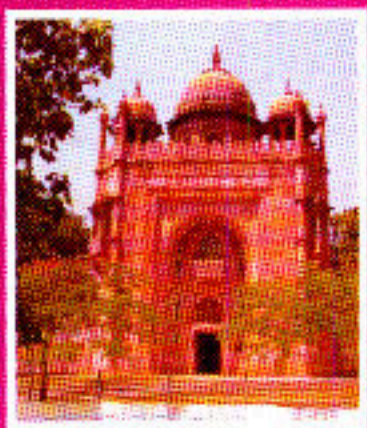


THE HAND BOOK ON GOVERNMENT MUSEUM, CHENNAI



Explore the past

This handy Guide Book gives you all information about the treasures of the Museum in a nutshell. Turn the pages to unravel the mysteries of the past.

THE HAND BOOK

ON

GOVERNMENT MUSEUM, CHENNAI

Published by

S. S. JAWAHAR, I.A.S.,
Commissioner of Museums,
Government Museum,
Chennai- 600 008.

First Edition : 2011

Number of Copies : 500

©

The Commissioner of Museums,
Government Museum,
Chennai - 600 008.

Price : Rs. 150/-

Printed at:

Tirumalaivil Printing Society,
Chennai - 600 021.



S. S. JAWAHAR, I.A.S.,
Commissioner of Museums,
Government of Tamilnadu

Government Museum,
Pantheon Road, Egmore,
Chennai - 600 008.
Tele: 91-44-2819 3238

FOREWORD

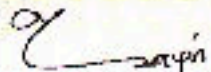
The Government Museum, Chennai has many firsts to its credit.

It is largest Museum in South India with a rich collection of antiquities, art objects and natural history specimens. It has some of the finest bronzes and largest collection of Roman coins outside of Europe.

The Government Museum, Chennai spans several centuries starting from Indus Valley Civilization right down to the colonial and modern times. As one passes from one gallery to another, one travels through the entire civilization with their rich history diverse cultures.

This guide book is a selective compendium of rare objects in the museum covering all the important Sections, namely, Archaeology, Anthropology, Numismatics, Arts, Geology, Botany, Zoology. The attempt here is to give the visitor a snapshot of the contents in a brief but comprehensive manner. The aim is to showcase the significant, rare and outstanding objects of historical and artistic interest covering various periods both within Tamilnadu and from the rest of the country.

Visitors can consult this book as an aid to their visit so that when they move through the galleries they will have a better understanding and appreciation of the objects displayed. The notes accompanying the photographs will attract both scholars as well as general public. I hope this Hand Book will enhance the curiosity of the tourists and encourage them to visit the Museum.


(S. S. Jawahar)

CONTENTS

Museum - General information	1
Archaeology	3
Anthropology	11
Arts	15
Numismatics and Philately	19
Children's Museum	23
Botany	27
Zoology	31
Geology	35
Chemical Conservation Section	37
Design & Display Section	39
Education Section	41

Museum- General Information



The Government Museum, Chennai has obtained a place of great importance in the modern world due to the fact that it has become more and more conscious of its responsibility towards various categories of visitors who come for recreation and education. In fact, the very purpose of the existence of a museum is education mixed with enjoyment.

This Museum is a center for education and scholarly research, which plays active role in contributing to the enjoyment for public and it covers all the important aspects of the cultural and intellectual life of society.

It is classified as a multipurpose museum and is incidentally the second largest in India. It is one of the largest and oldest of the State-owned Museums in India. Beginning as a Museum of Practical Geology, in 1851, the Madras Central Museum (as it was then called) now has different Sections like Archaeology, Art, Anthropology, Numismatics, Philately, Zoology, Botany, Geology, and Children's Museum. In addition to these there is a well equipped Chemical Laboratory for the conservation of museum objects, an Education Section for carrying out the educational activities and a Design and display section for organizing the display work of the Museum. These sections contain extensive collections illustrating mostly the past history, culture and natural history of South India and thus helps to preserve our rich cultural heritage by way of exhibiting them. The rapid cultural consciousness amongst the people are instrumental in bringing public to this museum.

Notable collections in the Museum are the world famous South Indian bronzes, Amaravati collections, sculptures, Tanjore (Thanjavur) armoury, inscriptions on stones and copper plates, the Dowleshwaram hoard of gold coins of Raja Raja I and Kulothunga I, the Chengam hoard of copper coins, artifacts from the Megaliths of Adichanallur, the Bruce Foote Collection of prehistoric stone implements, Roman and other artifacts from the famous site of Arikamedu (near Pondicherry), the exquisite crystal reliquaries from the Bhattiprolu Stupa and the enormous skeleton of the whale obtained on shore near Mangalore.

This handy guide book gives the necessary information for the visitor to browse through the museum in a leisurely way.

Government Museum, Chennai is located in Egmore, which is the heart of the city, spreading to an area of 16.25 acres of land. Six independent buildings in this Museum campus has 48 galleries.



General Information

Location :

Pantheon Road,
Egmore,
Chennai - 600 008
Tamil Nadu, India.

Accessibility :

1/2 KM from the Egmore Railway Station.
02 KM from the Central Railway Station.
20 KM from Air Port.

Entrance Fee :

Rs. 15/- for adults (Indian Nationals).
Rs. 10/- for children below 12 years (Indian Nationals).
Rs. 5/- for bonafide students and teachers in groups with prior permission (Indian Nationals).
Rs. 250/- or US \$ 5 for adult (Non-Indian Nationals).
Rs. 125/- or US \$ 2.50 for children (Non-Indian Nationals).
Rs. 75/- or US \$ 1.50 for bonafide students and teachers in groups with prior Permission (Non-Indian Nationals).

Camera Fee : Rs. 200/- per camera.

Video Camera : Rs. 500/- per video camera.

Web : www.chennaiuseum.org

E-mail : govtmuse@tn.gov.in

Working Hours :

9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Holidays :

Fridays and National Holidays, viz.,
Republic Day (26th January),
Independence Day (15th August) and
Gandhi Jayanthi (2nd October).

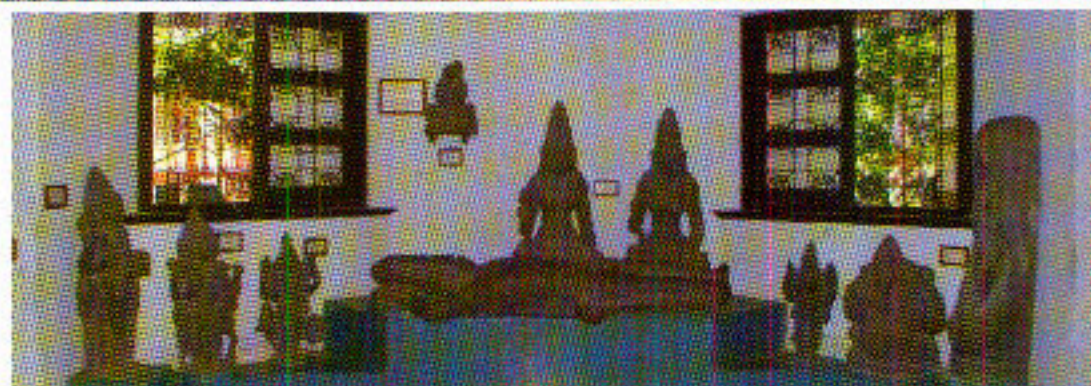
ARCHAEOLOGY

The Archaeology Section highlights South Indian Sculptures and bronzes which would reflect the high proficiency in carving and casting technology of yesteryears.

The Archaeology Section of the Museum is primarily concerned with the acquisition, preservation and display of antiquities and allied objects pertaining to the various periods of South Indian history. The exhibits in this Section consist of sculptures, architectural pieces, metal and stone inscriptions, which have a bearing on the past history and social life of the people of this part of India. A significant collection of objects representing the industrial arts such as wood carving, ivory work, metal ware, inlay and embossed works for which South India has been famous from very early times is also dealt with by the Section.

The collection of the Section may be grouped as follows, each group being important and interesting in its own way: (1) Bronzes, (2) Specimens of sculpture and architectural pieces, (3) Inscriptions and (4) Industrial art objects. The study of the objects of the first three groups is essential for a proper evaluation of the levels of culture reached by the people of the different periods and localities to which they belong. The inscriptions are, however, the main source for the history of the country as also for its social life. The study of the specimens of the industrial arts reveals how dexterous the South Indian craftsmen were in their application of various art motifs to objects used in daily life or on ceremonial occasions.

STONE SCULPTURES GALLERY



Vishnu

Vishnu is one of the most popular Hindu Gods and is usually looked on as the preserver deity. He is said to have taken ten avatars to punish the wicked and protect the good. He is represented here as seated with his powerfully built chest stooping forward. His kirta makuta is fashioned like an elongated cap, flattened at the top. He is wearing makarakundalas in his ears. He has four hands, the upper two carrying the discus and conch while the lower right hand bestows abhaya (protection) and left hand holds a mace. His sacred thread is fashioned like a ribbon with a broad fastening over the left breast. All the characteristic marks which enables one to identify a Pallava Vishnu image are present in this sculpture.

Unknown locality, Circa 6th- 7th Century C.E. Acc.No: 2607

Dakshinamurthy

This young four-armed God delivers his teachings in this serene stone sculpture. He is seen seated with his matted hair spread out with four hands on a raised seat. He is holding axe and antelope in his upper right and left hands respectively while his lower right hand is portrayed in the attitude of abhaya and chin mudra and his lower left hand rests on his left knee. His right leg is kept on the pedestal and his left leg is raised resting on the seat. A hefty band (Yogapatta) is seen crossing over his left knee. The figure trampled underfoot represents ignorance. The ornaments and yajnopavita speak of this sculpture belonging to Pallava art.



