Ways and Means of Communication for the Museums to the Visitors

Communication – What does it mean?

The word ‘Communication’ is derived from the Latin word *Communis*, meaning ‘common’. In broad perspective, it can be used for imparting or interchanging of facts, thoughts, opinions or information by speech, writings or signs. In simple way, for conveying information or giving instruction and to establish a ‘commonness’ with someone, the word ‘Communication’ is the ideal way or the act any natural and artificial means. In any management arena, the term ‘Communication’ is instrumental to wide interpretation. Undoubtedly, of all the ‘tools of management’ communication is the most vital one to reach to the multitude.

Thus, communication is

- an act or instance of transmitting information, and
- ‘a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour’ ... and also
- A system of exchanging information, thoughts, feelings or ideas in a two-way process towards a mutually accepted goal or direction.

In its most general sense, Communication is a chain of events in which the important link is a message. The chain connects a source, which has origin and has a destination interpreting the message, i.e. production, transmission and
reception of message and returning a feed back in some way if that message has or has not been properly understood. Accordingly, information is encoded and imparted by a sender to a receiver via a channel/medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback. Thus, when a sender and a receiver are 'tuned' together for a particular message, then ideal Communication takes place. It is purposeful to each other and for what is to be expressed and understood at two respective ends teller/sender and listener/receiver.

Viewing from other angle, Communication is the exchange of knowledge between a numbers of single human being through a common process of symbol. As an academic discipline, Communication relates to all the ways people like to communicate, so it embraces a paramount study and knowledge. Thus, when knowledge is converted into symbols like letters, spoken words, pictures or anything other, it is called information. In the year 1928, the English literary critic and author I.A. Richards defined Communication as an abstract aspect of human enterprise:

"Communication takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced, and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind, and is caused in part by the experience".1

**Communication – Motivator or Builder of a Nation**

Today, throughout the world, the concept of museum is redefined. The traditional concepts of museums are now virtually obsolete. Formerly, it was regarded as 'house of gods' and worked for the adoration of objects. Only rich people had the privilege to create artifacts. Kings and openhanded tycoons with a desire to dignify themselves and to indicate their societal pride set up collections. But since the time when the museum assumed its first concrete shape till this day,
it underwent constant conceptual and functional changes, assuming newer dimensions and covering wider domains. They are no longer mere store house of ‘old time’ historical objects. ‘The Present’ is now accepted as an integral part of the modern museum. This introduces new concepts of museum practices and duties, where mankind and environment sustainably developed as foci for policies, not only in the economic field but also in the field of culture. It is also urgent to revive the roles and responsibilities of the museum professionals. Museum now seeks to reach an ever-increasing numbers, even at their habitat, through various in-house and outreach programmes, especially Communication methods. This is entirely an evolution or, rather revolution in the sphere of museum management. Museums nowadays bridge the past to the present.

Based on the above notion, amazing popularity of museum throughout the world in the last fifty years is evident. Responding to the people’s call the number of museums also multiplies day by day. Worldwide tourism and the great economic benefit it brings justified for investing in museums and their enterprises all over the world. Thus, it can be rightly said that after going through the long process of changes starting from the Mouseion and culminating in museum, it is evident how man’s innate nature in accumulating and preserving treasures for personal and family security, also self-glorification, transcend to collections for public use motivated to provide education and entertainment. As repository of cultural and natural properties of the ages, museum has now become an important institution signifying history of civilization and pointing to future progress.

The present undertaking deals with the freedom struggle based museums and how they communicate with the visitors with the help of different ways and means. The term ‘Indian Independence Movement’ incorporates various national and regional campaigns, agitations and efforts of both non-violent and militant philosophy. The term encompasses a wide spectrum, the lines of which are composed of political organizations, philosophies and movements, which had the common aim of ending the British Colonial Authority. The initial resistance to
the movement can be traced back to the very beginning of colonial expansion in Karnataka by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and by the British East India Company in Bengal, in the middle and late 1700s. The first organized militant movement was in Bengal, but it later took political stage in the form of a mainstream movement in the then newly formed Indian National Congress, with prominent moderate leaders seeking only their basic rights to appear for Civil Service Examinations and more rights, economic in nature, for the people of the soil. They used moderate methods of Prayer, Petition and Press (3 Ps). The beginning of the early 1900s saw a more radical approach towards political independence proposed by leaders such as Lal-Bal-Pal and Sri Aurobindo. Militant Nationalism also emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century, culminating in the futile Indo-German Pact and Ghadar Conspiracy during the World War I.

The final phase of the freedom struggle saw the Congress adopting the policies of non-violence led by Mahatma Gandhi. As the ‘Bodhisattva’ of the twentieth century, Mahatma Gandhi undertook three prime anti-British mass movements, namely, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India. Along with this mainstream mass movements had adopted military approach to the freedom struggle from outside the Indian frontier with the help of Germany, Italy and Japan. The World War II period saw the zenith of the liberation movement like INA movement led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

The museums, under study, are the safe keepers and interpreters of history of Indian nation, where one can explore how the liberation movement served as a major catalyst for enthuse similar movements in other parts of the world. Indians feel proud to say that Gandhiji’s philosophy of non-violent resistance inspired the American Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King Jr., the quest for freedom and democracy in Myanmar led by Aung San Suu Kyi and the African National Congress’ struggle against apartheid in South Africa led by Nelson Mandela. As India’s struggle for freedom is characterized by many unique and historic efforts, including the world’s first and largest mass, non-violent civil
resistance movement, this thesis will focus the point, with special emphasis on
the role of Bengal.

Thus, it can be aptly remarked that India’s struggle for freedom was a
glorious chapter not only in the history of India but also in the history of the
liberation movement all over the world. The generations who have not witnessed
the gruesome exploitation of the British and subsequent inhuman tortures
inflicted on persons who had loved freedom, could not visualize the stages
through which the country passed to reach the present state. But one must know
history – to gain themselves from past experiences and also know how to
overcome most difficult problems for forward marches to newer goals, based on
the educative experiences of the past.

Here comes the question of Communication between the past and the
present. Museum with its extended dimension can play the part effectively. As
in human life, so in the life of nation, struggle never ends. After independence,
India as a country is in a state of confusion and turmoil. Innumerable problems
have cropped up. Political freedom is not an end in itself. Social, cultural and
economic freedom is no less important than the political one. Before
independence, there had been large hopes that when India will be free it would
step in a golden arena. For many that dream has been shattered. Freedom
fighters, who survived after independence for some time, some are still surviving,
asked at times bitterly or with deep anguish – “Is this the India for which we
fought?” The frustration was obvious. The gap between the ‘dream’ and the
‘reality’ was maximum. The sufferings, torture and sacrifices of the then
freedom fighters were not properly uncurtained to the post-independent
community. It seems, the generations that grew up after independence have not
been properly taught about the past sacrifices of previous generations. They are
not conscious about the fact that continued struggle and suffering for the cause
are needed to make the political freedom the primary basement for achieving
social, cultural and economic freedom. Here, museum can play a significant role
by communicating to them the story of great sacrificing lives of the freedom
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fighters. The museums can display models, photographs with anecdotes of the great fight people made for the liberation of their motherland. Communication, if transmitted properly might enthuse a sense of pride, purity and perseverance amongst the new generation so that future India can be build up more effectively. Thus, ‘Communication’ is the word here for consideration to make this chapter a purposeful one.

Museum as a Sender of Information

A Communication process starts with encoding the message by sender, i.e. the sender picks up the information he wants to send and puts it into transmittable form. The message may be of—

- Ink on paper
- Sound waves in ether
- A motion of hand
- A banner in the air, or
- Something like this, which can be interpreted meaningfully.

Sometimes, message is formed through signs. A sign is a signal that stands for something in experience. A signal comes to a receiver in the form of a sign. If the receiver has learnt the sign, he has learnt certain responses with it.

The sender may be ‘individual’ (i.e. a person, who is talking, writing, drawing or making gestures) or ‘organization’ (i.e. press, publishing house, radio, television centre, etc.).

The receiver may be ‘individual’ – a person who is viewing, listening, reading or a member of a group (discussion group, discourse audience, etc.) or an individual member of the particular (mass audience) or reader of a newspaper or
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a viewer of television. Thus, it can be said that only in terms of their common experience, the sender/source can encode and the receiver/destination can decode.

Let us draw a diagram in very simple form, like this:


As per diagram, when two circles have a large area in common, then the Communication is easy. National tri-colour of dependent and independent India is common and is basically the same and citizens of India before and after independence salute to it on 15 August of every year. It the circles have only a small area in common, i.e. if the experiences of sender and receiver have been significantly different – then it becomes very difficult to transmit a meaning from one to other. This type of difficulty arises when a non-trained person tries to sing Indian classical songs or when a community of one culture tries to achieve the inner sense of another culture which is much different. Similarly, a foreign visitor, especially a Pakistani national, who is in born anti-Indian, has no interest to visit the Museum of Indian Liberation Movement. In this particular case, the sender, then, should try to encode this message in such a way as to make it acceptable to the receiver – to inform them through literature along with exhibits that before 1947, the two countries were united and fought against alien rule for achieving freedom.

