

CHAPTER - SIX

EDUCATION

The Archaeological site museums are really things of pride to all of us. These museums were constructed neither in the heart of a big city nor in a small town. Their location is quite a matter of accident. These were built up to house the movable antiquities, found or excavated from a particular ancient site of certain extent and historic importance and these are situated on the sites themselves or very near to them.

The antiquities scattered in the sites, which are broken and dismantled, in a state of neglect, are collected and preserved in the museum. Thus the antiquities preserved in situ are kept in close association with the archaeological remains to which they belonged originally. This close association facilitates the study of the antiquities in their natural perspective. Besides, the museums are housed either in the old buildings that formed part and parcel of the ancient sites or newly constructed museum buildings. The scope and collection of these museums are limited to some extent. In other words, with the limited scope and collection, these museums never put before us any complex problems that usually crop up in big multipurpose museums of big cities. In fact, in peaceful rural atmosphere, these museums are a real source of pleasure and enjoyment for...
the local people, a place of visit for the tourists. The tourists usually pay a visit both to the site and to museum. The sites and museums are regarded as places of serious study and research to the scholars in their profession. With limited finance, scope and available facilities at our disposal, we are to find out the various means by which these museums can be properly utilized to educate the community at large. Before discussing about the various means of educational programmes, we are to take into consideration the various categories of visitors who usually visit these museums. In fact, the museums are meant for the community. Educational programmes planned at these museums should consider the categories of visitors and their educational background together with their receptive capacities. Now, visitors to these site museums consist of varied types ranging from scholars in the field of archaeology and art to the lay villagers from the surrounding rural areas. The former comes with a purpose of research and the latter comes as a part fulfilment of visiting an "alabhar" (house of wonders). Besides these two types of visitors, there are students from the nearby colleges, universities, schools, people from different walks of life and foreign tourists. There are certain distinguishing features in the trend of visitors movement in different site museums. All these places where the museums are located are not of course places of pilgrimage. There are places like Kondapur, Amaravati, Hampi which are neither places of pilgrimage nor so easily accessible to the
general public. As a matter of fact, the number of visitors to
the above places is not equal to the number of visitors at places
like Nalanda, Sarnath, Bodhgaya and Khajuraho. Again there are
marked changes in the visitors' number on different occasions
because of their inaccessibility. On holidays, festive occasions
like local fairs, festivals and during winter seasons, there
are marked increase in the visitors' number to most of these
museums.