Kaveriipakkam, North Arcot District., Circa 6th- 7th Century C.E.,

Acc. No: 71-22/37

Ganesa



Son of Lord Siva, he is always depicted elephant-headed, and with a large potbelly bound around with a snake. His limbs are usually rather chubby and child-like. His attributes are an elephant goad and a noose and most important of all, a bowl of sweetmeats, which the trunk, which is twisted to the left, tastes. Due to the heaviness of the belly his short stumpy left leg slightly folded and resting on the pedestal while his right leg is bent and kept on the pedestal. He is having a short karanda makuta on his head.

Kaveripakkam, North Arcot District. Circa 6th- 7th Century C.E.;
Acc. No. 71-24/37

Hero Stone

Veerakkal or Hero stone showing two warriors on horseback, one with a sword and the other with a lance rushing at a great speed over the battle field strewn with corpses. In the upper panel there are two Apsaras attending on a hero fallen in battle. In another panel further up there is a Sivalinga adorned by a seated figure on one side and a standing figure on the other side. A part of the lower panel and portions of the top panel are broken and missing.



Chippagiri, Bellary District, Karnataka,
About 10th Century C.E.

Horned Dvarapalaka



In South India, all temple doorways are protected by the presence of some powerful or auspicious figure, such as these twin warrior figures. Unfortunately, this figure is mutilated below the stomach. He is wearing kirita makuta on his head with two horns to show his prowess. He has kundalas in his ears, a broad kanthi on his neck, keyuras and valayas as ornaments. He is wearing a sacred thread that is the characteristic mark of the Pallavas- a broad fastening over the left breast. He is also having ucarabandha on his stomach.

Kaveripakkam, North Arcot District
Circa 6th- 7th Century C.E. Acc. No. 71-7/27

BRONZE GALLERY

By far the best known objects of the Section are the metal figures. There are over 1500 of them in the Museum, of which about 85 are Buddhist, about two dozen Jain and the rest Hindu. This Museum is perhaps the only institution in the whole world, where such a large collection of metal figures are assembled under a single roof. The collection of bronze figures contains specimens of different periods ranging from the early centuries of the Christian era to the recent times. The four fragmentary Buddha figures excavated at

Amaravati in the Guntur district, are the earliest and date from about the third century C.E. The most important part of the collection of Bronze figures is that representing the Hindu gods, goddesses and devotees. The images of Vaishnavite and Saivite groups are shown in separate showcases in the bronze gallery which was opened in the year 1963 C.E. Of these images a few date from the Pallava period, a slightly larger number from the Chola period and the rest belong to the Vijayanagar and later periods. Mention may be made of the Pallava bronzes, which include the figures of little Somaskanda (skanda missing), Vishvapaharana, Kannappanayanar and Vishnu.

The best Chola specimens include the figures of Nataraja from Tiruvalangadu and the Rama group from Vadakkuppanaiyur, Vishnu as Srinivasa, Tirumangai Alvar, Inscribed Kali, the

world famous

Ardhanarisvara from Tiruvenkadu and Parvati. In fact some of them, for instance, the

Tiruvalangadu Nataraja and Rama group, are so well executed as to be real gems of art, which we can be proud of. The figure representing the Vishnu with two hands in which the

attributes are embedded from Komal, and Balasubrahmanya and dancing Balakrishna belonging to the later periods are of interest as they are essentially in the traditional style though just beginning to get conventionalised. The figures of Venugopala, Rukmini and Satyabhama from Chimakurti which represent the art of the Telugu country have remarkable grace about them. A figure of Nataraja in the leg reversed pose received as a treasure-trove from Porupumetupatti in the Madurai district is of interest historically, iconographically and also artistically. There are images representing the ayudhapurushas Sudarsana and Kaumodaki which are very rare representations in metal.



Rama Ensemble

In this bronze ensemble the hands of Rama and Lakshmana are held in the posture of holding a bow and arrow in tribhanga posture. Hanuman is seen with his hands in the usual supplicating manner since he always worships Rama.

Tiruvalangadu, Nagapattinam District,
14th Century C.E.



Vishnu with his consorts

This is a unique bronze. Rarely Vishnu is portrayed with a single pair of arms in which his usual attributes Conch and Discus are embedded in the palms. A prominent "Vanamala", again a rare feature in South Indian bronzes can be seen here. Vishnu is seated on a rectangular bhadrāsana with hands in abhaya and varada postures, while Sri Devi and Bhudevi to his right and left are on smaller pedestal. The Tiruvāsi with carvings is highly ornamental.



Korral, Thanjavur District, 13th Century C.E.

Ardhanarisvara

As the name indicates, Siva is represented as half-male and half-female, typifying the male and female energies. In this form, he has three hands, the lower right rests on the back of the bull and the right upper hand holds an axe. The whole of the right side (male side) is adorned with ornaments peculiar to Siva. The right leg is bent slightly and rests firmly on the lotus pedestal. The drapery is up to the knee. On the left side (female side), the image has a Karandamakuta. The drapery is up to the ankles and her leg is slightly bent, as if leaning on Siva and rests on the pedestal.



Tiruvengadu, Nagapattinam District, 11th Century C.E.

Chakreswari

This beautiful miniature figure is one of the eight metal icons received as treasure-trove items along with four loose parts of Prabhavali decorations from the village Salukkal, where a Jain temple by name Virakotala Perumbari existed in the 11th Century C.E. The female figure with four hands is depicted in the Ardha-Padmasana seated posture on a lotus pedestal. She is bejewelled with short karanda-makuta, sira-chakra (hair clip on the back of hair part), ear ornaments, necklace, koyuras (shoulder ornament) and bangles and dressed with kucha-bandha (breast band) and lower garment. Both the upper hands are shown carrying discs. The lower right hand holds a lotus with a stalk, while the lower left hand carries a fruit-like object in the palm.



Salukkal, Vancavasi Taluk, North Arcot District, 12th Century C.E.

AMARAVATI GALLERY



Amaravat casing slab

The Buddhist sculptures from Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh, which adorn an entire gallery in this museum constitute by far the most interesting and important record not only of the development of the artistic activities of South India during the five centuries from circa 200 B.C.E. to circa 300 C.E. but also about the social life of the people of those times.

The Stupa at Amaravati is one of the biggest in South India. The ancient inscriptions refer to it as the Mahachetiya, built during the time of Asoka but was extensively enlarged and embellished by later rulers. The entire monument was covered with sculptured panels made of lime-stone or 'Painad marble' found in the neighbourhood. The Jataka stories of the Buddha are selected and displayed in showcases. The railing part of the stupa is displayed in the same fashion as it would have been in the original. The fragments are displayed in wall cases.

At the other end of the gallery; stone sculptures of Buddha from various parts of Tamil nadu are exhibited along with stone slabs of vidhyadarapuram. Four stone caskets from Bhartiprolu with inscriptions in Brahmi also find a place here.



Relic Casket made of sandstone

JAIN GALLERY

The Government Museum, Chennai has a good collection of Jain sculptures. The sculptures of this gallery are from the present Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh regions. Majority of them were brought from Danavulappadu, Andhra Pradesh. These have been collected in the days when the Government Museum, Chennai was the principal museum of the then Madras Presidency during the later half of the 19th Century C.E. And the 1st half of the 20th Century C.E.

Nishidhi Pillar



This Nishidhi pillar has two sculptured panels with an epitaph inscription. The upper panel is designed with a frame work of Simha mukha (lion face) in an arched niche. In this panel, Tirthankara, Mahavira is depicted in the seated meditation (Dhyana-Padmasana) pose, two Chamaras (fly-whisks) one on each of his sides and a carved Mukkudai (Triple umbrella) are depicted over his head. In the median band, which separates the upper and lower panels is a lion, the identification mark of Mahavira. It is carved in profile. The lower panel is designed with the framework of a nearly square Mandapa (hall with pillars). Both the Mandapas have ornate carved pillars. In the centre of the Mandapa, the worshipper is seated in Padmasana (lotus pose) with folded hands in Anjali mudra (prayer pose). The richness of his ornaments and lower garment conveys his opulent background.

Danavulappadu, Cuddapah District,
Andhra Pradesh. Circa: 14th Century C.E.

DECORATIVE ART GALLERY



Ivory bowl
about 19th Century C.E.

The exhibits of the Section consist of specimens of wood carving, ivory carving, metalware, inlay and embossed works.

The ivory carvings include representations of animals such as cows, deer and deities such as Vinayaka by traditional carvers of Mysore, Travancore and Visakhapatnam. The excellence of workmanship of the carver is revealed by the intricate work on an ink-bottle holder in the collection.

The metalware objects consist of lamps of different types, utensils used in temple and household worship, toys and luxury articles such as betel boxes and nut crackers. Each one of these groups is of great interest. Especially, the collection of lamps is remarkable for the multiplicity of types and the delicacy of workmanship. Of these, the large lamps with festooned branches spreading out, are noteworthy.

The Tanjore metal vessels and Bidri ware are also of interest.