The museums under study while communicating, try to make an effect on its 'environment'. The environment comprises not only its geographical
surroundings but also the aesthetic periphery, visitors and social structure of the area. Communication is made to strengthen the prospect of the museum's relations with aforesaid environmental forces – which influence on its and on which it influences.

At the time of the act of 'Communication' between the exhibition and the visiting people, museum personnel, more precisely, those working in preparing exhibition are sometimes confused between theory and practice. Theory and practice are complementary, but sometimes they are contradictory, and more often paradoxical. But both are important in spatial arrangement of an exhibition. As a result, museum personnel have to harmonize theoretical reflection and practical details of the exhibition.

Thus, in an ideal environment effective communication is successfully launched. It is done by hybridizing theory with practice in which value of exhibit, requirement of visitor and good coordination of mediator are ideally blended. If the museum is baffled to know the visitors' requirements, then its most intelligent explanations will be useless. Visitors do not like to be foolish when he is in museum. Visitor needs information, prefers conversation with exhibits, and apparently tries to show that these are made exclusively for him. At the same time, he cannot answer in most cases. To overcome this, visitors need personal care, if possible.

In case of exhibits, if they are in the state of bad selection, poor organization and insufficient explanation would not prop up the educational purpose of a modern museum. Similarly, too much information causes strain and visitors only select those things, which adjust with their prevalent mental set up and thus the considered aim of museum to involve more visitors with exhibit gets lost.

Again, theory and practice of Communication come under debate when internal set up and mediation do not create ideal balance between the requirement
of general visitors and potential visitors. These are the two faces of a single coin. A museum, lacking balance fails to understand its community and at the same time its community cannot understand it. When a museum, although being a good one, is only concerned with its internal functioning but not caring with its visitors, lack its balance and may be called as ‘introvert’. A good ‘extrovert’ museum is obviously visitor-oriented. It considers the need of its community and makes its collection accessible and comprehensible to the visitors.

**Different Media / Channels of Communication**

‘What is a communication medium? Strictly speaking, a medium is a channel – the spoken word, the printed word, or whatever’. Usually, objects are speechless. Museum is the place where one can recognize and appreciate the mute language of exhibits. For this reason, to convey the message, an efficient museum curator does draw out, simplify and make necessary information interesting to the visitors. And, visitors, when in museums, are made their acquaintance with exhibits by the central perspective of the exhibition. The same visitors, when outside, feel acquainted with museum having seen the photographs and texts supplied by mass media and advertisement. In most cases, it is observed that pupils opine loudly and spontaneously and adults ask carefully admitting their view only when they are asked to do so. Generally, visitors have a common interest. They visit museum to get relief from the strain of every day life. So, they expect to experience something sublime, which might take away their boredom.

An effective communication process needs a route through which a message is transmitted to the receiver and in the same, a feedback is received. In a museum, the prime mode of communication is visual. The selection of theme, colour scheme of the gallery, background of the exhibit-cases, planning of showcases, graphical aspect (map, graph and chart) and arrangement of exhibits
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are considered on the basis of visual impact, visual weight, visual direction, visual balance and visual mass of the exhibition. There are various means of mediation but they are complex in nature. An ideal and effective communication in a museum should have clarity and consistency, which may be divided into two broad groups – verbal and non-verbal, to reach people in and outside.

1. Docent – Docent means non-regular teacher. He is a person who delivers knowledgeable lectures, answers common questions, gives oral instruction and encourages visitors to interact with the proceedings.

2. Label – To transmit useful information a museum provides a concise know-how of the exhibit, which is called label. It is a ‘major feature of a museum’s communication policy’. It conveys necessary information about exhibit content, i.e. its nature, origin, chronology, mode of manufacture, mode of procurement, provenance, use, significance, key-relationship with other objects, etc. as well as instruction on what to search, what to compare, etc. A good museum label is always legible, distinct, comprehensible, informative, coherent and supportive of exhibits.

3. Audiovisual aids – Mechanical devices that produce sound and image are called audiovisual aids. The main objective of a museum – diffusion of knowledge through communication by exhibition – is furthered by the use of audiovisual aids. It is a change from the formal way of learning, such as, reading, writing and listening. The visitors can get additional background information related to the exhibit.

   (a) Recorded sound: provides background effects, or background music, or background verbal narration / commentary.

   (b) Projected pictures: provide one-way information, slide show, film-show, or video-show.

   – Interactive video corner with computers for visitors’ use.

   (c) Model: a three dimensional recognizable imitation of an object.
(d) Mannequin: the life size model of human figure with realistic expressions.

4. Graphics – Two-dimensional elements of an exhibition can be covered by using graphics. Two broad divisions of such graphics are illustrated texts and isotype charts. Illustrations include diagrams, photographs, line drawings, symbols and coloured drawings. Charts used in museums are intermixture of drawings, pictures, cartoons, graphs, which help to reduce the amount of verbal explanations.

5. In-house educational programme
   (a) Programme for general people

   **Spot light talk** – This is a fixed time in-depth discussion focused on a single object in the permanent exhibition. During the normal visits individual exhibits are viewed rapidly. It offers discussions of individual exhibits along with a short write-up.

   **Film show** – A variety of educational film-shows at museum auditorium enhance the knowledge of visitors.

   **Lecture** – Museums often conduct popular lectures by the educational laurels supplemented by slide-shows, film-shows, etc. These are arranged for school children, college and university students as well as for general public to arouse interest in the treasures of the museum.

   **Self guided family tour** – Museums arrange ‘self-guided tours’ for the families. Activity sheets are provided for exploring a particular theme, which is available at the
information desk. This process of knowing is akin to joy of discovery.

**Drama and puppetry** – Appeal of performing arts is universal. If drama and puppetry depicting some noteworthy persons are introduced then the visitors will find these immensely attractively. These shows, if intelligently conceived, can bring the picture of heroic deeds alive to the present generation.

**Son et Lumière** – This French word means ‘sound and light’. This is a popular means to gather knowledge, as well as amusement, using modern sound and light reproduction techniques for illustrating dramatized historical sites and events. By a combination of music and narration with skillful lighting, the spectators can be made both fascinated and instructed of the historical importance of events.

(b) Programme for children / student groups

**Story hour programme** – This special programme can be offered to the children of age group 4 – 9. By this a museum can explain different interesting facets of national history through a relevant story supplemented by objects exhibited. Before and after the story telling the children are asked to answer simple question on the main topic of the story.

**Museum games** – This can be offered to cover themes of a particular gallery. Generally, children are stimulated with a sense of observation and creativity. If these games are played outside the museum area they spread information about the inside working of the museum.
School loan service -- A museum can carry loan objects including fabricated exhibits, photographs, slides, etc. to schools. These are exhibited in school’s main assembly hall or in classrooms which enriches the classroom tutoring.

Home use folio – Folios / albums are prepared on selected museum exhibits. Extracts of literature, and speech, reproduction of objects, etc. are provided with this. These are available at the museum shop at a cheap rate. One can carry these home for more study.

Museum of wheel – Museums can arrange for migratory exhibitions carried by bus and van to fairs, cultural centres, educational and social institutions, libraries and public meeting places. They move to remote areas where museum provision is limited. Museum on wheel presents history of a nation and past civilization in a nutshell. This service can ultimately develop in people’s mind a permanent interest.

6. Outreach service – to reach outside people, a museum often conducts various programmes, which are directly or indirectly related to that particular museum’s content. These help in drawing the people to the museum and make them museum-minded. Museum tourism, field-trips, etc. make the people aware of the importance of country’s heritage.

7. Research and development – The museum publicizes the result of research about its content gained through acquisition, exposition and study and thus creates an ideal communication network for the benefit of viewers.

In compiling the above mentioned list, there are some more important channels of communication and to explain the purpose and/or effect of each.
Verbal communication (spoken or oral)

(a) Courses for trainees – are used to instruct and impart knowledge to the trainees of different courses on museum studies.

(b) Interviewing – is the two-way method of communication, through which the person/visitor is interviewed and presents his problems particularly in case of communicating with exhibits and upon which the interviewer offers advice. It is not merely monologue but a dialogue on the issue.

(c) Joint consultation – provides a forum for discussion by Museum Education Officer and ‘Friends of Museum’ Group regarding forthcoming temporary exhibition, educational programmes and proposed future developments.

(d) Meetings and Conferences – held between museum authority and educational institutions to provide an opportunity for transmitting information, for discussion and debate, and in most cases, for decision making.

(e) Radio – provides a means of communication which has been widely used for advertising and, to a lesser extent, public relations.

(f) Telephone systems – provide the commonest form of oral communication. They are, of course, used principally for external communication with other cultural organizations regarding day-to-day procedure.