The museums thus hold a unique position in the cultural
life of the community. These are indeed the place of attraction
to the local people. In rural atmosphere, site museums serve as
centres of education through entertainment. These are open
throughout the week and the hour of opening and closing is fixed.
Students from the local colleges and schools come to
visit and when they approach the Curator or the Assistant
Superintendent Archaeologist for Museums, he readily takes them
round the galleries explaining the exhibits to them. Even the
interested visitors also avail of this opportunity whenever
they approach the Curators. The prevailing practice of these
museums is that the Curators or the Assistant Superintendent
Archaeologist for Museums themselves, as cases may be, under-
take the conducted tours when the occasion arises. In order to
promote education through the exhibits posts of "Guide Lecturer"
can be made at least on an experimental basis in big museums
like those at Nagarjunakonda, Sarnath, Fort St. George, Madras and Sanchi. The service of Guide-Lecturer is very essential in our country, specially in rural set up. Despite the excellent methods of display, labelling etc., the meaning and the educational value of the exhibits in a gallery require to be orally communicated to the visitors especially to the illiterates by intelligent, well-qualified and enthusiastic "Guide Lecturer". It has been observed that the spoken word to the general public is often more attractive than the printed line on the labels and this has got more physiological impact on visitor's mind. The duty of the "Guide-Lecturer" should be to guide the visitors into the mysteries of the exhibited antiquities by pleasant speech or lecture. Their primary aim should be to enkindle in the heart of the visitors a genuine desire to learn and profit directly from the exhibits and to sustain an interest in them rather than to parade his technical knowledge on the subject. Curators or Assistant Superintending Archaeologist for Museums are generally preoccupied with both administrative and technical matters and they hardly get time to devote in demonstrating to the visitors. Recruitment of "Guide Lecturer", no doubt, involves the question of finance. If there is any difficulty in recruiting them at the present moment due to financial stringencies, it is to be found out whether the Curator or the Assistant Superintending Archaeologist for Museums can shoulder the responsibility. They can set aside two working days in a week for conducting local
school and college students in their museums. The students should pay visit to the museums with prior intimation. Visit to the neighbouring archaeological sites and museums should be made compulsory on the school and college curriculum. Proper coordination between the official and school authorities should be maintained. In Greece, visits to archaeological museums are compulsory for students in primary and secondary schools. In a town like Athens, no schoolmaster would think of teaching his pupils about any period of Greek history without visiting her monuments and its most typical works of art. The Athenian children visit Olympia, DELPHI or Mycenae and sometimes their excursions extend as far as CRETE, Rhodes and Dolos. Every school organises at least one visit a year to the nearest archaeological centre and museum. When Greek tragedy is being studied, the introductory course is not merely followed by the fabrication of designs and models showing construction and evaluation of theatre. The students are taken to one of the ancient Greek Theatres and there on the spot, they see the seating arrangement, position of the orchestra, the altar and the stage itself. This may really serve a good lesson for us. It clearly demonstrates how the children see at first hand what they have learnt about in class from books and pictures. We can also implement similar programmes in our school and college curriculum. Students reading much about the Buddhist University at Nalanda from books and pictures can see it at first hand.
along with its rich harvest of antiquities kept in the museum collection preserved at the site. Similarly, students reading about the Sanchi stupa can well benefit much by witnessing the site with their eyes along with the exhibits preserved in the Museum.

Apart from organizing regular conducted tours round the galleries, the authorities may also consider whether other media for educating the public can be implemented in the site museums. The present tendencies of educating the public consist of popular talks and also film shows on various subjects on art and archaeology. If possible, considerable space should be allotted in these museums to organize regular film shows. A variety of documentary films on Indian art and culture, if shown to the rural people can, no doubt, stimulate their interest in museums. There are of course some practical difficulties like lack of sufficient space, dearth of staff and equipments in most of the site museums. The most challenging problem in this respect is to overcome these existing difficulties for successfully planning the above programmes. For borrowing films, Film Division, Government of India, United States Information Service, British Council and different foreign Consulate Offices in India may be approached for long term loan. Loan service programme in the neighboring schools may be thought of as a novel idea for "Bringing the museum to the school." This system has been improved much in the
developed countries of the West in view of the growing demand for museum service in the School. The loan exhibits to the schools consist primarily of duplicate materials from the reserve, reproductions or faithful copies of originals, photographs, etc. This service to the schools, in fact, supplements the visit of museum by the school children to some extent. In our country, a modest beginning can be made of the system in certain site museums. A Guide-Lecturer or the Curator can select two days in a week when he can pay a visit to neighbouring schools with the loan exhibits in order to popularize the museum to the school children. This would further sustain an interest in school children to visit museum. Class rooms in school may be chosen as suitable place for display and demonstration of loan exhibits. Further, in order to supplement school curriculum or more specially to strengthen the class-room study, illustrated talks through slides stand to prove quite useful. There is a uniqueness about teaching through slides which arouses and maintains considerable interest among the students.

Museum publications are another useful means of arousing interest in museum exhibits and of interpreting their meaning to one and all. Publication of short guide books, catalogues, picture post-cards, pamphlets, brochures constitute suitable media of popularizing museum among the masses. Catalogues, which provide to the point information about museum collections are,
in fact, meant for scholars in the field. But guide-books in national language, or in local languages, short brochures in different Indian languages and picture Post-cards at a cheap rate appear to have been always welcome to the general visitors. Considerable progress in this direction has been made by the Archaeological Survey of India in the past. It is to be noted that almost all the publications are guide-books and these primarily deal with the sites. Only a few of these guide books however devote insignificant attention in discussing about the scope and collection of these museums concerned. A detailed list of different types of publications on various sites is furnished below:

1. **AMARAVATI**

(a) Sets of picture Post Cards.