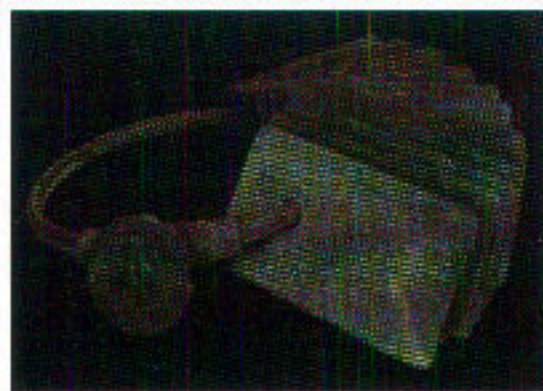
Varaha
wood carving

Despite its perishable nature, wood carving has been a most important craft in almost all the parts of India, especially in South India through the ages. Most of the wood carvings displayed here are the ones received from the disused temple cars all over South India. Sir George Birdwood who says,

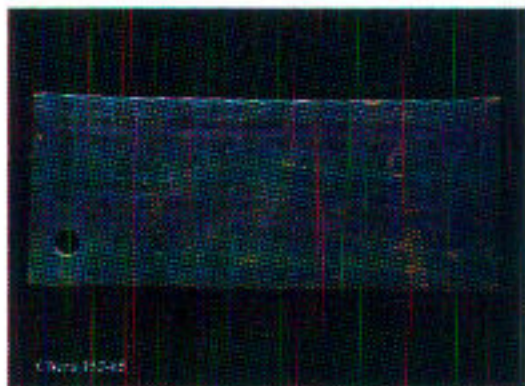
"South India serves as the best place for the study of wood carving" amply testifies the importance of this craft.

COPPER PLATE GRANTS AND INSCRIPTIONS

The political and social history of any nation can be written only on the basis of contemporary evidences. Inscriptions and copper plates are for most among them. India, a nation having a long heritage possesses very many numbers of such documents. Tamil Nadu has the unique distinction of having not only largest number of copper plate grants. Incidentally, the inscription throw light upon the administration, economic condition of the people, the nature of taxation, commerce and conditions of the mercantile community etc. A careful study of the inscriptions reveals various aspects of the social life and conditions in those days. They are also useful for a study of the growth of the region concerned. In addition to the above, they contain information about the ancestry and genealogy of the king. Further, they narrate how the king ordered the gift of the grant and close with imprecatory verses. The information they contain from the Pallava period to the reign of Petty Zamindars. The language of these grants vary from Prakrit, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Malayalam to Modern Tamil. The script used varies according to the dynasties; and also of the localities where and the period when, the grants were issued. Most of these grants are records dealing with gifts made by the Kings, usually of land, which may extend to entire village. They were executed on days specially selected because they were auspicious, such as solar and lunar eclipses, they are usually dated some times in the regnal year of the King, or other times in the Kali Yuga or in the Saka Era. In certain cases astronomical data are given and their date would be decided on the basis of the ephemerid data.



Tiruvallangudi Copper Plates



Chera Copper Plate

ANTHROPOLOGY

The Anthropology Section helps to understand the origin of human culture in South India and the customs and manners of South Indian tribes and its evolution into the present stylised forms.

In 1878, Surgeon General G.Biddie, the then Superintendent of the Museum made Ethnology as a museum subject, illustrated by prehistoric antiquities and ethnographic materials. World famous collections of stone tools, ancient pottery, implements, weapons and ornaments throw light in understanding the culture of South Indians.

And consequently, the Government Museum, Chennai is marked as the 'Cradle of Anthropology' of Indian sub-continent, since the subject matter of Anthropology was introduced and nurtured exclusively at this museum by the genuine efforts of a line of capable Curators.

The galleries of anthropology display tangible objects of culture, representing prehistoric, protohistoric, tribal, folk and urban communities. For the convenience of study, research and dissemination, all the anthropological exhibits in the galleries are presented in a judicious combination of educative and recreative display. The anthropological exhibits are displayed in various galleries titled as Prehistory, Indus Valley Civilization, Physical Anthropology, Ethnology, Folk Religions, Folk Arts, Puppetry, Musical Instruments and Arms.

Anthropology Galleries

Prehistory Gallery

The prehistoric antiquities are exhibited in the ground floor of the front building at its right side. The prehistoric stone tools collected from Pallavaram and Attirampakkam, by Robert Bruce Foote, Adichanallur and Perumbair Megalithic remains by A. Rea, Nilgiri Megalithic materials by J.W. Brecks are the prestigious and notable collection housed in this gallery. Ram sarcophagus unearthed from Sankavaram (Andhra Pradesh), Burial urns and associated finds of Adichanallur, Perumbair and Nilgiris, Roman antiquities acquired by Mortimer Wheeler from Arkamedu are other interesting exhibits of this gallery.



Madrasian Hand axes



Ram Sarcophagus

Indus Valley Civilization Gallery



Mohenjo-Daro Storage Urn

The material remains unearthed from the Indus Valley sites chiefly from Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro revealing the Chalcolithic Culture are displayed in the first floor of the Main Building. Stone tools co-existed with copper tools in this period as evidenced from copper axe and stone axe. The existence of stratified society is exemplified by the presence of ornaments of copper, conch and terracotta. The architectural excellence is reflected by the burnt bricks of varied size. The notable exhibits in this gallery are charred wheat grains, storage urns, figurines of mother goddess and other images, perforated vases, painted potsherds, weights, seals and sealings.

Physical Anthropology Gallery

Replicas of human fossils such as Australopithecines, Neanderthal men, Sinanthropus, various human skulls to cite racial groups, tools of anthropometry are displayed in this gallery. A completely articulated human skeleton is also presented here to impart knowledge to the viewing public.



Kireetam used by the Therukkoothu artists

Folk Arts Gallery

Artefacts revealing the various folk arts of South India such as Therukoothu, Karagam, Kavadi, Chettinadu artefacts, models of various temple vahanas, a set of folk puppets are presented in this gallery.

Puppetry Gallery

Puppets made from different materials and regions such as leather puppets, string puppets, glove puppets from Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, South East Asia adorn this small gallery.



Lambadi Woman

Ethnology Gallery

The ethnographic collection representative of the material culture of most of the South Indian tribes such as Todas, Kotas, Kanikars, Chenchus, Koyas, Gadabas, Saoras, Khonds, Lambadis are presented in this gallery. Further, fire making devices, fishing appliances, folk jewellerys, phootha figurines, South Indian boomerangs are also displayed in this gallery. An array of Assam Tribal artefacts acquired through exchange are also on presentation here. A set of life-size Kathakali figures, models of Saivite and Vaishnavite temple cars, Sorcery figures, Votive offerings of various religious sects, a set of Kondaipalli toys depicting avatars of Vishnu are exhibits of worth mentioning displayed in this gallery.

Musical Instruments Gallery



A view of Musical Instruments Gallery

A representative collection of the principal types of musical instruments of stringed, wind and percussion categories are exhibited in this gallery. Models of ancient Yash varieties, panchamukha vadyam (five faced drum) are notable collection of this gallery. Tribal, folk and foreign musical instruments are also on display.



Panchamukha Vadyam

Arms Gallery



A view of Tanjore Armouries

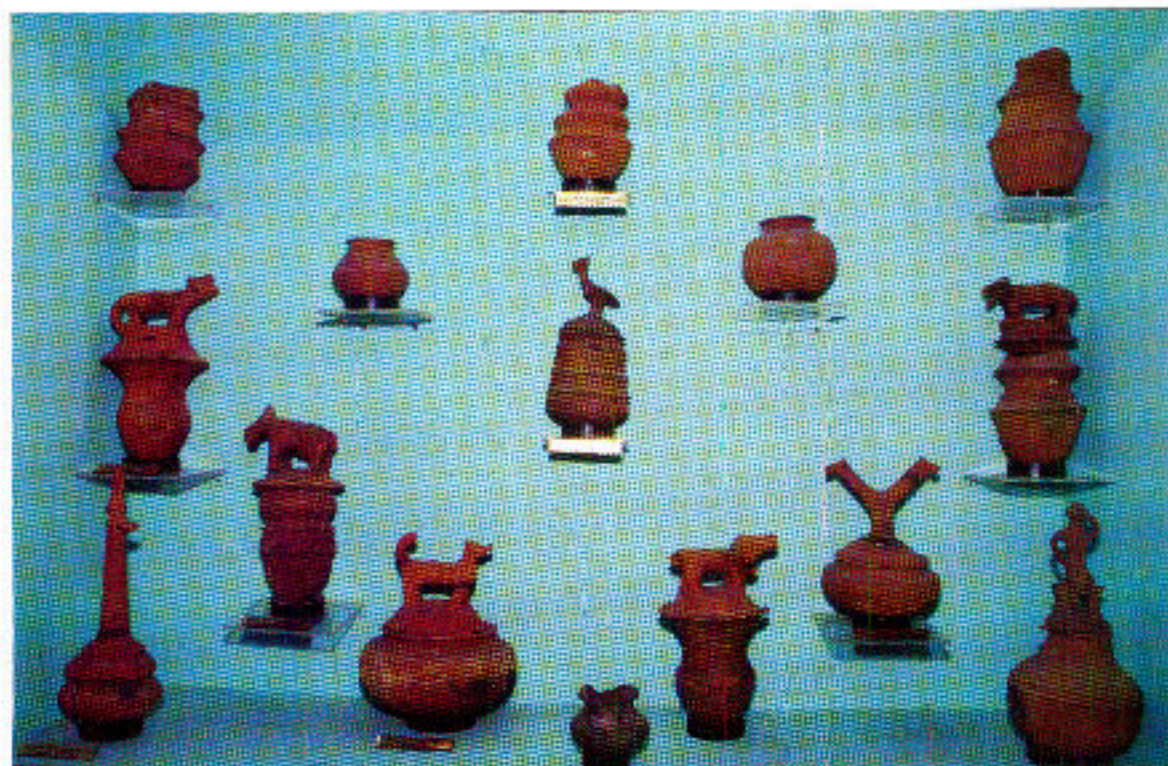
Tanjore armouries and European East India Company weapons occupy the right and left bays of this gallery respectively. The remnants of bombardment of Eriden are also on display here. The various war trophies and coat of arms decorate the walls. An array of cannons are displayed in the exterior and interior of the gallery. Here, a magnificently ornate cannon of Tippu, one of the prestigious collection of this Museum is also on display.



