

Component-I (A) – Personal details:

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Subject: **Indian Culture**



Production of Courseware
- Content for Post Graduate Courses

Paper : **Museology**
Module : **Museum Staff – Role and Responsibilities**

 प्रज्ञा विज्ञान विमूक्तये

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Component-I (B) – Description of module:

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| Subject Name | Indian Culture |
| Paper Name | Museology |
| Module Name/Title | Museum Staff – Role and Responsibilities |
| Module Id | IC / MUS / 21 |
| Pre-requisites | Knowledge of Museums, its components, collections, functions and services |
| Objectives | To understand the basic staff pattern of a museum and their roles and responsibilities to perform fullest to achieve the mission of the museum. |
| Keywords | Staff, administration, curatorial, role, responsibilities |

E-text (Quadrant-I)

1. Introduction

Museum is the manifold activities organisation. It needs many people to run its day to day operations. A notable and good museum largely relies upon its staff members. According to the size, collections and responsibilities of the museum towards its community, it is expected to have adequate number of staff. The Governing Body of a museum is specially committed to appoint the Director and other human resource for the museum. Because of the performance of all the staff a museum run effectively as a public service organization. Each museum has staff positions and job descriptions are appropriated to the needs and financial resources of that institution. There is no one pattern that applies to all museum; in fact it is doubtful that any two museums, unless they are under the same administrative system or quite small, will have the same staff pattern. Larger and better-funded museums need to have more officials in both administrative and curatorial positions. Museum needs special experts for developmental works, application for grants, fund-raising, coordinating the work of volunteers, supervising docents and guides, public relations, and for the special needs of the institution. On the other hand many poor funded museums have very less staff, where one staff performs the job of many staff.

2. Objectives

- To know about the staff structure required in a museum
- To know about the different staff role in a museum
- To know the responsibilities of staff in a museum

3. Staff structure, roles and responsibilities

The Museum personnel are structured in three different organizational models:

- **Hierarchical**
- **Matrix**
- **Task Force**

In a **hierarchical** set-up there is always a well-defined vertical chain of command from top to the bottom of the ladder, as in a bureaucratic organization, but the horizontal communication is less defined and has to be ensured through committees. The National Museum is a hierarchical organization like a typical bureaucratic set-up, with powers flowing from top to the bottom of the pyramid. Director General of the Museum heads this pyramid. Below him are other different levels of power. The three functionaries below him are Assistant Director (Administration), Assistant Director (Exhibition Cell) and Director (Conservation). These two levels are higher level of management in this museum. The Curators, Deputy Curators and the ranks equivalent to them is the middle level of management.

Here below the example of the high and middle level staff role in the National Museum, New Delhi.

| Sl. No. | Group A | Group B | |
|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Gazetted | Gazetted | Non-Gazetted |
| 1. | Director General | Administrative Officer | Assistant Curator |
| 2. | Director | Secretary to Director General | Assistant Chemist |
| 3. | Assistant Directors | Hindi Officer | Assistant Conservator |
| 4. | Deputy Director | Lay-out artists | Senior Technical Assistant |
| 5. | Curator | Photographic Officer | Head Modeler |
| 6. | Chemist | Accounts Officer | Senior Photographer |
| 7. | Library & Information Officer | Chief Modeler | Mount Designer |
| 8. | Deputy Curators | Research Officer | Officer Superintendent |
| 9. | Deputy Chemist | Production Officer | |
| 10. | Deputy Conservator | Education Officer | |
| 11. | Deputy Chemist | Senior Technical Restorer | |

Higher level staff structure in the National Museum, New Delhi

In a **matrix** format, functions are organized as axes of interaction; for example, exhibition, education, publication etc. will be separate wings in which curators, conservators, registrars, security, finance etc. will be associated.

Task Force, on the other hand, is not a permanent type of museological organization. Task Force is set up when a special project, programme or exhibition is to be organized. In a Task Force representatives of various departments are co-opted for accomplishing a special task. It has its own delegated powers, which cuts through the hierarchical pyramid.