(g) Speeches – are favourite means of communication. A speech given by the noted museum exponent is frequently used to communicate with the viewers.
(h) **Television** – provides a combination of both oral and visual communication which is already extensively used for advertisement, instruction and education, and to a lesser extent, public relations.

(i) **Travelers** – often provide a vital channel of communication to the person who do not pay visit to the museum.

**Written communication**

Written communication is made by the following means.

*Publication* – Inquisitive visitors, when in a museum, are eager to know the nature of the objects and related informative data about it. To satisfy them, publication should be the ideal communicative tool in the form of an illustrated book, folder, brochure and catalogue, which are easy to carry.

(a) **Guide book** – contains historical background and location of the museum with sketches, maps and photographs, names of various sections, means of communication, opening hour, rules and regulations, admission fee, and more prominently, accounts of various sections and important exhibits in display and in reserve.

(b) **Children's book** – are simple, lucid, and easy to understand in order to attract children in museum.

(c) **Folder / leaflet** – is a single sheet of folded paper containing in short, necessary information about the museum.
(d) **Directories** – are published incorporating the names of the persons, associations and commercial farms related to the museum.

(e) **Bulletins** – are periodical publication of a museum in which are given current data as well as papers read at seminars or contributions by experts on a given topic.

(f) **Catalogue** – is a list of exhibits, scientifically arranged along with photographs or sketches of some important items and also modes of acquisition, provenance, period, medium and measurement.

(g) **Monographs** – deal with a single subject, written in a scholarly way, containing relevant pictures, sketches, charts, maps, etc.

(h) **Excavation report** – prepared during excavation highlighting details of finds from a site illustrated through photographs, site plans, sections, sketches of the finds.

(i) **Art album** – is prestigious publication covering pictures of paintings, sketches, decorations and sculptures.

(j) **Poster** – contains theme of exhibition, location, duration, hours of opening, date and time of inauguration, name of the inaugurator, etc.

(k) **Pictures** – are treated as mementoes in most of the times and these are usually common and popular publications of any museum.

(l) **Take home sheets** – are available in the gallery in which individual exhibits are illustrated through literature and photographs. Visitors can take these to home.
(m) **Annual reports** – prepared by the governing body provide information of museum policies, developments and activities.

**Correspondence** – is a day-to-day flow of incoming and outgoing letters claims to be the real life-line of communication between museum and other organization.

**House journals** – are extremely useful method of presenting current information about the museum and its collection, with the object of narrowing the gap between museum management and visitors.

**Suggestion scheme / remarks book** – is an excellent channel of communication from which museum authority come to know on needs and opinions of visitors.

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**Intra-personal, Interpersonal and Mass Communication**

**Intra-personal communication**

When inner thoughts, impressions and memories influenced a person to say within and to himself is termed as 'Intra-personal communication'. This is supplemented by external environment. As per discussion, a visitor, when in a gallery stimulates himself by internal and external settings, courteous surroundings or dirty area, docent service, good or bad mode of mate, urged for silent conversation that changes regularly renewing itself and ultimately acts upon his viewpoint of inner self and the museum. It is a process where communication is transmitted through inner thought process emerging out from within of one’s self.
Inter-personal communication

Interpersonal communication “can be defined in relation to what you do with it. First you can use communication to have an effect on your ‘environment’, a term, which means not only your immediately physical surroundings but also the psychological climate you live in, the people around you, the social interchanges you have, the information you want to get or give in order to control the questions and answers of your living. Second, you use communication to improve the predictability of your relations with all environmental forces, which act on you and on which you act to make things happen”.2 It is a process through which communication is conveyed between one person to the other by way of different methodologies.

Communication through public address

‘Public address is one-to-many communication’. Although it is a face-to-face communication but it involves continuous discussion. The source and the receiver can be easily distinguished. The source is the person who is talking and the receiver is the audience. Here interaction is extremely limited. The source recognizes, interprets and adapts to audience-response or feedback. The basic message is prepared prior to the communication transactions tarts. So, if the sender inappropriately analyzes his receivers, ‘he is likely to develop an inappropriate and thus ineffective message’.

Mass communication

Mass communication is the process of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes to many people, usually through a machine. The source of a mass communication has great difficulty for gearing message to the audience. He may know the demographic statistics of the audience (age, socio-economic status, etc.)
but he cannot know the individual quirks of each individual reader, listener and viewer.

The audience of a mass communication is likely to twist the message through selective attention, perception and retention.

Mass communication systems are complicated. Each message (an article in a newspaper) may have as many as a dozen sources, with different points of view and different goals for the communication. The channel too is a complex organization (newspaper) composed of many individuals, whose viewpoints and goals may vary widely.

At the end, it can be said that the power of mass media is based on the size of their audience, on their ability to reach millions of people in one shot.

The mass media in general have four basic functions to perform. These are:-

(a) **To entertain** – Entertainment is by far the biggest service of mass media, which is the basic requirement of audience. It is extremely difficult to come up with a clear cut standard between good entertainment and bad entertainment. The media must cater for public tastes, but they also wish to mould public tastes.

(b) **To inform** – Information is probably the most important communicative medium. It is worth mentioning that everything in the mass media is in some sense informative. Even a soap opera tells something (true or false) about how people live, how they dress up and talk and solve problems.

(c) **To influence** – The power of the mass media to change people’s mind directly is very limited. But influence is more subtle than that. Through careful intermixture with entertainment and informational content, the mass media gain a captive audience.
(d) **To make money** – It is proved that money from advertisers makes successful advertising. But if the media do not make money from advertisers, there would be no advertising. To remain successful, the media must do a good job of influencing people, thus attracting advertisers. Similarly, they also do a good job of entertaining people by attracting audience. The success of sponsorship venture highly depends upon the influence of communicator and the impact created on the mass through communication.

**Mediated communication**

Mediated communication is a system that involves the use of electronic media. It does not involve a face-to-face transaction. It involves continuous discourse. There is a clear-cut source – receiver distinction. There is little or no opportunity for immediate observation of receiver response on the part of the source. Thus, mediated communication requires that the source knows his receiver in advance in order to prepare an appropriate message for him. The success of the venture of communication through multimedia depends on early assessment of the receiver’s pulse and requirement.

Mediated communication or Multimedia is simply and unification of two or more different media, which provides an experience of a virtual trip to a museum.

From the day of its inception, museum collections and preserves artifacts and through exhibition provides visitors with a successful and charming learning experience. But in the present twenty-first century world, the emotional impact of an exhibition is lavishly improved by embracing learning support techniques. In this particular field, multimedia provide an ideal legible support of reference by which a visitor can understand what an exhibition is about, what it has to do with the visitors, how it is organized, and what visitor can await to learn from it. Multimedia certainly improve visitors’ aptness to take pleasure from the
exhibition through discovery and help them to understand what it is they discovered. It makes application of computers to store, integrate, retrieve and offer information from a variety of media, and permits user-defined interactive navigation through these sources.

It is proved that multimedia result when two or more media are linked to render information about a topic. These media are text, drawings, and graphics, still photographs, moving images from film or video and audio. Interactive multimedia establish communication between the multimedia system and its user. The user regulates the duration and presentation of information and asks feedback from its 'audience'. So, multimedia inside museum administration require widening out of the definition of audience, researchers and staff, even, it is working locally, nationally or globally. Finally, it can be said that though use of multimedia may be a pertinent solution, but it should be evaluated against other visitor-support system.

A useful multimedia can be provided in gallery when

- Their content and story of use relates directly to the story-line or subject matter of a specific gallery.
- Their location in the gallery does not present obstacle of visitor flow.
- The social behaviour (talking to each other in a group) they encourage does not clash with that specified for the gallery concerned.

But use of multimedia in exhibition galleries may indicate following problems –

- The organizational scheme, purpose and scope of the exhibition are not clear to visitors.
- Visitors are not able to realize the multiple contexts of objects exhibited, viz., functional, symbolic, stylistic or typological.
- Visitors are not apt to recollect for longer period information when they met in the exhibition.
(These problems are usually faced by casual visitors, thoughtful visitors may suffer less.)

- Visitors may land in compulsive observation which may not be attractive to them. There may be a backlog of time-energy bondage.

The target audience for the multimedia inside the museum needs to be defined at the onset of the project. For that, an outline of the audience should be explained considering their age, education, curiosities and software knowledge. And, when outside the museum wall, multimedia are excellent for spreading the broad range of museum communities. As libraries are being converted into digital form and teaching takes place on the network rather than in classroom, similarly in museums learning moves from being directed to being explanatory using multimedia. On the whole, it is still motivating for the "class", but some more time-span should come in the offing to make the multimedia useful for the "mass". The organizer in the periphery should balance the 'CLASS-MASS' equilibrium.