(b) Amaravati, H.B. Sarkar and S.F. Nairer, New Delhi, 1972.

(The book is divided into two parts. The Second half of the book deals exhaustively with the Amaravati museum. This is indeed a welcome venture and the site museum gets into rightful place in a guide book.)

2. **BIJAPUR**

A descriptive catalogue (very old and now out dated)

3. **BODHAYA**

No guide book published till now. There is a proposal
to publish a guide book in the near future.

4. KHAJURAO

(a) A Guide to Khajuraho - B.L. Dhamma edited by Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni (published on the occasion of the visit of the Viceroy and Lady Irwin at Khajuraho, January, 1928). (No account of the Museum is given).

(b) A Guide to Khajuraho - B.L. Dhamma and S.C. Chandra, Delhi, 1952. (Only a few lines are written about the museum at Khajuraho.)

(c) Khajuraho (Hindi) - Translation of the above book by K. N. Sastrig, New Delhi, 1958. (A short account is given about the museum at the end of the book.)

(d) Guide to Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho - Krishna Deva and B.S. Rayal, New Delhi, 1974. (This is undoubtedly a new edition in the Survey's guide book series)

5. KONARK

Konark - Debala Mitra, New Delhi, 1968.

6. KUNDAPUR

Nothing has yet been published on the museum collection. An idea about the nature and collection of the excavated
antiquities from Kondapur can be had from G. Yazdani's paper on "Excavations at Kondapur", Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, XXII (1944), pp. 171ff.

7. NALANDA

(a) A Short Guide to the Buddhist Remains Excavated at Nalanda - M.H. Kuraishi, Calcutta, 1931.

(b) A Guide to Nalanda - A. Ghosh, Delhi, 1946. (A portion of the book is devoted to the museum of Nalanda.)

(c) A Guide to Nalanda (Bengali) - Jitendra Kumar Roy, Calcutta, 1951 (A very good account of the museum is given at the end of the book.)

(d) A Guide to Nalanda (Hindi) - Hiranand Sastry, Delhi, 1938.

(e) Sets of picture Post Cards.

8. NAGARJUNAKONDA

(a) Nagarjunakonda - H. Sarkar and B.N. Misra, New Delhi, 1972. The book is divided into two halves, of which the second half devotes itself to the scope and collection of the museum. The arrangement of various galleries with adequate illustration deserves admiration. This is indeed a good venture. We do hope that
in near future the Survey would get the guide books on different site museums written by the museum curators.

(b) Picture Post Cards.

9. NEW DELHI

(a) Catalogue of the Delhi Museum of Archaeology, Delhi, 1926.

(b) The coinage and Metallurgy of the Sultans of Delhi - H. Nelson Wright, Delhi, 1936.

(c) Delhi Fort, a guide to the buildings and gardens, Calcutta, 1932.

(d) Specimens of Calligraphy in the Delhi Museum of Archaeology - Khan Sahib Maulvi Zafar Hasan, Memoirs of the A.S.I. No. 29, Delhi, 1926.

10. SANCHI


(c) Sanchi - Debala Mitra, New Delhi, 1957 (A short description of the museum is given at the end.)
(d) Sanchi (Hindi) – Kedarnath Sastri, New Delhi, 1962. (Being a translation of the above book),

(e) Archaeological Museum Sanchi – Narendranath and J.P. Saxena, New Delhi, 1966. (This is a book devoted exclusively on the Sanchi museum. This is a new venture and is definitely a landmark so far as the museum guidebook of published by the Survey is concerned. This book contains an upto-date arrangement of galleries, scope and collection of the Museum and important photographs of the exhibits. (The authorities should make such provision that the book can be changed in future according to changes made in the arrangement of galleries.)

11. SARNATH

(a) A Guide to Sarnath – B. Majumder, Delhi, 1937. (A good account of the museum is given at the end of the book.)

