

CHAPTER VIII

- REVIEW & OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Review of this Study

This research endeavour began with the quest to find the relationship between art and education. It was hypothesised that Art, or art-making has something more valuable to contribute to human development than the mere 'entertainment of the senses'. The study of the lives of artists and the process and attitude of craftsmen, led the investigator to believe that the quality of thought stimulated by the act of creation was a component that may have a relevance for the education of children to face the needs of the future and to make it a better place to live in.

In order to trace the relationship of art and education a survey of ideas and experiments were made which brought to the foreground that art education is necessary for a more total mental and physical development. Recent research highlights the cognitive aspects stimulated through art activities that develops those mental skills of keen observation, qualitative problem solving and qualitative concept formation that are necessary for independent learning and for permanent-learning abilities. Such a framework of ideas on the

importance of art in education was seen in the context of the needs of Third World countries. The writers concerned with problems faced by third world countries stressed the need to provide students the opportunity to learn how to make decisions, to be confident in their own ability to create, to be familiar with their own history and culture so that they can be makers of their own future and servants to no one within or beyond their country. In order to provide such an educational opportunity for students a review of past policies of the government school education was conducted for the period 1947-1979.

It was found during the course of the survey of educational policies in India for the period 1947-1979 the school curriculum had provided very limited opportunities for the Arts to make its valuable contributions to the educational system. The discipline centred approach still remained the dominant approach to school education. Such an approach not only splintered learning into particles that lost their relevance to 'life needs' but were presented with an emphasis on content rather than 'learning how to learn'.

Art in education over the years in Indian governmental reports had moved from the position of a 'leisure time' activity to that of a "work experience' or "productive-vocation' oriented activity. Such a shift however did not incorporate the most valuable contribution that art-making can give to education.

The contribution of art to education, seen in research lies in giving students the opportunity to use their mental observational skills and acquired knowledge, to solve new qualitative problems and to see the world problematically, so that learning becomes a perpetual process of inquiry, assimilation and accommodation.

The main limitation in government policies were that art was not perceived in the light of educational value but rather for its extra-curricula value. Furthermore, though the National goals of education were democratic in emphasis when they were translated into a discipline-oriented curriculum that stressed on verbal and mathematic skills they lost their direction and seemed to foster attitudes that they most wanted to remove.

The Government curriculum was so designed to create a sense of cultural unity, to foster the talents of students and to pave the way to the improvement of the country by the participation of its educated citizens. However, the curriculum designed on the National goals had no provision for study of cultural history of the country and of its rich regional heritage. Moreover, students were given little access to develop modes of expression other than the written thus limiting the freedom of expression in different modes ^{which} require training and facilities to use other modes of observation and thinking rather than the verbal. The verbal and numerical skill training in schools was a limitation and considered as being a fundamental flaw in the curriculum framework which distorted the connotation of the National goals of education.

In order to suggest a renewed approach to art education, a conceptual framework was drawn up in which the main problems and limitations of translating objectives into curriculum outlines were discussed. The renewed approach was termed the Integrated Problem Centred Approach to art education which aimed at an integration of concepts

within disciplines by the integration of cultural history and the use of traditional art activities as an aid to facilitating the qualitative problem solving approach to learning that aims at making education relevant beyond the school.

A tryout implementation of the units designed with the renewed approach yielded important observations that substantiated the arguments of this research. It was recorded that students in the early years of schooling (class 6) who had not yet gained mastery over the written language were assisted by the use of other modes of expression. Learning to solve problems through dramatization and drawing and from visual aids, helped to supplement students with information, and observations so that they could understand the multidimensions and facets of the knowledge input. Furthermore, the investigator found that students expression through a variety of other modes gave a more comprehensive picture of how much the student had assimilated which was unclear when recapitulation was restricted to written exercises. Drawings, and gestures of students gave the teacher and the students a wider understanding of what had been learnt and comprehended.

The attempt then in this study was to find a means by which students would appreciate the different forms of knowing and to acquire confidence in their own ability to learn and to form an expression of what they knew. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the release of art from its 'elitist shackles' and its bondage to 'leisure' and 'pleasure' so that art may make its valuable contribution to the process of education that is aimed at human development and societal change.

It would be impossible to draw conclusions from this research or to conclude it with any finality, for education and research are aimed at a perpetual process of seeking and finding. Therefore, this last portion of this study is aimed at pointing towards some observations that can be used to stimulate further research into the field of art education and for the renewal of the approach to education.

On the methodology of this study.

The first observation of this study deals with the methodology and the qualitative procedure utilized in this research. It was observed that in order to provide the initial conceptual framework

and historical background for the field of art education in this country a qualitative descriptive approach should be used. Such an approach was felt to be most useful for the nature of the data that was being analysed. Furthermore, even in the tryout of the renewed approach to curriculum development described in chapter VII a qualitative approach was used so that future researchers could observe the process of implementation. In a field that yet unexplored a qualitative conceptual framework helps to lay the foundations, it is felt that in such "navigational" research an experimental tryout would not have been useful, as variables, influences and other factors have not yet been identified.

