

LEARNING THROUGH MUSEUM FOR EDUTAINMENT: “A CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL CHILDREN MUSEUM, NEW DELHI”

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The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education. “Martin Luther King, Jr.”

Introduction

In Course of studying the sources on the topic, it struck on mind that both the words in the title Museum and edutainment, Edu - for education and tainment - for entertainment appear to be in National Children Museum activities. Most of the children are more eager and prefer learning through free choice via modes of participating, performing and creativity which are the key components and activities of the Museums.

Children have pedagogy, learning in situation where learning can be fun therefore Museum is a better supplement for edutainment. Museum is a non-formal educational institute where family is also encouraged. In this paper I am highlighting different types of activities which were organized by National Children Museum, New Delhi under the Ministry of HRD Govt. of India.

The present paper deals with experiences and experiments undertaken by the author as an intern Gallery Guide in National Children Museum in designing educational programmes for the school children and other segments of the society. The activities carried out were targeted to outreach the school curriculum to create relevance of Story of Wheel-Mode of Transportation through the Ages under the educational programme.

ICOM (International Council Of Museum) Defines Museum

Museum as a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development open to the public which acquires conserve, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment.

Development of museum (india and world)

The Latin word ‘MUSEUM’ is derived from greek word ‘Musion’ which means temple of the Muses – Goddess of Art and daughter of zeus – the king of Greek i.e. the nine goddess associated with learning of epic, music, love, poetry, oratory, history, tragedy, comedy, dance and astrology. Museums serve as repository of knowledge, treasure house of artifacts reflecting the cultural fame of a nation, as a recreation spot.

Indian Context

The Museum Movement in India dates back to 1814, when the Indian Museum at Kolkata was first established by Asiatic Society of Bengal, with a Danish Botanist Dr. Nathaniel Wallich as its first Curator. The Movement embarked upon a new phase of development during the time of Lord Curzon who had evinced keen interest in the preservation of the archaeological monuments in the country and had established several museums under the stewardship of Sir John Marshall, an eminent archaeologist, who was appointed as the Director General of Archaeological Survey

of India. It was during his period that a number of museums at places like Khajuraho, Gwalior, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Saranath, Nalanda, Nagarjunakonda and Baripada (Odisha) were established. Some museums were established under the auspices of the Archaeological Survey of India.

The importance of the museums in the educational set up of the country was emphasized with the formation of the Museum Association of India in 1944 at Varanasi as an adjunct of Indian History Congress. Later on it started functioning as a separate entity. The establishment of the National Museum at New Delhi in 1949 with a high level of managerial competence went a long way in providing the much needed leadership and orientation to the movement.

Apart from large number of Archaeological Museums and multipurpose provincial museums a number of organizations like the Craft Museum, New Delhi, the Health Museum, Hyderabad, Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad etc. have been developed in various fields of human knowledge. The Coin Museum at Anjeneri near Nasik is exclusively meant for numismatic study. It has been established by joint efforts of Dr. P.L.Gupta, the renowned historian and museologist and K.K.Mahesvari, the great industrialist. Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Samgrahalaya of Bhopal represents the ethnic culture of man vividly.

In The World Context

Early museums began as the private collections of wealthy individuals, families, or institutions of art and rare or curious natural objects and artifacts. These were often displayed in so-called wonder rooms or cabinets of curiosities. Public access was often possible for the "respectable," especially to private art collections, but at the whim of the owner and his staff.

The first public museums in the world opened in Europe during the eighteenth century's Age of Enlightenment:

- The Museo Sacro, the first museum in the Vatican Museums complex, was opened in Rome in 1756.
- The British Museum in London, was founded in 1753 and opened to the public in 1759. Sir Isaac Sloan's personal collection of curios provided the initial foundation for the British Museum's collection.
- The Uffizi Gallery in Florence, which had been open to visitors on request since the sixteenth century, was officially opened to the public in 1765.
- The Belvedere Palace of the Habsburg monarchs in Vienna opened with an outstanding collection of art in 1781.

American museums eventually joined European museums as leading centers for the production of new knowledge in their fields of interest. A period of intense museum building, in both an intellectual and physical sense was realized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (called "The Museum Period" or "The Museum Age"). While many American museums, both natural history museums and art museums alike, were founded with the intention of focusing on the scientific discoveries and artistic developments in North America, many moved to emulate their European counterparts in certain ways (including the development of classical collections from ancient Egypt, Greece, Mesopotamia, and Rome). It is typically understood that universities took the place of museums as the centers for innovative research in the United States well before the start of the Second World War, however, museums to this day contribute new knowledge to their fields and continue to build collections that are useful for both research and display.