(b) Sarnath ka parichaya (Hindi) – M.M. Nagar, Delhi, 1941. (There is also a good account of the museum at the end.)

(c) Sarnath – V.S. Agarwala, Delhi, 1956. (There is a
good account of the museum in this book.)

(d) Hindi translation of the same by the above author published from New Delhi, 1958.


(f) Guide to the Buddhist Remains at Sarnath - Daya Ram Sahni, Delhi, 1923. (There is a brief account of the Museum at the end.)

12. SRIRANGAPATNA

Picture Post Cards.

13. HAMPI

(a) Hampi Ruins - A.H. Longhurst, Calcutta, 1925.

(b) Hampi - D. Devakunjari, New Delhi, 1970.

(c) Picture Post Cards.

14. HAIFA

Picture post cards.

15. FORT ST. GEORGE

Fort St. George Museum - K.R. Vijayaraghavan
(Reprinted from the Madras Information, September, 1956). This illustrated Pamphlet is meant for free distribution among the interested visitors.

16. GOA - Picture Post-Cards etc.
   Old Goa - S. Rajagopalan, New Delhi, 1975 (There is a brief account of the Museum at the end of this book).

17. VAISALI

Since this is a new museum brought under the control of the Museums Branch, nothing has yet been published.

18. PURANA QUILA

As this is a new museum nothing has yet been published.

19 & 20. LOTHAGA TAJ: Yet to be published.

The archaeological Survey published guide-books mostly in English, some in Hindi and a few in local language on the archaeological sites. Besides publication of guide-books on the sites, there are only a few catalogues which are by now out-dated. As mentioned above, a few guide-books on the sites incidentally include something about the museums. The guide-books, as a general rule, deal with the history of the site together with the details of architectural and sculptural
material of the site which are worthy of visit. They usually contain photographs of important objects, plans and maps. The few catalogues that were published in the beginning of this century can not be described at present as up-to-date and the museums have attained by this time considerable changes since they were published first. It is desirable that these should be revised and re-written on modern lines with up-to-date information. It is a matter of great satisfaction that by the publication of informative and attractive guide books exclusively on some site museums in the recent years, the Survey has rendered a great help towards the museum visitors. These are written by the respective museum curators who are, no doubt, familiar with their collection. It is expected that guide books on rest of the museums would be published soon. It would be more beneficial if these are translated in national language (Hindi) and in the languages of the region where the museums are located. The catalogues should include a fair number of good illustrations. Catalogues of Museums have great advantages as these make the scholars in the field acquainted with the scope and nature of any museum collection. The survey does not publish any bulletin or journal which can be regarded as a mouthpiece of the site museums. However every year an annual report entitled "Indian Archaeology - A Review" is being published by the Survey, which includes some information about the activities of the Museums Branch. These information briefly deal with the activities of the site
museums. These reports include information regarding remarkable collection, if any, in different site museums and improvement done in the museum galleries. The scholarly bulletin of the A.S.I. entitled "Ancient India" does not include any article on science of Museology which now has been recognized as a separate discipline. In fact, the twenty museums so far have no mouthpiece of their own from which one can get a detailed idea about their activities and development. It is worthy of consideration whether a journal can be brought out by the Museums Branch, which would include articles by the Curators and other Scholars in the profession, besides providing routine information about the various activities of the museums. The journal would further give an incentive to the young Curators of the site museums to work on any particular place in their respective collection.

The various site museums should publish short resume or pamphlets in English, Hindi and in regional language on the site museum collection. These should have neatly designed cover with a good reproduction of prominent sculpture from the respective collections. If possible, this should be printed in colour. The price of such publication should be very nominal. The pamphlets on the site museums would include a short account of the history of the site, nature and character of the museum collection, and distribution of museum galleries. It is obvious that they should also include map of the site, plan of the museum galleries, in order to guide the museum visitors. The
Archaeological Survey of India brought out attractive folders in black and white on Sanchi and Nagarjunakonda in 1966 in which there are references to the museums (at least in case of Sanchi). Such folders should contain more descriptive account both on the site and the museum.

