

PAINTING AS MAJOR FINE ART TOOL FOR CREATIVE NON-VERBAL ART EDUCATION

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Abstract: Art education plays a significant role in the development of society as well as nation. Arts are reported to be of two key categories: Visual Arts (VA) and Performing Arts (PA). The VA includes drawing, paintings, sculpture, and the like while the PAs include music, theatre, dance, etc. Among all VA forms painting has got a special significance. A painting is visual that facilitates non-verbal communication. Communication is a must for all living organisms as much as for all human endeavours, be it inter-personal interaction, relationship and conversation. Hence, man has ultimately devised diverse ways for effective communication. Some of these are verbal and some nonverbal. Right from the birth the newly born child develops communion with mother naturally. As he grows up he sees many objects which have different moving patterns and colours that attracts him. The child sees the objects again and again as he tries communication with these objects. In fact communication remains associated with all living beings from the very beginning. Painting, which is a non-verbal art form, has a strong potential to convey the intended message to all kinds of people, no matter to which social strata, caste or creed, or ethnic group they belong to. It is an important method of art, through which much is got said without actually saying anything. The message of a painting can be easily understood, unlike literary info that can be comprehended only by the erudite. A painting is not merely a means of preserving the past, but also a tool of transmission of wide range of stories, emotions, feelings, abstract world, etc., emblematically, didactically or in a latent mode. Several paintings, particularly on natural objects and scenes, portray real life so meticulously and need no mastery of language for interpreting the intended theme. These are rather self-interpretive, that transmit their messages which are easy to comprehend even by the non-literate viewers. In several situations, educational or otherwise, this pictorial mode of communication generates immense benefit for art education.

Keywords: Art education, Attributes of paintings, Educational benefits of painting, Historical paintings, Non-verbal communication, Teaching, Visual culture

Introduction

Communication is usually vital in all human actions whether these are for interface, affiliation, perpetuation or survival (Okeke, 2007). Education invariably involves communication of knowledge and information from the teacher to the taught. The success largely depends upon the efficacy of communication. Therefore, choice of the communication method is greatly meaningful especially in art education. Some communications are verbal and some nonverbal. Art is considered to be of two key categories: Visual Arts (VA) and Performing Arts (PA). The VAs include drawing, paintings, sculpture, and the like; while the PAs include music, theatre, mime, histrionics, dance, etc. Among all VA forms painting has special significance as many things are best whispered

visually (Preble, 1973). A painting is a visual that facilitates non-verbal communication. In art education; an object is able to creatively communicate with the onlooker and the paintings do it better. This is going to gain importance in the new Millennium (Mayo, 2007).

There are mixed feelings generated by the portrayal of art forms whose verbal and vocal expression is rather tough. Therefore, use of arts, mainly the fine arts, for expressing their specific experiences and creativity holds vital sense, irrespective of the place or time. The visual culture in art education is progressively moving forward (Duncum, 2009; Mayo, 2007). Painting is an important technique of expression using creativity and art, vide which a lot is got said without actually uttering something. Here, an artist symbolizes the envisioned messages, presents in coded form and allows the viewers to decode the same and interpret the intended messages. A painting is not merely a way of preserving human history, but also a tool of transmission of a wide range of stories, emotions, feelings, activities, etc., with symbols, signs, marks, emblematically, didactically or in a hidden mode. Besides in India, the art of painting, use of colour or pigment (dye) in combinations, to a matter is important. It has been practiced all throughout the Greco-Roman Antiquity era (Jones, 2012).

Paintings in an Indian Context

Different art forms have been in vogue in India since time immemorial. The art of painting has been rather held in high esteem and paintings have been considered to be sovereign among all other arts. There is a mention in *Vishnudharmottara* that the practice of painting is the chief of all Arts as the hill Sumeru (*Sumer Parbat*) is the King among all the mountains, and *Garuda* (the bird *Garur*) is the Chief of all those born out of hatching of eggs, and the king is the Chief of men (Agrawal, 1989).

The art of painting had flourished well in India, particularly in temples and caves. The world famous Buddhist carvings and paintings are found in the ancient Ajanta caves in Western region of India. The earliest of the 31 caves along the Waghora River dates back to the Second Century B.C., when the Buddhists banned depiction of the Buddha, allowing artists to freely create symbolic figures only. Six Centuries later, the caves were created to express the visions as per the Mahayana order. Here, the Buddha is lovingly shown seated, and the story of his life portrayed in sensuous mode. These art depictions indicate that it is the life of the spirit rather than that of worldly being which pervades through these paintings (Behl *et al.*, 2005).

