Chapter-1
Introduction
‘Museums’, began in the ‘Private collection’ of curious natural objects and cultural artifacts of rich and elite persons and families, which were later displayed in so called ‘wonder rooms’ and ‘cabinet of curiosities’ in 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} centuries in Europe for the selected elite of the upper classes and ‘Scholars’ of the new middle class, that has too been a difficult process as the ‘visitors’ had to apply in writing for admission. It was only in the late 17\textsuperscript{th} century and early 18\textsuperscript{th} century when the ‘collection’ was open to ‘general public’ during the ‘Renaissance’ in Europe especially in Italy. France and England (Ashmolean, 1683) followed by two major museums from Louvre and British Museum in United Kingdom. Lourve was the first major museum which considered ‘education’ and ‘public’ as its vital and definite objective and goal. French revolutions pronouncement of ‘human and civil right’ opened new panorama for the progress education and culture. This new enlightenment has its impact on the activities of collection and displaying the objects of value resulting in the gradual increase of public access to this collection resetting in making ‘education’ as one of the major functions of the Museum (Falk, 1999).

During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century ‘collection’ turned in ‘museum’ as their focused shifted from ‘objects’ to the ‘people’ and they became ‘public institution’ realizing their social responsibilities to the communities in which the exists (Studart,2000).

Today the museum community agrees that the term ‘museum education’ should be seen in a broader context, with interfaces to many areas of the museum, especially with those related to museum communication (Anderson, 1997). With the purpose of improving the visitor’s museum experience and providing the visitor with a meaningful encounter. Museum professionals responsible for education and interpretive activities have begun to investigate theories of learning and the psychology of cognition that could have an application to the children museum context (Hein 1998).

The museum traditional role was acquisition, conservation, research and display of the objects, which gradually changed because it was realized that the visitor not only looks at the objects and admires and enjoys them, but also learn from them and pass them to the succeeding generation. Since the early years of 20\textsuperscript{th} century there has been an increasing acknowledgements in many countries where people are aware about the educational function of the museums. However a serious and systematic thought to this changing role of museum on an international level was given in 1951,
when a seminar was conducted by the expend (UNESCO) on the educational role of museum in Brooklyn. It was resolved that educating the general public through various educational activities, is one of the primary function of a museum (Molly H, 1960).

Eilean Hooper’s (2007) views that “National and regional museums are important institutions for learning. They faster the knowledge, creativity and understanding along with visitors of every ages and communities”. She states that “The educational programs, when combined with school tours and educational syllabus have a powerful influence on the social, cultural and intellectual learning of children.”

Anderson observes, “Museum education has a vital role to play in museum public policies. Among its recommendations, the report stresses that education should be incorporated in the museum mission statement and that research and evaluation of public learning needs to become an integral part of museum practice” (1997).

In 1995 a conference was organized in the United States, with the theme ‘Public Institutions for Personal Learning’ aimed at defining learning in museum and establishing a research agenda in order to determine how museums meaningfully affect people’s life. In the response to this conference, understanding of learning in museums becomes a high priority within the museum community in the US (Falk and Dierking, 1995).

In Britain, the Museums Association in its national strategy for museums concerning education and access, suggested that the Department of National Heritage should support research into the process of familiar learning in museums. The Museum Association also stressed the importance of museums being encouraged to examine their exiting and potential audience and adjust their activities accordingly.

The development of visitor studies in the museums during recent decades has provided new understandings about the museum visitors experience and about the visitor’s expectation, preference and interest. These studies are helping museum professionals to plan and design aiming at different sections of the museum audience.

The growing concern regarding the learning potential of museum exhibition prompted museum professional involved with education and communication to play more attention to the interpretive approaches they were employing in the creation of child oriented exhibitions. Many exhibitions for children and families have explicit
learning goals. As a result of this movement, some museum professionals have been trying to develop a deeper understanding of nature of learning in informal settings (Hein, 1998; Falk and Dierkling, 1992; Borun, 1997).

The museum started a number of programs for different types of visitors. A large number of visitors in museum were coming as school groups. For the benefit of the school groups, museums started educational programs and activities. The museum community today agree that the term ‘museum education’ in relation to exhibitions, their educational goals should aim at contributing to the enrichment of the visitor experience by providing visitors opportunities for discovery, observing and learning with the purpose of improving their experience and providing the visitor with a more meaningful encounters (Hein.G.E, 1998).

