

Museum and Education a Special Reference of Salar Jung Museum Hyderabad - India

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Abstract: *Museums are repositories of cultural heritage and playing important role in reconstructing of the history. Museums have a responsibility to educate visitors by offering more complete and complex versions of history. Galleries and corridors not only the relics of the past but it is to re-invest them with living significance so that they can become eloquent to a new generation and links in the cultural upliftment of the generation. Museums can contribute to society, for instance by providing and promoting experience, education, recreation and by developing cross-cultural understanding. Mir Yousuf Ali Khan popularly known as Salar Jung-III the famous Salar Jung Museum is the second largest single-family private collection in the world. His contribution towards education and literature was remarkable. Nawab Sahib was one of vast read among nobles his life style influenced both noble and common people of Hyderabad the museum was set up in the "Diwan Deodi" (16th December, 1951), the residential palace of Salar Jung-III. Later the Museum was transferred to the present building specially built for housing the Museum and the Library, in the year 1968.*

Keywords: Museum Education, Rare Books, Social Responsibility

1. Library

The importance of the Salar Jung Museum Library, consisting of rare and valuable manuscripts, printed books, research journals, etc. The rich collection of the library consists of about eight thousand manuscripts and more than fourteen thousand printed books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu languages. The collection of English printed books is to the tune of 29,000 which includes research journals, Albums of rare Photographs and valuable engravings. A note worthy of this vast collection is that it covers a wide field of learning ranging from the field of art architecture, archaeology, to those of physical and biological sciences, social sciences, literature, history, travel, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and other religions.

This valuable collection remained as the private property of an individual till the death of Mir Yousuf Ali Khan Salar Jung III, in March 1949, and was housed safely in his ancestral palace. But now the manuscripts and printed books are made accessible to the scholars and the common readers respectively.

A statistical study of the strength of manuscripts and books as given in these lists reveals that Salar Jung III inherited from his ancestors 8000 manuscripts and printed books of Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Urdu languages. When the collection of manuscripts and oriental printed books was handed over to the Government of India in December 1958, the total strength of this collection was 22,163¹. The difference in these two figures establishes that during his life time, Salar Jung III alone added 12901 manuscripts and oriental books to his family collection.

There are quite a good number of English books bearing the stamp of Secunderabad Club Library. These books could have been purchased by Salar Jung III as he was a member of this club. Some other books bear stamp or labels of Mohammedan Library (Secunderabad) Royal Asiatic Society Library, Bombay, Mudies Select Library, London. Singapore Library, College of Fort William and many

second hand books of such other libraries which might have been purchased by Salar Jung III. The largest lot of books, which became a part of Salar Jung collection was that of Mir Riasut Ali Khan Razvi, Mahboob Yar Jung Nazim-ud-Dowala Bahadur (1908 A.D) A.D.C to the Nizam, Aisf Jah VI Mir Mehboob Ali Khan. An exhaustive list of this collection which contains 4083 entries of Arabic, Persian and Urdu manuscripts and books, Jagirdars and Scholars or through dirt and presentation by other contemporaries. Dr. Mir Yousuf Ali added 279 manuscripts and 565 oriental printed books,

Oldest Books in the library

From the point of view of antiquity the oldest book in the collection is "The Generale Historie of the Turkes"², author of this book is Richard Knolles, in the year 1631 A.D. another one French romantic story under the title "Cassandra: The Fam'd Romance" by Sir Charles colterell, in 1661.A.D. the third one title is "The Life of Dom John De Castro, the fourth Vice-Roy of India" this biography was written in Portuguese by Facitnto De Andrada and translated into English by St. Peter Wyche Kt, in 1664.

Autographed copies

In the library, It is but natural to have books autographed by eminent personalities and reputed writers, Such as;

- The most fascinating autographed copy is travel book, relating to the excursion of Queen Victoria, in the Highlands of Scotland, title "Leaves from the Journal of our life in the Highland, from 1848-1801" This book presented to Sir Salar Jung I, by Queen Victoria.
- Another presentation to Mukhtar -ul-Mulk was from Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, title "Review on Dr. Hunter's Indian Musalmans" with his autograph.
- Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's poetic collection namely, "The Bird of Time" in 12th Nov, 1912. To Salar Jung Bahadur.

As well as various valuable translations, Articles, Arabic, Persian, and Urdu printed books, This valuable family collection, after the demise of its last member was declared

as a National asset when it was passed into the safe hands of the Salar Jung Museum Board.

