

1919-The Epoch of Rebirth of Art and Design Education and Recent Trends

¹Dr. Mukta Avachat

¹ Associate Professor, MIT ADT, School of Fine and Applied Arts, Pune, Maharashtra, India. .

¹ Email - mukta.shirke@mituniversity.edu.in,

Contact Number: 9850625237

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Abstract: *Art and Design schools are educational institutes with main focus on creativity and analytical thinking through exploration of various visual arts and designs. Many art schools established to meet the craft, design and drawing need during the industrial revolution. Exception to that; in 1919, Kala –Bhavan at Visva-Bharati University, Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan in India was established by Rabindranath Tagore to promote culture specific modernism. It became the centre of the revival of Indian art at the time when Nandlal Bose became the principal. Meanwhile at the same time in 1919 Bauhaus was founded in Germany by German architect Walter Gropius to reimagine the material world. It was an effort of interpreting the bond between society and art or technology. Both institutes focused on amalgamation of arts and crafts. The approach of Bauhaus was very practical towards teaching methodology and giving tasks while approach of Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan was inspired by ancient Indian teaching pedagogy. The two institutes had different vision but created great impact on the art world. This paper is focused on the comparative analysis of both the institutions and their respective pedagogies. Their approach changed the paradigms of art and design education. Since this paper is from academicians' point of view, it will analyze the impact of both the institutes on recent trends in art and design education. It will examine the qualitative data. It is focused on the impact of revivalism and modernism. The observations stated will throw a light on the contribution and the influence of both the institutes which were running parallel in education and design industry.*

Key Words: *Art institutes, Bauhaus, Shanti Niketan, teaching pedagogy, culture, Art & Design Education,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Education systems in the world have evolved through time. These evolutions helped shaping the different kinds of pedagogies.

Art and design education also gradually molded and shifted from artists' studios to university system. The two institutes which created an impact on other art and design institutes of India and Europe are Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus. These two institutes were built to eliminate the distance between applied arts and fine arts. The earlier institutes were unable to take art beyond the workshop or atelier system. The educational systems of both the institutes are famous for academic excellence and innovation formed by social and cultural needs. Kala Bhavan's pedagogy depicts roots in culture while Bauhaus's pedagogy depicts strategic efforts to change the mass production, function and art.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Education is an integral system of India. *Takshashila* was the world's first formal known educational centre for higher

education. It was formed before 700 BC. More than 10,000 students from all over the world studied there (World's First University, Takshashila (Taxila)). *Nalanda* University and *Vikramśila* University also had various subjects. All these ancient universities in India followed *Gurukul* system. Muslim invaders and British rulers destroyed India's traditional educational system. Education is one of the most significant areas where one can see the British impact in colonial India. The aim of the education in colonial time was to create a class of people with Indian blood and colour but with English in taste, to promote European literature, to promote oriental teachings etc. (British Education System In India - Features and Impact, 2024) . Train Indians to work as clerks was another objective behind colonial education (IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE ON INDIA: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL (1757-1857)). One can see the need to form new education system which can teach students Indian values. Establishment of Vishwa Bharati University was revamping education system of that time.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF KALA BHAVAN, SHANTINIKETAN:

The establishment of Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan was revolutionary in India. This institute was established to change the mindset of colonial impact. This institute was influential for forming culture specific modernism in India. With the vision to form new epitome of art education in India and to reject western pedagogy; this institute set new example in promoting Indian culture. Vishwa Bharati was transformed into central university in 1951 after independence of the country. Kala Bhavan, the art school at Vishwa Bharati University in Shanti Niketan was established in 1919 by Rabindranath Tagore. This institute was influential for forming culture specific modernism in India. It acted as a medium to connect the Indian art to Western world. He established this to highlight the importance of intellectual freedom and creativity. It is a response to colonialism. Tagore invited Nandlal Bose to head the Kala Bhavana (Art Institutions). When Nandalal Bose became the principal, he introduced art fairs that created a bond between students and regional arts. His rethinking of tradition was inspired by Anand Coomarswamy (historian and philosopher of Indian art) and visit to Ajanta Caves (Art Institutions). During his period various archival projects were undertaken. Although other art schools in India were formed to teach European academic art in India or to create artisans for industrial work or to create art goods; Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan established on the below fundamental principles –

1. Rejecting the transplantation of alien ideas
2. To get inspiration from old Indian Philosophy to create new pedagogy
3. To establish the bond between regional arts and artists

Unlike other art schools, Kala Bhavan established its own Indian philosophy of art which was rooted in nature and sustainability. It was the only school where liberal arts had place in education at that time. The pedagogy of Kala Bhavan, was based on construction and creation; 'Construction' of path to wisdom and 'Creation' of cultural traces (Dasgupta). Impact of other eastern countries can also be seen on Tagore's philosophy.



Fig. 1 Tagore with teacher and students at school (Learning is Beautiful)

Nandlal Bose, Abnindranath Tagore, Binod Bihari Mukherjee, Ramkinkar Baij were the academicians at Kala Bhavan. The focus was on student's holistic development. Emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development was important.

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF BAUHAUS

The thought that decoration of the building as the noblest use of fine arts inspired to establish Bauhaus, the German artistic movement. Bauhaus formed on the thought that only fine art education was unable to create artisans for industries. Bauhaus's philosophy inspired architects, sculptors and painters to get back to crafts. It was established in 1919 by Walter Gropius. He was invited to head the Bauhaus in Weimar, German. Bauhaus's practical approach was very fundamental to teach basic lessons. Bauhaus established on the below fundamental principles-

1. To establish the bond between daily life and design
2. To introduce design in a simplistic manner
3. To establish new pedagogy for design

Bauhaus focused on to amalgamate art, craft and architecture. It impacted on the field of design. Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Gunta Stölzl, László Moholy-Nagy were the academicians at Bauhaus. Bauhaus established the structure of today's curriculum and pedagogy of fine and applied arts. Bauhaus started the compulsory preliminary course of six months for the first semester students of both applied and fine arts (Principles and Curriculum).

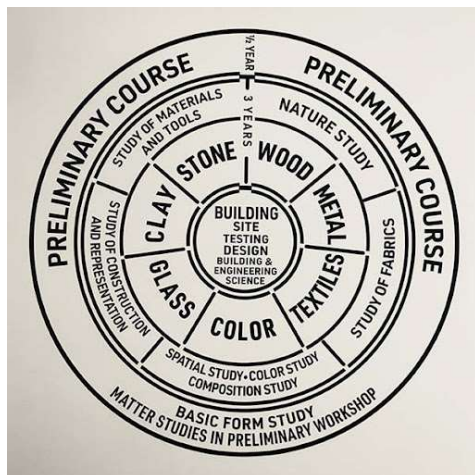


Fig. 2 Diagram of Bauhaus curriculum (Principles and Curriculum)

5. AIM: (if any)

To understand the impact of Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus on recent trends in education

6. OBJECTIVES

- To understand the philosophy of both institutes Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus
- To understand the relation between philosophy of Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus and NEP and other art & design institutes

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This is a historical research. This study used qualitative comparative analysis comparing the pedagogies of Kala Bhavan and Bauhaus. It will further understand the pedagogical outcomes of both the institutes on art and design world. The study is focused on cultural, social need to study certain conditions and impact for the occurrence of outcomes. The study used qualitative comparative analysis in comparing two educational systems. This analysis will help to throw light on cultural impact of both the institutes. Articles and papers were reviewed and analyzed.

8. RESULT / FINDINGS :

Binodebehari an artist compared the efforts of both the institutes in one of his articles in '*Adhunik Silpa Siksha*' in 1972. He stated that there was a similarity in the pedagogy of Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus but the difference lies at the analysis of the significance of modern civilization (Dasgupta). Art, craft and everyday life was linked at Bauhaus. Sustainability was not the goal of Bauhaus, while creation, production and developing sustainable approach were aspects of three different departments at Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan. The only difference is Bauhaus started on a planned programme and Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan began with the vision of Rabindranath Tagore for holistic development. Each faculty from both institutes created their unique pedagogy.

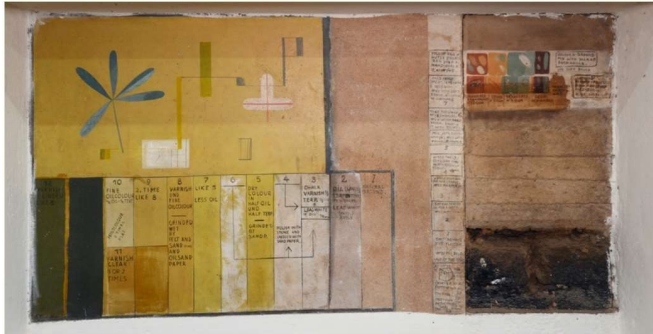


Fig. 3 Nandlal Bose, Instructions for Mural painting 1930 (Dasgupta).

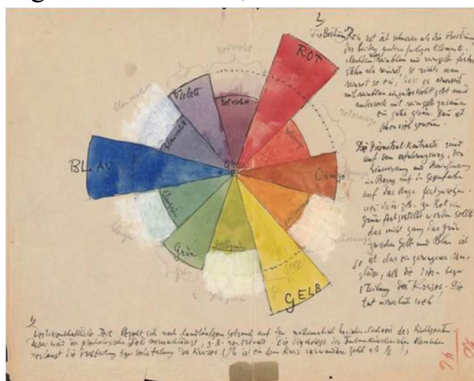


Fig. 4 Illustration by Paul Klee about colour composition (Candido, 2023)

9. ANALYSIS:

One can see the New Education Policy NEP 2020 is a blend of Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus philosophy. The policy revamps and revisions the education in India after a century of establishment of Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus. It focuses on holistic development like Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan. Recent trends in education show that vocational training and involvement of designs in daily life highlight the importance of both of these institutes. NEP 2020 helps Vocal for local approach which states the significance of crafts in economic, social and cultural development as stated in the philosophy of both the institutes

10. CONCLUSION:

Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan and Bauhaus coincidentally formed in the same year 1919. Educational trajectories of both institutes show that both institutes had many influential teachers. Each one followed their unique pedagogy. The Bauhaus focused on the outer beauty of the arts and Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan focused on the soul of the arts. Head of both the institutes wanted to merge each art domains under one roof. Both amalgamate theatre, music, arts and crafts. Unity of all arts and interdisciplinary approach in arts was the main aim of these two institutes. Since both the institutes had subjects only related to different kinds of arts and design they created an impact on other art and design institutes in the entire world.

NEP 2020 and recent trends in art and design education once again highlights the significance of both of these institutes.

The main feature of NEP 2020 is bridge the gap between the learning outcomes of current education and what is actually required to live. Some contemporary art universities are trying to apply the interdisciplinary approach for art, design and technology. Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan philosophy is best for school level learning also. It eliminates the barriers in the learning process. But it is very difficult to follow and teach interdisciplinary approach for each domain. To eliminate a gap between different teaching methods, diversities in the objectives of the universities, getting equal mindset or standard of faculties in all universities will remain a challenge and hence it is very difficult to blindly follow the philosophy of these institutes. This creates limitations for implementing a uniform policy.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is a scope for further research to create uniform guidelines or policies for developing a basic sense of aesthetics in teachers and students into private and government universities.

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Full Home Address with Pin code / Zip code : (First Author) :-

Name :- Dr. Mukta Avachat

House Number :- 1201

Apartment/Street/Building :- Rohan Madhuban 2

Area/Near by place :- Bavdhan, PVPIT College

City /Village/ Town :- Pune

District :- Pune

State :- Maharashtra

Country :- India

Zip Code / Pin Code: 411021

Mobile Number with country code: +91 9850625237