Beautiful paintings on ceilings and sidewalls can be found in Ellora caves depicting the cultural scenes of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The five shrines called *Chhota Kalash* (Cave No. 30), *Indra Sabha* (Cave No.32), *Jagannath Sabha* (Cave No.33), and an incomplete hall on four columns (Cave No. 31), and a small cave ((Cave No.34) towards the North end of Ellora have these kinds of paintings (Sharma and Manager, 2020). These paintings have natural scenes of clouds, flying figures and nice-looking motifs. The western porch too has these types of paintings. According to Falk (2004) the art-based educational programme "Paintings and Stories" that makes use of paintings to link with cultural/literary activities, has been established and found rather beneficial. Tillotson (1997) described Amrita Sher Gil as a painter of great substance whose productions possessed the elements of melancholy and womanhood excellently imbibed in beauty of colors.

For any progress, first nurturing and then chasing the dreams is important. All of us dream

of ideas and thoughts and share these with our colleagues, friends and students in the classrooms or outside. We can do so either verbally through spoken words or non-verbally by using colors, light, crayons, brushes, or silent gestures of body parts or using some art objects, etc. The best non-verbal communication is through the use of paintings or pictures. Akin to dancing, use of such paintings or portraits is rather natural to our disposition. This has great relevance in carrying forward the task of art education.

Paintings for Effective Communication

As mentioned above, the history of arts in India, reveals that painting art has its origin from the early cave era when people communicated either by conveying a symbolic sense to concrete objects or by way of making drawings, painting pictures, engraving or creating comprehensible scribbling marks (Sharma, 2013).

The early man used to paint to maintain the reminiscence of the previous happenings and to give definite shape or form to their logical, vital or abstract ideas and opinions. In nutshell, it can be stated that these cave paintings depicted the life of early man, showcased their day-to-day routines, and expressed their living styles, feelings, ideas and thoughts. Art is both a means of exercising communication and a way of expression of feelings. This make art a useful approach to education.

Paintings as Effective Source of Inspiration to Viewers

As a painting is created it acts as a source of inspiration for people because viewing the arts has a potential to create immense degree of inspiration (Ishiguro, 2022). In due course this creates a significant space to be an integral part of life. The effect of a painting is due to its temporal and spatial substance, over and above its colors, shapes, etc. The paintings have spread everywhere, from classrooms to living rooms and people have got diverse preferences for the emerging styles and makings that impact the different cultures around the world.

A painting is recognized as one of the most powerful visual art form. Firstly, it is by nature a luminous expressive output that stimulates the experience of the onlookers, and secondly; it pleases the viewer's soul by appealing his/her eyes and thereby communicating feelings or emotions. Words can never communicate in the way paintings can. In order that words awaken our emotions would require familiarity with the language concerned. However, a painting via its colours, shades and visual content impacts the emotions of even an illiterate person (Sharma, 2013).

Although life is a blend of happiness and sorrow; ridges and troughs, comprising experiences of hill-top and valley-bottoms. From time to time, it would be all roses; at other times, the whole thing would show rough and jagged setting. The art forms, especially paintings create inspiration not only for youngsters but to adults as well (Ishiguro, 2022).

A painting represents the imagination, intention and experiences of a painter from anywhere in the world, irrespective of the language and geographical region he or she belongs to. Therefore, paintings can be gainfully involved in art education irrespective of the country with the same intensity, in a perpetually time neutral manner.

The results obtained by Ishiguro (2022) revealed that children were more inspired on viewing abstract, rather than figurative, paintings. Further, the outcome of the kind of painting differed in the students of third and sixth class. Also, kids, irrespective of the class, were

extra inspired by looking at paintings created by children rather than by adults.

According to Gupta (1978) the painter has no intention to use the artistic media for either showcasing himself or advertising. He intends to use his artistic manifestation in an effort to find an identity amid his own soul and that of the things and objects that go in his world. In any art effort, there is a diversity of basic emotions that are predominantly universal.

The available literature indicates that futuristic research needs to focus on the relationship between viewing art and derivation of inspiration therefrom and examine the process of art viewing by children (Ishiguro, 2022).