Communication through publicity and marketing

The question of publicity and marketing has assumed a growing concern in the museums. Museums should and must serve the interest of the people at large. Understanding and maintaining cultural values are the honorable duties not only of the elites, but largely of the people, by whom the totality of culture is created. In short, museums should stand for public benefit, and here, to say the least, public money is involved. In short, there should be reciprocity of the three C’s – Cost – Communication – Culture.

Now comes the concept of marketing. In Business Administration, the word 'marketing' describes a number of associated activities, which move towards a common objective – determination of consumer demand for, and the sale and distribution of good services and thereby earning profit to maintain human resources. In the museum field, the idea is more or less modern, but
immensely valuable, as it promotes relationship between the people and the museum. In the context of museum, marketing has a threefold meaning, firstly, marketing of the museum itself by ascertaining the demand from the public commensurate with their taste and necessity; secondly, selling the fabricated products to the general mass, i.e. unfolding the objects through neat, precise, attractive and obviously with lucid illustration; thirdly, earning profit is not at all primary criterion to a museum because any organization-institution – establishment working with a social objective are non-profiteering although, there are avenues whereby museums earn to a certain extent for its sustenance.

Thus, the commercial word ‘marketing’ is related to its Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

Product comprises services to the people, atmosphere of the place, customer care, access and accessibility of the museum building.

Price covers cost of management, conservation, documentation, displays and exhibitions. The price depends on the amount of public funding or Governmental assistance or on admission charge, and also sale values of the fabricated products.

Place means the location of the museum at strategic places were people can easily reach and the place should be eco-friendly.

Promotion is equally important for true museum marketing. To reach people, museum and its objects come in the area of promotion. Popular means of promotion are lost-cost literature, advertisement in print and electronic media.

Public Relation and Advertising are also good means of museum’s publicity and marketing. In popular means, Public Relation is a ‘Psychological coated advertising Pill’. In the ‘Institute’s Guide to the Practice of Public Relations’, the word ‘Public Relation’ is defined as ‘the deliberate, planned and
sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between and organization (here museum) and its public. So, communication is the ‘life-blood’ of Public Relation. Similarly, primary function of advertising is communication. But advertising is not merely a communication; it is also closely linked with research and public relations. Their aim is to achieve a common object, namely, the marketing and distribution of the goods (here aims and services) produced.

Till the first half of the last century, it was not possible for museums to hire consultants for its publicity and marketing as the corporate houses can. It had to depend mainly on posterig, mailouts, using free-of-cost broadcasting time in the radio and television and taking help from sympathetic newspapers, who include in their news items special exhibitions when organized, and at times, highlight rare and valuable entries in it. Well-served visitors’ appreciative remarks to their friends or known persons helped a lot to promote the museum. Also, other means of help were -- corporate sponsors, charitable trusts, Government agencies and international funding bodies.

But having entered the arena of present globalization of the twenty-first century and to stand in competition with other leisure and pleasure time agencies, the museum does market researches and makes analysis of the findings to know what the people actually expect from it. Thus, equipped with the knowledge it has adjusted itself to secure and render its offerings to users. Here comes the term ‘Market Intelligence’, which depends on internal and external information. Internal information is gathered by observation and from interviews or answers to questionnaire put to the visitors. External information comes from agency reports and published and unpublished materials. By all these, impact of the museum is determined. And this is important not only for focusing the existing collection but also for planning for future growth.
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Keeping in view its promotional venture, modern museums recruit Advertising or Marketing Manager whose work and responsibilities for its fruitful extended life are—

- Interpretation of the museum’s policy,
- Co-ordination in internal administration as it covers the organization, planning and control of the department to its effective performance,
- Selection, placing and training of his staff and maintain routine departmental responsibilities,
- Preparation of departmental budget and controlling of expenditure,
- Selection of advertising media with great care,
- Keeping regular contact and liaise closely with the selected media,
- Keeping updated or new technique and methods of marketing research,
- Organizing special publicity scheme, e.g. gift schemes, demonstrations, broadcasting, films, etc.
- Seeking new channels of communication, evaluation of testing and recording of visitors’ attitude towards museum,
- Coordination and evaluation of publication, planning and arrangement of exhibition by obtaining advice and assistance on technical matters.

Communication through Tourism

To know and experience what is unknown in the wider world panorama is behind the basic urge for ‘Tourism’. It is a pleasurable activity for enjoying leisure in places other than their own.

Tourism has close connection with museums, as they are places of tourist interest. The varied nature of museums greatly attracts tourists. They collect and put to display examples of three dimensional world, which is an aid to education. Museums provide historical, cultural, natural, scientific and geographical data and also of different ethnic groups with their distinctive characteristics living in that region. Inquisitive men, tourists included, are always in search of new knowledge and experience. So, visit to a museum by the tourists enriches their
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understanding of the land and the people of the area they have been touring. Thus, communication lies at the core of tourism that enhances museum’s educational mission to promote life-long interaction based on its collections as broadly as possible. In fact, enrichment of knowledge and its globalization is assisted to a huge extent through museums. Museums are the static pivot around which the dynamic wheel of tourism encompasses, and “Museum – Communication – Tourism” are nourishing one another.

Museum Visitors as Receiver

To some extent the image of a museum is reflected by the types of its visitors. Museums are to take stock of the nature of its visitors in order to establish a better communication system. The success of attracting and communicating visitors depends upon various factors, such as to discover their area of interest, to arrange the objects logically and recreationally, to mend up deficiencies in planning, to orient programmes effectively, to publish news about different material, to provide attractive audiovisual aids – as a whole, for a communication system. All these will help to evaluate the effectiveness of the exhibition.

Visitors in a museum consist of a variable and heterogeneous group being based on age, profession, abode, education, socio-economic background, motivation, interest, etc. with a qualitative as well as quantitative range.

Visitors from dwelling place may broadly be divided into two classes: Foreigners and Indigenous. These two major groups again have urban and rural basis.

On the basis of age, visitors are: Children and Adults.

Considering their educational background, visitors may be literate or illiterate. Literate visitors again may be of primary school level, secondary
school level, college level, university level, research scholar level and expert level.

According to profession, visitors may be unemployed, employed or retired.

On the basis of socio-economic status they may be of three groups: Low Income, Middle Income and Affluent.

Regarding the companion visitors, they may be either a single person, or family members or organized groups of adults / children.

On the basis of motivation, they may be of two types: Aesthetic and Intellectual.

Other two types are – Physically Fit and Disabled.

Museum and Community

Wasserman (1995) provides a definition of Community –

"A population living in an area, conscious of the affinities and the differences which characterize its elements, as well as the conflicting relationships between these and their environment and to whom at least the future is common. Communities may depend on institutional, political, technical or economic structure – or be based on spontaneous structures: groups of individuals – with a freely chosen social objective, unrelated to material profit or the will of legislators or administrators. Even in the case of small communities, more or less local or at least with a definite location, a community may be of various dimensions: village, country, region, nation, company, religious grouping, academic, immigrant, professional, family. Everybody belongs to a community, while at the same time crossing several others: an individual chooses certain communities, while others are imposed on him by law, events or birth".7
Target Group / Focus Group

Each of the aforesaid visitors' groups is considered a Target / Focus Group in museum. It means a group of museum visitors having common need and common tendency. Target Group may be based on demography, educational levels, socio-economic condition, culture, leisure choices, area of study, ethnic or social affiliations, disabilities, etc. Any sub-group based on any of the said categories within a community is potentially a Museum Target Group. It can be specified as:

- Family group
- Children group – it acts in pre-school and school stages. If children's interest is aroused, not only they, but also their caretakers or guardians would be drawn to visit the museum on and off.
- Young people group – the choice of this group is a must as on their interest depends the meaningful existence and future growth of a museum.
- Adults group – they sustain and stimulate museum activities by their mature approach. They can be made aware of the resource and potential educative values of the museum through organized group like clubs, work-place communities, etc.
- Disabled group – an essential and moral duty of the museum is to approach this group, who are deprived of many a pleasure of this material world, and at least some of them possess intense desire to know and enjoy, having a ken sensibility. Suitable physical access, interesting activity programmes should be provided in the museum. Programmes could also be extended to hospitals, and other care centres from where disabled persons cannot move.

Thus, museums should provide special attainable benefit to the Target Groups, and extend effective effort to attract and hold them in museums.
Conclusively, museums have to *qualify* themselves to the necessities of the visitors, so that visitors should reciprocate to *quantify* their presence in the museums, thereby the base of the sustenance of museums is strengthened.

**Noise**

Noise creates a discrepancy between the signal transmitted and the signal received. Inefficiency (commonly called 'redundancy') then takes on a positive value in the presence of noise. The notion of noise is basically simple. The picture on a television screen is a signal. When a viewer watches television he wants picture to be clear, and any sort of flickering or 'snow' (engineering noise) arises from the set is called Noise. A mechanic then turns the set on and examines the snow. For him, the snow is the signal, since it may be indicative of what is wrong in the set. In other words, one man's noise is another man's signal.

