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8.1 IMPORTANCE OF STORAGE IN MUSEUMS— PURPOSE & AIM

Most Site Museums have a rich collection of reserve items. These collections are very useful to scholars and research students. Reserve collections should be stored methodically so that they are easily available and accessible to the scholars and researchers whenever required.

It had been the custom of many Museums to place their entire collection on exhibition. This practice is still followed by some Museums. In such cases, identical objects are crowded together in a gallery creating confusion. They look like an antiquarian shop where one has to find un-usual or valuable objects with great effort.

The present trend is to keep a smaller number of objects on display for neatness as well as educational reasons. This tendency for displaying of selected items, requires the other artifacts to be placed in a store where it is readily available for study and comparison. Stored objects are used for changing the display, for loans, for traveling exhibitions and other museological activities. These functions cannot be fulfilled efficiently if the material in the stores is kept in a haphazard manner. The collections in storage need careful maintenance, as well as accurate recording.

8.2 RATIO OF STORAGE AREA IN A MUSEUM IN RELATION TO CURATORIAL AREA

It is generally considered that only half the space of a Museum be ear marked for exhibits, the other half being for curatorial functions and storage. The latest concept of storage is that it should be three times bigger than the curatorial area. The storage rooms need not be on the same level as the exhibition rooms. They may be in the basement of the premises of the general plan of the Museum building, in separate rooms, or in old buildings adjacent to or on the floor above the Museum offices. In the Hazarduari Palace which was built as a residence and converted to a Site Museum later, the space is inadequate for keeping
reserve collection. Hence the reserve collections have been kept under lock and key on the top floor of the palace. The essential thing is that the collections should be dry, safe, easy to inspect and having adequate light. In fact their features should be as carefully considered as those of the display rooms.

The space allotted should be planned in such a way that if needed, more space could be added without affecting the basic plans of the exhibition area. The storage area should be very near the curatorial office and also near the galleries. The place of loading and unloading should be close to the stored object. If possible there should be a separate entry and exit gate for the storage area. Provision for a separate gate will not affect the entry and exit of visitors to the Museum, and at the same time keep it out of their view. In today's context this is very important.

8.3 PROBLEMS OF STORAGE IN OLD BUILDINGS/ MONUMENTS CONVERTED INTO MUSEUMS

Location of the storage is always a problem. Some Museums housed in old buildings which have been converted into Museums do not have storage facilities as in those days no one thought that a Museum would grow up in these sites. It will also be difficult to carry heavy loads in old buildings as the floor above the ground may not be strong enough to bear these loads.

If the store is located in the basement, it is also difficult to carry in the large pieces unless the Museum is provided with a ramp like that in hospitals. As old buildings are damp specially in the basement, due to the soaking of sub soil water, specimens may get permanently damaged if they are stored in this atmosphere.

Even storage in open air is not correct. The Site Museum at Konarak, though comparatively new has many of the specimens left in an uncovered area outside the Museum premises. Such exposure to climatic conditions is inevitably damaging. Even if kept under a tin shed the collections will accumulate dust and will lose their original charm.
8.4 PLANNED STORAGE

The best place for storage would be the ground floor where objects are easily accessible to the curator for routine checkup and study. It would also be within the easy reach of visiting scholars.

The store rooms should have two main doors — one opening towards the gallery and the other towards the road. Iron shutters and double lock system should be provided in the doors. Whenever an object is received in or taken out from the store, the outside door can be used without disturbing the displayed exhibits in the gallery or the visitors. The inside door may be used only by the curator and staff for entering the stores. Stores should have adequate lighting arrangements, exhaust fans and fire extinguishers. It would be better if the storage place of fragile exhibits are in an air conditioned room as has been done in some foreign Museums.

From the point of view of architecture, the building for storing Museum specimens need not differ from any other store house. A purely utilitarian structure will be sufficient having temperature, air, moisture and light as per requirement of the stored specimens. Fixtures will be needed for adequate accommodation of objects of a variety of a material and shape. Provision should exist to house series of single specimens of one type or kind, sets of objects and complete exhibits. These need not be set up in a manner of display. A sketch or photograph showing a set or a complete exhibition in a state of installation together with a list of specimens and descriptive notes should offer sufficient information to the scholar.