Cannon with Tiger Head

In short, the socio-cultural, technological evolution and advancements of the mankind is manifested in these galleries. Starting from stone tools to fire arms; terracottas to ornate metal objects; shadow puppetry to stage theatrical art; digging stick to plough share; spindles to embroidery; ancient yazi to contemporary veena, one could visualize authentic evidences available at these galleries for both specialists and public visitors.

Representative Showcases of the Prehistory Gallery



ARTS

The Art Section tries to reflect the changing trends of painting starting from the period of the Mughals, the adaptation of Western oil on canvas painting technique by Raja Ravi Varma in 19th Century to the Present Era.

The Government Museum, Chennai has a good collection of paintings and sculptures, both traditional and modern. Interesting traditional paintings of Tanjore, Rajput, Moghul, Kangra, Deccani schools and modern paintings in Oil, Tempera, Water Colour, Graphics and Acrylic mediums are in the collection. Graphics and modern style metal sculptures are also in the collections.

Tanjore paintings depict the figures of Tanjore Maratha Kings and Queens and Puranic (mythological) scenes from Tamil Literature.

Rajput paintings belong to 16th and 17th Centuries C.E. They illustrate the rhythm of love based on musical modes.

The court scene of Emperor Babur, portraits of Jehangir, Shah Jehan, animals and birds are the subject matter of Moghul paintings.

The Kangra paintings represent Krishna legends as the main subject. There are twelve Portraits of British Governors and Governor-Generals.

Fifteen Raja Ravi Varma School of paintings are considered as National Treasures in the collections.

The Rock and Cave Art Gallery



The Rock and Cave Art Gallery of the Government Museum, Chennai makes the Rock and Cave Art found usually in the remote areas easily not accessible to the visitors. It has used interactive Son-et-lumiere, Touch Screen and Tran slides to stimulate visitors' interest.

Rock Art sites like Perumukkal in South Arcot (petroglyphs), Alambadi, Keezhvalai in Villupuram District, Vellarkomba and Iduhati in Nilgiris District are some of the Rock Art sites on

display. Tirumalai in Tiruvannamalai District, Sittannavasal and Tirugokamam in Pudukottai District and Mahabalipuram are some of the Cave Art sculptures and paintings on display.

Holography Gallery

Holography demonstrates the age old Hindu concept of Maya through science - what appears as real and three-dimensional object is actually unreal.

This Holography Gallery, recently refurbished, is first of its kind in Indian Museums. The display of 37 holograms of rare coins, jewellery and miniature bronze icons holographed by using LASER at Anna University. It is located at the 2nd Floor of the Gallery of Contemporary Art with improved paneing and illumination.



Industrial Art Gallery



This gallery was set up in 2003, specially for 151 years of Anniversary Celebrations of the Government Museum, Chennai to show how Tamilnadu was once the world leader in industry and technology; how it rapidly adapted itself to the Industrial Revolution and how it is stepping into the present Information and Bio-Technology Era as one of the leading states.

Miniature Paintings Gallery

Rajput Paintings

The miniature paintings produced at the court of Rajput kings form a distinct group and they were contemporary with miniatures produced in the Moghul court at Delhi. The majority of the paintings are small in size. An important class of Rajasthani miniatures is the series of Ragamalas or the paintings of musical modes.

Musical mode Ragini Madhumadhavi



The painting shows a lady sitting in the palace lawn. Another lady is plucking flower from the plant. An inscription is written on the top portion.

Size : 26 x 20 cm.
Thick tempera on paper.
Rajput School.
17th Century C. E.
Purchased in 1951.

Musical mode Ragini Gaudakali



The picture shows a lady holding tambura in her hand and dancing in joy. Animals like monkeys, peacocks and deer are seen running in the garden. An inscription is seen written on the top portion.

Size : 26 x 20 cm.
Thick tempera on paper.
Rajput School.
17th century C. E.
purchased in 1951.

Tanjore School of Paintings

The Cholas who ruled South India after the Pallavas were great patrons of art and literature. The rhythmic and graceful paintings of the Brahadeswara temple at Tanjore, built by Raja Raja Chola is the best example of the art of that period. The Vijayanagar kings, who rose into prominence in the South about the year 1336 C. E., and their successors, the Nayaks, who followed the footsteps of their predecessors. The large scale wall paintings which has resulted to continue the tradition up to the beginning of the 18th Century C. E., and the Tanjore artists followed the art tradition till the 19th Century C. E.

Sri Krishna

The picture shows Krishna holding the butter pot in his left hand. An attendant is standing at the right side. The background is in dark blue.



Size : 40 X 38 cm.
Tempera, Tanjore School,
About 19th Century C. E.

Raja and Rani

The picture shows the Maratha King and Queen in standing posture. They are shown with folded hands in worshipping pose. Their dresses are adorned with gold leaves.



Size : 50.7 x 40.3 cm.
Tempera Tanjore School.
Maratha Period.
About 19th Century C. E.

Contemporary Art Gallery

British Portraits

Lord Connemara (1827-1902 C. E.)



Size : 282 X 177 cm.,

Oil on Canvas

Museum campus has been named as the Connemara Public Library.

It is an oil painting painted by George Smith in 1900 in India. Lord Connemara was the Governor of Fort. St. George during the period 1886-1890, Madras Presidency. In memory of his achievements as administrator in India, the public library situated inside the

It is an oil painting painted in 1901 by Raja Ravi Varma, the harbinger of modern art in India. The artist had used dark background in the painting in order to give relief to the main pictures which are in light yellow.

Raja Ravi Varma Paintings

Yasodha and Krishna



Size : 94 X 60 cm.

Oil on Canvas

Boats on Canal



Size : 115 X 65 cm. Oil on Canvas

This is an oil painting on canvas painted by K.C.S. Panicker (1911-1978) in the year 1952. He was one of the eminent contemporary Indian artist of India. The painting shows the scenarios of canals in Malabar region.

When Winter Comes



Size: 31 X 36 cm. Bronze.

This masterpiece sculpted by D.P.Roy Chowdhury in 1955, depicts abstract themes.

It is made of bronze. The artist's portrait sculptures are unrivalled for their vigour. The statue shows an old man covering his body with cloth to avoid cold.

A Street Scene



Size : 68 X 52 cm - Water colour.

This is an art work of water colour on paper painted by R. Krishna Rao in the year 1951, which depicts a street scene.

NUMISMATICS AND PHILATELY

The Numismatic Section with its huge collections of coins, philatelic materials and documents aims to understand culture, history and technology of India and their relationship with the outside world.

Numismatics is the study of coins. It is important for the study of history, especially ancient history. It confirms, modifies and even amplifies history. To a great extent the political and economic history of a country is constructed by numismatics and historical facts are very often corroborated or rejected by numismatic findings. Many facts connected with administration, historical geography and religious history of ancient India are revealed to us by the Numismatics.

The Government Museum, Chennai has a rich collection of the ancient, medieval and modern Indian coins of gold, silver, copper, lead, potin and bullion. Besides these, there is a representative collection of foreign coinage. Under the Treasure Trove Act all finds unearthed anywhere in the State are sent to this Museum by the Revenue Authorities for examination and if it is decided that they are worth acquiring, they are acquired by the Government for the Museum. But, the treasure-trove hoards are not the only source through which coins are received here. Most of the North Indian coins are donated by North Indian Museums and institutions such as the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, the Asiatic Society, Nagpur, the U. P. Coin Committee, Indian Museum, Calcutta and so on.

In the year 1975 C. E., on the first floor of the Bronze Gallery, the Numismatics Section has started a gallery of its own. There are, at present, two hundred and fifty medals in the Section including the Mysore medals. The collection includes a facsimile of the Great Charter of England, the Magna Carta of 1215 C. E., believed to be the only copy in India.

Punch-marked Coin Satamana Silver Coin



Earliest coinage in India is known as the Punch-Marked coins. Although 'gold' and 'copper' coins are noted in the ancient literatures in reality we come across only 'Silver Punch-Marked coins. They were issued by various Janapadas (republic states) and Rajyas (kingdoms). Panini, the Sanskrit grammarian has mentioned about these coins in his grammatical treatise. Punch-Marked coin served as common currency throughout the Indian sub-continent between the 6th Century B. C. E., and the 1st Century C. E. They were called as Satamana, Pana and Karshapana. Interestingly, the Punch-Marked coins bear only symbols; neither king's name nor date engraved.

Sangam Coins Copper Coin of Pandya



Sangam Period existed between 300 B.C.E. And 300 C.E. In this period, the Tamil country was ruled by three crowned kings viz., Chera, Chola and Pandya. They issued coins with their royal insignias, namely, Bow & Arrow, Tiger, Stylised fish. Pandyan kings imprinted their royal emblem of stylised fish even on the reverse side of the Magadha Punch-Marked coins.