Anything that interferes with effective communication can be called Noise. In mass media, channel noise is usually a minor problem, but other kinds of noise are not. Often the source / sender of the communication produces his own noise. A public speaker may mumble or mispronounce a word; he may speak in a foreign language that his audience does not understand. These are examples of 'source noise' or as it is more commonly called 'semantic noise'.

The bulk of the noise in a communication process is contributed by neither the source nor the channel, but rather by the audience. People are enormously proficient at ignoring, misinterpreting and disremembering communication that for one reason or another do not appeal to them. There are three psychological strategies that are relevant here –

**Selective attention:** People expose themselves primarily to communication they like. If he is not interested in visiting science museums, he
will read only few science museums advertisements. But, if he is interested will probably read all the advertisements he can.

**Selective perception:** Once exposed to communication, people tend to interpret it so as to coincide with their own perceptions. When a painting shows a white man threatening a Negro with a knife, many will find (racist attitude) the knife in the hands of the Negro.

**Selective retention:** When people understand one particular encoded communication, they tend to remember only what they want to remember. After reading a balanced discussion of the Soviet Communism, anti-Communist students recall mostly the drawbacks of the system, while pro-Communist students tend to remember mostly its advantages.

Selective attention, selective perception and selective retention are universal. They bear a huge amount of noise to almost every communication. The sender can easily control his message, but he cannot control the hearing of message by the audience.

But, in most cases, the source controls communication, when a docent guides a group of visitors, it is the docent, not the audience, who decides what will be said. The audience can control the message by their selective attention, selective perception and selective retention. If a person is bored or offended by what the docent is saying, he may retract himself and think about something else. Or he may misinterpret the lecture. Or he may simply forget those least appealing parts of the message. The docent is likely to take a little consideration of these omissions, but he and the audience are equally guilty.

It is seen that audience noise acts most powerfully when the message is disputed. On the other hand, simple and unthreatening messages are received relatively clear. As a result, it is nearly impossible for any communication to change an audience from one viewpoint to other. It is much easier to create a
new viewpoint where none existed before. And it is easier still to communicate information that tends to support the established viewpoint of the audience. All communicators must work within these constraints.

Feedback

The return process, which is most important in communication system, is called Feedback. Without feedback, the sender is likely to be aimless and desist from further communication. It ascertains how messages are being interpreted. An experienced communicator takes care of feedback and ceaselessly alters his messages through his observations and hearings from his audience.

In Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (Ed. A. M. Macdonald, UK, 1972), feedback is defined as “return of part of the output of a system to the input as a means towards improved quality or self-correction of error”. Thus, without feedback, meaningful communication is hindered and cannot make progress.

Feedback is also considered the regenerative circuit or loop of communication. A student who submits his essay to the teacher expects feedback in terms of comments and a mark. Unless this feedback occurs (it may be positive or negative), the student lacks guidance for the future; more, he is likely to be de-motivated and draw back from further communicative interaction.

In the feedback process, ‘control’ is an intermediating factor, i.e. feedback helps the communicator to regulate the message or response and to the context in which the communication takes place.

Conceptual Methods of Communication

Communication is the process of sending information about objects in a museum to the visitors. The objective of communication in a museum is equated
with the educational impact, recreative stimulation, merriments and mental delight by meaningful presentation of exhibits in a recreational environment and attractive service programme.

The circular composition of communication in a museum is made of:

- Research and Planning of Exhibition
- Organization of Exhibition
- Sending encoded Information through Channel / Mediator
- Receiving and Decoding and Interpreting of the message to the Visitors
- Alteration
- Execution

Organization of Exhibition

"An exhibition is a means of communication aiming at large groups of the public with the purpose of conveying information, ideas and emotions relating to the material evidence of man and his surroundings, with the aid of chiefly visual and dimensional method".  

Through an exhibition, runs an authentic story in the context of human endeavour endowed with texts, photographs and other communicative media. Visitors' response is direct here, which could not be attained only through reading books. Visitors of different intellectual levels select and approach the exhibits, having their personal interest and comprehension.

The cardinal mission of exhibition is the comprehension of museum objects from the standpoint of artistic, scientific, aesthetic and historic values, to fulfil the educational, intellectual, emotional and aesthetic requirements. This is accomplished in two ways – one is by the object itself by its inherent values and the other by exhibition preparation and lucid presentation techniques.
Before the execution of the exhibition, Front-End Evaluation is done. For that, firstly a scheme is chalked out depending on some ideas and suggestions. In this particular field, contribution of Research is immense. Research is defined as 'critical and exhaustive investigation or experimentation, having for its aim the discovery of new facts, their correct interpretation, the revision of accepted conclusion, theories and laws'. At the second stage, persons planned its throughout all the aspects of the scheme thoroughly discuss among themselves and where necessary, eliminate possible errors. At the next stage, opinions are solicited from knowledgeable persons like museum curators, intellectuals and designers. Next comes the target audience with whom detailed discussions are made about exhibition ideas and execution of plans. All these are done to determine the requirement and possible response of the target visitors and also the nature and extent of the public benefit.

The modern museums arrange Formative Evaluation in between Front-End Evaluation and Summative Evaluation. This 'pre-testing key designing concept' is carried out by presenting models, lay outs, photographs, labels, visual symbols etc. using cheap materials for determining the visitors' response to different objects. During this 'mock-up exhibition' questionnaire are put to and interviews taken of the target visitors. This careful study and arrangement are done during the development period, when changes can still be made. This cost-effective and rational process ensures an exhibition's perfection.

While organizing thematic or taxonometric presentation in the form of Permanent and Temporary Exhibitions, the aforesaid notion is strictly followed. Painstaking research and careful planning and evaluation ultimately create such an exhibition for which visitors feel satisfied and thus an ideal communication network is successfully launched.

There are four categories of objects defined by ICOM – Cultural, Historical, Scientific and Technological. For example, Gandhian Charka suggests the accepted custom of using it during the struggle revealing Swadeshi
culture and technology of the time. The same Charka has historical value facing the present and some emotional value as well. So, in a single exhibit are noticed many types of overlapping values.

It is just mentioned above that an exhibition in a museum aims to convey facts, message, idea and feelings connecting with the material evidence of man, i.e. exhibits. The word ‘Exhibit as Noun’ is a group of museum objects and auxiliary explanatory aids that form the unit of an exposition. And the word ‘Exhibit as Verb’ means to show or display, or expose to view, or to present an object meaningfully, so as to create an impact on the thought-process of the visitors.

Here to mention that in a freedom struggle based museum exhibits bear a specialized character. For the reason inherent significance of these objects are decoded by visitors with the help of various communicative media. Here, ideal communication makes visitors able to narrow the gap between the past and present. Thus, ‘every trace becomes a window on to other traces, without end’.

The museums under study displayed rare and irreplaceable objects used or made by freedom fighters. Used articles, manuscripts, letters and arms are these types, which for their immense value should not be in constant exposure. So, sometimes, fabrications of original exhibits have been made. Gandhi Memorial Museum of Barrackpore displays fabricated tumbler (used during Gandhiji’s imprisonment) and bamboo stick (used in Dandi March), which create an effective and educative role.

Usually exhibitions are organized by the museums, not only in their premises but also outside, even to remote places to carry on their educative purposes. Apart from its in-house agenda, freedom struggle exhibitions on wheel being cost-effective and can educate people of different categories. These are all important as these types of exhibitions can reach such remote areas of West Bengal, where museum’s basic nature, utility and cultural dimension could not
have reached. In 1980s, the Netaji Bhawan has arranged an exhibition of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on Tamluk (epicenter of Quit India Movement of West Bengal). By such exhibition, main accountability of Netaji Bhawan, bringing enlightenment to the people on the contribution of Netaji, at large, was amply served.

Regarding organizing the Liberation Movement exhibitions, experimentation can also be done, following this, the display becomes interesting when museums under study exhibit in various ways –

**Didactic Exhibition**

This type of exhibition tries to tell a story, i.e. it exhibits documentary materials like manuscripts of Ananda Math and first issue of Bangadarshan in Bankim Bhavan Gaveshana Kendra with the help of descriptive labels and docent service etc. So, by this, the exhibition demonstrates the historical value of militant aptitude of the writings of Bankim Chandra which had influenced and strengthened the mental power of the revolutionaries of the then Bengal.

**Reconstruction Exhibition**

This type of exhibition tries to reconstruct as far as possible, an original context. Following this, Town Hall Museum tries to create a scene of Bengal’s role in freedom struggle with the help of models, charts, graphics and audiovisual aids.

**Aesthetic Exhibition**

Gandhi Museum, Barrackpore presents photographs and other items mostly of Mahatma Gandhi and other luminaries of Indian struggle in such a way that the whole exhibition is charged with aesthetic ideals of them.
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Evaluation of Communication in the Museums of Indian Freedom Struggle – A Survey

It is absolutely necessary to measure the degree of success of an exhibition by evaluation. The present undertaking is likely to find out the efficacy of standing communication systems in different freedom struggle based museums (classified in Specialized History Museum, Historic House Museum, Biographical / Personalia Museum, Memorial Museum and Period House Museum) in and around Kolkata.