Extremely fragile objects should not be stored in mobile storage systems. Objects that are very sensitive to the environment may require additional environmental protection. If it is necessary to place certain objects within a container before storing, then an appropriate system should be adopted to accommodate the container.
Storage system varies from Museum to Museum. The storage system depends on the size, shape and weight of the objects to be stored. Storage areas with high ceilings allow for higher storage units. Units can be modified according to storage requirements.

Some Site Museums are located in areas where commercially manufactured systems are not available. Then the Museum has to make its arrangements by using the services of local carpenters. When laying out a system of adjustable shelving in a storage area, several factors should be considered. The minimum width of the aisles is very important. Generally a 1m aisle is enough but if large objects are stored it may be 1.2m wide. Wood shelving is cheaper but eventually it may sag and unless carefully finished may cause abrasions to textiles. In a metal shelving it is necessary to add a layer of protective padding.

Adjustable metal shelving systems are available which are appropriate for open-shelf storage. The shelf units can be placed back to back so that access space is left on both sides. This is called a double loaded system.

These systems allow the Museum to have shelving depths of 30cm, 60cm, 90cm and 1.2m by lining up the individual shelves of these units.

Plastic wire mesh shelving can be used to support light weight objects where air circulation is particularly important. Sometimes
contact with copper or other metals may damage the objects. Plastic wire mesh shelving is very economical.

To accommodate deep objects a combination of open shelving system and drawers may be arranged. The flexibility of this system allows the storage of different kinds of artefact in the same area. Drawer or shelving units can be adjusted, added or removed as necessary. This is also quite economical. The width of the aisles must be planned to accommodate the movement of large objects. This system allows large objects to be stored on the open shelves with smaller materials stored in adjacent drawers.

Unframed prints and drawings, small flat textiles and framed textiles may be stored in a flat drawer storage system but pastel drawings should not be stored here. Pastel drawings should be stored in a fixed vertical position in the storage room so that the drawings may be examined without movement.

Sliding rack storage with wire screens are suspended from sliding tracks which are hung from the ceiling or from an independent structure. Materials are hung from the screen with simple hooks. Channels secured to the floor keep the hanging screens from swaying back and forth when they are pulled out for examination. Sliding racks may be kept on both sides of the room so that a common space in the centre of the room is kept for viewing.
8.5   CATAGORIES OF MUSEUM ANTIQUITIES IN SITE MUSEUMS

A) ART OBJECTS

There are different methods of storing art objects. According to one method the objects may be placed, Museum number wise or Accession number wise whereby they can be easily located. The other method of keeping the objects is School or Period wise. A third method of storage is according to Site or Region. Some Museum even keep their objects, Theme or Subject wise. It is a good idea to arrange the objects thematically in chronological order. This will help scholars of Art or Iconography to visualize the display through the ages.

B) STORAGE OF HEAVY STONE SCULPTURES

Usually heavy items are simply laid on the ground in reserve stores. However this method occupies more space and will seem un-impressive to the outside researchers. It is recommended that taking the height of the ceiling and the sculptures to consideration, three or more tier steel rack or platforms be built and the items arranged closely in rows. The items should not be placed on permanent pedestals as this might hinder their removal for display in the gallery or any other purpose.

C) STORAGE OF SMALL SCULPTURES

Small sculptures or their fragments may be fixed on wooden block pedestals and placed side by side in parallel rows in steel racks. Apart from the accession number on the objects, the pedestals also should be numbered to facilitate easy location. Each rack and its shelves should be numbered with details, so that information may be obtained from the list without having to consult the classified accession registers. Very small fragments can be arranged in trays and then kept on shelves.

D) STORAGE OF BRONZE OBJECTS

Big bronze objects may be kept on steel racks specially made for them. Very large ones would have to be placed on wooden pedestals in a row on the fixed steel rack or
platforms. They should be stored at a dry place away from heat and dust. It is better to cover them with alkathene bags. Miniature bronzes should be kept in wooden trays.

Low RH at 40 percent or less is good for objects of iron, copper, alloy or bronze. Dry silica gel helps to control RH by absorbing moisture from the air.

E) STORAGE OF TERRACOTTA, SEALS, STUCCO, TILES ETC.

These objects are very fragile and should be handled with utmost care. Each item should be wrapped in medical cotton and tissue paper and then placed in wooden trays, inside steel almirahs. Small seals should be kept in small bags or cloth lined packets bearing their numbers in black ink. They should then be placed in steel almirahs. The trays should be of uniform size. The details of the tray, shelf number and the almirah number are to be recorded with a pencil in the location column of the departments classified, accession register and index cards. Use of pencil is recommended as the location might change in the future.

Terracotta objects may be stored in steel cabinets. Smaller ones may also be kept in boxes with cotton padding.

F) BEAD STORAGE

Usually beads are stored by stringing them together in a thread and placed in a wooden box. However time is wasted to find out a particular bead and they may also get damaged because of constant rubbing against each other. Ideally, a small or big bead should be kept separately in a small cloth lined paper packet and then placed in an index card cabinet. A typed list giving the details of the beads should be kept in the cabinet.

G) STORAGE OF GOLD AND SILVER JEWELLERY

Gold and silver jewellery should be kept in a wooden tray lined with cotton and tissue paper or in a velvet padded box. These may then be kept in a steel almirah in the strong room of the Museum. Their exact location is to be entered in the storage accession register.
H) STORAGE OF PAINTINGS

Paintings are often kept in a crowded manner or stacked on top of each other. This hampers accessibility. Paintings should be padded to reduce the danger of frames getting chipped or damaged. They should be securely fastened to the rack and well supported. Storing only a few items in each slot reduces the possibility of this happening. A compartmentalized storage system for framed prints, drawings, or paintings may be made with vertical wood posts and plywood shelving. The slots should be made narrow to minimize the number of items that can be stored in each. It is possible that the works of art may rub against each other when they are being taken out or put back into storage or they may rub against the structure of the storage system itself. The slot height should be varied so that different sizes of paintings can be accommodated without wasting space. This system is easy to build and costs less. So it is good for museums with limited budgets. Paintings sensitive to environmental changes and light are best stored in flat boxes or drawers with acid-free tissue as padding. If possible, water colours, prints, and drawings should be stored out of their frames.

At the National Museum, New Delhi, the method adopted for storing paintings is as under mentioned. Each miniature painting on paper is mounted on a folding card board by means of two or three strips of cellophane tape. A sheet of tissue paper covers the front of the painting but the glazed side of the paper does not come in contact with the painted surface. They are classified and stored in specially designed boxes of deodar wood or compressed fiber which is open on the top and on one side.
I) STORAGE OF PRINTS, DRAWINGS AND LARGE BOOKS

Here the shelving consists of closely spaced metal shelving upon which solander boxes containing prints and drawings are placed. The prints and drawings are separated by acid free tissues in each solander box. The shelves extend to about 2m off the floor. Apart from metal, such shelves may be made of wood. Aisles should be planned carefully so that mobile carts may move freely, if carting the boxes becomes necessary. They are very good for prints and drawings on paper, manuscripts etc.

J) STORAGE OF TEXTILES

Textile collections are of two types—flat and three dimensional. Flat textiles are tapestries, wall hangings, embroideries etc, while three dimensional textiles are costumes and accessories. Flat textiles may be stored in acid free boxes interleaved with acid free tissues. This is a simple economical system for storage of flat textiles. One disadvantage of this storage system is that it is not air tight so that certain items must be protected individually. Large objects can be rolled onto cardboard or plastic tubes. As the cardboard tubes are acidic, it should be first wrapped in aluminium foils. After rolling onto the tube, the textiles should be wrapped in pre washed calico or closely woven cotton fabric, tied and suspended. It should never be stacked.
one on top of another. Three dimensional textiles should be hung on prepared padded hangers and kept well spaced in cupboards. Chairs, sofas etc should be covered with pre washed closely woven cotton to prevent dust and dirt.

Costumes may be stored in a cabinet where it can be hung on top of a four drawer unit to store folded costumes and accessories. Steel is a good choice but sharp edges should be avoided which may tear the costumes. The costumes are hung on specially constructed hangers. Specially equipped rolling ladders can be used to work on the costumes because of the height of the units.

K) POTS, POTTERY AND CERAMICS

Fragile pots and pottery pieces can be stored in a dry place after wrapping them in cotton and tissue papers.

Ceramics should be handled as little as possible and with great care. They should never be bunched together. Cups and bowls should not be kept one inside the other. Similarly plates should not be kept one on top of another without intervening tissue paper. If possible ceramics item should be kept on lightly padded shelves to minimize the shock of vibration or movement. Ceramics should be secure, weather proof, well lit and adequately provided with electricity.

L) IVORY AND WOOD

These objects are to be kept in steel cabinets, particularly large sized ivory and wooden objects. Relevant storage information should be recorded in the accession register. Minor objects may be placed in slots in a steel cabinet.
M) COINS

Coins should be kept in strong rooms or in iron safes. This room should be near the curator's room. Coins are stored in wooden cabinets in a series of wooden trays with cut out grooves for keeping individual coins. Wooden cabinets are not safe for lead coins as they are likely to be dislodged when the trays are pulled out. Here a Perspex sheet should be placed on each tray to avoid dislocation during handling. As only one side of the coin is visible in these trays they have to be handled while being studied, which is a disadvantage. To avoid this, two coins of the same type may be kept in obverse and reverse position so that both sides of the coin can be seen without handling them.

Coins are kept on glass shelves with a mirror, four inches to six inches behind the shelf so that both sides can be seen. They are also kept in between two sheets of glass which make it easy to see both sides.

N) MANUSCRIPTS

Manuscripts should be kept in usual library method that is in glazed almirahs.

O) ARMS AND ARMOUR

A sliding rack system is used to store arrows and spears. Spears or arrows are tied to the peg board with string. This system is quiet compact and the units fit closely together. Swords may also be stored individually on slotted wooden battons inside a wooden cabinet.

P) FURNITURE

There are different techniques of storing furniture, all of which can share the same storage area. Large pieces of furniture are placed on ply wood platforms or palates with pastels attached. The tops
of the pallets are covered with carpeting. If a piece of furniture is removed for examination, conservation or exhibition, it may be rolled out of its space and moved with ease. As the furniture is raised from the floor, storage areas are easier to clean and the danger of damaging delicate furniture legs with cleaning equipment is eliminated. The empty volume above the furniture stored on pallets is used for the storage of light pieces of furniture such as chairs, small tables and items that are normally hung like chandeliers. The chandeliers can be hung from simple bar like structures suspended over the rows of furniture.

8.6 EXISTING/PREVAILING STORAGE SYSTEMS IN DIFFERENT SITE MUSEUMS

A survey of storage conditions at different Site Museums gives us some information about the prevailing storage system. Too much of information is not available about the storage system as the curators feel hesitant to show the places or discuss about them due to security reasons. Whatever could be gathered is given below.

Items which have to be stored out of doors have to be protected with tarpauline or covers. Where ever possible, it is preferable to keep all storage items inside the Museum building.

AMARAVATI

One of the four major places of Buddhist worship in India is Amaravati which was the capital of the Satavahana dynasty. Here the reserve collection consists of crystal cascades, silver and lead coins and other important objects. The sculptures that are not exhibited are kept in sheds. The place has good facilities to keep its reserve collections.

BODHGAYA

Bodhgaya is a holy place of pilgrimage to the Buddhists. There is a Site Museum at Bodhgaya. The store room for keeping sculptures is within the Museum building and very near to the galleries of the Museum hall. The storage area is about one-sixth of the
area containing the exhibits. The bronzes and some other minor antiquities are kept close to the curatorial office in steel cupboards. More space is required here to organize the storage materials properly.

FORT ST GEORGE, MADRAS

The Fort is one of the finest examples of British military construction in India. It has the oldest protestant church of the east. The Fort Museum containing several antiquities was in a building that housed the first Light House of Madras, the first commercial bank and the first club. It is now a well kept repository of tangible memories of early Madras. The main storage is located on the ground floor of Clive’s corner, in the house where Robert Clive lived. This is outside the Museum premises. Coins, medals and other valuable antiquities are kept in iron safe in the room of the Deputy Superintending Archaeologist for Museums.

HALEBID

Halebid is in North Karnataka and was the capital of the Hoysala dynasty. The Archaeological Survey of India has done a commendable job here in preserving the spectacular Jain monuments. The Site Museum is in the open air within the compound wall of the Hoyasaleswara temple. The reserve collection is lying in the open field surrounded by a barbed wire fencing. The plan for a Museum building with adequate storage facility is in place.

HAMPi

Hampi was once the capital of one of the largest Hindu Empire. Hampi is located in the middle of Karnataka and was also known as Vijaynagar. The Site Museums is in the Southern part of the ruins in Kamalapuram. A portion of the reserve was then kept at a protected monument close by. The valuable antiquities like gold and copper coins, palm leaf manuscripts are kept in the iron safes and were shown mainly to the scholars on request. The store room is in a rented house quite at a distance. Gold ornaments like one
waist chain, two gold rings etc were kept in the treasury at Bellary. Some changes have been made after the new Museum building started. The reserve collection has been kept in a well protected room and a sculpture shed has also come up.

HAZARDUARI

Hazardwari Palace Museum is in the town of Murshidabad on the east bank of the river Bhagirathi The building is three storied and comprises more than fifty halls and galleries. The collection includes arms and weapons, paintings and statues, costumes and jewelleries, palanquins and carriages, gold silver and ivory objects, besides vases, furniture, chandeliers etc all belonging to the 18th and the 19th centuries. This Site Museum is one of the greatest of its kind and has a good storage capacity. The stored objects are mostly situated on the top floor and well protected from visitors by iron chain barriers in the stair case. Other valuables like coins, gold and silver objects are kept in bolted lockers where no visitors are allowed. The Museum has been re organized on a modern basis and the storage problems has been solved as far as possible. There are however places which can be cleaned and utilized for the use of the Museum.

KHAJURAHO

Khajuraho, the capital of the Chandela dynasty is known for its magnificent temples. In 1910, W.E. Jardin, collected objects from the temple complex and displayed them in an open air enclosure near the western group of temples. Thus the Site Museum which was called the Jardine Museum changed its name to Archaeological Museum in 1952. The reserve collections were kept in three rooms in a building hired for the office use away from the Museum. The minor objects were kept in cupboards. The Museum that later developed was of 19680 sq.ft while the storage was only 656 sq.ft. Though there is poor provision for keeping storage collection, it is hoped that in the near future better provisions will be made.
KONDAKUR

Kondapur is located 90 km North of Hyderabad in the district of Medak. It is known as the Taxila of the South and is referred to as the Town of Mounds. The finds of the archaeological excavation done here dates back to 3000 B.C. Remains of a vast Buddhist complex, coins of gold, silver, copper and lead belonging to the Roman and Satavahana era have been excavated. At the Museum there is a storage room next to the gallery where valuable reserves are kept in steel almirahs. The size of the area is not big enough.

KONARAK

Konarak is a small village in Puri district. The Site Museum is next to the famous Sun Temple constructed by Narasinhadeva of Ganga dynasty of Orissa in mid 13th century. The archaeological surveyor of the Bengal Circle, T. Bloch started a planned campaign of unearthing the buried portion of the building under the sand. The building was registered as a World Heritage Site in the year 1984. The Site Museum displays various structures which fell from the temple or were excavated. Though the displays are well kept and labeled, a large number of artifacts are still lying in an enclosed open space by the side of the Museum. These will face environmental decay unless adequate provision of storage area is made.

NAGARJUNACONDA

Located on the river Krishna, Nagarjunaconda was the greatest center of Buddhist learning, South of the Vindhyas, about 17 centuries ago. In the 50s during the work of the Nagarjuna Sagar hydroelectric project, the ruins of the site were excavated brick by brick. Indian archaeologists have salvaged the precious ruins showcasing them in a Museum styled as Vihara. The storage collection at the Nagarjunaconda Museum was insufficient and a portion of the gallery was kept for storing of reserve collection. Many excavated sculptures were kept on the floor. Coins and smaller antiquities are kept in steel almirahs. Now it has got a good storage space for the artefacts.
NALANDA

Nalanda is located south of Patna where the Archaeological Site Museum was established in 1917. It has a beautiful collection of Buddhist and Hindu bronzes. A number of undamaged statues of Lord Buddha, two enormous intact terracotta jars of 1st century A.D. are housed here. In the Nalanda Museum, the store rooms are at a distance from the main Museum building on the Northern side. More precious antiquities are stored in a strong room cum gallery. The coins are kept in a burglar proof iron safe.

