

# Museums help people with disability: A special focus on education of visual disability

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**Abstract - Initially people considered museums only as an institution for collecting, repairing, preserving and displaying objects, but now it is an education-oriented place for different classes of people. The purpose of this study is simply to determine whether students with visual impairments already know about museums and how museums can better contribute to their lives and what those students hope to gain from museums. Also, what are the future plans of the museum to improve the educational quality of visually disabled people? This study showed that visiting museums is very beneficial for all types of visually disabled students, but unfortunately the educational activities for those students are still insufficient, so the old plans to improve their educational quality in the future should be revamped and many new plans should be implemented. In future, museums need to introduce educational facilities for visually disabled people, free wheelchairs, separate entrances for barrier-free access, various games and events, electronic media, tour and exhibition programs, tactile objects and tactile books.**

**Index Terms - Visual disability, educational activities, exhibition Programmes, electronic media and tactile books.**

## INTRODUCTION

21st century museum organizations promote a variety of activities such as serving communities, audience consultation and community, collecting and interpreting, outside body collaboration, working in a variety of disciplines, staff training and core streaming diversity awareness (Coxall, 2006; Das & Lowe, 2018). Museums are not only organizations for the collection, preservation and display of specimens, but are also dynamic institutions that teach human beings their long history and endless opportunities (ICOM Turkiye Milli Comitési Ynalari, 1963) and are exploring issues in related to individual, community, education and society (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, 1999a; 2007; Hooper-Greenhill, *et al.*, 2000; Ashby

and Machin, 2021; Dodd & Sandell, 2001; Sandell, 2002; Black, 2005; Newman, *et al.*, 2005; Ashby, 2017; MacGregor, 2018). People with disabilities such as some visually impaired people with low vision cannot see properly but can read regular scripts or large scripts and discriminate between shapes and colors with magnifying glasses (Atman, 2006).

Currently museums are education-oriented, and it's trying to become a more accessible variety of educational facilities and services for society and people with disabilities. As for the types of disability, there seems to be a great deal of attention paid to physical access and reduced sensory access (Sandell & Dodd, 2010). According to Candlin (2006), physical touch is not strictly prohibited in museums as are opportunities for touch for people in general and visual disabilities in particular. Museums have also developed various services, programs and facilities for people with visual disabilities, such as tactile collections, tactile exhibitions, tactile tours, audio guides, oral descriptions, operational sessions, three-dimensional models, reproductions, relief sculptures, in Braille. information, large worldwide prints, tactile diagrams, workshops, etc. (Fondation de France/ICOM, 1991; Axel & Levent, 2003; Boussaid, 2004; Levi, 2005; Candlin, 2006; Reich, *et al.*, 2011). These educational activities are very helpful in exploring the awareness the better growth and development of people with disabilities. In Greece over the years, some museums have developed various activities such as educational programs for schoolchildren outreach programs, participation in international initiatives, temporary touch and multisensory exhibitions and programs, tactile guided tours and permanent touch tours (Tsitauri, 2004 : Chaita and Treda, 2010; Constantios, 2008; Nakou, 2010). At the same time, it is also notable that museums often ask to collaborate with associations for

the blind and visual disabilities to develop programmes, services or materials accessible to visually impaired visitors, such as information in Braille, tactile diagrams, Touch tourism, etc., (Emmanouil & Avgoulas, 2011).

#### MUSEUM AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

In this section, various renowned museums across the world such as the Royal academy of art (London), Guggenheim Museum (New York City), Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum (Madrid), Vienna Art History Museum (Austria), National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul), Picasso Museum (Barcelona), Strozzi Palace (Florence), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Australian Museum of Contemporary Art (Australia), British Museum (London), Smithsonian Institute (Washington), American Museum of Natural History (New York), Van Gogh Museum (Amsterdam), Baltic Center for Contemporary Art (Gateshead), and Tate Modern (London) have offered educational activities and access facilities for people with disabilities. Museums are much more accessible to blind people who have shown an interest in visiting museums and an appreciation of the visual arts, however, their ability to visit museums still depends on support from their family and friends or museum personnel. . From an educational point of view, museums provide many educational services such as learning by touching, listening or listening to audio books for blind people and also persons suffering from multiple visual disabilities. On the other hand, a person with low vision cannot see everything, but can read regular scripts or large scripts and discriminate between shapes and colors with a magnifying glass (Atman, 2006). Museums create various skills and programs for people with low vision, which are necessary for them to survive, learn, educate, improve their personal life. Tactile, auditory, taste, olfactory senses, certain learning strategies, and different environments are all important in the learning of people with low vision (Levi, 2005; Reich, *et al.*, 2011). According to Faulk & Dearing (2002a), the museum helps to increase the clarity of the personal, social, cultural and physical conditions of people with disabilities. Museums also facilitate students to understand that they are members of that society and form the basis of personality and self-confidence

building by presenting documents relating to the culture within the social interaction (Reidmiller, 2003). A museum organizes multicultural events in societies that play an important role in integrating different groups together, thus we can say that the museum is an informal learning center (Gaffken, 2013).