‘Museum Education’ in wider perspective is understood as, “Any museum activity pursued with a view to convey knowledge or experience to the public”. which ultimately lead to practical learning. Earlier education through museums were restricted to activities such as display of objects and the labels (hand written information), which comprises a little explanation and basic information.

1.1 Museum, Children and Beginning of Children’s Museum

The attempt to provide suitable museum services for children is an issue that has been concerning museum educators for a long time. By the inspiration of various conceptions of the nature of learning in the childhood, museum educators have begun experimenting with diverse educational approaches to exhibitions and interpretations of the collection (Studart, 2000).

The progressive social, political movement of the late nineteenth century and specifically, the progressive education effort in the western societies, along with child development research led to the development of dedicated educational activity of museums in the twentieth century. The methods used were personally connected with those of the progressive education movement e.g. learning from objects, the use of local materials and activities, importance on analysis, the visitor’s interest and previous experience, story telling, lectures illustrated with slides and kits for delivery to schools were all popular museums initiatives for children (Cohen Urial, 1985).

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the Piaget’s works and his stages of cognitive development that began to be attached with other theories concerned with stage of human development. These theories emphasized the importance of early stimulation
of children as a school performance between the affluent and the poor and disabled. This notion of early interaction was translated by middle class parents who, wanting the best for their children bringing babies as visitors to children’s museum (Studart, 2000)

The growing concern regarding the learning potential of museum exhibitions encouraged museum professionals involved with education and communication to play more notice to the interpretative approaches they were employing in the creation of child orientated exhibitions. Many exhibitions for children and families have explicit learning goals. The growing interest in the nature of the family experience in museums encouraged visitor studies researchers to focus on the connections and perceptions of children and family groups at different museums exhibitions. The aim of these studies is to understand the nature of visitor social interactions and learning in a museum environment in order to specify how museums could get better and increase friendly learning situations directed at family groups (Feber, 1987).

The way children grow and learn in the museum, which is originated in the writing of 18th and 19th century thinkers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau, John and Friedrich Froebel and later on in the socio and psychological research of 20th century, thinkers such as Jean Piaget, John Skinner and Lev Vygotsky. All these studies have emphasized more and or less explicitly the complex nature of children development and significance of early years (Zapri, 2004).

Child development was seen as dependent on the associated concepts of stimulus response and reinforcement. The behaviorist model suggested that the child learns through direct instruction, and the teacher should control the reinforcement of learning punishment, rewards and frequent repetition (Wadsworth, 1971).

The most important stream of psychological and learning thought is the relations or constructivist conception of learning and development, which sees cognitive development as an active interaction between the individual and his physical and social environment. The developing learning child as necessarily active and that developing/learning were not automatic (Wadsworth, 1971).

Children's museum can play an active role in enhancing the children's awareness of subjects and the visitor experience. Many museums of western Europe and America specially museum of science and Natural history started their “Discovery Rooms, Science centers, Exploratorium along with their traditional
galleries and offered their collections to be touched, felt not just be seen. Thus making learning enjoyable for children (Studart, 2000).

According to Maher (1997) those children’s museums are a unique museum type that appeared at the end of the 20th century as an effort to provide a museum environment that caters more effectively about the educational and developmental needs of the child. Children's museum use artifacts, both authentic and replicas as a tool for the visualization of concepts and the provision of meaningful learning experiences that build on the child's interest and inner motives and empower them to understand their place in the World. Experimenting with progressive teaching strategies and innovative learning environment for hundred years. The children's museum has functioned as an educational laboratory for child centered methods and techniques that were later incorporated in general public museum as well.

According to Kronkosky, “Children’s museums play a vital role in the learning experiences of children of all ages”. Studies have shown that learning begins at a very early age. Nearly half of the children that visit children’s museum every year around the world is under the age of six and today’s children’s museums have the latest technologies to help these very young children develop cognitive and physical skills through interactive learning and play (Caplan, 2004).

Children museum was becoming more popular in the 19th century. In this context Association of children's museum (2008a), USA denoted that children’s museum is becoming more and more popular tourist destinations for parents with children under the age of thirteen. Janel Rice Elman, the managing director of the Association of children museum, USA states that children's museum offer substitute to the highly structured and success driven knowledge that takes place in the schools. At these museums children are the driving strength behind their own knowledge (Sloan, 2005).

