

Indian Art Education and Career Opportunities: A Critical Analysis on Commercial Art

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Abstract—Art education is often ignored in syllabus of developing countries like India and in educational planning for development but now days Indian Art with a global recognition is becoming an integral part of the education at all levels. The term art, widely used in all parts of the modern world, carried varied significance in India as its meaning was continuously being extended, covering the many varieties of creative expression such as painting, sculpture, commercial art, design, poetry, music, dance, and architecture. Over the last 100 years Indian artists of all forms have evolved a wide variety of expressive styles. With the recommendations and initiatives by Government of India, Art Education has subsequently gained pace at the school level as a mandatory subject for all making a path way for students with a creative bend of mind. This paper investigates curriculum in various schools of the country at secondary and senior secondary levels along with some eminent institutions running the program. Findings depicted the role of art education and justified its importance primarily with commercial art being perceived to be essential for students learning skills for economic gain in their career ahead. With so many art colleges spread across India, emerging artists and designers are being trained and are creating art of infinite variety and style and have opened up many career avenues. Commercial Art being a plethora of artistic expressions has confidently come of age wherein a creative perception is mixed with an introspective imagination to bring out multi faceted career options with a significant future enveloped in art. Visual arts in education thus is an expanding field of result assured research.

Keywords—Modern art, commercial art, introspective imagination, career.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE word education comes from the Latin ‘educere’ meaning ‘to lead out’- to draw others out of “darkness.” The purpose of education, in ancient times, was to bring about a realization of what it is to be a human being. These days also education is meant to improve our minds, develop our intellect serving the socio-economic needs of the society resulting in an effective workmanship empowering our job efficiency and career opportunities.

The more we are exposed to various avenues of education, it encompasses all the dimensions of human experience. “It seems to me that education has a two-fold function to perform in the life of man and in society: one is utility and the other is culture. Education must enable a man to become more efficient, to achieve with increasing facility the legitimate goals of his life.” [1].

The commitment of education has always been to give the young, the things they need, in order to develop them in an orderly, sequential way into responsible members of the society. “Any education, in its forms and methods, is an outgrowth of the needs of the society in which it exists.” [2].

A. Significance of Art in Education

1. What is Art?

“It is the response of an individual’s creative soul to the call of the Real.” The above lines by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore symbolize the spirit with which India blossomed and flourished in all its glory in the field of art education.

The report, released by America President Barack Obama’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities has also called for *Reinvesting in Art Education*. It makes the following five recommendations: [3]

1. Build robust collaborations among different approaches to art education;
2. Develop the field of art integration;
3. Expand in-school opportunities for teaching artists;
4. Utilize federal and state policies to reinforce the place of arts in K-12 education;
5. Widen the focus of evidence gathering about arts education.

Kids usually learn to engage themselves through the art activity which is much easier than trying to memorize facts. In ancient Greece, Socrates argued that education was about drawing out what was already within the mind of the student. American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey recognized that teaching students how to think may be more important than teaching them what to think. In 1947, Dorothy Sayers advised that ‘Schools must give students the tools they need to unlock the doors to learning—not teaching what to think as much as how to think and revisiting the classical Greek subjects of the Trivium in order to foster analysis and mastery of subjects.’ [4].

This paper supports the theory that expanding students’ capacity to learn is a valid end for education and for art education-less from the standpoint of economic competitiveness, and more from a concern that learning and teaching systems must be designed to nurture the potentiality of every student.

The main purpose of Visual Art Education, therefore, is to develop creativity, individuality, and expression through art activities. Visual Art Education is the means by which knowledge and culture are transmitted from one generation to the next. It is therefore essential for the minds of children to get the right exposure to arts in their formative years.

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'Indian education has always highlighted the importance of art education, both through formal and informal methods from the pre-primary stage to higher education with a vision to retain our unique cultural identity. According to the present National Curriculum Framework framed in 2005 by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) our children should be given their own space of understanding wherein they would be able to create and implement their own knowledge gained out of meeting the world of bits, images, and transactions of life [5].

II. FINE ART EDUCATION IN INDIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the *Vedic* era, the formal schooling had its roots perennially deep in the *guru shishya parampara*. A variety of subjects were introduced to the students ranging from language, culture, environment, archery, horse riding, chanting. Since education through writings had its root on much later stage, more emphasis was laid on recitations and retentions of the teachings. This teaching methodology subsequently passed on to every form of Fine Arts. Through various historical references and restorations, it is quite evident that art has been an integral part of the Indian culture since ages. Murals, cave paintings, clay tablets etc. all convey how art was natural human expressive outlet, and was popularly practiced far and wide. Fine Art education thus has invariably been central to Indian life. Education through the art forms has been an inherent genre of Indians.