The entire human resource of a museum can be divided into three broad sections—

- **Administration**
- **Curatorial**
- **Security**

3.1. Administration

Administrative staffs are responsible for running the entire administration or management operations like human resource management, financial management, marketing and quality management of a museum. In India the pattern of administrative system varies greatly from one another. All the National Museums of India and the museums and science centers under the National Council of Science Museums have specific staff pattern under the respective Director Generals whereas museums like Indian Museum, Kolkata—a museum of national importance; Railway Museum, Mysore, Anthropological Museum, Shillong etc., have other structure where Director is the highest official of the museum works under the Board of Trustees. In case of Victoria Memorial, Kolkata, the Secretary Curator is the highest official works under the Board of Trustees. Apart from these big and important museums in India many small museums are run under the direction of curators. The Governing Body affirms that the Director or any other high officials with organizational responsibilities to implement the standards in the direction of any assignment, promotion, dismissal of the staff of museum. Here below the roles and responsibilities of high museum officials who administered museums :

3.1.1. Director General/Director/Secretary Curator (Highest designated official)

Responsibilities

- Take the leadership of the entire museum
- Direct policymaking, planning, staffing, and operations.
- Work closely with the Governing Body/Board of Trustees to refine and develop the strategic direction and establish initiatives for a progressive museum
- Fulfills the mission of the Museum and increase local, statewide, national and international awareness and prominence.
- Directs the museum's operations, to include development, education and public programming, finance, external communications, and staffing.
- Manages and leads the full-time staff, part-time staff, volunteers, and consultants.
- Leads and participates in all fundraising and development activities, including grant writing and developing relationships with foundations, corporations, and individual donors.
- Serves as spokesperson and chief advocate for the Museum.
- Establishes strong partnerships in the community.
- Enhances the Museum's public image to expand interest and support.
- Directs the overall development of public relations and marketing initiatives.
- Develops an effective communications plan to raise the profile of the museum.
- Manages, secures and maintains the property and facilities of the Museum, as well as the collections held in public trust.
- Fundraising activities might include museum promotion, charity event management and securing grants.
- Administration, research and collection maintenance are general, day-to-day museum director duties.

3.1.2. Director (Under Director General)/ Deputy/Assistant Director (under Director)

- Responsible for specific function of museum like entire operation of conservation, exhibition etc.

- Works closely with other Directors and, curators
- Works with the entire staff to make sure museum runs smoothly and assists wherever needed in any level

Director/Deputy/Assistant Director (Exhibition)

- In charge of exhibition
- Looked after by Curators and Deputy Curators

Director/Deputy/Assistant (Administration)

- All the curators and some deputy curators, library and information officer, administrative officer are under him
- Responsible for galleries of museum
- Departments of education, display, publication and Public Relations
- Combines and harmonize the curatorial and non-curatorial—the ‘assets’ and the ‘activities’—function of museum

Director/Deputy/Assistant Conservation

- Responsible for entire conservation work
- Responsible for entire care and prevention of objects in display and store
- Responsible for environmental control in galleries and store

3.1.3 Deputy Director/ Assistant Directors

- Work under the Director and responsible for the respective functions for instance administration, education, exhibition
- Also responsible for human resource and personnel concerned.
- Responsible for both administrative and curatorial work

3.1.4. Finance Officer/ Accountant

- Coordinates with all finance staff in financial planning and strategy.
- Prepares and monitors Museum current fiscal year budget.
- Provides and presents Museum financial reports to Finance/Endowment and Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, trustee committees, governmental agencies and support groups as required.
- Performs all responsibilities assigned as Museum cashier.
- Processes accounts payable and accounts receivable.
- Manages Museum employee benefits program and payroll.
- Manages Museum purchasing policies and procedures.
- Guides financial decisions by establishing, monitoring, and enforcing procedures that adhere to Museum policies.
- Maximizes return and limits risk on cash by managing cash account and reserve balances and making investment transactions in conjunction with the Director and the Board of Trustees.
- Provides status of financial condition of the Museum by collecting, interpreting, and reporting key financial data.

