

APPENDIX NO. 8

REPORT OF THE SEMINAR ON ART EDUCATION, 1956, NEW DELHI

Art in the Education of the Adolescent:

The points discussed under this head were:

- (i) Whether specific Art technique should be taught at the Secondary School level.
- (ii) Whether there should be any set syllabus.
- (iii) What can be done to improve the present standard of Art teaching.
- (iv) Whether a separate department should be provided for Art teaching.
- (v) Whether a better environment in and out of the school can be created to instill a love for Art in children.

(1) The general consensus of opinion was that Art should be an essential part of Secondary School education. It should be a compulsory subject up to the age of about 13 and thereafter it should be an optional subject of study and, for those who do not take it as such, one of the arts or crafts should be a compulsory co-curricular activity.

(2) In regard to the question of Art teaching, it is suggested that, while a certain amount of formal techniques is necessary from the age of 13 onwards, care should be taken to see that the essential freedom of expression of the child is not discouraged.

(3) A set syllabus is obviously necessary at the stage when Art is a subject of study and examination. The following syllabus is suggested for children from the age of about 13 to about 16:

- (i) Drawing (object, life, etc.).
- (ii) Imaginative composition (in any medium, tempera, water colour, gouache or oil).
- (iii) Illustration (black and white or any other medium).

OR

Design (black and white, water colour, tempera and coloured paper).

- (iv) Simple outdoor sketching in any medium.
 - (v) Simple clay modeling and casting in plaster of paris.
 - (vi) Theoretical instruction should include:
 - (a) Lives of great painters and sculptors of the world.
(Only a few very important personalities to be included).
 - (b) Elementary study of Indian art and architecture.
- (4) For co-curricular activities, drawing, modeling, mural painting, making of mobiles, interior decoration, theatre craft, pottery making and painting, weaving and textile painting and printing, woodcarving, woodcut and linocut are suggested.
- (5) It is necessary that the Art teacher should be a trained teacher.
- (6) It is essential that there must be a separate class-room for Art teaching.

(7) If Art Education is to serve its purpose fully, it is essential that the environment of the school should be such as to promote the appreciation of beauty.

Recommendations:

- (i) Art Education should be compulsory for every child up to the age of about 13 years and should be an integrated part of the school curriculum.
- (ii) The development of the child should be noted by the teachers at the various stages of his growth and instruction imparted accordingly. There are certain definite stages in the mental development of the child in accordance with which the character of his creative activity changes, beginning from the scribbling stage and going on through the schematic stage and the pseudo-realistic stage to the crisis of adolescence. The special characteristics of individual children should not, however, be ignored because the mental age does not always correspond to the physical age.
- (iii) Teaching methods should be based upon the dictum "Free expression without adult imposition".
- (iv) The child should not be taught formal drawing or to copy, because to the child the image is the reality and the object a symbol.
- (v) As far as possible, the training of the hand and the eye should be directed towards the particular art or craft for which the child shows aptitude.
- (vi) It is desirable that a congenial atmosphere be created in the class-room so that children feel happy and relaxed and are able to express themselves without

restraint. In this connection, it is important that the physical surroundings in which the child works should be neat, clean and beautiful.

- (vii) The Seminar viewed with concern the growing practice of “Child Art” exhibitions, as they are apt to give an undue and wrong place to Art in the education of the child and to encourage exhibitionism, which is in every way harmful to children. Exhibitions of children’s work in art and crafts should, therefore be kept within the limits of a school’s normal activities and should be organized not as a ‘public show’ but only for the purpose of encouraging and educating the children themselves and informing the teachers and parents.

(Note: This recommendation also applies to “Art in the Education of the Adolescent”).