The various museum publications should be made available to the visitors through the museum Sales Counter. The Sales desk should be located at the main entrance in order to serve a vital need of all museum visitors. Fortunately, Sales Counters in some site museums are giving a satisfactory service. Besides selling museum publications and publications of the Archaeological Survey of India, the museums may also arrange to sell books pertaining to museum collections and also books on Indian art and archaeology. Copies of important objects from the collection in plaster may also be made available to the visitors for sale through Sales Counters.

If a Museum is to play a vital role in the society, it should be made widely known to the public. In order to give adequate publicity to the site museums, attractively designed posters should be printed and displayed prominently at convenient sites such as the nearest post office, railway stations, bus stations, airports, tourist offices, public libraries, hotels and other key places in the towns and cities. The Archaeological
museums at Nalanda, Sarnath, Bodhgaya, Red Fort, New Delhi, Khajuraho are renowned historical spots and favourite tourist centres. Many of our countrymen as well as tourists from foreign countries go to Khajuraho to see temples and sculptures, Sarnath and Nalanda to have a glimpse of the ruins of Buddhist establishments and Red Fort, Delhi to visualise the pomp and grandeur of the Mughal rulers. Very few among the visitors are aware beforehand that there are Archaeological museums at these places which act as added attractions for the tourists. It is only through adequate publicity campaign, that the people can be made aware of their location and importance. A post of Public Relation Officer may be created, the primary function of whom would be to make adequate publicity of these museums under the Survey. Directing notice boards in the town are a useful reminder to the inhabitants of the existence of a museum, and such boards serve as a convenience to the strangers in the locality.

Another essential component of every museum should be a library without which a museum cannot function. At the Head Office of the Museums Branch at Calcutta, there is a good library with an approximate strength of nearly nine thousand volumes. The library regularly subscribes to various leading journals and periodicals specially those bearing on indology, museology etc. There is a provision in the Librarian's office for the scholars to consult these books. In almost all the site museums, also exist small collections of books and journals to be found in the
office of the Curator or Assistant Superintending Archaeologist for Museums. The scope and collection of the libraries at these site museums should be made wider so that interested public and scholar visitors may also have an easy access. If possible, there should be a separate stack room and a reading room or both combined in one. A library of this kind will be of considerable help to the students of the neighbouring colleges and universities. To avoid sound in the library room, the floor should be covered with coir matting. This is economical and suitable for Indian condition than covering the floor with rubber or cork tile, which are expensive. The chief advantage of coir matting is its softness and it is least tiring and least noisy but easily get affected by dust and dirt. So periodical cleaning is very necessary indeed.

Another very important aspect of education in these museums would be holding of temporary exhibitions. Temporary exhibitions have great impact in imparting education among all. Organization of this kind of exhibitions has got many advantages. For public relations, they provide stimulating entertainment for the visitors, help increasing attendance and also attract, in general, new categories of visitors. Site museums, most of which possess rich reserve collection, can choose occasions in order to display those advantageously for mass education. The general public, who do not have the opportunity to see the reserve collections, can have a chance to examine in succession
It is needless to mention here that each and every temporary exhibition in the site museums should be arranged and explained for the benefit of the visitors. Now-a-days, these museums may expect visitors from all walks of life. So the first and foremost duty of the Curators should be to attract all types of visitors aiming to achieve such standard of exhibition which would go a long way in enriching their knowledge and broadening their outlook. Temporary exhibitions are known to have been organized in some site museums in the recent past such as Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Konarak, Nagarjunakonda and a few others and had proved very successful.

Temporary exhibitions at the site museums usually take less space. So, exhibitions should advantageously be arranged at the entrance area, if completely separate space is not available. The entrance should preferably be a large one, spacious enough to admit big crowds and should lead directly to the exhibition area without going through the museum galleries. Furthermore, provision should be made in such a way that closing of the gallery would not affect in any way the exhibition space or room.