Role of museum in society

Museums provide a structured platform for interactions between cultures, which make them ideal ambassadors for intercultural communication. Museums also have the responsibility to display rationale culture that reflects and represents society.

Museums provide a central arena where individuals can meet in order to look, examine, and wonder at creation and learn in the process that when we judge a work of art we are also judging ourselves

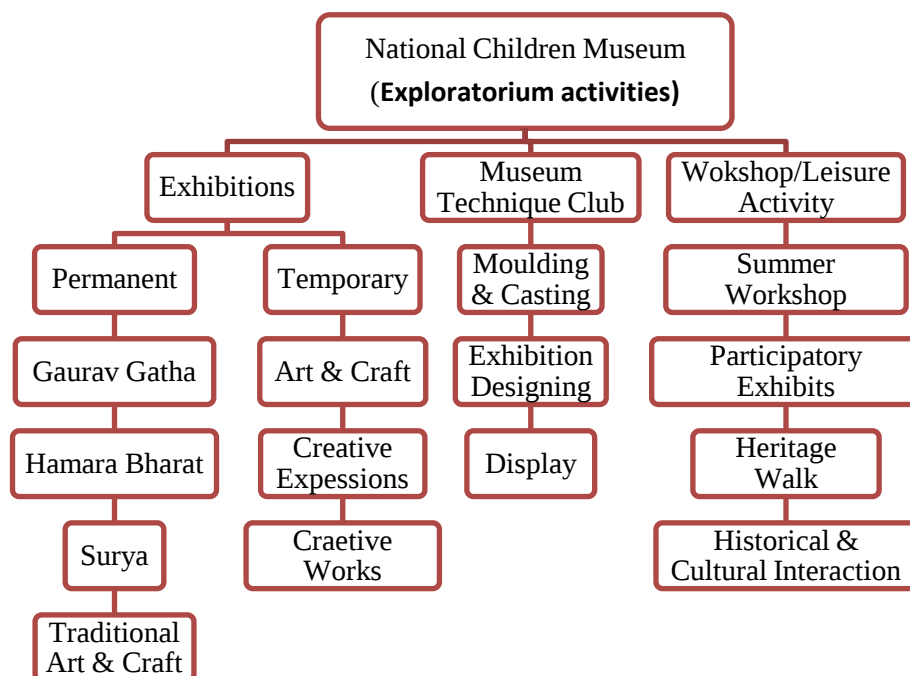
- Contributing to the preservation and conservation of the community's cultural and natural heritage;
- Serving as a cultural focus and a place of shared 'memory' for the community;
- Engaging with educational organizations and offering students of all ages opportunities to learn through contact with original material;
- Providing accessible cultural facilities, e.g. Exhibition spaces, meeting rooms, lecture theatres;
- Representing the history and culture of minority groups;
- Organizing accessible cultural events and activities;
- Providing opportunities for community involvement through volunteer programmes, friends' groups or training programmes;
- Working in partnership with other cultural bodies, e.g. Libraries, archives, theatres, arts centers to develop joint programmes and projects;
- In a very real sense, museums are able to inspire people and enhance the quality of human culture and their material evidences.

Changing role of museum in imparting education

Museum education in wider perspective is understood as, "Any museum activity pursued with a view to convey knowledge or experience to the public" which ultimately lead to practical learning. Earlier education through museums were restricted to activities such as objects display, labels, hand written materials, which comprises little explanation and basic information, and projected museum as "Cabinet of Curiosity in the eyes of people". But in modern perspectives museums are emphasizing more on informal modes of education (Learning outside the curriculum- engaging Family, Peer group, Media, and Youth culture) to increase learning through active social participation. In current scenario, to achieve educational aims, Museum exhibitions features electronics media, Demonstration, storytelling, theatres, dance, musical performances, and hands on activity to impart "Edutainment" or education through fun. Nowadays, digital media and technology is playing a key role in involving youth whose eyes are always glued to the screen and are gaining information and knowledge round the clock.

A case study: national children museum

The National Children Museum is an integral part of National Bal Bhavan, Bal Bhavan – a unique institution for enhancing creativity among children which was founded by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in 1956. The targeted audience of this museum is children. All the exhibitions and activities of this museum are thoroughly and positively inculcated.