Chola Coin Silver Coin of Rajendra



The Cholas subjugated and ruled the southern peninsula for two centuries. By the 11th century, their naval supremacy they subdued Sri Lanka and far-eastern countries. They conquered the Gangetic Valley through their territorial army. The copper coins of the Rajaraja I are most common, depicting image of a standing man on the obverse and seated goddess on the reverse with Nagari legend 'Sri Rajaraja'. The historic victories of the Cholas are attested in their coinage. For example, Rajendra I issued silver coins with legend 'Ganga Konda Chola', commemorating the victory over the Gangetic Region.

Vijayanagar Coin Gold Coin of Krishnadevaraya



The Vijayanagar kingdom was established by Harihara and Bukka in 1336 C.E., to check the Muslim expansion towards south. Till the battle of Thalikota in 1565 C.E., this kingdom was ruled by three dynasties. The fourth dynasty ruled from Penugonda and Chandragiri. The typology of these coins is that on the obverse side the figures of Hindu deities, animals, symbols and on the reverse side the issuing king's name or his title in Nandi Nagari or Deva Nagari or Kannada or Telugu Script is depicted from Vijayanagar.

Mughal Coin Silver Coin of Akbar



Sher Shah introduced and standardised Silver Rupee. Mughal emperor Akbar issued both square and circular coins. Jehangir has issued coins with zodiac signs. The Hijri era, regnal year and place of mint were inscribed in the Mughal coins which help historians to find out historical facts.

A view of the
Coins Gallery



Coinage of the Mysore Sultans (1772 C.E. - 1799 C.E.)

Though the period of the Mysore Sultans, (Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan) lasted for a short period only it produced a coirage which was marked by its variety and artistic merit.

Haider Ali minted pagodas and fanams. For sometime after his overthrow of the Wodeyars, Haider continued their coinage with the figures of Shiva and Parvati on his earlier gold pagodas.

Epa Sulten continued for some time his father's pagodas and *tantras*.

The Persian inscriptions on Tipu's gold and silver coins are religious in character. Tipu adopted the elephant device of the Wodeyars, kings of Mysore for his copper coins.



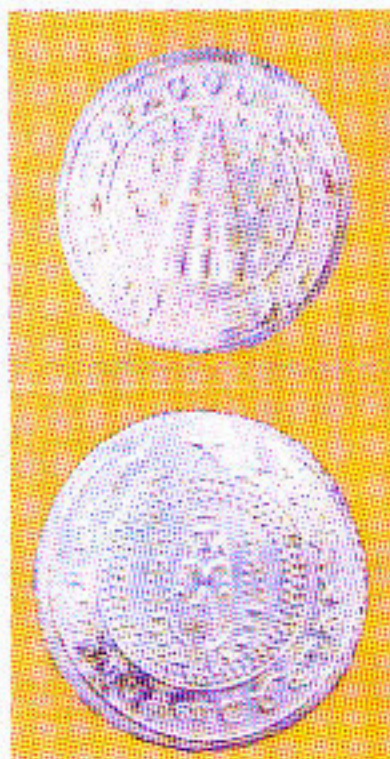
INDO -EUROPEAN COINS
Indo- French coins
(with Tamil legend)



The geographical discoveries of the last quarter of the 15th Century C. E. paved the way for the Europeans commercial contacts with India. The Portuguese, the Danes, the English and the French came to India to promote trade. In varying degrees they established commercial settlements and issued their own coins.

Indo - British Coins

These star Pagodas issued from the Madras Mint continued to be the standard coin of the Company in the south until it was abolished in 1816 C.E., and the Silver Rupee was made the standard coin.



Half Star Pagoda
Metal - Silver, 19th Century C. E.

Figure of Vishnu is surrounded by pots and a star is depicted in the obverse side of the coin. The denomination of coin "Half Pagoda" is inscribed here both in Tamil and Teugu scripts on the obverse. This coin has on one side the temple gopuram (tower) surrounded by 18 stars. Near the edge is an inscription denoting its value "Half Pagoda" both in English and Persian.

Coins of Indian Republic



In 1947 India attained the independence but not issued any coins. After declaring of Republic she issued coins in the occasion of 3rd anniversary of independence. This coinage continued for seven years. In the year 1957, the decimal system was introduced in all walks of Indian life and it reflected in coinage also.

**New Arrival of
Bi-metal 10 Rs. Coin**



Stamps and Medals

The Government Museum, Chennai has the unique privilege of organizing the first Philatelic Gallery among the Museums in India. The gallery has been organized in 1964 C. E. to present the evolution and or development of postage stamps in the world. Stamps of all countries of the world beginning with the inception of the modern Postal System are displayed here.



Burma War Medal

Silver

An angel with wings crowning a warrior having a sword in his right hand. (obverse)

1889 C. E. - 1892 C. E.



India Medal

Bronze

An English soldier holding a rifle and an Indian soldier holding a sword. India (reverse)

1895 C. E.



Kabul to Kandahar

Bronze

Five sided star with a crown at the top. Inscription 'Kabul to Kandahar' (obverse)

1880 C. E.



Mysore Medal

Silver

Lion pouncing on a tiger with the flag (Union Jack) and Persian inscription. The date is 'IV May MDCCXCIV'. (obverse)

1794 C. E.



Greek Medal

Bronze

A chariot drawn by four horses with the charioteer. An angel with wings above. (reverse)



China War Medal

Bronze

Figure of coat of arms, a cannon and some trees with the inscription at the bottom 'China 1900 C. E. Inscription around the rim 'ARMIS EXPO CERE PACEM' (reverse)

1900 C. E.



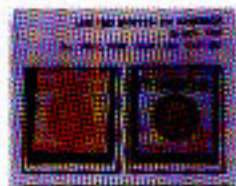
First Day Envelop with Special Cancellation

A Special cancellation cover of the National Art Gallery was released on 14-04-1992.



Mini Sheet

The Mini Sheet was released by the Postal Department on 19-6-2003 in honor of the Museum - the first mini sheet issued in India.



Mahatma Gandhi

Postal Stamp on Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of Indian Nation - issued by the United States of America.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

The Children's Museum aims to encourage children to touch and feel the exhibits in order to help them understand their heritage and to develop scientific temper.

The 'Children's Museum' is a place of wonder for children, which takes them from the land of books to the land of objects. It encourages a child to probe new horizons. It directs the children into constructive and worthwhile pastimes.

720 exhibits are thematically displayed in its 7 galleries apart from 16 semi-diorama display arrangements for showcasing various civilizations of the world in chronological order. Besides the galleries and parks, life size fiber glass models of Tyrannosaurus and Stegosaurus in front of this building are added attractions to the Children's Museum.



A View of the Children's Museum under Illumination

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

The Children's Museum of the Government Museum, Chennai consists of the Basement Floor, Ground Floor and First Floor, each having an area of 5000 sq. ft. The architecture of the Children's Museum conforms to that of a model museum building, with all the facilities contemplated in a modern museum.



Front View of the Children's Museum

History of the Children's Museum

His Excellency Shri Sri Prakasa, the then Governor of Tamilnadu laid the foundation stone for the separate building for the Children's Museum in the Government Museum campus during the International Museum Week Celebrations in October 1956 C. E.

The proposal of constructing a separate new building for Children's Museum was renewed in 1979 C. E. during the International Year of Children, and was inaugurated by His Excellency, Dr. P.C. Alexander, Governor of Tamilnadu on 11th April 1988 C. E.

Galleries

The display arrangements in the Children's Museum reveals to the children the world in which they live, arouses their curiosity and opens the door to the world of educational entertainment. This Museum has galleries such as the Civilization Gallery, the Costume Dolls Gallery, the Science Gallery, the Transportation Gallery, the Technology Gallery, the kids Corner.

Civilization Gallery

In the Ground Floor, the Civilization Gallery Starts with the story of prehistoric man and the development of civilizations through the ages in different parts of the world. In this series, the life of early man, the temple model of Jigurath dedicated to God Nannar and buildings in the city of Sumer, construction technique of pyramids and a model of Great Pyramid with an oasis of the Egyptian civilization, Model of Mohanjo-Daro town in the Indus Valley, the Euphrates river, Hanging Garden and Ishtar Gate of Babylonia, the temple of the Hebrew God Jehovah in Hebrew Civilization, ship building scene of Phoenician seafarers, the models of decorated palaces of Minoans and Mycenaean's, the Acropolis and the city of Athens in the Greek Civilization worshipping Celtics, the Great Wall of China and building structures of the Mayan Civilization are displayed as series of dioramas. At the end, the five fold geographical divisions based on the type of land of Ancient Tamilagam are represented with the deity, occupation and landscape associated with them.



Diorama of the Prehistoric Culture

Costume Dolls Gallery

In the Costume Dolls Gallery, 150 costume dolls with traditional costumes representing 25 countries are displayed in 21 diorama showcases to illustrate the cultural heritage and sartorial habits of the people of those countries. Moreover a series of dolls illustrating the costumes worn by the dancers during the classical dances of India, namely, Bharathanatyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri are also on display.

The Costume Dolls of Taminadu



Science Gallery

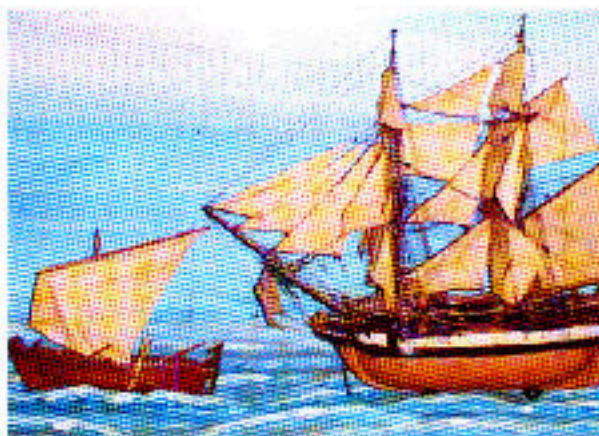
In the Science Gallery, which is in the first floor, exhibits pertaining to natural and physical sciences are in 33 showcases. It starts with the model of the formation of earth and other planets of the solar system, followed by the working models of a volcano, mineral treasures of India, miniature plaster cast models of extinct dinosaurs and mammals. These are displayed in their natural environment in diorama showcases. For the benefit of students, classification of plants and animals, models explaining the physiology of plants, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and human beings are displayed in the Natural Science Section.