The American Association of Museums (A.A.M) defines a museum as “An organized and permanent non-profit institution essentially educational or esthetic in purpose, with professional staff, which owns and utilizes tangible objects, care for them to the public on some regular schedule”³

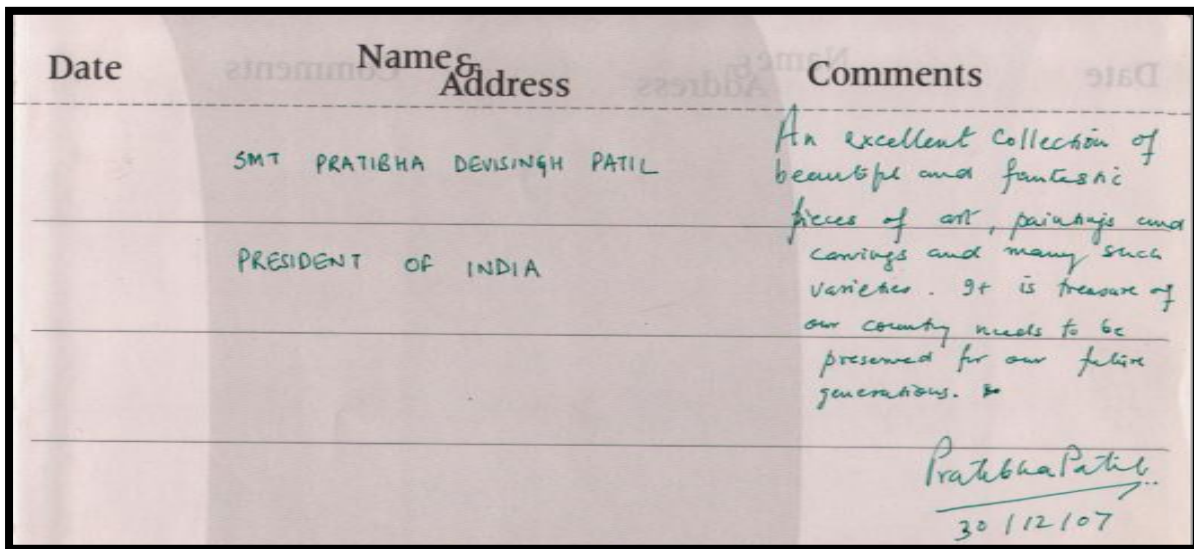
Since the dawn of the century, the average Museum in India has changed from a static storehouse of antiquities, art objects and stuffed animals to an educational and cultural centre of artistic activity. The public has also begun to feel the possibility that Museum could supplement the conventional educational institution. Thus, the chief function of the Museum is to translate the importance and meaning of their exhibits and to communicate their significance and value to the people at large who have equally inherited cultural wealth of the past age⁴.

One of the important activities of the Museum, as envisaged in the Salar Jung Museum Act, is to undertake interpretation

and research, besides providing education to the community in matters relating to the Museum, for the advancement of learning and dissemination of knowledge among the public.

The museum is flocked by various categories of visitors. They may be divided into educated casual visitors, students of schools and universities scholars, research students and above all illiterate masses. To cater to the needs and requirements of such a vast range of visitors belonging to diverse age groups and with varying interests and approach, is no easy.

Museums are the buildings that house neither them nor even the collections. They protect important as these are , museums are cultural institutions uniquely concerned both with collecting and preserving the material cultural heritage and at the same time “communicating its meaning”⁵ whether that meaning arises from works of art, archaeological artifacts or scientific specimens. The social and even political dimensions of the communication of meaning result in an institution that combines those aspects with the ‘hardware’ functions of housing and caring for a collection.



Ex-President of India Smt. Pratiba Devi sing Patil’s note on her visiting Salar Jung Museum on 30-12-2007

India occupies a pre-eminent place in the comity of World Nations in so far as its Antiquarian wealth is concerned. The history of its heritage is traceable from the remotest past of the Universe. It had a rich and varied pre and proto historic remains in different geographical zones. Harappan civilization on endowed it, the earliest and most magnificent personality as a highly cultured state in the world by third millennium B.C. its historical period takes a definite shape and is exemplified by many ancient site, standing monuments, art objects and other remains reflecting the Indian traditions, diverse life styles and a unique Heritage. The country is also immensely ric in anthropological specimens, tribal arts and crafts, besides art treasures and antiques created by contemporary artists.

There are a more than 400 museums⁶ in the country in the country falling under he categories called State, District and Local museums including six Museums of National importance. These are National Museum, Delhi: Indian Museum, Kolkata, Government Museum, Chennai, Prince

Wales Museum, Bombay and Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad. The last mentioned one is a Museum of National importance and treasure-trove of World Art providing a true vision of Indian Art in the context of International Heritage. This apart, the Archaeological Survey of India, the oldest and a premier organization protecting the National Heritage. Maintains 31- Archaeological Site Museums⁷, which serve as grand repositories of Cultural relics right at the very sites, and Monuments causing no alternation to their original ecological set up.

Museums and social responsibility

In the changing socio –economic scenario, museums too, have to change themselves in respect of their activities in terms of schemes and programmes befitting to the aims and objectives as envisaged in their respective Memorandum of Association / Governments.

Museums are clearly social entities. The nature of that social responsibility has been a contested question throughout most of the modern period. Regardless of the specific power relationships or the dominant social narratives, tension is inherent in museums as they select and present collections and interpret those to an outside audience. The social responsibility of the museum is enacted differently by its many practitioners and is read differently by its many users. This has led some insiders to conclude that the social role of museums as a concept should not be closely defined, resulting in vague mission statements of broad generalizations that can be set aside as needed: words that are useful in a marketing slogan but not problematic in terms of accountability. The contest does not arise from ignorance regarding the position of museums within the larger society or of the possibility that museums may exert ideological influence in that society.

