

Art Education of India – An Overview

Dr. Prajjawal Pundhir



Assistant Professor, Department of Drawing & Painting, Swami Sukdevanand College, Shahjahanpur, U.P. India.

History, culture and institutions have contributed to the transformation of art education in India. It began in art education in British colonial schools where it imitated models of the British industry, rather than fostering creativity. Teachers and students, such as Abanindranath Tagore and E.B. Havell, agitated to revive local traditions, and to make art directly related to identity, which gave rise to such stuff as the Bengal School. Despite the growth of such institutions as Santiniketan or the Lalit Kala Akademi, Indian art schools continue to be stagnant, with either outdated curricula or a single-minded concern with either traditional or new. We should know how to strike the balance between technical skills, freedom to explore and cultural roots. Given that globalization and digital technology transform the ways art appears and sells, Indian art is torn between its tradition and modernity, and it is an authenticity that we need the drastic changes and a new approach.

Keywords: Art education, Abanindranath Tagore, Bengal School, colonial influence, modern Indian art, Lalit Kala Akademi, curriculum reform, cultural identity, contemporary art, art marketing.

Art education, transmit the elements, excitement and energy of inherited values, so that understanding, involvement and creativity are inculcated, as much as possible, in each student. From the very beginning of the Industrial revolution, the artist has accepted an alienation from his environment which provided him freedom for his emotional and spiritual search. It brought revolutionary changes in art and led to a continuing search for innovation involving spontaneous and even exotic experimentation. This has no doubt opened new and exciting realms of art.

India has witnessed marked changes in the development of visual arts during the courses of the twentieth century. The reason for the this up heaves is not entirely localized and are not also to be attributed to western influences, yet none of these factors can be overlooked. There is a rather vague and blurred distinction between common visual surroundings and the qualities of art; they are unfortunately lamped together in a blend of

generally unrewarding fusion of values. The unique reality of art becomes the esoteric possession of only a few!

The art schools of colonial India, set up on the model of the British Technical schools during the mid nineteenth century to impart training to a group of middle-class Indians to copy work, in the survey agencies of the expanding colonialism, played a major role in establishing the assumed supremacy of European art. As a result, the India's past was wiped out from the very inception of colonial rule.

Abanindranath, the fest major figure on the Modern Indian Art scene, felt this instinctively having grown up through the time the Indian intelligentsia was trying hard to discover a national identity; Abanindranath stressed the importance of sensitive individual openness to the impulses of the environment, physical and cultural. He thought in terms of a unified aesthetic for all the arts, against the background of an ordered life system.

Abanindranath came in contact with E.B. Havell the principal of Arts School. Calcutta in 1897 and at whose request he joined the Art school as its Vice-Principal in 1905. Havell was more continental than British in his taste and attitude and was the first percipient viewers of Indian Art. He not only dissuaded Abanindranath and his disciples from imitating western style but urged them to make use of their own heritage, which to him was enormously rich. At the turn of the century Abanindranath emerged as a creative personality to be reckoned with he was destined to give leadership to an art movement. Havell desired it, so also his compatriots and in this way was founded the "Bengal School, then known also as 'Calcutta School'. Students of Bengal School despite their literary bias developed different stylistic traits. In 1907. Abanindranath were also established "Indian Society of Oriental Art'. The society almost functioned as a club and was helped by the government. "Kala Bhawan' at 'Santiniketan' also played a major role in art education established by Ravindranath Tagore in 1919. The trend that was set up by Abanindranath Tagore at the beginning of century was further activated by the "Calcutta Group". "Bombay Group" as well as by the "Delhi Silpichakra", "Sharda Ukil of Arts" and "Garhi Studio" of "Lalit Kala Academy at Delhi" are also playing a major role in respected field. Art serves as a powerful medium of communication, but this potential can only be realized through openness and empathy. Educators must develop an understanding that goes beyond the practical and visual aspects of art to include its deeply humanistic

dimensions. It is essential to recognize the distinction between objects that hold meaning without practical use and those that are useful but lack deeper meaning. Our society—and even art education—has often prioritized the latter, valuing the instrumental over the intrinsic qualities of art.

The position of art education today can briefly be stated to be rather uncertain. With education and culture undergoing scrutiny, and both objectives and methods being sought to be modified, the future of art education is in a flux.

Although art education has long been associated with the broader field of education, its contribution has remained rather insubstantial. It has largely been molded by external influences—political, social, psychological, and pedagogical—rather than by its own intrinsic principles. Unlike other disciplines grounded in well-defined academic structures, art education has often lacked clarity and coherence, drifting away from the essential conditions that define the nature of art.

