Use of Collection and Services of Government Museum Research Library, Mathura (U.P.): A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of Govt. Museum Mathura, Uttar Pradesh and its historical importance. This paper also gives a brief knowledge of the collection and services of its Library, naming Research Library. The main purpose of this study is to find out the present status of this Library and its services.

Primary data for this study has been collected through questionnaire and secondary data from the Library records. 50 questionnaires have been distributed to the users including Librarian of this Library.

Scope of this study is limited to the users of Research Library, Govt. Museum Mathura.

On the basis of analysis of collected data, some suggestions/recommendations regarding user satisfaction and improvement of Library services have been suggested in this study. This paper can help the research scholars in getting the knowledge about Govt. Museum Mathura and its Library. Also can helpful in improving its services and status in this Information age.

Key Terms: Museum, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, Research Library, Information Age.

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘Museum’ arises with the Greek word Mouseion, a place or temple devoted to the Muses, in Greek mythology of the arts. This Musaion, however, is also known as the great library of Alexandria which was established in the 3rd century AD and which provided the final resting place of Aristotle’s famed library. This Musaion was in fact a place dedicated to muses and to study where one engaged oneself in noble disciplines. Early in the 3rd century BC, the great museum at Alexandria was founded by Ptolemy I Soter, with its college of scholars and its library. The word museum was invigorated in 15th-century in Europe to describe the collection of Lorenzo de’ Medici in Florence. Use of the word museum during the 19th and most of the 20th century represented a collection of cultural material to which the public had access. Later, the museum has been changed to represent the historic and artistic collection, open for public interest. With the invent use of ICT application, the museum is now being digitized and virtualized.

MEANING OF MUSEUM

International Council of Museums defines a museum is a "permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment, for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment".

The UK Museums Association definition (adopted 1998) is "Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artifacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for Society".

GOVT. MUSEUM, MATHURA

Mathura is a religious and historical place. This holy city is birth place of lord Krishna, situated on the right bank of the River Yamuna at a distance of 145km to south-east of Delhi and 58 away from Agra, the Taj Mahal City. The Govt. museum of Mathura is a house of collection of ancient art & sculpture belonging more than 3000 years ago. This museum was set up by F. S. Growse in the year 1874, after the celebration of its centenary in the year 1974 its name had been changed to Govt. Museum Mathura from its original name, ‘Curzon Museum of Archaeology’.
The worth visiting building of the museum is octagonal in shape and is made out of the red-sandstone. The museum has vivid and the most splendid collection of Kushana sculptures in the country. The Museum is the repository of the fine collections of stone sculpture and terracotta belonging to the Kushana period and and Gupta period. It has the largest collection of Kushana sculptures in the country. Apart from that, the museum also has a marvelous collection of gold, silver and copper coins, clay seals, ancient pottery, paintings and bronzes among others. Few museums can boast of a better and a more varied collection of archeological material from one single region.

Museums Holdings

Museum Holdings as on 01.04.2013

| Sculptures | 5099 |
| Terracottas | 2800 |
| Bronzes | 360 |
| Pottery-bricks | 293 |
| Paintings | 418 |
| Ornaments | 32 |
| Sonkh objects | above 12000 |
| Others | 1494 |

Gold | 178 |
Silver | 5800 |
Copper etc. | 18724

MUSEUM LIBRARY

With the growth of museum the need for a library was also felt. So, in 1930 a library cropped up and it was named as ‘Research Library’. Here one thing is very important which should be cleared that the library as known "Research Library" is not only a research library. It equally welcomes general public also. So, it also allows to general public for only study but lending of books is available only for staff members of museum. People from far off places of U.P. and other states of India come over here to explore the inexhaustible mine of wealth hidden in this library. Not only Indian but foreigners also come here due to its significance.

COLLECTION

The collection of this library consisting of 40,000 books in Hindi & English languages on variety of subjects like history, culture art, architecture, religion, numismatics, philosophy etc. The library also subscribes to more than 10 periodicals. There are 19 maps also available in its collection. We can classify it’s collection of books into three parts.

Table 1: Collection of Purchased Books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>No. of Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Art and Architecture Sculpture</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Paintings</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Iconography</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Numismatics</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Epigraphy</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>1088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second part is their manuscripts. It has a rich collection of manuscripts. The total number of manuscripts is 3825. There are two types of manuscripts available in the library one being paper and the other palm leaf. Mostly manuscripts are in Sanskrit language. There is one fumigation chamber available for preservation of manuscripts.

Third part of its collection is donated books. Its total collection is 27,091 books. These books are related to Hindi literature. In Research library these donated books are placed in a separate room.
MEMBERSHIP

The library does not offer its membership to general public but they can visit the library for their research work only after obtaining the prior approval from the Director of the Museum but the library does not provide lending facility to them. This facility is available only for museum staff members.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The library provides the following services:
- Reference services
- Reading room facility
- Books lending facility
- Register catalogue
- Reprographic Services

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to find out the present status of the library and give some suitable suggestions for its further improvement in the collection and services for the benefits of the users.