Paintings for Logical Interpretation

Indian paintings are the amalgamation of the artistic excellence of painters and the seamless balance of religion and spirituality. In the ancient Indian divinity-oriented treatises an account of art creation in a mythical form is available. There is a mythological belief that Lord Brahma taught the procedure of how a king could bring back to life the dead son of a Brahmin by portraying the picture of the dead boy which he endowed with life. The Part III of the *Vishnudharmottara* is a vital source of diverse facets of painting. In its Chapter II, Markandeya explains to Vajra that the rules of image-making cannot be recognized, unless the rules of painting are learnt, and he pointed out that due care ought to be taken in finishing the picture (Sharma, 2013). He also underlined some desirable traits of painting, such as the appeal, diversity, buoyancy of ground proportionate to the position of the figure similar to what is perceived in its natural setting and also about the norms connected with its minute execution, and much more.

Non-Verbal Communicative Potential of Paintings

Painting is not a perceptible language; it is visual, mute and non-verbal, yet it is a robust means of communication (Okeke, 2007; Sharma, 2013). Through painting one can know events and conditions that pertain to one's own life such as love and matrimony, bereavement, socio-cultural and political events, and other life aspects.

The skills of non-verbal communication practiced by teachers can have a positive and profound effect on the students' mood (Bambaeroo and Shokrpour, 2017). Non-verbal communication is considered tremendously dependable in the education process. In their study, Bambaeroo and Shokrpour (2017) recommended that due focus to non-verbal communication skills can usher a positive change in the student's educative upcoming. Additionally, the teachers need to practice and grip well effective communication skills, especially for those who interact with students. Relationship between teacher and taught constitutes important factors contributing to the success or failure of students.

As termed by Bharata Muni, in *Natya Shastra* there are certain strategies of painting that communicate its intended meaning. *Vatsyayana* in *Kama Sutra* mentions six communicative aspects of painting.

The first aspect is *Roopa Bheda* implying familiarity of the form or appearance and its impact which can be apparently discerned by vision and soul. To comprehend a painting one requires keen perception and imagination. The envisioned or hidden meaning can be sensed with the help of imaginative mind.

To understand the intrinsic meaning of a painting, the viewer needs to have thorough familiarity with proportion (i.e., *Pramana*). This aspect does not just offer knowledge of proximity and remoteness but also enables the painter to choose the needed level of exposure to make an object have elegant results and creative output. The fitting proportion of creative media in paintings helps viewers to assess, perceive and comprehend the unlimited prettiness of space.

The third communicative aspect of painting is expression (i.e., *Bhava*) which is amenable of transformation and articulation in painting and are shown either through gestures of face expression, postures, sights or other actions of performance art. These are creatively depicted in paintings.

Three types of expressions are made through the adjustment of human body such as (i) by seeing and hearing, (ii) speaking and doing some work and (iii) some response to stimulus of feelings and thoughts (Sharma, 2006).

In India, paintings of Ajanta caves are the manifestation of brilliant expressions, sentiments or *Bhavas*. These emotions constitute the soul of these paintings. The expressions of non-violence, love, friendship, fear, compassion, sorrow, repose, bashfulness, worship, hate, request, jollity, strain, restlessness, renunciation, etc., are candidly and beautifully showcased in the cave paintings. These paintings effectively convey the artist's mind through various hand gestures, facial expressions and body movements, in the way a teacher conveys to the students. These cave paintings serve as the potent medium of telling interesting Jataka stories; the characters portrayed are emotionally surcharged with several motions efficiently.

The manifestation of peripheral beauty is also notable for the dissemination of information and knowledge. The *Lavnya Yojna* is significant after *Bhava*. It value adds by infusing grace or exquisiteness in paintings. As *Bhava* is the expression of inner beauty *Lavnya Yojana* is the pointer of the external beauty that adds sheen to *Bhavas*. According to Sharma (2006) the gem is deprived of glitter if it is without luster of *Lavnya*. Thus *Rupa*, *Pramana* and *Bhava* of a painting lack magnificence of liveliness if it is devoid of gleam of *Lavnya* in it. For being effective in teaching the painting must be comprehensive with all the required attributes.

Yet another desirable trait of a perfect painting is its similitude (i.e. *Sadrashya*). In ideal painting the inner aesthetics of art must connect with the external and explains how the fundamental nature or aesthetic inside is reflected and influenced by the exterior or environmental influences. The exterior factor can be associated with *Lavnya Yojna*. These elements or communicative aspects of painting are useful in enabling the viewers to decode the buried meaning in paintings. The famous painting of Monalisa is an example for this. This perfection is a useful extremity of any painting. Referred to as similitude, it can be got with the proper use of colors and their combination, texture attributes, thin and bold lines, light, shades and the strength of strokes. A few poodles and strokes of different colors are enough to enflame the hearts of many viewers (Flemings, 1980).