After completion of the exhibition, Summative Evaluation (sometimes called Follow-Up Evaluation) is required to draw a more complete picture of the effectiveness of communication in a museum. This process is not concerned in knowing whether it creates a particular effect on the visitor or not, but it aims at determining the general reaction on them, or whether it has created any impact or not. There are a number of active methods to collect data for more in-depth study like formal interview, discussions, written questionnaires, apprehensive and / or effective test, uninterrupting observation including tracking and timing visitors through the exhibition, behavioral rating sheets, video tape and analysis. By this process, deficiencies are identified, which helps for future ‘modus operandi’ i.e. to adopt measures for increasing better effectiveness of the exhibition and also for future planning.

Evaluation of Visitors in Context to their Socio-economic Condition

As museum visit is a very complex phenomenon on the part of visitors, i.e. Demographics, Psychographics, Individual Interest and Experiences, Cultural Background and Environmental Factors are taken into consideration.

India is a vast country where socio-economic development differs from region to region. There exists a mixed society, such as agricultural societies, tribal societies, middle class and well-to-do societies, extending to urban and
rural areas. So, while planning to serve the needs of these societies, socio-cultural background of the country is to be considered, because the stage of social development determines the receptive, heterogeneous capabilities of the people.

A major portion (nearly 80%) of the Indian population is composed of rural folk. Similarly per capita income of large percentage of its population is insufficient. But most of the well-to-do museums are located in urban areas where visitors of low income group from the villages come in limited number. It does not mean that in urban areas, most of the people are affluent and at the same time, habitual museum goers. Only a negligible part visit museums. Actually, economic backwardness compelled Indians not to visit museums. For them, museum visit is wastage of time and money. Moreover, they are deprived of basic education and their hard necessities of livelihood forced them to earn more and more for better living. Here to mention, not only adults, but also their children are compelled to enter the field of earning in early hood rather force their parents to take them to a museum. To a huge population, the name and meaning of the word ‘museum’ is not understood. To tackle the situation, many solutions have been discussed in different seminars and some of them have been used for attracting those people in urban and rural museums.

At the same time, especially in Indian context, it is difficult to evaluate the exhibition’s effectiveness in satisfying expectations and providing educative value than counting the number of visitors. A good attendance figure cannot prove the effectiveness of communication. Thus said, ‘it is important to keep in mind just who is visiting an exhibition and what kinds of expectations these individuals may have’.

But objective of modern museums is to have more and more visitors. But as it is said earlier, that in the third world countries like India economic instability and illiteracy cause havoc for people’s entry in the museum. To overcome the problems, museums provide some sort of economic benefit to the people justifying their social accountability. For adults, they provide alternative jobs
like guide service in temporary basis and fabrication artist after proper training. Along with this, they establish market complex form where people can earn money. They also arrange for career counseling, apprenticeship training, and vocational training especially for poor and physically handicapped persons. Not only this, museums undertake literacy programme for the street-children, child laborers and organize programmes in prison houses.

It is just said earlier that enhancing the ratio of job potentialities is a hard task for which every Government is anxious about. In this context, Indian museums with their limited resources can only fill up the vacant posts, but not enhance more. So to suit with the situation the freedom struggle museums in and around Kolkata organize different social and philanthropic activities for the betterment of the people. Mahajati Sadan, Town Hall and Bankim Bhavan Gaveshana Kendra regularly organize different lectures, seminars, debates and competitions. Ancestral House of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo organize slum development and other philanthropic activities. An art fair is temporarily organized in the complex of Victoria Memorial Hall with the permission of its authority to popularize the urban and rural craft fairs.

Evaluation of Encoding Information or Data

The researcher has checked and verified the encoding data or information supplied by freedom struggle based museums. They are –

- Data relating to exhibits, interpretative media, etc.
- Data relating to viewers and also non-viewers conception about the above.

This process is done by –

- Researcher's personal visit and review of Visitors' Comment Book
- Visitors' survey (by tracking, interviewing and observation)
- Non-visiters' survey.
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While visiting the museums under study Visitors’ Book was duly consulted and a check list was used in which was incorporated simple data about freedom struggle and its exposition through the museums. To find out the problems of communication of freedom struggle exhibits the researcher went to the root of the common problems of communication. Having based on the written statement of the sample visitors, which assembled a large amount of information, the researcher had formulated a survey query without irritating them. In the next step, second type of data was compiled on visitors. A questionnaire was used for this purpose. In the third step, non-visiting persons were contacted and interviewed outside the museum premise. On the basis of that survey, a comparison was made between visitors and non-visitors regarding planning of operation. The above mentioned questionnaire was simple, short, straight and to the point. At the beginning, purpose of the survey was explained and at the same time assured the respondents about top secrecy of their opinions. As background information – visitor’s name, age, urban/rural background, occupation and education were collected.

Here, visitors’ books of the most of the museums show in maximum cases (70%), three particular comments in general – ‘good’, ‘excellent’ and ‘superb’. Remaining part (35%) put remarks on the theme, content and existing communicative measures. While incorporating with the viewers (70%) researcher counted the usual shyness of the Indian visitors, especially the rural visitors and their minimum skill in writing comments (though they are allowed to write in mother language) which resist them to remark freely. Moreover, according to the visitors’ book, in most cases, especially in the Kolkata Museum of Town Hall and Calcutta Gallery of the Victoria Memorial Hall, visitors are attracted by the gallery arrangements and also by the use of interpretative media rather than by the theme. They are more or less reluctant on following themes. But in Mahajati Sadan and Bankim Bhavan Gabeshana Kendra, the visitors are to some extent a good follower of the theme and content, though their presence is much lower than the former. As Subhas Chandra Bose still remains in the hearts of millions, especially the Bengali as Netaji, the visitors’ book is highlighted with
viewers’ love, gratitude and salute to Netaji. As Ancestral House of Swami Vivekananda is a popular place in Kolkata so general visitors and devotees usually go there to see the renovated house and also museum. But the authorities of this cultural centre, may be for some compulsions, do not highlight Vivekananda as a guiding inspiration to the revolutionaries of Bengal. Naturally, visitors’ books do not highlight this portion. On the other hand, apart from the devotees, a few number of general people know about the Picture Gallery of Aurobindo Bhavan. So, flow of visitors to know Sri Aurobindo and his revolutionary activities are limited. The Rabindra Bharati Museum is a biographical museum of Tagore family. Here, contribution of the ‘Family’ to the Indian culture is highlighted with special reference to Rabindranath Tagore. Direct involvement of the family in Indian Liberation Movement is displayed here following their creative impulse. As a consequence, visitors’ book of the biographical museum is full of tribute to Rabindranath and his literary activities. But, Indian Association, through officially continued with a museum has given more stress on arranging seminars and lectures, rather than to give minimum assistance to visitors in the gallery. Naturally, it is difficult to trace the visitors’ book with appreciative comments on the gallery.

It is a common phenomenon on the part of the visitors that they initially hesitate to answer before a survey. But as soon as they feel assured about the good intention of the interviewer and their given opinions are considered to be secret, they got inspiration and answer. In all these aforesaid museums some matured visitors agreed with hesitation that barring few pages of history in the school curriculum they have limited knowledge on Indian freedoms struggle. They also admitted that these museums opened their eyes to the vast unfolded chapters of events and activities related to freedom and they will encourage other specially their next generation to come with them to visit the museums. And non-visitors, while they interviewed outside Aurobindo Bhavan, Indian Association and Calcutta Police Museum were quite astonished about the presence of any museum inside Town Hall premises. Here, mention should be made of Police Museum, which is situated at the Northern Division of Calcutta.
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Police, where people in general are usually afraid of entering. In this particular field, it is the duty of the authority to advertise about the Museum in the mass media and appeal people for their feel-free visit. Moreover, a few non-visitors admitted that they would prefer to watch the movies in home-theatre rather than being in a museum.

Evaluation of Museum's Educational Role

'Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man' – Swami Vivekananda. Totality of a man depends upon education. Ideal education elevates oneself to know the relationship of an individual with the whole, i.e. his country, his society and the universe. Thus, a learned person realizes this inter-relationship; turns back to know his history and try to narrow the gap between the past and the present.

The present day museum is a place for studying, learning and expression of thoughts and ideals. Its exhibitions present objects and provide information in proper perspective. It is some sort of an open educational institution for imparting informal, non-compulsory education to the visitors enjoying new experiences through services of well arranged exhibits. More directly, it offers something to every age and category of population.