III. FINE ART EDUCATION IN INDIA: PRESENT SCENARIO

Art has flourished in approximately all homes in India today. A child in India, knowingly or unknowingly learns art from his surroundings, when he sees homemade mattresses, pillows, bed sheets and other household items all embroidered with motifs, figures, and traditional forms. They are exposed to the best practiced customs of his/her own ambiance. Avant Garde artists and their predecessors are responsible today for shaping the contemporary art scenario and determining the fate of contemporary Indian art in the global market.

Indian Art has been a glorious journey over 100 years with artists evolving with varied expressions and creative styles catering the Indian society. Though commercial art is also an artistic expression, it is addressed to a mass of readers and onlookers to the public at large. In commercial art we can find that a large percentage of public wants to see things represented as they seem in nature. They wish to get the illusion of its real existence.

The Indian art seems to be taking up plenty of space in all the major publications. Today the 'business of art' has captured the imagination of galleries and artists all over the world. With global recognition art is also becoming an important subject both for discussion and acquisition at all levels. With so many art colleges spread across India, artists are being trained and are creating art of infinite variety and style and have opened up many career avenues. Commercial Art commonly refereed as applied art implies to the application of design and aesthetics to the objects of function

and everyday use. Primarily fine arts acts as a source of intellectual stimulation to the viewer or academic sensibilities, Applied Art is all about adding design and creative ideas to enhance utility of objects. However, some artists and theoreticians have tried to counter this 'dislocation' by creating and praising works meant to be "site-specific" which becomes very relevant to the field of Applied Art.

Concerns of globalization, identity, consumer culture, ecological destruction are important issues in the current socio-political scenario affecting the ongoing career opportunities in this field too; however, the history of Applied Art over the last century hence has been one of the dynamic evolutions and has been deeply involved in these reforming tendencies. Today Applied Art is confidently coming of age. Here, perceived reality is transfigured through the prism of an introspective imagination and figured in images of many faceted possibility. The applied or accompanying arts of advertising and design provides intriguing challenge to mobilize the aesthetic instincts in modern man.

We can find the traces of 'Freelance' in Applied Art as an influence of the western impact in our society and care eristic mindset in the genre which has seemed to be evolved from an inclination of today's youth towards completely commission based job work without being bound to a specific organization. In the present-day scenario, even the established advertising agencies are focusing more on specialized freelance artists giving reflections to the new varied creative ideas they come up with, which in turn solves the purpose of agencies without being hired.

Commercial Art in the form of Graphic Design today surrounds us from logos to brands, book covers to packaging, posters to building facades, and websites to content writing enabling one to acquire the skills and techniques necessary to pursue a fulfilling career in the various areas of Design Industry.

As technology based communication has taken a drift into industry, it has become more important for all the professionals to get acquainted with the approaches and techniques by which the content is designed and executed. Commercial Art professionals are thus considered as visual problem solvers who are experts of Media selection and conceptual executions in order to inform, direct, promote, entertain, engage and educate target audiences.

IV. INITIATIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Implementation of Art as Compulsory Subject on School Level

According to the present National Curriculum Framework (NCF) framed in 2005 by NCERT Art education has to be considered as a necessary module at the elementary and secondary school education focusing on four major areas:

1. Arts and Crafts,
2. Physical Education,
3. Peace,
4. New forms of knowledge and creativity.

At the senior level, a strategy to formally recognize out-of-school resources for work is recommended to benefit children who opt for livelihood-related education.

B. Recommendations by NCF 2005

1. Arts education must become an essential subject (up to Class X) with well-equipped facilities in every school. The four primary streams that come under art education are Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Theatre.
2. Teacher education and orientation must include a significant component to enable them to efficiently and creatively elevate arts education.
3. School authorities must acknowledge giving significance to art in their curriculum, permitting and actively encouraging students to study art.
4. Public campaign and advocacy to promote art education as a necessary subject must be initiated. The mind set of parents and school administration along with the policy makers have to be nudged to make them understand the need of Art for the overall development of a child.
5. Emphasis should be given on learning than teaching in art education and teachers should have participatory and interactive approach rather than instructive.
6. Resources for research development and training must be allocated. More material on art education should be made available for teachers including electronic media aids.
7. It has been recommended to form a group of Faculty from different disciplines of art to empower and enhance proposed art structure whenever required.
8. It further envisions that arts in India are also living examples of its secular fabric and cultural diversity. A vision towards the global art will enable students to appreciate the richness and varied artistic traditions of their country. Art, thus, will enrich both the lives of our young citizens and also their school years.