On the same lines, color scheme is also an important communicative property of a painting. The color scheme of any painting is rather important. In order to create paintings for serving the intended purpose of art education, the color scheme merits due importance. Many scholars link color with the subject matter of the paintings which are able to communicate

effectively. The colors do have the ability to shake the soul (Lester, 2002). Each aspect of art, is ultimately pertinent to life; and in painting, such vital situations as violence, passion, bereavement, love, command, festivity, socio-political and historic events, which man faces in life, continue to serve as theme subjects. The painters have thoughtfully endeavoured to portray these situations in color in the different paintings created by them (Okeke, 2007).

Portraying a painting is generally based on observation, reminiscence and use of mind's eye. Painting can as well be seen as a 2-D medium of communiqué wherein shape, color and outlines are aesthetically set on a flat pictographic layout to style a portrait (Okeke, 2007). In painting forms are usually manipulated to create 3-D effects.

Besides their role in artistic shaping and expression of ideas or emotions, colors act as an interpreter of the painting and has the potential to impact human perception, behavior and emotions deeply, more than any other media can do. So colors are the medium of conveying the message. In India, lot of importance is given to colours. In visual arts each color has been allied to some *rasa* or emotion. For example, 'blue' and 'black' are linked with erotic and terrible while 'white' with comic *rasa*. 'Red' color is assigned with furious and 'yellow' with heroic acts. The colors like blue, gold and jasmine are associated with odious, pleasing and inactive moods. In the modern time the visual art form has undergone sea change (Samuel, 2021).

The *Vishnudharmottra* (Chitrasutra chapter) there is a mention about the use of principal colors, such as white, yellow, red, black and blue. The blending of these colors in altered proportions produces hundreds of fresher and novel color shades. In the cave paintings of Ajanta the perfect use of a scheme of using colors efficaciously conveys the proposed feeling or emotions. How a creative artist uses colors is largely dependent on context, culture and symbolic interpretation of the colors being used. It, nevertheless, varies from one culture or society to another.

Educational Implications of Paintings

Painting is a common visual art form. It holds enormous possibilities being the feasible working approach for communication in art education. This visual arts allows kids to give vent to their thoughts, perceptions and feelings which enable them to know about creativity. There is a synergy of words and visuals as far as the comprehension by young students is concerned. Words in integration with visual symbols, enable the young minds to comprehend the language or the message of paintings with ease and in a better way than when they read only the words.

Paintings are gainfully used to communicate the intended curricular message to students. This is because of their manifold qualities. Paintings can be purposefully involved in various educational activities in classrooms and art galleries such as storytelling, creative expression of emotions, rhyming, focusing on science, nature and cultures, explaining art intricacies, bursting myths, and much more.

At a young age, paintings particularly the chromatically augmented ones, effortlessly entice the attention of the child (Okeke, 2007) due to their color elements that produces a basic, natural visual appeal (Pentak and Lauer, 2002). Thus, when a child is shown a good

painting as a teaching aid, he or she gets a direct means of communication leading to a better grasp of the subject.

These days the collection of visual art paintings in digitized form are being made available for uses in education and other purposes (Xu *et al.*, 2021). The imprecision of multi-media systems is essential as huge amount of multimedia digitized artwork for retrieving and archiving data are piling up. For modeling, it is vital to consider their positive features and offer the best way for erudition of these. The intrinsic quality of visual arts education, their similarities and features, make art education an attractive feature by revamping cognitive expansion in students.

A realistic painting is a robust and buoyant teaching aid with which the instructors can deliver curricular substance effectively. When a painting is shown on the art board as a teaching aid it leads to easy comprehension of the subject. It is likely for a student to implant an image in his subconscious mind into the conscious mind, especially if he had seen such picture earlier in the past. Color, lines and the general composition of the painting get registered on the subliminal areas of child's mind, due to their engaging makings. The student finds allure of the pictorial elements as wistful, thus making him recall what has been taught pictorially.

Paintings and cartoons have the potential to create an indelible impact on the viewers and arouse their creative imagination. Besides communicating something, the paintings also make the viewers gleeful. In a painting the prudent and meaningful array of colors, shades, acts, etc. by its creator generates an instant appeal to our vision and passion.