The museums under study are such academic institutions where people can go and see for themselves and closely acquainted with the glorious chapter of Indian Liberation movement. The ideals, bravery, courage, honesty, simple life and heroism are all blended and displayed in the galleries of freedom struggle museums. 'My life is my message' (Mahatma Gandhi) and 'Give me blood, I shall give you liberty' (Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose) are the two parallel aesthetics for which every Indian feel proud of. No doubt, having seen this message in Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Netaji Bhavan and Mahajati Sadan any illiterate visitor feels vibrant with enthusiasm.
Here comes the necessity of social accountability of Liberation Movement Museums. It is a fact that everything cannot be taught through academic courses and everybody is not able to go to school. In this complex sociological perspective, museums' role is beyond imagination. With the change of social and economic perspective, especially in the field of public education, potentiality of museums began to be realized after the World War I. With the spread of mass education, the area of common people's knowledge has expanded and education is no longer confined to classrooms, libraries and study rooms. Following this, museum authorities of the twenty-first century have now become more conscious of the dictum – 'Museum for All'. Here, the freedom struggle museums place before the visitors various specimens relating to struggle and the glorious role of freedom fighters for achieving freedom. Surely, while serving this purpose, the under study museums perform its social accountability.

But sometimes, authorities of the aforesaid museums arrange galleries in the way that those become deeply complex and visually loaded. It is a fact that a few galleries are jumbled with exhibits and necessary facilities like wide windows, sufficient light and air circulation are not provided. As a consequence, mental and physical over stimulation and over efforts lessen their all academic interest and they prefer to leave early.

Critical Evaluation of the Arrangements and Amenities in and out of the Museums under Reference

Museums serve the requirements of both sections of society – elitist and populist. Following the ICOM Statute, Museum should be engaged 'in the service of society and of its development'. Thus, with a view to attracting more and more people to the museum, the organizers are arranging galleries in a better way by meaningful presentation through audiovisual aids and by using the mass media. Museums also publish printed materials using different interpretative media. And museum services have been taken its four walls to remote places by means of various extended and outreach programmes.
The effectiveness of an exhibition is the prime aim to attract viewers. The eye-soothing background colour of the showcases, clean galleries, slim and trim showcases, ideal arrangement of traffic (visitor) flow, good use of labels, proper lighting for visibility and readability illumination and a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and last but not the least eye-level display can increase the aesthetic value of an exhibition. So, the exhibition should demonstrate the beauty and usage, significance and aptitude of the objects, which will determine the cultural and historical value of them.

The main galleries of the Mahajati Sadan (in the first and second floors) and Aurobindo Bhavan arrange their galleries only through displaying the laminated and framed photographs on the walls relating to the life and activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Sri Aurobindo and other luminaries of the struggle. Along with this, contemporary political events are also highlighted. Other museums under discussion used showcases and almirahs for displaying irreplaceable and priceless archival materials, used articles, arms and armours, and mementos. Here, most of the museums give stress on its cleanliness and maintain an ideal colour scheme of the galleries and showcases. Besides Kolkata Museum and Calcutta Gallery of the Victoria Memorial Hall, all other aforesaid museums use both natural and artificial lighting.

It is seen that visitors can observe exhibits comfortably when objects and graphics are properly positioned. It means the centres of the displayed objects are set at eye level. Around 1.6 meter (5 feet 3 inches) is the average height for adults. The area of vision in the form of a cone begins at the eyes and extends to 40° around the horizontal axis. Distance from the object creates comfortable or uncomfortable viewing area within the cone. Placing of objects and of associated printed materials wider than the cone area makes difficulty in seeing, and thereby fatigue is caused. As photographs of the events and activities of the struggle are one of the ideal media of narration, the museums under discussion displayed those as far as possible at eye level. Also, items displayed in showcases and
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almirahs attract visitors for its ideal position. Graphics, charts and maps are positioned at strategic places so as to give visitors related information.

It is said earlier that for transmitting useful information, museums provide label, which is a major feature of a museum’s communication policy. The typographic aspect of labels should be legible, neat, and well spaced so that they could be easily read from a reasonable distance. Labels should not be placed in a dark corner or obscured by any large object. They must be placed at eye level to the close proximity of the exhibits so that it interprets for easy visibility and readability without any physical and optical stress and strain. Lastly, labels must be comprehensible to the visitors of average educational standard. Visitors not only visit the gallery to have aesthetic pleasure, some also come to fulfill intellectual and academic interest. Such exhibition if not properly labeled at all, remains unappreciated without communication.

For a suitable communication system trilingual Introductory Label and trilingual Group Descriptive Labels are to be provided. For individual exhibits, objects in a showcase may be provided with a Battery Label. Objects are inscribed with numbers or alphabet letters. Descriptions of each of the marked objects are given in or outside the showcase. ‘Key Pictures’ (a type of label) may serve the purpose better. Photographs, outline drawings, silhouettes or any other type of representation are used in this system. Captions are provided in suitable places alongside the representations of small exhibits.

In connection with the present study, the museums of the liberation movement generally provide a few types of labels for communicating and giving necessary information about struggle to the visitors. But labeling has its own problems in the country like India where diversified languages are used. Again, struggle related museum must serve up the needs of foreign visitors. But apart from Calcutta Gallery and Kolkata Museum, other museums do not provide trilingual labels having an international language, national language and regional language.
Freedom struggle of India is a unique phenomenon in the history of liberation movement of the world. Different political lines, faiths, beliefs and isms were worked side by side for achieving goal. But a common man of India, whose thinking is rolled with day to day problems, cannot visualize this glorious history. It is not wrong as per their socio-economic conditions are concerned. To them, descriptive labels of freedom fighters, events and activities should be used. In some cases, Netaji Bhavan, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Town Hall Museum, Bankim Bhavan Gabeshana Kendra provide descriptive labels. Otherwise, most of the museums use individual labels for communication. In Indian Association, most of the exhibits do not have any type of label. Only on hanged oil paintings of national leaders some captions are provided. Unfortunately, those are unreadable as they are placed above eye level.

The visitors' movement through a gallery and the way in which they approach the exhibition is termed as 'Traffic Flow'. They are –

**Suggested Approach** – in this method, visual symbols, introductory labels, wayfinders, landmark exhibits, etc are used to attract visitors along a predetermined route without placing physical obstacle in a single way.

**Unstructured Approach** – entering a gallery, a visitor may decide on a self-chosen route, disregarding the guided route. This non-directed and random movement is the characteristics of the visitors of art galleries.

**Directed Approach** – some galleries are set in such a way as providing no scope for taking another route.

Here, only Kolkata Museum and Calcutta Gallery use both the Suggested Approach and Directed Approach inside the gallery. But in other museums and galleries, visitors' movement is non-directed and random following the Unstructured Approach.
Also, Ancestral House of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose arrange for visitors the Period Rooms to make the period alive. Surely, visitors are overwhelmed seeing the personal rooms of the great sagas of Indian liberation movement. Here are seen a peculiar tendency of general visitors. Sometimes, when they first enter period rooms, got astonished with the by-gone environment and ultimately leave the museum without seeing other galleries. In Museology, this attitude and mental condition of the visitors is aptly called ‘Ghee-whiz’ factor of an exhibition. But, other galleries contain important and significant exhibits and historical documents relating to struggle.

**Evaluation of Internal and External Environment**

A good environment certainly changes the whole scenario. In a museum, apart from its arrangement of galleries, amenities and comforts are among the facilities, which create mental stimulation for the visitors. A visitor will have a negative feeling in an environment where he is physically and psychologically uncomfortable. Surely, not only should a museum be an entertainer and academic institution, but it should at the same time treat the visitors as guests by catering necessary amenities and comforts with meaningful exhibition. Amenities provide an informal and comfortable surrounding in and outside the museum to form a receptive audience, extending to them beneficial learning experiences.

In all the museums under review, there are no car-parking facilities inside the premises. Only visitors can use outside road for parking. Sitting arrangements inside the gallery are not provided by the authorities. Only at outside, minimal arrangements are there. Town Hall Museum only possesses information desk. Docent service is available at Calcutta Gallery, Kolkata Museum, Bankim Bhavan Gabeshana Kendra and Ancestral House of Swami Vivekananda. Air-conditioning facilities are only available at Kolkata Museum, Ancestral House of Swami Vivekananda, Calcutta Gallery and Painting Gallery of the Rabindra Bharati Museum. Excepting the Ancestral House of Swami
Vivekananda, provision of lift for general visitors is not available in other museums.

Again, Kolkata Museum and Calcutta Gallery provide sign posts, pictograms, maps and gallery plans for informing and directing the visitors as to where they are standing now, where they can go and what they are supposed to learn. These are fixed itinerary, passage information, specification or narration of area and rooms.

An Ideal Future Museum of Indian Freedom Struggle with Updated Communication Process – Projection for the Future

A national museum of Indian liberation movement may be set up in Kolkata by a group of Indian freedom fighters to depict the sacrifices made by millions of their compatriots. Unknown freedom fighters, who sacrificed their lives for the country, may get their due recognition. The people who participated in the Indian freedom struggle for freedom belonged to various Schools of Thought and Action: politicians – moderate, extremist and revolutionary, social reformers, spiritual leaders, educationists, journalists, musicians, lyricists, peasants, students, women, workers and so on. However, despite their differences, they were all united in their desire to secure independence for their motherland. This parameter should be highlighted through museum. Not only this, the museum also would build a strong foundation for communal harmony and dismiss some common myths and beliefs.