- Ensures compliance with national, state, and local legal requirements by researching existing and new legislation, consulting with outside advisors, and filing financial reports.
- Advises management of impending actions and potential risks.
- Supervises annual audit performed by outside auditors; collects and provides all information regarding taxation and insurance
- Acts as liaison for contracted service providers as appropriate.
- Participates in contract negotiations and maintains contracts as appropriate.
- Innovation and ensure compliance
- Other duties as defined by Executive Director

3.2. Curatorial

Larger museums often separate curatorial duties among several individuals. There may be collections curators, exhibition curators, education curators and a chief curator who supervises the specialist curators. Curators often have an advanced degree in art history; many have doctoral degrees. For example the National Museum, New Delhi has seven curators.

3.2.1. Curator

Curators are in charge of a collection of exhibits in a museum. Curators develop ways in which objects, archives and artworks can be interpreted, through exhibitions, publications, events and audio-visual presentations. Their work involves buying exhibits, organising exhibitions, arranging restoration of artifacts, identifying and recording items, organising loans and dealing with enquiries. All of these tasks require curators to work with colleagues in areas such as conservation, education, design and marketing. In addition, they may conduct research and may lecture on findings or ongoing activities.

Responsibilities are

- Curators direct the acquisition, storage, and exhibition of collections,
- Look after negotiation and authorization of the purchase, sale, exchange, or loan of collections.
- They are also responsible for authenticating, evaluating, and categorizing the specimens in a collection.
- Curators oversee and help conduct the institution's research projects and related educational programs.
- Involves fund raising and promotion, which may include the writing and reviewing of grant proposals, journal articles, and publicity materials, as well as attendance at meetings, conventions, and civic events.
- Tracing the history of ownership, the provenance, of works of art in the collections of the museum.
- Knowing the geographic, personal and commercial route followed by works of art provides valuable insight into the history of collecting and taste.
- Curators develop materials for museum visitors: brochures, exhibition catalogues, audio guides, and wall text.

3.2.2. Assistant Curator

- Assistant curators often design the museum exhibits that are open to the public.

- They may travel to various areas to authenticate a work of art and make recommendations about its acquisition.
- They also oversee storage protocols, direct appropriate handling of artifacts or authorize the loan of a specific collection to another facility.
- Assistant curators may also spend significant time in meetings with board members, writing grant proposals or organizing research projects within their department.
- Some assistant curator positions are largely research based. In this case, their primary job is conducting research for the museum or facility.
- Assistant curators often promote the museum through community outreach programs, such as visits to classrooms. They also spend time on fundraising.

There are some specialized curators. Such as:

✓ **Guest Curator**

The guest curator may be an independent scholar, a professor at a university or an individual from another source. Sometimes an exhibition is jointly curated by both an employee of the exhibiting museum and a guest curator. Guest curators may provide services to individuals shaping an Art Collection.

✓ **Joint Curator**

Joint curation may occur in the case of a traveling exhibition. The curator of an exhibition toured by an organizing museum to various other museums may collaborate with the curator at an exhibiting museum.

3.2.3. Keeper

In some Indian museums Keepers are high official and ranked above the Curators and look after the curatorial functions as well as some administrative works of a museum. For example, Keepers in Indian Museum, Kolkata; Allahabad Museum etc.. They are specialized in a subject. They are responsible for;

- Planning, development and maintenance of the museum galleries.
- To head the documentation/ digitization and coordinate with Assistant Keepers for documentation and digitization of object/maintaining the digitized data.
- To prepare list of works under plan for fulfilling the strategy for various
- Performs developmental works of the museum in consultation with the Director
- To prepare the detailed project report of works under heads of various sections.
- To ensure safe custody of museum objects in the galleries and in the reserve collection.
- To ensure display and reorganization of galleries and arrangement of materials for furnishing the galleries.
- To ensure Supervision of periodical verifications of museum objects and submission of report to the Director.
- To ensure Publication of Journal
- To ensure collection of data and related information for preparation of periodicals/Annual Reports of activities of the Museum
- To take round the VIPs/VVIPs and eminent scholars in the Museum
- Keeper countersigns in the Register of Opening and Closing along with the technical officers/staff.