Where there is no wall space available, the organizers can build false walls if he intends to exhibit the material on
a vertical plain. This can be done by means of partitions at
selected places over the available space or by system of
temporary uprights with panels set between them. The latter
system is effective for display of large number of light weight
objects, such as photographs, drawings, sketches etc. In U.S.A.,
such exhibitions have become very popular and widely in use.
The uprights are held fast to the floor and ceiling so effective­
ly that even light-weight shallow showcases for the display of
three dimensional objects may also be attached between the
rails. Free standing panels are also widely in use for temporary
exhibition purpose. These panels need not be fixed to the floor,
wall or ceilings. These are light weight but strong enough and
very effective for temporary exhibition purposes. It is to be
considered whether similar devices can be used in our museums
for organizing temporary exhibitions.

The selection of subject for temporary exhibition is an
important factor on which depends the entire success of the
exhibition. The selection of subjects for the site museums
should aim at the following points :—

(1) The subject selected for exhibition by the respective
site museums should be strictly of local historical
and cultural importance.

(2) The scope of the subject should be well defined.
This would facilitate both the organizer and the museum visitors.

(3) The subject should be a popular one which will be simple and narrative. Primarily, attempt should be made to arouse interest even in a common man.

Voluntary services of students of local schools and colleges as well as local artists may be requisitioned for organize, display and interpretation of the exhibition. So, the site museums may be developed in course of time as local centres of education and recreation for the community at large.

The question of using original objects in a temporary exhibition is a point worthy of consideration. The psychological impact that it makes upon the visitor can not be ignored. The use of original, no doubt, has got some significance. Besides using original objects, photographs, models, maps and charts may be widely used for better classification. Every effort should be made to ensure that such reproductions are not only faithful copies of the original but should give a clear idea of their aesthetic quality. Emphasis on the use of originals is particularly essential in archaeological museum, which makes the onlookers acquainted with the original contributions of the ancient site. But no one can object to the use
of some reproductions if skilfully and aesthetically suited to the whole exhibition set up for better clarification.

The subject for temporary exhibition can be of varied nature which is determined to some extent by the availability of the materials in the museum collection and facilities. As for example, the museum at Nagarjunakonda can organize an exhibition on "Prehistoric Nagarjunakonda". As the very name implies, the exhibition should aim at displaying prehistoric objects of various phases at Nagarjunakonda and its environments. Very one of us knows that the site abounds not only in historical relics but is very rich in yielding antiquities of palaeolithic, neolithic and even of megalithic ages. So, representative and selective objects of these phases can be suitably displayed along with maps, diagrams and dioramas showing similar culture area in India, chart showing the probable chronological framework and lastly sketches depicting the life of man in Krishna-Godavari valley. Similarly the Archaeological Museum at Sarnath can select a subject like "Sarnath and Gupta art centres in India". The exhibition can be made more attractive through display of photographs of representative art objects from various Gupta classical centres side by side with the Sarnath school. Explanatory map of India showing the location of various art centres may be an essential component feature in such exhibition. "Sarnath through the ages" can be another
subject for exhibition at the Nalanda Museum. The exhibition can focus on the visit of Hsiian Tsang and other Chinese travellers at Nalanda. Particular emphasis can be laid on various episodes of the former's life highlighting various incidents associated with Nalanda.

Wide publicity of the museums is a modern trend for popularising museums among the masses. This is almost a regular practice in the western world but in India this has not been fully developed. For popularising exhibitions in the site museums, news items may be released in local dailies. A review of the exhibition by journalists in the daily newspapers will always be welcome. Photographs should be included in the stories about such exhibitions in the newspapers as done in United States of America.

Large attractive posters, possibly in colour should be put at the entrance gate of the museum during the exhibition period. This would surely draw more people to visit the museum.

It has been suggested that in the principal site museums a separate gallery devoted to contemporary living art and crafts of the locality concerned may be opened. The gallery would emphasize on the continuity of old heritage and tradition of the
area in which a museum is located. This would further encourage the local craftsmen to study the archaeological objects in the museum and fashion their own art and crafts on these old models.
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