Some other objectives are:
- To study the use of collection and services of Museum Library
- To identify the status of present staff.
- To identify the actual strengths & weakness of library resources & services.
- To identify the kinds of users and their needs.
- To identify the limitations or problems.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was limited to the users of Research Library of Govt. Museum, Mathura.

METHODOLOGY

Two types of questionnaire were prepared for this study. First one is for librarian and second one for users of the library. In this study, primary data have been collected through questionnaire and interview and secondary data from the records of the library, books and journals etc. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed among the users and received back duly filed by the users with 100% response. The collected data was analyzed, tabulated, interpreted and presented in the form of tables and figures.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Analysis of the data collected from users has been presented here:

- Status of the Users

Figure 1 shows that 54% of the visitors of this library are research scholars, 20% are retired persons, 14% are students and 12% are employed persons.

- Frequency of Library Visit

Table 2 indicates that out of 50 respondents 16(32%) visit the library first time, 13(26%) visit the library in a week and 9(18%) visit the library daily, 5(10%) visit the library fortnightly & monthly.

- Time Devoted

Figure 2 shows that 40% users spend 2-4 hours, 26% users spend 1-2 hours, 24% users spend 1/2-1 hours, 2% users spend less than 30 minutes in the Library. Only 8% users spend 4-6 hours in the library, and no users spend more than 6 hours in the library.
Accessibility of Reading Materials

Table 3: Accessibility of Reading Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not easy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less easy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More easy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely easy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that out of 50 respondents, 25(50%) said that the accessibility of the reading materials is less easy, 15(30%) found that it is more easy to access the reading materials.

Type of Library Materials Used

Table 4 reveals that out of 50 respondents, 24(48%) users visited the library for books related to their subjects and reference books, 16(32%) visited the library for reading of newspapers and magazines and only 10(20%) users visited the library for reading of government documents.

Table 4: Type of Library Materials Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Material</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects/Reference books</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers &amp; Mag.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. documents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photocopying/Reprographic Services

It is observed from figure 3 that majority of users i.e. (96%) are satisfied with the photocopy service of this library and only (4%) users are not satisfied.

Figure 3: Opinion towards Photocopy Service

Awareness Towards Computerized Library

Table 5 shows that 34 (68%) of users of this library are aware about computerized or automated library and 16 (32%) are not aware about it.

Table 5: Awareness Towards Automated Library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Users’ Opinion Towards Physical Facilities

Table 6 shows users’ opinion regarding the physical facilities provided by the library to them. 96% of users indicate the reading room has adequate space with enough seating capacity. 100% users indicate that library has adequate space for browsing materials (popular magazines and newspapers). Majority (96%) of users indicate that reading room has good ventilation and lighting facility. 72% of users say that library stack is not congested. 74% of users say that books on shelves are always organized.

Table 6: Users’ Opinion Regarding Physical Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Facilities</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Space with Enough Seating Capacity</td>
<td>48(96%)</td>
<td>2(4%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Space for Browsing Materials</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventilation and Lighting</td>
<td>48(96%)</td>
<td>2(4%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Stack is Congested</td>
<td>14(28%)</td>
<td>36(72%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelving Arrangement</td>
<td>13(26%)</td>
<td>37(74%)</td>
<td>50(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the survey that users are satisfied from its collection that’s why its importance for them is high but their satisfaction level is less due to less staff. The library has procured the software for computerization but there is no any professional staff working on it. Due to lack of funds and staff, the library is not able to improve the collection, services etc. A lot of things, which should be considered by the government and appropriate steps, should be taken for its further improvement in order to provide the best services to the users. As it is the very oldest library, therefore, it should be maintained by the government in the proper way so that the library could attract number of users and plays a vital role in their research work.

SUG!ECTIONS

The following suggestions/recommendations are set forth on different aspects of research library of govt.museum, Mathura, on the basis of the study. These recommendations, if implemented, are likely to solve the existing problems and make the system more effective.

- There should be digitization of available manuscripts and rare books. So, that these valuable sources not only become the showcase item of the library but also become approachable source also.

- There should be given a chance to research scholars for becoming the member of this library. So, that they can also borrow the books.

- There should be a website of this library & museum also. So, that people from all over the world can be able to aware about its rare collection and able to utilize it. Like The Government Museum Chennai and the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

- Library management should take the guidance and support of The National Museum and Library Services Board, the
advisory body for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Donated books also should be displayed properly. So that everyone can use them too.

REFERENCES


BIBLIOGRAPHY