- To ensure timely attendance of staff

3.2.4. Documentation Officer/Curator

- Responsible for establishment and maintenance of all aspects of a documentation system according to the needs of the institution.
- Knowledge of valid documentation methods;
- Introduction of contemporary procedures in the state-of-the-art processing of material
- Informing all documentation personnel about the rules of the system and classification
- Within his specific area of expertise, he should cooperate with collection curators and at the same time sees to his and the curator's additional training;
- Regular meetings with the curators of collections of items in order to eliminate any mistakes and ensure efficiency of the agreed documentation system procedures.
- Keeps the central documentation of entry, access, registration, borrowing and other lists pertaining to items and supplementary material.
- Ensures that data is systematically arranged, accessible, correctly kept and interlinked:
- The keeping of register books and lists of documentation material, and the provision of clear links with object-related documentation; regular print-outs of digital documentation; the keeping of copies of register books and lists;
- Knowledge of the methods of storage and maintenance of documentation material;
- Researches, exhibits and publishes findings regarding documentation material
- The compilation of thesauruses and terminological dictionaries; with the help of collection curators

3.2.5. Documentation Assistants

- Technical management of documentation material:
- Data processing and editing of documentation material together with the documentation curator or collection curators;
- Compilation of lists and making of print-outs of documentation material;
- Approximate selection of material for later documentation processing;
- Classification of material according to valid classification;
- Registration of material outside the institution;
- Sending of documentation material to users;
- Scanning and photocopying of documentation material;
- Cooperation with photographers.
- Take part in exhibition and research projects and publications by preparing and editing the necessary material in cooperation with curators.

3.2.6. Education Officer

An Education Officer must have good writing skill and should be creative and good with people. Working with people of all ages is a key feature of the job and includes activities such as talks, presentations, workshops, demonstrations, guided tours and running courses. Some evening or weekend work may be required.

The person is responsible for:

- Preparing and distributing publicity materials and displays
- Writing plans and reports
- Producing educational resources or study packs
- Liaising with schools, voluntary/outreach/community groups and other local organisations
- Organising school visits
- Managing budgets
- Generating income via fundraising activities and submitting funding bids
- Analysing data and collating information
- Attending conferences
- Plans tours and other programs for museum visitors of all ages
- Works with the Curators to develop exhibits
- Oversees the docents

3.2.7. Gallery Guide (Docent)

Docents must be a good public speaker, enjoy research, good with people

- Welcomes visitors to the museum
- Guides and teaches visitors on tours of the museum
- Answers questions about the objects in the museum

3.2.8. Conservation Officer

- Examines artefacts, both visually and using scientific tools such as x-rays, infrared photography and microscopic analysis, to determine the extent and causes of deterioration
- Keeps full conservation records by writing up notes on the object's condition and any previous restoration work that has been done
- Produces a visual record of the object for identification purposes and to illustrate its condition
- Monitors and record display and storage conditions in order to keep objects in a stable condition
- Proposes and estimate the costs of treatments to halt decay and reveal the true nature of objects
- Negotiates with colleagues to justify a proposed treatment regime
- Organises the logistics of long-term projects and collaborate with other conservators in person and by email
- Works out creative solutions to clean, support and repair sensitive objects

- Uses a range of conservation instruments such as scalpels, cotton swabs, dental and carpentry tools, and solvents/adhesives
- Recreates historically-accurate finishes, such as mixing traditional paints from scratch
- Develops and maintain appropriate professional standards within your specialist area
- Keeps up to date with the latest conservation techniques and practices,

3.2.9. Graphic Designer

- Designs posters and brochures about the museum, both by hand and on the computer
- Assists the Public Relations Officers in creating advertisements for the museum
- Helps with the creation of the museum catalogue