To understand the birth of children’s museum at the end of the 19th century, it is essential first to understand the educational association which were going on at that time there was nothing special or unique for children until the Brooklyn Children Museum opened. This museum was devoted as a place especially for the children to discover, to please, to satisfy these natural curiosity. Brooklyn Children Museum marked the foundation of the development of children museums in the United States (Herminia Weihsin Din, 1999).
According to Victor Regnier, children museum is not a place where children are displayed behind the glass cases. A few years ago one might have heard this explanation more frequently. Today the children museum, as a building type and as a cultural organization, is rapidly gaining identity and definition. However, inspire of the numerous educational ideas and products that have emerged from well established children museum like Boston, Indian polis and Brooklyn. Educators, child psychologists and environmental psychologists have promoted hand eye manipulation, multiple gross motor and fine motor muscle movement and multiple sensorial experiences in the exploration of the environment as enriching experiences for the physical and mental development of the young children. The museum provides very young children with basic information about themselves and the social and physical work around them. As they grow, it allows them to experience the integration of science, technology the humanities and the arts. Although the main goal of children’s museum is the physical and mental development of children through hands experience and interactive activities, the opportunity for learning and development is not limited to children. Most encourage or actively promote the involvement of parents. The interaction of children, staff docents and students of children behaviors is an opportunity for personal growth to accomplish research and explore the qualities of alternative communities and education. The children museum is a friendly lab for everyone (U. Cohen & R. Mcmurtry, 1985).

1.2 Children’s Museum A-Definition

“A Children’s museum is a place that encourages curiosity and stimulates learning while bringing families and children jointly in a new kind of town square where play inspires lifelong learning.” (Association of Children Museum, 2008a).

To more fully understand the definition and use of children's museum, the ACM offers some useful publication. The book has a collective vision: starting and sustaining a children’s museum for children, including finding space, hiring staff, developing programming, etc. The children’s museum field that frames the argument for why children’s museums are an important and worthy community investment.

Children museum is typically identified as, “User friendly, interactive, hands on good-looking, non frightening and inspiring places where imaginations can run wild” (Mayfield, 2005,181).
Children museum is found to be fundamentally different from traditional museums in four key ways:

1. Education justifies and is the purpose behind every object, activity and event, workshop, field trip and exhibition.

2. Bright colors and special lighting effects imprison child's attention. Also, exhibit labels are written in easy to understand language.

3. Exhibits are placed so that everyone together with the youngest (i.e. shortest) may look at them, exhibits are in a rational particular order.

4. Contact with the exhibit is the very important resource of learning, no matter how difficult the exhibit.

Children museum challenge the typical stereotype of a museum by proving interactive exhibits for children instead of a traditional museum exhibits that are often displayed in a way that does not allow personal relations with the subjects (Enseki, 2007). Traditional museums expect learning to take place without any tactile commotion, this makes learning out-of-the-way to very young children who learn through touch and play. Children’s museums focus on “the empowerment of the guests through contact and direct experience with objects as important as subjects or content focus.” (ACM, 2008a).

Children Museums generally focus on four general themes to improve learning and the hands on experience.

1. Foster makes up play through the supply of dress up, clothes, ritual dress and settings such as houses, grocery stores and fire engine.

2. Provide regional or country precise exhibits examples.

3. Offer exhibits with an international or multicultural center of thought to foster learning of other cultures.

4. Introduce the arts, culture by given that studio space, theaters or assortments of instruments (Mayfield, 2004).

1.3 The Growth of Children’s Museum in India

The growth of museum activities in India is of very recent date, although in the second half of the 19th century, some of the biggest museums had their foundation stone laid in our country, it was the archaeological excavations that mainly supplied the impetus for housing the antiquities of historical importance. Inscriptions, coins, pottery and other objects displayed in a manner unsystematic and haphazard. The idea
of children’s museum under the context, neither thought about nor there was perhaps any single museum, which felt the necessity to supplement the school curricula.

At many museums, occasional lectures are given, but anything like an organized and successful efforts have been made to bring together schools and the museum. In fact, the concept of the museum for younger ones had its first base, when in 1934-35 the Government Museum, Madras had arranged classes for the secondary school teachers. These teachers attended demonstration by the museum’s staff on the exhibits, biological, archaeological and anthropological and later in their respective schools, they explained these exhibits to the pupils.

The first children's museum in India opened its door in 1955 at Amreli, Gujarat. A good future ensured when the children properly educated. The most important thing of a child’s is education concerned in his socialization- a process by which a child learns about his society and build up his personality accordingly. In third five year plan, child welfare in India was attended to. It was decided to set up a National Children’s museum at Bal Bhavan, New Delhi. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister whose affection for the children was fathomless. He dreamt of a place where children of all classes irrespective of their caste, creed, color or the status in society could gather and participate in non-formal activities for fuller development of their personality. Designed on a unique note of understanding child psychology better, this made exclusively for children and it aims at calming the children about India’s society, tradition and life. The museum has a large collection of toys, traditional jewellery, dolls, art and craft material, and currency from various countries.

The present study is about the origin and development of children’s museums in India and detailed documentation is an analysis of the data related to the National Children’s Museum (NCM), New Delhi as a case study.

1.4 Statement of the Purpose

The overall purpose of the study is to trace the history, development and the role of National Children’s Museum, New Delhi. This study also documents and analyze the activities, workshops and social events of Children’s Museum, New Delhi.
1.5 Objectives of the study:

Aiming to find out the learning and activities of National Children's Museum of Delhi, this research work attempts:

To study the infrastructure, organization map and exhibit galleries of the museum;
To study the educational role of the museum;
To document and analyze the activities of the museum specially educational activities;
To know the visitors' response to museums, exhibits and activities.

1.6 Research Gap

Children museum’s concept and role have been one of the most researched topics in the western world. But no significant work has been done on this topic in India. This study attempts to study the present condition and status of children museums in India with focus on National Children’s Museum (NCM), New Delhi.

1.7 Need of the Research

This research will be helpful in many ways. This study examined the position of children’s museums in India.

- The study will be helpful for the people concerned to know the actual conditions of children museums in India;
- This study will be helpful for the development of children museum as well as the development of children;
- The findings of the study will be helpful to prospective researchers;
- The study will be helpful to the educators to know more about the children museums in India;

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis contains nine chapters. The first chapter is ‘Introduction’ that gives a synoptic view of the entire thesis.

Chapter two is the ‘Literature Review’. It presents the literature in the form of books, journals, magazines, research reports and articles both domestic and foreign related to children museum and museum learning.

Chapter three is ‘Research Methodology’. It describes all methods which was used by the researcher for their thesis. It includes the research design, field study,
screening and filtration, methods of data collection, limitation and significance of the research topic.

The Purpose of Chapter four “Learning in Museum” this chapter discusses learning theories proposed by experts like Dewey, Montessori, Piaget and Heins et. al. and also define the educational potentials of children museum.

Chapter five deals with the Concept of Children Museum and has been described, the history of the children museum about the world view as well as the Indian contexts.

Chapter Six deals with ‘Children Museums in India’. This chapter covered the selected children museums in India like the National Children Museum (New Delhi), Shankar’s International Dolls Museum (New Delhi), Motilal Nehru Children Museum (Lucknow), Children’s Museum (Kerala), Children’s Museum (Kolkata) and Children’s Museum (Chennai) are personally visited by the researcher and described their objective as well as their educational potentials.

Chapter Seven discusses the Role of National Children Museum (Bal-Bhawan) in non-formal education: A Case Study’ and has described the Role and Objective of National Children Museums, its galleries, displays and all the activities and workshops which them Museum organized time to time for their children.

Chapter Eight deals with the Data Analysis and Interpretation. It reveals the data analysis and interpretation and presents various statistical techniques used for data analysis to examine the hypothesis of the study. All the variable study has been done with the help of various statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, t-test, multiple regressions, using SPSS and demographic information in the form of tables, charts and graphs.

Chapter Nine devoted to the conclusions and recommendations which are based on the results of analysis done in previous chapter.

1.9 Summary
This chapter is mainly dedicated to the introductory background of the entire research. This chapter had the concept of children Museum leisure affected the establishment of children museum and its definition along with it gave a statement of the purpose, objective of the study, Research gap, Need of the Research and structure of the thesis has been discussed.
References