Flow Chart of National Children Museum Activities

Out of four Educational Programmes, “The Story of Wheel -Modes of transportation through the Ages”, was selected and I had the privilege to organize educational theme based programmes during session 2013 – 14.

1. Let's Explore Our Neighborhood Virasat
2. MY INDIA- The Blend of Unity & Diversity
3. Story of Wheel-Mode of Transportation through the Ages
4. Let's Explore Museums- Treasure Houses of Our Glorious Past

Theme of Educational Programme

“The Story of wheel-Modes of transportation through the Ages”.

Objective

The programme was not only to inform and educate the children, about the history of wheels and modes of transportation and its evolution through the ages but it was more aimed and focused on fun based activities and innovative approaches for imparting education and its analysis, and the outcome of the effort after the completion of the programme.

Targeted Participants: -

Participated 29 members - All children (16 Girls and 13 Boys) of Bal Bhavan.

Age Group: -

7 - 14 Years.

Duration

A five day long programme “**Story of Wheel-Mode of Transportation through the Ages**” was organized by Museum from 3rd to 7th June, 2014.

Technical aspects and innovative approaches- Audio visual devices (3D Projector), Storytelling, Worksheet, digital equipments, Models of Historical replica, Origami Clay modeling, Photography, Theatre, Gallery guide Lecture, Orientation and different types of pictorial brochure.

Methodology

The programme “**Story of Wheel - Modes of Transportation through the Ages**”, coordinated by author (Habib Ahamad) won applauds and praises for its remarkable achievement and powerful presentation in enjoyable way for the children.

The highlight of the programme was the pre test conducted on children before the start of the programme to test and analyze the knowledge and awareness of the children on the history of wheel and modes of transportation through the ages.

The programme was formally inaugurated by Dy. Director and children’s by unwinding a strip of paper wrapped on the replica of a giant wheel.

The strip carried the title of the programme as well as the pictures of various modes of transportation used in different periods as a symbolic representation of evolution of transportation through the ages. Prior to this as soon as all the participants gathered and they were evaluated through a Pre-Test.

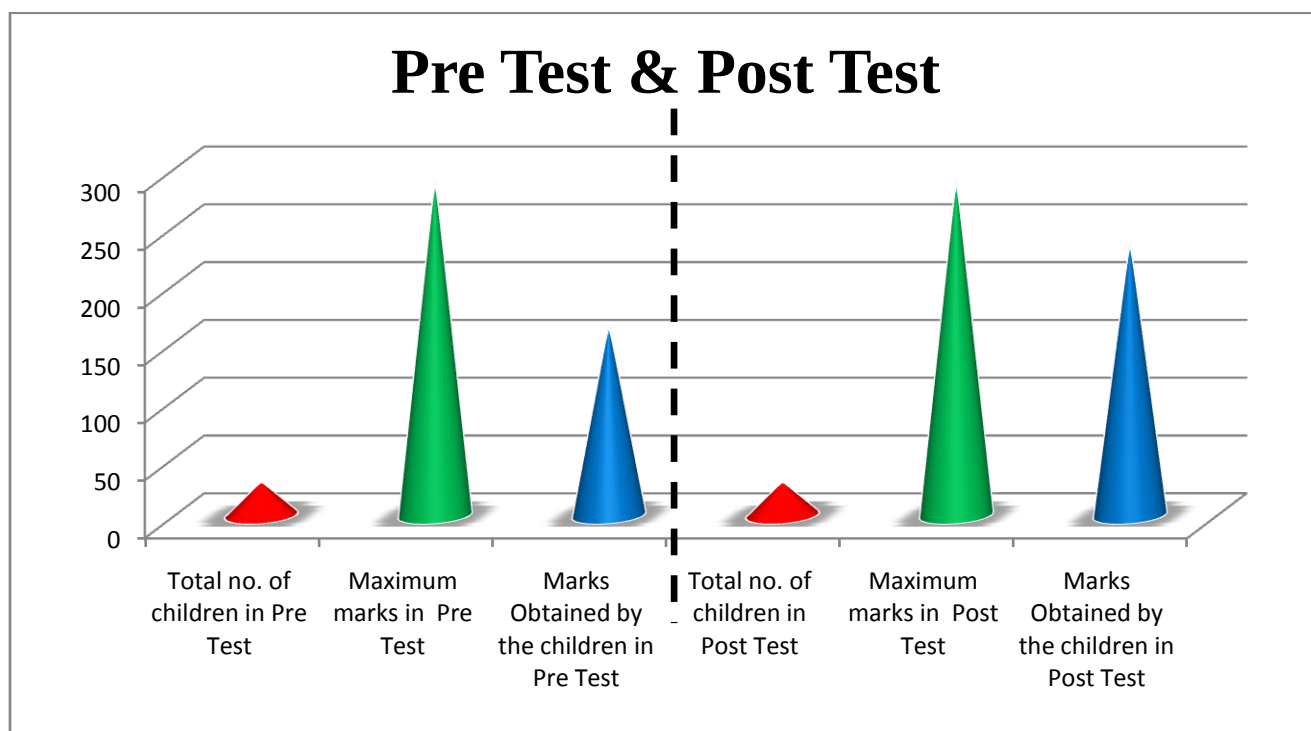
After a brief orientation about the programme, its subject and day to day schedule through a especially Power Point Presentation. Titled ‘Facto-Meter’ children were made realize that we are surrounded by wheels in our day to day life which shows that today we can’t think of moving even an inch without wheel. Some interesting facts related to wheels, its various types and uses etc. were also told to children. This was followed by narration of Wheel’s Story through Power Point Presentation giving factual information about how, where, when and by whom the wheel was invented and its evolution through the ages. Children came to know that the oldest wheel found in archaeological excavations was discovered in Mesopotamia (presently Iraq) and is believed to be over fifty-five hundred years old. This was made up of wood.