The Ministry of Culture, Government of India in its Eleventh Five Year Plan [6] issued an order to preserve and promote all forms of art and culture. The areas include (i) Visual Arts & Museums (ii) Performing Arts (iii) Literature, Libraries & Archives (iv) Archaeology, Anthropology & Ethnology and (v) Research.

In 1964-66 Kothari commission (report on Indian Education) [7] stated that today when discovery and invention has taken a lead, education for creative expression acquires added advantage. The Commission constituted an experts committee in order to survey the prospects of arts in education system and its loopholes. As a result, in 1966 NCERT underwent some procedures to improve the status of art education in schools and simultaneously at the college level.

NCERT framed National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005 incorporating all art forms as a compulsory area of curriculum knowing its utility towards the wholesome development of child's personality [8].

C. Art Education at School Secondary Level

CBSE has introduced art education as mandatory subject for the secondary level [9]. Subjects to be taught includes:

- i. **Fine Arts/ Visual Arts:** Drawing and Painting, Applied Art/Commercial Art, Printing Making, Computer graphics, Clay modeling, Sculpture, Collage Making, Photography.
- ii. **Performing Arts:** Music (Vocal/ Instrumental), Dance, Drama, Creative Writing and Poetry at the Senior Secondary level
- iii. **New areas introduced:** a) Graphic design and b) Crafts.

V. ORGANIZATIONS WORKING FOR ART EDUCATION IN INDIA

- **National Bal Bhavan (NBB)** was founded by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister in 1956 providing children with an environment for expressing their ideas through creative art, photography, computers, dance, drama, music, etc. These programs enable the students to enhance their inner potential through creative approach.
- **Navodaya Vidyalayas:** These are the residential schools in India set up under The National Education Policy with an objective of providing quality education at the Secondary level. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNV) often conduct short duration Art Workshops for providing intensive training in different art forms like Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Creative Writing.
- **National Museum:** National Museum provides training opportunities to the museum personnel, short duration summer workshops on different art forms for students and teachers.
- **The National Institute of Design (NID):** One of the leading multi-disciplinary Design institution in India, it functions as an autonomous body under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Government of India offering courses in Graphic Design, Animation Film Design, and Film and Video Communication, Textile Design, Apparel Design and Merchandising, Lifestyle Accessory Design etc. Some of the new courses offered are New Media Design, Software and User Interface Design, and Information and Digital Design.
- **Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Art):** Was set up as an apex cultural body in 1954, it ensures development and promotion of Visual Arts in India by providing scholarships, fellowships, sponsored exhibitions in India and abroad. Being funded by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, it is an autonomous organization looking after various creative programs for art awareness among children, youth and art lovers. It plans numerous Exhibitions, Camps, Seminars, Workshops and Lectures nationally and internationally.
- **India International Rural Cultural Centre:** Established in 1979, IRCEN has taken the task of bridging schemes between the formal system of education and India's rich and varied cultural traditions.
- **Institutions of Higher Learning in the Field of Arts:** The following eminent universities and institutions are offering higher learning in the field of art: Sir J J School

of Art, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (MSU), Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Vishwa Bharti University, University of Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), University of Delhi- Faculty of Music & Fine Arts, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) etc. Besides these, different Central and State Universities all over India are conducting research programmes and offering Ph. D degrees.

VI. CONCLUSION

Learning is no longer considered an accumulation of knowledge, but an ability to construct knowledge and synthesize information in meaningful ways. In this paper, static, passive views of learning and knowing are challenged to give way to more meaningful, constructivist epistemologies, including social, contextual, and affective facets of learning.

In the successful selling portfolio, there will be a constant change and flow that reflects the changes and tastes in the marketplace as well as the growth and maturing of the freelancer's talents and abilities.

For the few soul-searching young freelancers and those who have an inclination to opt it as a career, the first quarter of the 21st century should prove crucially important in this respect. They should try to look upon the needs of the next century in perspective. The moment of achieving the optimum level of this creative breathing capacity, will be the moment of a new awakening that we are also the best as freelance artists. So, let us prepare ourselves to respond to the call of the new century, because the new situation is asking us to look around for other opportunities and grab them. Thus, through these points mentioned above step up for a successful art career, enhance your creativity and prosper as a freelance artist in your career.

Nowadays, it is evident that 21st century living requires creative problem solving, foreseeing with empathy, ability to think big, and make sense of vast amounts of information—an education in and through the arts cannot be ignored. When taught with balance, depth, and meaning and with a capacity view in mind, the arts in education hold potential, not only for nurturing students' critical, creative, and practical intelligence and dispositions, but for building life-long learning power as well. With apt channels, committed expert guidance, a practical curriculum, and a focused approach to bring about change functionally, we do see ourselves creating a creative world all together.

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