#### HOW MUSEUM HELPS VISUAL DISABLED IN EDUCATION

Visually impaired people have very limited education resources and this limits their career outlook and quality of life. For better educational facilities, museums developed a separate parking space and bathroom, wheelchairs can be rented, separate entrance for barrier free access, cabin width of lift is also specified and guided tours are organized for all disability groups. Museums provide an educational platform for people with visual disabilities that's why museums are trying to be more accessible to people with disabilities with a variety of facilities and services (McMillen & Alter, 2017). Sandell & Dodd, (2010) and his Students reported that the vision disabled people may access the information in a variety of ways, for example Braille, audio-tape, or enlarged print.

#### MUSEUMS ORGANIZE GAMES TO EDUCATE VISUAL DISABLED CHILDREN

The museum is an informal organization that organizes fun and simple sensory activities to engage the children. Fill an ice tray with various programs such as acrylic paint and let it freeze in the refrigerator. Once frozen you can take out the paint and let the disabled child draw beautiful patterns with them on a sheet of paper. This sensory stimulation using cold ice paint will surely delight baby. These activities are very helpful to improve skill for colour recognition and observation. These activities are very helpful for improving skills for colour recognition and observation. Museums offer another sensory activity consisting of a plate with a variety of snacks that vary in size and texture. He asked the blind children to sort out the snacks on the basis of these characteristics. This type of activity is helpful in teaching basic math such as addition and subtraction; it also rewards

children if they cooperate well with the activity by allowing them to eat breakfast.

#### MUSEUM USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN EDUCATION

Several technologies can play a part in welcoming visually handicapped people to museums as well. Many museums all over the world are doing innovative things with 3D printing for people with disabilities. One of the major benefits of this new technology is that it can give visually impaired people the opportunity to experience museum objects in new ways (Mesquita and Carneiro, 2016; March, *et al.*, 2005). Electronic media is very helpful in gathering a large amount of educational information for people with vision disabilities. Electronic media provides information to students who cannot see. Verbalize what is written on PowerPoint and television. Museum staff should read the printed information and describe the charts and graphs being used.

#### MUSEUM ORGANIZE TOUR AND EXHIBITION PROGRAMS

The museum organizes tours and exhibitions for the visually impaired and is very helpful in education. The tour and exhibition programs are interactive and they invite participants to experience the performance through vivid detail. The standard audio guide may prevent the visitor from asking questions and clarifying their points. Student visits to museums are gradual and give people the opportunity to create works of art in their own way. Doctors make seizures more interactive by creating images rich in the meaning of color, smell and sound with their words.

#### MUSEUM FUTURE PLANS FOR VISUAL DISABILITY

##### Implement touch objects in museums

The duty of the museum is to cater to the diverse needs of the visually impaired. To visit the number of disabled people in museums and we have to apply tactile objects. Initially traditional museums only offered touching objects behind glass, but they did not provide facilities for the visually impaired. But museums must develop tactile experiences to make travel more enjoyable and educative.

##### Implement tactile books in museums

There is an urgent need for all museums to improve tactile book qualities and add new books, as these books are a great way to promote the development of literacy skills with any visually impaired child, including children with other significant disabilities. These tactile books should be kept in museums which help in imparting knowledge to the visitors. These books are of many types such as experience books, commodity books, regular books and subject books

##### 1. Experience Books:

Museums add experience books to their plans, as the experience book is a book based on an experience the child had on a trip to the zoo and grocery store. These types of books are used to retrieve memories of that experience and to assist the child in the development of language around the experience.

##### 2. Object Books:

An object book consisting of real objects and these items must be drawn from the student's activities and experiences so that it is meaningful. These books introduce a smart learner to the wonderful world of reading.

##### 3. Routine Books:

A regular book is a book that organizes a student day or activity set; A book version of the calendar box. When the activity or step is complete, the student will turn the page. The story box is a way for young children with visual impairment to experience the story.

##### 4. Theme Books:

A theme book is a book that focuses on a topic (ie transportation, restaurants, demographic information). Then the books are used to supplement the instruction for that subject.

This is a qualitative study and therefore has no intention to generalize to the wider population of people with visual impairment. However, people with disabilities face both physical and mental challenges when visiting museums and the authors are aware of this. The museum needs to rethink and re-invent a large population with visual disabilities and other disabilities so that their future can be bright. Museums need people with innovative thinking and engaging research that can enrich our understanding of the experiences of people with visual impairments when it comes to visiting museums. In these ways museums can further improve their services to make the museum

accessible and accessible for people with visual or other disabilities.

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