Children also learnt that the Potter’s Wheel was invented in about 4500 BC and the [spoked](#) wheel was invented quite later. They also came to know that in the [Harappan](#) civilization of the Indus Valley and Northwestern India, we find toy-cart wheels made of clay with lines which have been interpreted as spokes painted or in relief. While telling participants about how invention of wheel brought revolution in human life they were given information about different modes of transportation like air, water, under water and road transportation.

On 4th June Children made toys based on wheel as well as various means of transportation such as boat, aeroplane etc. through paper craft activity. On 5th June, 2014 children were told about various ways and means of Future Transportation. They also learned why and what kind of future transportation is needed. They were also shown photographs and videos of a few such means of transportations which can help us in avoiding traffic jams, parking problems as well as pollution. Prior to these children were also told about importance of land, air and water transport.

Thereafter using waste egg trays children learned to make helicopter. On 6th June, 2014 all the participants played specially designed games based on the subject and through that learnt various facts related to the subject.

A quiz based on the theme was also organized wherein children participated in two teams- Team A & Team B. Each member of Winning Team was given a chocolate as a token prize. On 7th June i.e. last day of the programme all the participants were taken to visit 'Metro Museum' where they gathered information about the latest mode public transportation introduced in Delhi recently and which has made our life quiet easier. Following is the graphical representation of the student's performance before the commencement and after completion of the programme.



***Figures on Y-axis represent both no. of Students as well as Marks obtain by them**

Story Of Wheel – Modes of Transportation Through the Ages

PRE TEST -

Total No. of Participants	= 29
Per Sheet question Marks	= 10
Maximum marks	= $29 \times 10 = 290$
Marks Obtained by the Children	= 164

Effectiveness (%) of the Programme (Pre Test) = $164 \times 100/290 = 56.55 \%$

POST TEST –

Total No. of Participants	= 29
Per Sheet question Marks	= 10
Maximum marks	= $29 \times 10 = 290$
Marks Obtained by the Children	= 236

Effectiveness (%) of Edutainment (Post Test) = $236 \times 100/290 = 81.4 \%$

Result and findings

After successful completion of the Programme we analyzed the effectiveness/result of the programme on the children by conducting another test (Post Test), and what we observed was a remarkable improvement in the performance level of the participants. There was a considerable increase in the percentage result from 56 % to 81 % on the same Programme based questions.

Conclusion

Our experiment and implementation of innovative approaches in imparting education through fun based activities proved to be quite instrumental in the learning curve of students as it resulted in significant increase in the percentage of correct answers. The increase in the marks of students depicted and strongly conveyed that if right mix of entertainment based activities is collaborated with innovative educational approaches, it has the potential to bring out positive results and can contribute to the upgradation of educational standards by infusing a sense of enthusiasm and curiosity towards education and learning.

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