This situation partly arises from the inherently unstructured character of art and the challenges involved in designing a systematic curriculum. The creative insight and autonomy of individual teachers have also been constrained by various external pressures. As a result, art education has evolved into a field with overly broad and unfocused content. In contemporary contexts, a work of art is often perceived as a commodity to be bought, sold, or traded, rather than as a meaningful and lived experience.

The oldest art schools in the country started by the British nearly 150 years ago, as we know, were primarily in response to the need for improved design in the Craft Industry. The courses in painting and sculpture were added later, and much later came the courses in Commercial art and teacher's training, in fact as late as the mid 1930s.

Although the number of art schools and colleges has today increased, they continue to conduct training in limited disciplines i.e. painting, sculpture and applied art, with the addition perhaps of full-fledged courses in print-making and history of art. Present day art education in the visual and plastic arts in most of art institutions, whether offering diplomas or degree courses, is rather pathetic in the sense that they still, by and large, continue to follow the out dated curriculum and methods of teaching based on the British Royal Academy System of art education. The main changes that one finds perhaps is the addition of the basic design course. But there is a conspicuous lack of emphasis on acquiring skills in drawing, design and manner of execution. Alternatively there is a generous provision for so-called 'freedom of expression' reflecting ill-understood Euro-American modern and post modern trends in art. Chief among these being the rejection of representational imagery and a stress on personal expression.

The present system, in fact, conforms neither to true modern norms nor does it reveal any assimilation of traditional points of view. The experience of the modern art movements in the west which has otherwise greatly influenced our artists, has so far neither been

incorporated, nor even appropriately reflected in the curriculum or class room teaching in these schools. The current system of an education needs to be overhauled and the scope for adopting some elements of the traditional methods fully explored for suitably linking the present system of art education with indigenous aesthetic values.

Today's art institutions must present a kind of education that meets the challenge of outstanding professional achievements in creative and applied arts and crafts, as well as design. Students have to be prepared for understanding the future, directions to be taken by their respective fields of specialization.

Art departments of almost every university today are offering, the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) and the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) level, six to ten courses in craft and design fields in addition to those in painting, sculpture, print-making and history of Art and Art education. They include ceramics (pottery), weaving Jewellery-making, enamelling, metal craft, wood-work, graphic design, advertising design, exhibition design, furniture design, product design, fashion design, industrial design, animation, TV graphics and computer graphics.

Art educational programmes should not only be concerned with the shifting requirements of professional capability, but ultimately with an explanation of the basic formation and trends in the various art and applied fields as they evolve in the days ahead. With a rich tradition of hand crafts in our country it becomes even more important and urgent to also include craft oriented courses in our art schools.

In the field of Art, there is a need of proper syllabus, proper training, lectures by great artist, art-critics on the various aspect, interaction between students and teachers, guest-lectures by artist after two or three months, trip or tours should be arranged by the institution for the students to various art Gallery and Museums.

There is no doubt that eventually a student, particularly of the creative arts, has to take a major part of the responsibility for his own destiny, but a suitable frame of reference must be provided to him which will serve as a viable foundation for the student's development in the years to come after the completion of his training. This will enable him to connect himself with the great tradition of and culture, of which he is the inheritor, as also to the developing reeds of the time.

Paradoxically, even as art becomes increasingly visible and widespread in contemporary society, the genuine artist and their work experience a deep sense of spiritual isolation. The growing number of exhibitions, the abundance of publicity, and the lure of material success have introduced new and often more complex challenges. Ironically, even the enthusiastic admirer can become a limiting force—pressuring the artist to pursue novelty and innovation for their own sake, often in a superficial manner. Yet, despite these tensions, the substantial and powerful body of work produced by artists in recent decades offers hope for the emergence of a new and transformative artistic era. Through this ongoing creative exploration, the artist has instinctively grasped the deeper essence of their civilization.

The progressive market for Indian art is growing domestic and international interest provides us a cue to focus on the subject art marketing. Art is into a subject of widespread interest across India and no longer restricted to few countries. It a no money-making proposition, many experts believe that quality of Indian art is comparable the best in the world. Artist's critics have worked to get the international art market to acknowledge them. To promote art India hosted 1st Triennale in the year 1968. And has conducted ten international art exhibitions so far. Triennale India is an event, which shows cases the current trends and happenings in the contemporary art movement. World today art from a varied range of countries is showcased on one platform thus Triennale are sources of inspiration for Indian art lovers, it has found a place internationally, so we should look in the market value of art. In India through 90's ideas in visual arts through moving images like tally casting, cyber spatial interactions, audio visual publication (D.V.D.S.), Video transmission thought mobile phone have been evolving worldwide and change the life of artist.

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