This museum building, to be called ‘The Independence Experience’ would be built on 6 acres, and the space for it can be acquired from the Metropolitan Authority, Kolkata. The Union Government, the Government of West Bengal and UNESCO can jointly work to provide all assistance for the project. For its successful completion a high-powered steering committee is to be
formulated with other committees for fund-raising and construction of the building. A third committee, comprising of leading South Asia experts, professional curators and museum specialists will direct the conceptualization and content of the centre.

The Project will seek to preserve for posterity all relevant records and archival materials under one roof. It is an attempt to revive the basic ideals of the freedom struggle such as truth, non-violence, passive resistance, armed resistance, communal harmony, etc. There is also an urgent need to identify and record the reminiscences of a handful of surviving freedom fighters and salvage the audiovisual artifacts from various parts of India. In this way, this museum would pay tribute to freedom fighters, should make sense to everyone and should be portrayed in such a manner as to generate interest among the younger generation about important milestones in the struggle for independence.

It is a matter of anxiety and shocking that owing to negligence and indifferent attitude of the Indians, the eventful places related to struggle is not glorified. Here comes the question of possible publicity and marketing of the places. It is true that liberation movement of any country does not need any marketing. It is actually required for kindling the latent interest by showcasing places that have strong linkage with the movement. But it is unfortunate to see that very few Indians know where Secret Militant Societies or Mangal Pandey’s Tomb are. While Kurukshetra, Plassey and Buxar may evoke an instant connection in Indian minds, no one is interested in visiting the place physically. And at least 90 percent of Indians would struggle to pinpoint Dandi and Barrackpore (occurring place of Sepoy Mutiny) on the map of Gujarat and West Bengal. All these places had an intrinsic role in the liberation movement, yet with the possible exception of Lal Qila, Rajghat, Sabarmati Ashram, Netaji Bhavan, Gandhi Ashram (Barackpore), Andaman Cellular Jail, Jallianwala Bagh – none of them has been marketed as tourist destination. With a heavy heart the authorities feel that most Indians are ‘smitten by the mythical rather than the historical’ and the English know on the intricate details of the Indian freedom
struggle rather that the Indians. One of the reasons behind this Indian attitude was their 'superficial, narcissist and selective consumption' of patriotism.

Side by side, most of the people around the globe visit the Statue of Liberty in America and Pearl Harbour in Japan as the concerned authorities have perfected the art of marketing the places and also their history. The amenities and eco-friendly environment around these places catalyze the visitors to visit again. Here, mention should be made of Rajghat (New Delhi) and Kathmandu’s Patan Museum (Nepal), which have followed this model and thus recognized as one of the best examples of South Asia.

To avoid this catastrophe and to rejuvenate the history, the authorities of the proposed museum should advocate public – private partnership models to manage the important ‘struggle – cities’ of India. Around these sites, there should be no scarcity of information as far as marketing opportunities are concerned. For instance, pointing the route of Dandi March by Mahatma Gandhi and glorious departure of Subhas Chandra Bose from Calcutta to Gomoh (Ranchi) will make imminent sense. Sabarmati Ashram and Ancestral House of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo can be made a part of ‘Discover Package’. Manicktolla Garden House and Yugantar Office can be bundled into a ‘Revolutionary Package’. Along with this, vandalism is a serious concern for which authorities of the proposed museum would take appropriate measures to educate the people. It goes without saying that maintenance of these historic sites is not only the Government’s responsibility, but also of the people. Graffiti on the walls and littering the premises are unpardonable acts. In this regard, the Government and the people need to work hand in hand. Even tourism-specific campaign such as ‘Incredible! India’ of 1990s never covers the freedom struggle as a destination. One plausible reason why the authorities of the Project would not think of doing it as they think the possible politicization of the freedom struggle and the fear of tuning it into a communal issue. They also noticed that as a medium of expression recent Mumbai movies like ‘Gadar’, ‘Rang De Basanti’ and ‘Lage Raho Munnabhai’,
for instance—has triggered audience interest through themes drawn from the freedom struggle. The concerned authorities of the project should consider it as 'Pop-Patriotism' putting aside with the academic movie like 'Gandhi' and 'Netaji Subhas' as "ideal Patriotism".

At the time of construction of the museum, Communication process will be conveyed carefully so that designed information and notion will make some changes in the knowledge, idea and behaviour of the receiver (visitor) what is required by the sender (museum) for its further development.

It is said earlier that communication process in a museum has a bi-way structure, comprised of objects, visitors and the mediator. Exchange of experiences between the visitors and the mediator is the aim. When this instruction takes place, visitors are prompted to ask questions and the mediator is enthused for supplying adequate information. The mediator, following proper communication process, does not assume instructive attitude but extend cooperation, recognizing the rights of the visitors to know and satisfy themselves. It is a forceful medium of informal education. When it occurs in an easy and delightful environment it increases inclination to learn and to further learning. A museum communicates its message that originates from its collection by various means of transmission. Visual components are the basic tools of communication in museums. Thus it follows, and museum should not remain static but should try to penetrate along with its objects into the minds of the visitors by various available means.

The proposed Liberation Museum will aim to maintain various means depending upon—

- Display
- Service programme
- Mass media
- Communicative process.
Chapter V

Ways and Means of Communication for the Museums to the Visitors

The opening and closing hour of the museum must be convenient. At the very entrance the proposed museum should distribute visitors leaflets containing – plan of museum, building specification, route details, photographs of some noteworthy exhibits, known and unknown freedom fighters, events and activities, etc. A scaled model of the museum building at the entrance, signs and visual symbols throughout the museum, trained and friendly staff will help the orientation, i.e. ‘where things are’. Viewers must be informed by museum what they are going to see. The welcoming atmosphere, the leaflet and a docent – all can readily help them in this respect.

The aim is to expose people to the rich, deep-rooted and diverse nature of India’s struggle for freedom. It will also allow for cross-cultural understanding and would add people to people interaction that will have the greatest impact and greatest value. Keeping this notion in view the proposed museum will include a permanent National Integration Centre for rural youth and an Oral History Section devoted to reminiscences of surviving freedom-fighters.

The museum will have pavilions for each of Indian states depicting their roles in India’s struggle. The harmony forest in the museum will consist of trees from all the forests and different parts of the world where people fought for freedom. The museum will conduct daily film-shows on various aspects of Struggle and related topics. A library and archives will stock valuables and books related to it.

The museum will have a dedicated department for conducting research on non-violence and it will conduct tours for children and youths to important places relating with struggle.

The museum will also have a prayer hall where all sections of society can pray in different languages and this will be aimed at promoting the religious harmony and the slogan of Unity in Diversity.
Chapter V

Ways and Means of Communication for the Museums to the Visitors

The museum will have a separate section for studies on different peace movements of the world.

The proposed museum would be envisaged that the sage of India’s freedom struggle through vintage stamps. From the indomitable courage of Rani Lakshmibai and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to the non-violent means adopted by Mahatma Gandhi, this particular museum will induce tears and cheers of country’s past sacrifices. For the next generations, the portrayal of several themes, movements, events, personalities involved in the struggle through stamps is indeed a unique and novel concept.

Besides stamps on Indian freedom fighters, the museum would also give fair honour to foreign contributors such as Sister Nivedita, Annie Besant and others who played a stellar role. Moreover, stamps depicting the National Flag, the Asokan Lion Emblem, the Indian Parliament and others will make a vivid impression on the minds of the visitors.

Performing arts like Jatra, Play, Kirtan, Kathakata, etc. are areas, which the proposed museum would like to work. Present generation is lacking in awareness about history will find the aforesaid medium in a better way to know the struggle period with zeal and enthusiasm.

The museum would also portray the life and activities of Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru. Visitors will feel sensation seeing their bedrooms and activity rooms. These period rooms will be made in replica likewise with the original rooms situated at Netaji Bhavan, Ananda Bhavan and Sabarmati Ashrama. As one walks towards these particular area will find two marble tablets carrying excerpts of their Will and Testament. And while on the way out, there are three massive granite rocks inscribed their historic speeches.
Temporary exhibitions would be the regular agenda. Exhibition on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Dayananda, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Lal-Bal-Pal, Kshudiram Bose, Jatindranath Mukherjee (Bagha Jatin), Rashbehari Bose and others.

The proposed museum would have the following features in its buildings – attractive entrance, reception desk, orientation, visitor information service, Braille digest or information cards, tactile signage, cloak room, rest area, assembly, toilet, café, audiovisual room, education room, auditorium, museum shop, security office, and outgoing telephone booth. The above range of service must be catered to visitors as the features have a psychological impact on them.
Notes and references: