

Art for holistic development

Art education in schools was long due. It must look beyond mandatory drawing classes



IT'S not unusual to find students skip the art class in school. Often it is treated as a hobby period and many times this period is taken up by teachers of more important "academic subjects". While the advantage of art education isn't lost on anyone, the subject often goes to the backburner as students move to higher classes.

So, in order to give better recognition to this subject, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), earlier this year, decided to make art education mandatory for all classes from this academic session. As per reports, all schools have been asked to reserve a minimum of two periods per week for art education. "I wish the Board had started it early. I would have loved to study art as my main subject instead of accountancy," says Aabhas Verma, a Class XII student of a prominent private school in West Delhi.

"Also, the Board needs to make visual arts as valuable as an academic subject like mathematics or economics," he adds. Currently, the 17-year-old is taking coaching to work on his visual art skills. "I wish to get into a design college for my graduation. But having had zero exposure to art in school, I had to opt for private coaching," he says. Verma may have missed the mark to excel in art education right from the school level but if CBSE has its way and schools put their heart into building an ecosystem, there won't be many more students like him who will complain.

CREATIVE LANDSCAPE

Art education occupies a marginal position in the present education system, whereas the future sectors demand a creative, flexible, and dynamic 22 Mail Today, New Delhi, Tuesday, August 6, 2019 IN order to offer students an opportunity to tap the unexplored sports management field in India, International Institute of Sports Management (IISM) in association with Mumbai University has announced a three year Bachelor of Sports Management programme. It aims to develop human resources for the sports industry.

UNDER its hygiene education programme for primary schools in Lucknow, the Dettol Banega Swachh India programme was inaugurated with a toilet and handwash unit in Saraswati Shishu Mandir school. It was attended by Anupama Jaiswal, minister of state, Independent Charge (Basic Education) who encouraged the kids to become agents of change for the society. Children's ability to attend schools is affected by inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in schools in Uttar Pradesh.

Art education in schools was long due. It must look beyond mandatory drawing classes youth. The Board has finally sensed the gap that existed in terms of a long-term programme at the school level. This was coupled with an increasing demand for a creative, flexible, adaptable and innovative workforce. "A need for a radical change in pedagogy was felt as it does not allow to fulfill the creative potential of all; has failed to develop critical reflection

and freedom of thought," says Ritu Khoda of Art1st, which was established in 2009 with a vision to create visual literacy, creative skills and cultural awareness among children and educators.

The decision to introduce Art Education was taken after the Board held discussions with several stakeholders, including schools, principals, teachers, and NCERT and art professionals. At school level, the focus is on visual arts. Organisations such as Art1st are helping schools develop a pedagogy. "So we have developed pedagogy from the preschool to Class VIII.

This has translated into our curriculum books. The entire programme then gets implemented into schools. We have a minimum five-year contract with most of our schools and we try and build a capacity of teachers," says Khoda. Schools give a one-hour block period to Art1st for teaching art to teachers. "The second part is to generate awareness about the role of art, their culture and heritage through books and films," she adds.

Academicians believe that CBSE's plan to integrate art with education will lead to betterment of learning in the classrooms. "Schools tend to spend a limited amount of budget in the art domain, and those who spend charge exorbitantly for their services.

Currently, the focus of institutions is to have merit lists for sciences and commerce streams as they get name, fame, and money from them. But this will change soon," says Prof Shilpi Jain, associate professor, Information Technology, FORE School of Management.

FUTURE SHADES

Even when there is a cohesive document on art-integrated learning, the struggle that art educators and thinkers face is how to get the document implemented in schools? Since children are critical thinkers with the ability to adapt, the implementation process has to be correct so that there is no gap at any level.

To spread awareness, Art1st Foundation has started roundtables in seven cities which will culminate with an annual seminar in Delhi in December. Art1st will circulate the white paper to government bodies, educational institutions, research institutes, and universities.

There are several credible colleges offering quality art education in India. "Students and parents are unaware about careers such as product engineering, product management, new product development, ergonomics engineering, and design thinking consultants. Hence, the need of the hour is to spread awareness about these programmes through career fairs and counselling sessions," says Prof Jain.