Working Model of the Strowger Telephone

In the Physical Science Section, models explaining principles of magnetism, electromagnetism, electricity and electronics are represented through interactive models. Calculating instruments in chronological order, peripheral hardware items of a computer like circuit boards, visual display unit, key board, magnetic tapes, hard disc drives, core memory and print card are displayed to impart knowledge about computers. Paintings illustrating various stages of development in communication, a Strowger telephone exchange with two telephones, India's first radio transmitter used in Chennai, remote controlled miniature models of car ship and aeroplane, scale models of satellite launch vehicles, such as ASLV, SLV III, PSLV, GSLV and satellite IRS-IC, a miniature model of the Taminadu News Print Factory and a flow chart from Seshasayee Paper and Boards, Erode, illustrating various stages in the process of paper manufacturing from bagasse are the fascinating exhibits of this Science Gallery.

Model of the Rigged Ship



Transportation Gallery

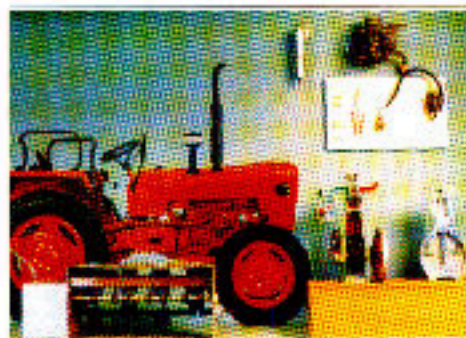
In the Transportation Gallery, the exhibits illustrating the development of transports in land, water and air are displayed. Miniature model of a cart used in the Indus Valley Civilization and various modes of transport used in earlier periods are displayed.

Models of a Montgolfier balloon, air ships, a jet plane, a jaguar aircrafts, a Kiran aircrafts, catamarans, boats, earlier period ships, a model of S. S. Irwin ship, a San Francisco Xavier steamer, working model of internal combustion engine, two miniature working models of train and colour photographs of Chennai Port are displayed in this gallery.

Model of S. S. Irwin Passenger Ferry



Technology Gallery



In the Technology Gallery interactive models pertaining to wheels in chronological order, different types of gears, various mechanical working principles, Hydro and thermal power station models, working principles of steam engines, steam boilers and internal combustion engines are displayed.

Working Models of the Internal Combustion Engine

Kids Corner

Curious articles and bells made of porcelain, lacquer, glass, clay, wood, metal, papier mache, celluloid, cloth, plastic and shell are displayed in the Kids Corner to entertain the children.

Science Park

Besides the above, in order to educate the visiting public and students, a Science Park with 22 play gadgets to impart the scientific temper while they play with them, a fountain operated by solar power and a water-pumping unit operated by a windmill are displayed.

Visitor facilities such as a see-through lift and ramp way for physically handicapped visitors are worth mentioning.

Life size fiberglass models of the Dinosaurs – Tyrannosaurus and Stegosaurus are exhibited in front of the Children's Museum building to attract and educate the visitors.

The Children's Museum of the Government Museum, Chennai combines education and recreation for children.



Play Gadgets of the Science Park

BOTANY

The Botany Section exhibits the existing flora of South India with a special emphasis on commercial botany.

The importance of plants in everyday life is known to all, as most of the things that man needs have got their origin in some plant part or the other. Government Museum, Chennai houses its botanical collections in two galleries, namely,

1. The Systematic Botany Gallery
2. The Economic Botany Gallery

Both these galleries are situated in the first floor of the Main Building.

In the Systematic Botany Gallery, the exhibits are arranged in their evolutionary order starting with primitive Cryptogams, namely, the Algae and Fungi. The flowering plants are arranged according to the Bentham & Hooker's system of classification. About thousand specimens inclusive of wet specimens, herbaria, line drawings, vinyl prints are on display. Cross section of teakwood dating to about 500 years old showing the Dendrochronology, along with historical events, depicted on it, cross section of Rosewood, collection of South Indian Timbers are noteworthy specimens of the Section.

In the Economic Botany Gallery, the exhibits depict the myriad ways in which the plants are useful to man. Of the five hundred specimens on display, the Sandalwood skeleton, Bamboo specimens, Gums and resins, Textile blocks showing the floral depictions are some of the noteworthy and interesting exhibits.

SYSTEMATIC BOTANY GALLERY

Bracket Fungi / Pore Fungi Polyporus

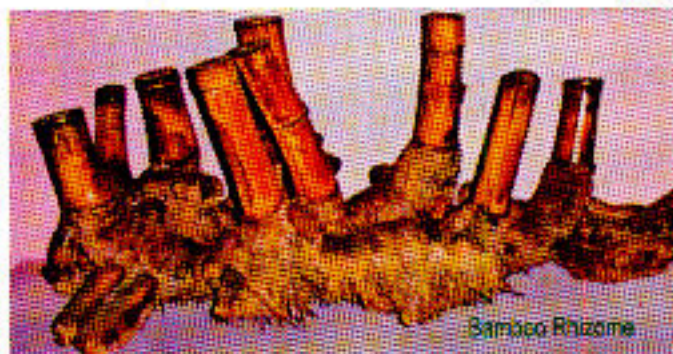
These fungi are so called because their hymenial layer lines the inner surface of tubes, all of which open on the under surface of the pileus lending it a porous appearance. When young, the basidiocarp is soft but as it grows older, it becomes hard, tough, leathery and usually bracket-shaped and hence the name, 'Bracket fungi'. It grows parasitically on roots, trunks and branches of trees. Quite often, they are seen to grow on dead or fallen tree trunk. Many species of polyporous are wood rotters, sometimes causing severe economic losses especially if the tree logs are left damp.



Bracket Fungus Polyporus

Bamboo rhizome

It is a graceful gigantic grass, popularly and collectively known as 'Bamboo'. It is a monocotyledon member belonging to the family 'Poaceae'. Of the 550 species of bamboo, 136 species occur in India. 'Dendrocalamus giganteus' cultivated in Malabar is the largest of the Indian Bamboo. The culm reach 80' to 100' in height and 8' to 10' in diameter. The crooked and knotty culms of bamboo, render it as a second class. Used mainly for floating heavy timber and for structural purposes and also yields good quality paper pulp. The marvelous, clustered, compacted, bunched, underground rhizome is displayed in the Systematic Botany Gallery.



Bamboo Rhizome

Tectona grandis-Teakwood

It belongs to the family 'Verbenaceae'. It is a large deciduous tree, indigenous to both peninsular India, in the eastern drier parts of Java, in Sumatra and in Burma. The plant wood is very durable, resistant to fungi used for poles, beams, trusses, planking, staircases and other constructional work. The teak is popular in marine constructional work and employed for sound-boards of musical instruments. The 500 years old cross section of the teak wood is exhibited in the Systematic Botany Gallery which was gifted by the Raja of Travancore in the year 1880. It is a very rare object which shows the 'Dendrochronology' of the tree.



Tectona grandis - Teakwood

ECONOMIC BOTANY GALLERY

Bamboo Objects

Many artefacts of everyday uses are made out of bamboo viz. mats, baskets, toys, pipes, fans etc.. Bamboo seeds generally resemble those of rice, but are some what bigger in size. Bamboo grains are extensively eaten by the poorer class during famine. Bamboo forms a rich raw material for the manufacture of Rayon. The stems of these are cut into fine pieces and chemically treated to form pulp. The pulp is beached and drawn in very fine threads. 'Rayon' is almost as strong as silk. It is more resistant to perspiration and it is unaffected by salt and air. Kept on display are the different varieties of bamboo.

Rubber

Rubber plant is indigenous to South America. It is obtained from the milky juice (latex) of various erect climbing woody plants of the tropics. Today more than 50 plants yield latex; out of these only fifteen are important. The best rubber in the market is the 'para rubber' which is got from the plant called 'Hevea brasiliensis'; it belongs to the family Euphorbiaceae. The cultivation of rubber is known as plantation rubber which grows at an elevation of 600 to 2,000 ft. from the sea level. The latex is produced in special cells (latex tubes) and latex vessels, a by product of general metabolic activity. Latex exuding from the cut surface of a stem, leaf, or roots seal off a wound. The composition of plant latex varies considerably from species to species. The latex is colorless milky and in the liquefied form. It has elasticity, resistance to heat. Before processing rubber it is a very soft material but after vulcanisation the rubber becomes hard.