The purpose of using the qualitative evaluation and observation schedule in the tryout was to highlight the process of learning and to describe the problems encountered in the process. The evaluation and renewal of the educational system requires that the methodology should assist in the identification of the problems rather than merely quantifying them.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

PART I

The review of governmental policies for Art education (1947-1979) presented in chapter IV of this study brought to light some important observations:

1. Since Independence two parallel philosophies of education came into existence; the Gandhian model of integrated learning through a vocational craft, and the British model of a discipline centred school curriculum where art/craft was an extra curricula activity. These two philosophies ran parallel and often merged, though the dominant model for Indian schools was always discipline centred. The vocationalization of education gained impetus in the mid 60's and 70's and finally in the 1979 report the two strains of vocational training and the academic were split once again.
2. The effect of an inconsistent educational philosophy gave art education a lowly status in the schools, as an extra curricula activity at one period and as a vocational training at another.

3. The philosophy of Aesthetics and Art history analysed during this transition period (1947-1979) was not based on democratic ideals, elitist notions of 'taste' 'selfexpression' continued to remain in theoretical arguments. The poverty of explanation at the ideational level further increased the lowly status of art education.

In the field of art education the exponents on various committees were unable to provide substantial researched arguments to prove the value of art to education. The value of art presented in the reports were restricted to western or elitist concepts on emotional and psychological growth often divorced from cognitive aspects of development. It came to be accepted that art had little to do with cognitive development and was a mere leisure time activity and was then treated with contempt in the light of social and economic problems facing the country.

This thesis has striven to highlight research findings that reveal the importance of art education for cognitive development and for social awareness which are the aims of education and of art.

4. Chapter IV contains an analysis of the conceptual limitations of a discipline centred curriculum approach. It was observed that the discipline centred approach segmented the objectives of education and weakened the value of education.
- 4i. The discipline approach over-emphasised the 'content' of education. Educational theory that aims at developing democratic self-learning skills stress on the form, activities and experiences that make an exposure educational significant. It is no longer "what is learnt" but "what skills and attitudes are acquired during the experience" that makes for permanent self motivated learning.
- 4ii The discipline centred approach also fosters a ~~folk~~ notion that there is a one-to-one correlation between mental skills and the study of one discipline eg. arts develop creativity and science the "spirit of inquiry". This one-to-one correlation of objectives to disciplines was seen as a limitation as it has been found in recent research that mathematics or any other subject can develop creative abilities and art a 'spirit of inquiry'.

5. Throughout the period under study the Reports stressed the need to develop cultural awareness, national integration and the talents of the students through school education. However, no detailed scheme for cultural education was found in any of the reports.
6. An examination of the 'content' of art education in the 1979 Central Board Curriculum for 10 year schooling revealed that art education in the fine arts had no cultural history content and the activities were restricted to 'Drawing and Painting' based on western aesthetic principles of perspective etc., Crafts and music education were the only areas where some traditional Indian forms were to be taught.

The poverty of explanation at the theoretical level and the splintered disciplinary approach that negated the value of art activities and cultural history spurred the need to develop a renewed approach to art education.

PART II

The observations made during the development of the renewed approach to art education and the implementation of the approach in a school were:

7. Art making contributes to the development of qualitative concept formation, and qualitative problem solving skills. Lessons 2 and 4 exemplified that students were able to express qualitative concepts in the process of drawing. The medium brought to light the degree of concept differentiation that the students had acquired which was not visible when students were restricted to verbal expression.
8. Art making offered students the opportunity to express what they knew, in a media most suited to convey the content. The dramatization and drawing activities in the tryout exemplified the rich integrated fund of information that the students had which was necessary for the study and expression of any new concepts.
9. The artistic expression involves a process by which the students synthesise what was learnt previously into a harmonious form. The transformation of experience into knowledge that can be used and comprehended by others was exemplified in lessons 6,7 and 8 and 9 of the tryout. In these lessons students derived historical information through the visual experience of viewing slides, this experience permeated their drawings and writings in subsequent lessons.

10. Art making and cultural education requires the development of ~~max~~ observational skills that are highly differentiated and for comprehension and expression the use of knowledge in an integrated form.

It was found that art and education share similar aims in enabling students to extract information and order this knowledge for future expression and critical awareness.

Suggestions for the Improvement of the School Art Education programme.

1. In order to enable students to receive the full value and benefit of art education it would be of primary importance to introduce a component of cultural history to develop their critical awareness and synthesise the knowledge they have gained during Schooling.
2. The restructuring of the art education activities with the problem centred approach will assist in the development of mental skills most necessary for self learning.
3. The art education programme necessarily has to be designed to be region specific so as to

enable students to develop skills of critical appreciation which can later be used to understand less familiar forms of art.