RED FORT

The foundation stone of Red Fort was laid in 1618 by Emperor Sahajahan. The Red Fort Archaeological Museum is situated in Mumtaz Mahal, Red Fort and comprises of a collection of rare artifacts from the Mughal period. A section of the Museum is dedicated to Bahadur Shah Zaffar where some of his personal belongings including the robes and a silver hukka are on display. The coins here are kept safely, well classified and catalogued, stored in wooden cabinets with trays containing rows of curved out cups. The wooden cabinets with the coins are kept inside a burglar proof iron safe. Reserve collections of textile, paintings and manuscripts are stored in wooden cupboards. The storage area is about one-eighth of the display floor area. Over all improvement has been done to tackle the space problem.

SANCHI

Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh is renowned for its many stupas, monasteries, temples and pillars dating from the 3rd century B.C. to the 12th century A.D. Below the Sanchi hill is the Site Museum which houses invaluable antiquities like the Lion Capital of the Ashokan pillar, some ancient stone sculpture and metal objects used by monks. The old Museum was on the hill top. The new building which was purchased for a college was converted into a Museum after necessary additions and alterations. The reserve collections here are well kept and easily accessible to scholars.
SARNATH

Samath in Varanasi was the place where Gautama Buddha delivered the first sermon after gaining enlightenment. The Site Museum houses exquisite antiquities of Buddhist art including Ashoka's Lion Capital. The Sarnath Museum has one main hall with two chambers on each side. Outside the Museum there are two long covered passages where many sculptures are kept due to lack of space in the main Museum. The area for storage is not sufficient for storing all excavated objects. This Museum is one of the earliest Site Museum of the country and the earliest Museum of the Archaeological Survey of India. There are 6830 antiquities including stone sculptures, architectural members, stucco, terracottas, iron objects, gold objects and semi precious stone objects. Among them 301 are displayed. The relic cascades and gold objects are stored in specially constructed strong room. Most of the antiquities are of stone and stored under a roof and within the four walls of the Museum, so they are not subjected to decay by direct sun or rains. Fragile iron objects and stucco figures are treated with chemical preservatives to arrest further decay. The art objects are stored under controlled climatic conditions, that is RH maintained between 60 and 65 and the temperature is not allowed to rise above 30 degree C. Periodical check up is also done.

TIPU SULTAN MUSEUM

The Museum is housed in Dariya Daulat near Srirangapatnam Fort in the Summer Palace built by Tipu Sultan in 1784. It contains many items and personnel belongings of Tipu and his family. There are many portraits, furniture and rich tapestries. It also includes some of his swords and shields. Coins and documents of Tipu are also housed here. The reserve collection of coins are kept in wooden coin cabinets. A few gold objects are kept in the local treasury.

TAJ MAHAL

The Taj Museum at Agra started under an Assistant Superintendent Archaeologist. The reserve wing of the Museum is in one of the buildings of the monument complex of the Taj Mahal garden. The storage facility is on the first floor while the gallery is on the ground floor.
VAISHALI

Vaishali (Kolhua) near Patna is specially significant for Buddhist devotees. 4kms away at Kundupur, Lord Mahavira was born. At Kolhua, Lord Buddha delivered his last sermon. It was also the center of the second Buddhist council congregation. The Vaishali Site Museum houses archaeological remains discovered at various sites in Vaishali. Close to the Museum in a tin shed is the remains of a stupa which contained Buddha's funeral ashes. This was found in a casket buried in the relic chamber along with a beautiful terracotta head of the Buddha. Storage facilities are now being improved to make it a proper place for the research students and interested people.

VELHA GOA

The Site Museum in Goa is at the back of the church which used to be a Franciscian Monastery. The Museum contains many portraits, wooden Christian sculptures and Hindu sculptures from temples, dating from the 12th and the 13th century, Kadamba period. The storage facilities here are gradually being built up with space for antiquities. Some are kept in the hall where the office is located. The storage area is about 1053 into 1699 sq.ft. and is within the Museum building.