Seaweeds

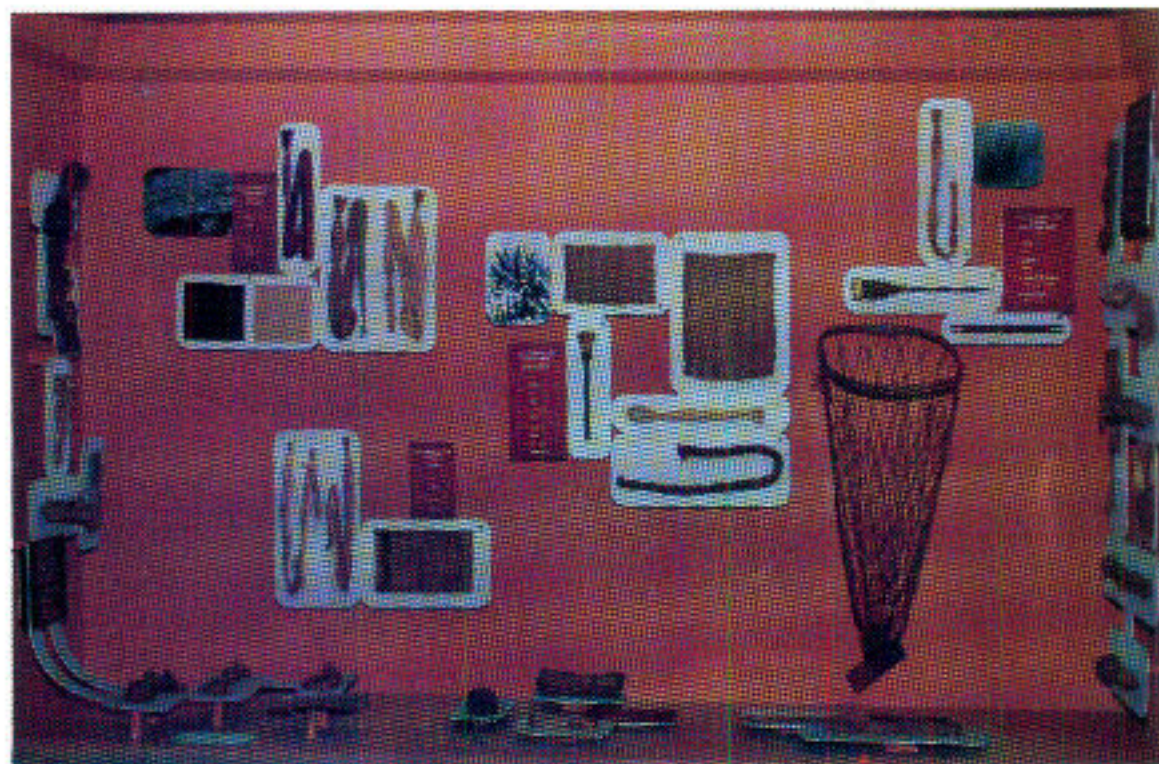
The seaweeds have long been used by man as a source of food and various minerals since the time immemorial. They are rich in vitamins. When properly cooked they may either be eaten alone or mixed with other foods. Seaweed have also been used for treating conditions like dropsy, menstrual problems and a so other difficulties like gastro-intestinal disorders, abscesses, antibiotic activity, bronchial ailments and even cancer. The important pharmaceutical products obtained from seaweed are alginates, polysaccharides, alginic acid, carrageenan and agar-agar. Some of the seaweeds like Gracilaria, Gelidium, Rhodomenia, Laminaria, Turbinaria, Chondrus crispus etc., are kept on display.



Rubber Extraction - Diorama Showcase



Representative Showcases of Economic Botany Gallery



ZOOLOGY

The Zoology Section with stuffed birds and animals in well designed dioramas helps in the comparative study of South Indian fauna with those of other countries.

The Zoology Section is one of the biggest Section of the Government Museum, Chennai. The Galleries of the Zoology Section are located in the ground and first floor of the Main Building of the Government Museum, Chennai. There are 12 Galleries situated in a nearly 25,000 square feet area, which comprises from lower invertebrates to advanced chordates. More than 3,000 specimens comprising wet and dry specimens are on display in the Zoology Galleries.

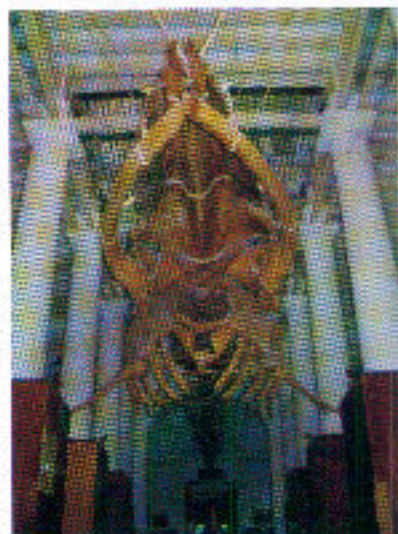
Galleries of the Zoology Section

- Skeletal and other Integumentary Structures
 - Flight in Animals
 - Foreign Animals
 - Reptiles
 - Amphibians
 - Birds
 - Mammals
 - Corals and Lower Invertebrates
 - Invertebrates
 - Fishes

ZOOLOGY GALLERIES

Skeletal and other Integumentary Structures Gallery

The first exhibit which attracts the visitors in this Gallery is the 60 feet length hanging skeleton of the Baleen whale. There are two types of whales exists today. One group is called Baleen whales (Toothless whale) and the other is called as Toothed whales. The baleen whale exhibited here was washed ashore in Mangalore in 1876. In the head region we can see the baleen plates hanging from the roof of the mouth cavity. Baleen plates are useful in filtering the minute organisms which the whale feeds on. Baleen whales attain the maximum size in the animal kingdom. Blue whales of this category attains 120 feet in length and can weigh up to 120 tons. The skull of a toothed whale (Sperm whale) is exhibited in the right side end of the hall. Sperm whale, Killer whale, Dolphins come under the toothed whale category. The sperm whales are so called because of the Spermaceti oil which it contains. Toothed whales grow to a maximum size of 60 feet depending upon the species. The other interesting exhibits in this gallery are skeleton of elephant, horse and man and a variety of animal skeletons and other integumentary structures of animals which shows their modification according to their mode of life.



Skeleton of Baleen whale



Flying Fish

Flight in Animals Gallery

This is a small gallery allotted to show the different group of animal's ability to attain flight. Flying fish, Flying frog, Flying drongo, Flying squirrel and Bat (true flight by mammals) are shown as the exhibits. The other exhibits show the mimicry and adaptability of the animals to their environment.

Foreign Animals Gallery

Good collection of Foreign Animals are represented in this gallery. Some of the important exhibits of the Foreign Animals Gallery are Kangaroo from Australia, Ostrich and Bustard birds from Africa, Tapir from Malay Archipelago, Macaw parrots from South America. In addition, we have exhibits of Sulphur crested cockatoo, Mandarin ducks, Opposums and some other interesting foreign animals. Tapir is represented in a diorama showcase (explaining the life of the animal in its habitat).



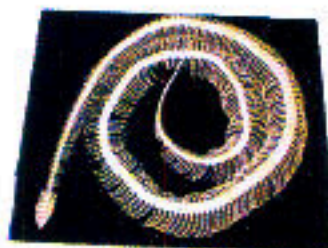
Tapir

Reptile Gallery

Reptile Gallery consists of good collection of Lizards, Snakes, Crocodiles, Turtles and Tortoises. Most of the collection of lizards and snakes are South Indian. Both poisonous and non-poisonous snakes are represented. Most of the snakes are displayed as wet specimens. Dry skin of 12 feet length King cobra, 18 feet length Python are notable items. All three Indian varieties of crocodiles (Estuarine, Marine and Gharial) are displayed as stuffed specimens. Good collection of Marine turtles and tortoises (stuffed specimens) are exhibited in sloping cases in the right side of the reptile gallery.



Leather Back Turtle



Skeleton of Python showing spur

Amphibian Gallery

Adjacent to the Reptile gallery a small gallery is allotted for the South Indian Amphibians. Specimens of different varieties of Frogs and Toads are exhibited. Notable items are Legless amphibians (caecilian worms) and giant size toads.

Birds Gallery

Birds Gallery is situated in two places. The gallery adjacent to the Reptile Gallery where stuffed specimens of Flamingos, Ducks, Cormorants, Pelicans, Bustards, Spoon bills, Herons, Egrets, Gulls, Terns, Cranes, Fow varieties, Eagles, Kites, Harriers, Owls and Owlets are exhibited. All of them are stuffed specimens and are displayed in good postures. The other bird gallery (Birds Gallery - II) is situated in the first floor of the extension hall which leads from the tail end of the suspended whale skeleton. Here, small sized passerine and other varieties of birds are exhibited according to their classification. White Peacock, White crow, Pink headed duck, bones of Moa bird are notable items.



Diorama of Grey Heron

Mammals Gallery



Diorama of African Lion

Mammals Gallery of the Government Museum, Chennai is also located in two places. The gallery adjacent to the Birds Gallery - I, consists of Skeletons of Elephant, Deer and Dolphins, Stuffed specimens of Tiger, Leopard, Wild boar, Otters, Mouse deer, Dolphin, Baboon, Nilgiri tahr, Slender loris and other varieties of mammals. The notable collections are Egg laying platypus from Australia, Dugong (sea cow) from Gulf of Mannar, Sealion from California. The other mammal gallery is situated in the extension block adjacent to the Birds Gallery-II. Here, dioramic representation of Indian and Foreign animals have been displayed. The notable items displayed are African lion, Hippopotamus, Gibbon from Assam, Deer varieties of Sambar, Barking deer and Antelope variety of

Black buck. Monkeys like Bonnet macaque, Rhesus monkey, Hanuman langur, Madras langur, Wild boar and Wild dogs are also exhibited.

Corals and Lower Invertebrates Gallery



Hard Coral

In the first floor, the first gallery on the right side is the Corals and Lower Invertebrates Gallery. Here, a variety of Hard and Soft corals are displayed. Other lower invertebrates like Protozoans (single celled animals), Porifera (sponges), Coelenterates like Jelly fishes, Sea anemones, Annelids and other worms have been exhibited as wet and dry preserved specimens. Minor phyla exhibits have also been displayed in this gallery. Centrally, a big diorama showing the underwater environment of a Coral reef is the highlight of this gallery.