Certainly museum workers are aware of the social status hierarchy of external stakeholders and organize themselves to collect, conserve, and interpret material that decision-makers have decided is of compelling importance to the future. The ideological contests within the museum sector echo faintly or distinctly – the physical, economic, and political contests that ripple or roar through society at large. These courses may cross when a museum takes a subject of broad social interest and places that theme on its gallery walls.

Salar Jung III was probably the last of the great nobles of the old order and of great tradition. He was a connecting link between the calm, discipline and dignified life of the past and the progressive tendency of the present age. Though he was born in the old school of thought, nevertheless, he easily adapted himself to the new surroundings. He wanted Hyderabadis to serve Hyderabad well in one-way or the other.

Salar Jung III died on March 2, 1949⁸. He remained a bachelor till the end. But he left a legacy beyond all computation, and has immortalized his and his family's name with the Salar Jung Museum at Hyderabad. It is the largest and finest single-man collection in the world, unparalleled in the annals of history. Though some of the pieces are inherited, Salar Jung III spent all his wealth, time and energy with sincere devotion to buy about 50,000 objects of art, antiques and curios. The rich heritage and the prestige of distinguished family have gone a long way in shaping the destiny of this Nawab of Nawabs.

The delightful atmosphere of a magnificent ancestral palace spilled with treasures of art and literature, provided the stimulus to awaken the inborn qualities of aesthetic sense and acquisitive temperament. Not only was he a great collector of antiques, art objects and rare manuscripts but he also patronized poets, writers and artists, encouraging literary and cultural activities. He was responsible for the publication of a large number of books on his family members. He continued his zeal as an art – connoisseur till the very end of his life, enriching his art collections. It is this labour of love of over forty years which finds a place in the portals of the Salar Jung Museum. Wedded to his art collections. Salar Jung III died a bachelor at the age of 60. In the absence of any direct descendants, the Government of

India appointed a committee to administer the Salar Jung Estate. Later on with the idea of perpetuating his name, the Salar Jung Museum was brought into Existence in 16th December, 1951 in the Diwan Deodi⁹, the residential palace of Salar Jung III. It was declared open to the public by Padit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India.

The administration of the museum continued to be vested with the Salar Jung Estate Committee till 1958 when the heirs of Salar Jung graciously agreed, through a compromise deed, to donate the collections to the Government of India. Thereafter the Museum continued to be administered by the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India till 1961.

In 1961, through an Act of the Parliament¹⁰, the Museum along with the library was declared as an Institution of National Importance. The administration of the Museum was transferred to an autonomous Board having the Government of Andhra Pradesh as its Chairman. The museum was transferred to the present building specially built for housing the Museum and library, in the year 1968.

Before Nawab Salar Jung Bahadur passed away on 2nd March, 1949 the Military Governor, General Choudhary, with one stroke of the pen, abolished the age-old Jagirdari system of Hyderabad.

But the order did not become effective during Nawab Sahib's lifetime. He was born a Jagirdar and died a Jagirdar. Here the golden era came to end. The Salar Jung family itself contributed five Prime Minister. But only two are remembered. The first and the third. The 25th grandfather and the grandson. One for wielding power and glory for thirty, long years the other for his indulgence in a hobby for an equally long period. Their titles being common, most of the people think only of the grandson when the name Salar Jung is mentioned. He was a kind and benevolent noble and a God-fearing man. His motto was: "My Trust is in God".

Collections As on date, there are 46 galleries in the Museum in three blocks.(1) Indian Block (33 galleries), (2) Western Block (7 galleries) and (3) Eastern Block (6galleries) in which nearly 13,654 objects are on display. The collections of the Salar Jung Museum are the mirrors of the past human environment, ranging from 2nd century B.C to early 20th century A.D of different cultures such as Greek, Roman, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Christian and Islamic of various countries and of various materials.

Salar Jung Museum is one of the few Indian museums which can boast of a fairly extensive collection of Far Eastern Art consisting of Sino-Japanese art objects of porcelain, bronze, enamel, lacquer ware, embroidery, paintings, wood and inlay work. European collection comprising of art objects ranging from resplendent and excellent examples of oil paintings, aesthetically attractive glass objects to majestic furniture, splendid examples of ivory, enamel ware and clocks. The objects on display in the children's section of the museum are a testimony to the vast range of interest and diverse nature of Salar Jung III, in collecting objects. The objects housed in the section provide informal education to the children apart from providing delight to them. Salar Jung Museum is an institutional member of various historical and

museological organizations, like ICOM-INC, and Museums Association of India etc.

Above all, as the head of a family with immense wealth, Salar Jung III had ample opportunity to implement his cherished dreams of acquiring things of art, love and beauty. Just starting as a hobby, over the years his art collection assumed large proportions for which a single palace was insufficient. His collection has an international character as about 41 countries are represented in his great collection of art and cover all aspects of life and culture. Though Salar Jung III had a short-term premiership but gained an everlasting empire in the hearts of men and women and children of generations.

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