3.2.10. Exhibit Designer

- Plans layout and display of objects in the space provided for the museum
- Decides on wall colors and arrangements of objects
- Helps in display of objects to hang, place and install artwork properly

3.2.11. Public Relations Officer

- Responsible to write and distribute press releases and announcements to inform the school and the community about events and activities at the museum
- Contacts local television stations and newspapers with information about the museum
- Works with the Graphic Designer to create posters, brochures, and advertisements
- Assists with assembling the museum catalogue

3.2.12. Museum Shop Manager

- Runs the museum gift shop, which sells postcards and other small souvenirs
- Arranges and displays the merchandise for easy shopping
- Handles money and helps visitors to the museum shop
- In-charge of other shop clerks

3.2.13. Volunteers

Some museums run volunteer programmes or offer work placements who have any of the following qualities:

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to organise, present and communicate messages effectively through design
- Excellent project management and organisational skills
- Knowledge of fundraising for cultural projects

- Knowledge of working with museum databases and IT issues
- Good team working skills
- Excellent research and IT skills.

3.2.14. Library and Information Officer

- The person is the in charge of the museum's library of books and historical archives, where members and staff can borrow books and do research
- In-charge for maintenance, management and supervision of the Library
- Conduct library committee meetings for purchase of books, references accounting, classifications, liaison with other libraries for procurement of books on loan
- Issue library cards to members and attendance certificate to researchers
- Conduct physical verification of books/periodicals and modernization of library
- Scrutiny/passing of bills towards all purchase

3.3. Security

Museums should and must have compact and strong security force. It may comprise museum's own personnel, or personnel of a security agency or both, under the supervision of a security officer. The force includes gallery guards, door attendants, cloakroom attendants, night watchmen and chief guard.

3.3.1. Security Officer

- In charge of safety for all museum objects and visitors
- Ensures that all museum rules are followed
- Assist visitors with questions
- Stationed throughout the museum during visiting hours
- Provide front of house security and surveillance in the Gallery
- Monitor and report security, safety and fire incidents to the supervisor on duty and complete the required documentation
- Participate in investigations regarding loss and assist with resolutions
- Complete the tasks outlined in the Security and Safety Management Plan
- Adhere to all of the Gallery's policies and procedures
- Conduct other duties as required

3.3.2. Security Guards

- Security Guard watches over the visitors, staff and museum assets and equipment. Continuous tours of the museum premises may include patrolling the outdoors during inclement weather.
- A Guard directs and informs visitors, so must be able to interact well with others as it is a consumer-service-oriented position.

- Monitors the surveillance systems such as the CCTV system. A Guard also directs traffic and way-finding for visitors, helps lost children, and provides crowd control and security for all major museum events.
- A Guard must be able to expertly handle emergencies and to report any hazardous conditions or irregularities to the appropriate personnel.
- Light office computer work such as emailing and writing reports may be required.

.Other Technical Roles in a museum

3.3.3. Taxidermist

- Prepare animal specimens for display
- Mount animals that are biologically correct and aesthetically pleasing

3.3.4. Photographer

- Associated with the documentation and display of objects
- Take and document images of museum objects

3.3.5. Carpenters

- Build display along with the curatorial staff
- Assist in installation of exhibition

3.3.6. Building and Grounds Staff

They are in charge of maintaining the building and grounds of the museum in good condition, including repairing walls and roofs, mowing lawns, cleaning floors

4. Summary

The museum must be administered by a professional staff. The board and staff must be united in their commitment to the institution's mission and responsibilities and clear in the distinctions among their various roles. No single overall staff pattern guarantees the production of high quality museum performance. Again, it is not mandatory to have all position in a museum. A crucial matter for management is to document the structure under which the museum is authorized, governed, and supported. This very basic process is valuable for existing as well as newly formed museums.

Members of the museum profession need relevant academic, technical and expertise training to perform effectively towards administration, care and conservation, exhibition designing, education and public relations, safety and security. In this regard, the Governing Body should offer re-training in view of supporting, competent and energetic personnel.