Invertebrates Gallery

From the coral gallery we can enter in to the Invertebrates Gallery which mainly consists of Molluscs, Arthropods and Echinoderms. A vast collection of Molluscan shells including bivalves, gastropods and other molluscs are exhibited. Important molluscs are Giant clams from Andaman Islands, Sacred chanks, Pearl oyster shells and Chambered Nautilus. Giant sized gastropod shells are also exhibited. Among Arthropods a good collection of Crabs, Lobsters, Insects and Spiders are exhibited. Good collection of Scorpions, Peripatus and King crab are notable items. Echinoderms represent Star fishes, Sea urchins, Cake urchins, Brittle stars and Sea lilies.



Nautilus

Fish Gallery



View of the Fish Gallery

Good collection of South Indian fishes consisting of Cartilaginous and Bony fishes are exhibited in this gallery. Among cartilaginous fishes Sharks, Skates and Rays are represented. Big sized Rayner's shark, Tiger shark and Sting ray are exhibited as wall display. Devil ray, Electric ray and skeleton of Devil ray are other notable items. Among bony fishes almost complete collection of South Indian bony fishes are on display. The biggest fish in the world, the Whale shark is suspended from the ceiling. Sword fish, Eels, Porcupine fishes are other notable items.

Thus, the Zoology Galleries of the Government Museum, Chennai provide a very good information, especially about the South Indian Fauna in an attractive and educative way. Besides the exhibited specimens, the Zoology Section possesses a large reserve collection consisting of over thousand specimens stored in jars and several dry preserved specimens preserved in boxes and cabinets.

GEOLOGY

The Geology Section tries to present the richness of South Indian rock formations and mineral varieties and informs the ways they are formed, their scientific exploitations and their effects on ecology.

The history of the Geology Section in the Government Museum, Chennai is indeed quite interesting, since it was started only with the Geological Collections in the year 1851 C. E.

The Madras Literary Society, a branch of the Asiatic Society of London, desired to have a Museum of Economic Geology at Madras and began collecting Geological specimens. Thus beginning as a Museum of Practical Geology, its scope was later expanded to cover all the allied fields such as General Geology, Petrology, Mineralogy, Palaeontology and Economic Geology.

Since then, the geological galleries have been considerably improved, reorganised and modernised. The Geological gallery is a veritable treasure house of Indian minerals and has been rearranged so as to present to the visitors a fairly complete picture of stratigraphy and the range and variety of mineral wealth of India.

Some exhibits which are specially attractive are the stones, gold ores, building stones, meteorites and a gigantic fossil, Ammonite (allied to the living Cuttlefish). The important collections in the Geology section are the celestial bodies known as 'Heaven stones' or 'Meteorites'.

Other displays are the line drawings, pictorial exhibits like model of the earth, solar system, rivers, glaciers, effects and the impacts of volcanoes and earthquakes.

Petrology is one of the important branches of Geology which deals with the study of rocks. Generally a rock is an aggregate of various minerals. The rocks in turn are classified into 3 main divisions, namely, (a) Igneous rocks (b) Sedimentary rocks (c) Metamorphic rocks. Various types of rocks including gemstones are exhibited.

Quartz



Acc. No: 83/1962
Locality: Salem.

Quartz is the commonest mineral widely present in all kinds of rocks. It is an oxide of silicon occurring as masses and as hexagonal crystals. Quartz is used in the manufacture of glass, porcelain, refractory, abrasive, paint, lenses and optical instruments. It is also used in metallurgical and chemical industries.

Amethyst



Acc. No: 23/1964
Locality: Pochra.

Amethyst is a purple or violet variety of Quartz. Its colour is due to manganese dioxide. It is used as a semi-precious stone. These stones are used for personal adornment and ornamental purposes.

A mineral is usually a natural inorganic substance having a definite chemical composition and characteristic atomic structure. A few are powdery or resinous but most are crystals. The minerals are indispensable to man. Moreover minerals are the backbone of our modern industries. More than 300 varieties of minerals and their ores are included in the collection of the Museum.

Polished Granite



Acc. No: 37/1944
Locality: Mysore.

The various rocks which are used as building stones are granite, charnockite (blue granite), diorite, dolerite, marble, sandstone etc. This granite is a polished rock specimen used in the construction of the Maharaja's Palace at Mysore.

Stony Meteorite

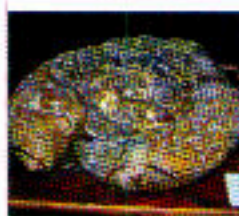


Acc. No. 1/1946
Locality: Veludavur,
South Arcot District

Meteorites are bodies of extraterrestrial origin which fall on the earth from interplanetary space. All meteorites possess magnetic properties. Iron meteorites are entirely made up of nickeliferous iron. Stony meteorites are made up of stony masses, chiefly ferro-magnesian silicates. This stony meteorite is 2799 gms., which fell on 30.10.1994.

The fossils are the recognizable remains of animals and plants which lived in the past geological ages and preserved in the rocks of the earth crust by natural process. The various types of fossil exhibits are mainly collected from Ariyalur. The huge fossilized wood from Tiruvakkarai is also exhibited in the Sculpture Garden.

Ammonite Fossil



Acc. No: 19/1930
Locality: Ariyalur.
Cretaceous Period

Geologically it belongs to Cretaceous Period. The characteristic feature of the fossil ammonite is that it contains complicated types of suture line.



Acc. No. 45/1947
Jurassic Period

Brontosaurus

The Brontosaurus is an extinct reptile, which lived during the Jurassic Period of about 150 million years ago. It had a bulky body, long neck and tail. The specimen displayed in the gallery is a plaster model of Brontosaurus.

CHEMICAL CONSERVATION SECTION

The Chemical Conservation Section tries to preserve the objects in the Museum in their pristine form.

The Chemical Conservation and Research Laboratory in the Government Museum, Chennai owes to the scientific vision and foresight of Dr. F. H. Gravely, Superintendent of the Government Museum, Chennai in the early 1930s.

Dr. S. Paramasivam was appointed as the Chemist in 1930. He was very active both in conservation and research activities. Besides the treatment of bronze objects, ethnological, prehistoric and numismatic objects were treated.

One of the foremost activities of the Laboratory is to engage in conserving the materials of the past.



A view of Chemical Conservation Laboratory

TRAINING



In order to disseminate the expertise of the Laboratory, in 1974, a refresher course on Care of Museum Objects was started by Mr.N.Harinarayana the then Curator. Professionals and students of museology and related subjects received the training. This course is conducted during the month of June every year. Course on Care of Temple Antiquities for the Executive Officers of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, a course on Care of Archival Materials exclusively for the

Archivists, a Course on Care of Library Materials for Librarians, a Course on Care of Art Objects exclusively for art students etc. are conducted. Besides these, training programmes to the school and college students are conducted both in Chennai and districts on Care of Cultural Materials and Preservation of Monuments. It has introduced internship training in Conservation for a period of one year.



Conservation of Museum Objects

Paper print



Before



After conservation

Painting on Leather



Before



After conservation

Bronze icon



Before



After conservation

Coins

Copper coins



Before



After conservation

Silver coins



Before



After conservation

DESIGN AND DISPLAY SECTION

The Design and Display Section is in charge of galleries and the thematic presentation of the collection. This is to attract and sustain the interest of viewers.

In order to attend to the day-to-day maintenance of galleries and set up temporary and permanent exhibitions both in Chennai and Districts, a Design and Display Section was created at the Government Museum, Chennai in the year 1980 C. E.

Organizing New District Museums

As per the Government policy, museums are set up at district headquarters. The planning and establishment of new district museums are done by the Design and Display Section of the Government Museum, Chennai.

Re-organization of Galleries

The Government Museum, Chennai has 48 galleries which are being modernized at regular intervals by the Design and Display Section. The district museums also re-organize their galleries in consultation with the Design and Display Section.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions are being organized in the Government Museum, Chennai as well as outside the Museum on special occasions. The Design and Display Section collaborates with other Sections in organizing these exhibitions.

Maintenance of Galleries

Many of the galleries are made up of wooden showcases and maintenance of showcases is a major work in the museum which is being taken up by the Design and Display Section regularly.

Notes.....

EDUCATION SECTION

The Education Section, in coordination with all other Sections, tries to act as a bridge between society, especially the learning younger generation and the Museum.

In the modern concept, museums should function for increase and diffusion of knowledge among men and women. To achieve this goal, they have to engage themselves in activities related to research, education, and preservation which are often defined as great functional trinity of museums. The Government Museum, Chennai is well aware of this basic fact and acts diligently on these spheres from its inception. This museum started its educational activities as early as 1870 C. E. by initiating popular lecture programmes under which periodically scholars were invited to deliver lectures on topics of public interest for the benefit of public and students. Various educational programmes such as Special Lectures, Endowment Lectures, Internship Training, Art Exhibition, Oratorical Competitions, Drawing Competitions, Quiz Competitions, and Training on Museology for Students and Teachers, arranged Gallery Lectures and Talks, Film Shows are being arranged at the Activity Centre. News Letter and Endowment Bulletins are being published inadvertently.

Activity Centre



The Government Museum, Chennai has its credit more than a century of useful service as an educational institution in South India and it is earnestly hoped that the sphere of its usefulness will continue to expand in the years to come.

Notes.....



The Museum Theatre