A survey of the above few Site Museums show that most of the Museums are housed in modern buildings and some are in historical buildings. Arrangement for storage has to be made everywhere even though space may be lacking. This is also true in case of rented buildings like the Site Museum in Tamluk. Tamluk Museum is however now being shifted to a new building which will be having a better storage facility. Without proper storage facility only a small portion can be put on display.
8.7 DOCUMENTATION OF STORAGE OBJECTS

Documentation of storage objects is of primary importance. It should be done in such a way that each individual specimen can be traced out and all pertinent information can be available within a short time. This will help the investigators and students immensely. To ensure correct identification of the objects there should be a general register for them having the following columns.

1) Date of entry
2) Accession number
3) Description of the object
4) Period
5) Locality
6) How acquired (gift, purchase, exchange, loan etc.)
7) Name of the donor
8) Size and weight (specially in case of coins)
9) Location in the Museum with cabinet or drawer or shelf number
10) References
11) Remarks

After registration, the objects may be sent to the Chemical Branch for necessary treatment. It is then ready for entry in the sectional registers. Precaution should be taken to avoid confusion between the entries in the general accession register and those in the detailed sectional register.

Index cards should be prepared containing detailed information about the object. Index card may be arranged according to provenance, material, school or in alphabetical sequence.

The index card and general accession register should be kept in safe custody. Accession registers should be properly bound. The index cards may be kept in card file cabinets with location of the object in a special column. Furniture like racks, shelves, boxes etc. should be labeled for ready reference.
8.8 IMPORTANT POINTS TO BE NOTED WHILE HANDLING STORAGE EQUIPMENTS

1) A number of trays of suitable sizes preferably made of wood for carrying smaller specimens from one place to another should be available.

2) Wheel trolley of both lighter and heavier capacity for carrying objects from place to place are required. The trolley should have ball bearings and rubber tyred wheels and cushion so that they may be moved easily without any noise or scratches on the floor.

3) Vacuum cleaners should be provided for cleaning the storage rooms periodically.

4) Small stool and steel folding chairs and tables should be provided for scholars and students visiting the storage room.

5) Provisions for light and exhaust fans should be made. Lighting should not be too strong or dim. If there is no electricity, provision should be made for sufficient natural light.

8.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

Stored articles should be housed in a suitable building. Environmental conditions need to be controlled. Safe handling procedures should be developed and regular conservation and security assessment undertaken. There should be space for expansion as more items may enter. Rack systems and covers should be of adequate size to cope with the collections and should have adjustable shelves for changing if required.

It is better if the storage place is de-humidified. Otherwise with all precautions metal work will rust. Too low a level of humidity or fluctuating relative humidity will cause damage. A stable environment should be aimed at with a RH level of 50-55 percent. Items should be covered with dust sheets but polythene sheets should be avoided.

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A new approach to solve storage problem in Site Museums is Visual Storage System. Most Site Museums suffer from upkeep and lack of proper storage or space problems. In this system as many objects as possible are exhibited in the gallery. The gallery is divided into two parts—exhibition area and storage area.

The advantages of visual storage are—
1) All the objects can be displayed so that they remain under constant observation and are well secured as well.
2) Routine inspection helps to note any damage and immediate steps can be taken to rectify and restore the objects.
3) The objects are saved from frequent handling and are also visible for loan, exhibition, photography etc.
4) The research scholars can view them without undergoing various formalities.

Visual storage can be arranged both inside the study or the reserve collection room as well in the concerned galleries. This is beneficial to the general public as all information is available at the site of display. Research oriented visitors will have easy access to objects. Instead of looking like a storage, the visual storage may have the appearance of a gallery, in case there is enough space for displaying the objects. An example is the visual storage of Central Asian Antiquities in the Museum Fuer Indische Kunst-West Berlin.

**NOTE**

Comparison between the space utilization of a fixed storage system and that of a high density mobile storage system.

The high density mobile storage system will save 40% of the space in the area because only one access aisle to
the system is open at any given point in time. 50% more storage capacity can be provided in the same amount of floor area than is possible by using a conventional fixed storage system.

The essential element of the high density mobile storage system is its carriage. Some carriages are made of wood, some of steel but structural aluminum is the best material because it is light weight and does not rust. If the existing building structure is inadequate to support the high density mobile storage units, additional beams can be installed to support the load. Although a high density mobile storage system is more expensive than a conventional system, its savings in space and building construction when a new facility is planned can make up for the increased cost. The draw back of this system is that although the collections are protected from light and dust when the carriages are closed the vibrations created by the movement of the carriages are a negative factor.
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