4. Regional specificity will enable the intelligent usage of naturally available resources. Limitations of funds can be removed by the use of inexpensive, recyclable local materials that have traditionally afforded valuable artistic and educational experiences.
5. The resource persons made available to the schools can be drawn from local craftsmen who can work with students and teachers from all disciplines to enrich the experience of concept formation in diverse content areas.
6. The Integrated problem solving approach entails less expenditure in the long run but requires the pooling in of resources from inside and outside the school so as to provide an integrated experience to students.
7. The sequencing of activities in the programme will have to be prepared keeping in mind; The rhythmic pattern of developing new skills and the reinforcement of the same. The inter-connectedness of the content areas, problems solved and skills developed must be maintained at every level of schooling.

Though this study has attempted to renew the school art education programme, the attempt has been to design an approach that is suited to Indian conditions and the problems faced by schools. The problem solving approach is ideal for schools ^{with} ~~xxx~~/large number of students. The limitations of funds, trained teachers and varying paces of students learning abilities have been accounted for in the design of the Integrated Problem Solving Approach. This approach has also incorporated the new research findings so as to ensure that students can develop all their capabilities and develop a sense of respect for the culture of other people.

The primary observation found in literature on education of recent years was the sharp re-emphasis on the need to organize educational experiences so that the process of "learning-how-to learn" is stimulated. The emphasis of education has now been shifted from the 'content' and 'product' outcomes" to the process of learning. This shift ~~w~~ has had a revolutionary effect on all disciplines and the whole approach to schooling. As part of this movement in educational research, the field of art education has begun to gain prominency not only because it affords an educational process and activity, but because it involves the integration

of knowledge and stimulates a multimodal approach to education. Art education has become valuable to the process of human development as it aims at developing a variety of modes of expression and thought and deals with qualitative concept formation through problem solving activities.

In the light of this new emphasis on the process of learning, it is suggested that more research using various media should be conducted to describe and understand the factors effecting the process, and the variables that determine the nature of the process of learning.

Cognitive development which is closely linked to the conceptual framework of art education for schools in this study, needs to be explored further so that those in the field of education and teaching may be made aware of the stages, sequences of educational experience that most effectively stimulate the process of independent learning.

This study has also been governed by the ideas of educationalists in Third World countries who have critically examined the needs of countries such as India. Educational research and philosophy in India needs to develop a consistency in approach that take into cognisance the national and

international goals for the achievement of human freedom. The meaning of freedom and democratic ideals need to be incorporated both in the means and goals of education and should not be limited to a selected population within these countries. The de-emphasis of teaching and the importance laid on independent problematic approach to learning are aimed at reinstating a sense of freedom and dignity to the learner and teacher-learner so that the process of education is no longer confined to the walls of educational institutions. Every researcher then needs to reconsider the philosophy of education under which research (even empirical research) is being conducted so as to verify the consistency between the approach and its objectives.

Suggestions for Future Research.

1. The most urgent need in the field of education is the development of an educational and aesthetic philosophy that is based on democratic ideals. The philosophic arguments must include the approach to understanding cultural history and the artistic endeavour so as to ensure the development of those cognitive skills and attitudes that enhance self learning. The development of self learning skills and critical awareness amongst all human beings

is necessary for the development of a democracy so that people may become "controllers of their own future".

2. Using the renewed philosophy of education experimental tryouts at every level of schooling should be attempted in all regions of this country to ensure the optimum usage of human, material and cultural resources.
3. Further research in cognitive development will assist in assessing the tasks and activities that are most effective in developing self learning skills and its use in self expression.
4. More research has to be conducted in order to verify the formate and sequence of educational material so as to foster individual cognitive styles. Remedial work would necessarily be woven into the very fibre of the curricula to provide for the "equality of opportunity" for all students.
5. A team of researchers specialized in various disciplines should collaborate in order to draw out the laws and fundamentals of each discipline and then work towards preparing an integrated curriculum. The inter-relationship of disciplines has in this study been found to exist on the levels of; laws

and principles of knowledge such as relativity, harmony, balance etc., and on the level of content comprehension and is also the bases of all activity which draws knowledge and experience from various 'disciplines' and "content areas". The dialogue across disciplines would be essential to ensure the presentation of a more 'total' educational experience for the students.

The suggestions presented above will naturally revise and adapt the Integrated problem Centred Approach developed in this study and may perhaps lead to the formation of an integrated approach to school education that aims at critical awareness and creative self-expressions and nurtures the spirit of inquiry.

As the suggestions above reveal, there is still so much to be discovered and explored in the field of education, and still so much more has to be done to ensure that the potentialities of all human beings are developed. This study on the value of art education has been only an initial qualitative exploration into the field of art and education. It must be stressed that no conclusions can be drawn from this study. This research is but a beginning and not the end of a long journey into the field of education.

Future research in education must acknowledge that the artistic endeavour is truly a universal phenomena, both in time and space. Art, like science has for centuries enabled human beings to transform experience into harmonious patterns of knowledge. Through the process of Art and Science human beings have derived an understanding of the material world, the world of ideas and all that is human, so that they may attempt what once seemed impossible, the qualitative enrichment of life.