Teacher can custom paintings to tell a story, share success stories of national heroes in different areas, biographies of stalwarts, underlining ideas, events or any specific happening in a discrete manner. For example, in the Middle Ages in Europe, windows with stained-glass and church sculpture educated Bible stories to uneducated people (Preble, 1973).

A painting can potentially express the rhythm that we sense inside. In real nous, music is the poetry of sound, and the painting is the poetry of vision. As and when our ears discern any melody, we routinely start tapping our feet or fingers tunefully. Likewise, a painting stirs our mind's eye in rhythmic joy (Sharma, 2013). This is the effect of artist's heart on the mind and soul of viewers. Painters create a bouncy design of lines, colors, shapes, etc. as a person looks at a painting, his or her emotions mostly resonate to light, color, shape in an explicit way. This is how paintings can have affirmative impact on art education.

According to Hebbert and Clerk (1978), the childhood memories greatly impact the artistic acumen that an artist showcases later in life. Consequently in art education, the bringing up of the artist plays a significant role in the professional competition.

Supplementary function of the painting art is to create prompt emotions and feelings in students and invoke their absorbing interest in the subject being taught. Due to the communicative quality of the color, form, texture or lines in the painting its utility in art education is enhanced.

Loughlin *et al* (2015), reported that for basic and middle school students art-based reading teaching and interventions (e.g., painting, nonverbal communication) are gaining popularity

with slight theoretic justification and empirical research backing.

Based on the literature survey, Moller-Skaua and Lindstolb (2022) found three types of effects on the student-teacher learning outcomes. These effects included (i) Emotional Turns; (ii) Ability and desire to start action and (iii) Change in their attitudes. These effects were discussed using a metaphor called 'crystallization' based on which plausible steps were proposed for strengthening art education.

In their study Loughlin *et al* (2015) explored the level to which comprehension of painting maps the text grasp processes by students. They revealed through 'Protocol Analysis' that there existed six painting comprehension processes, namely (i) observation, (ii) activation of prior knowledge, (iii) inference and interpretation, (iv) elaboration, (v) evaluation and response, and (vi) monitoring. As many as 23 sub-processes were involved in this. Of the recognized painting comprehension sub-processes, 17 were generally linked to text comprehension. These reports encourage visual, linguistic or symbolic encoding of compositions.

A painting continuously expresses excellence and portrays different manifestations of human cultivation. As a matter of fact, painting as an art performs a dual function. It represents the excellence of Nature, whether it vitrines human figures, animal figures, birds, flowers and landscapes or anything else. Thus, the portrayal might be following the 'laws of proportion and balance', and the 'Rhythm and balance in Nature' (Gupta, 1978). Yet, the paintings normally do not find limit to manifestation of Nature and its surrounds. On whatever theme the painting is created, it essentially depicts the streak of human culture and civilization in it based on the human thoughts and feelings.

Paintings help to infuse in the mind of onlookers an interest in Nature and surroundings (Sharma, 2013). This is due to intense impact of paintings. An artist, who creates a painting does not merely generate a stimulating design, but also communicates a message or emotion through this depiction. Critical place-based pedagogy gives a sturdy frame for the theory and practice of art education linked with environmental issues and concerns (Graham, 2015). Art education was distinguished within a vital pedagogy as a prologue to relating current art and art education to take on to environmental issues.

Hence, the aforementioned functions of paintings express that they are an insignia of the most subtle representation of human thoughts and feelings, and is thus capable of arousing an absorbing interest among viewers. It also unswervingly communicates the diversity of multi-layered human lives, Nature and abstract concepts of the life. More than that, paintings not only act as the medium of collecting information or a source of entertaining, but a unique force of uniting us with the imagination in education, science and arts.

Concluding Remarks

Paintings have an inherent power of strong non-verbal undercurrents. These can wordlessly narrate stories of events, describe indigenous and alien cultures in addition to unearthing the past and connecting with the present. The message of a painting can be easily understood, unlike literary info that can be comprehended only by the erudite.

Therefore, it can be concluded that painting, being one of the parts of the visual art, is a communication per se based on its color, illumination, dimensions, depth, textual gradients,

time of the day, seasonal impact, perspective, etc. Paintings are like opening creative dialogue with the viewers. In the classroom the message of the painting impacts the learning by students.

The famous Greek poet Simonides wrote, that a painting is like silent poetry and poetry is like painting that speaks (Layton, 1978). Teacher should try to make his subject matter flawless to the students for easy and self-interpretation through developing and employing paintings in art education. This would serve to communicate the intended messages promptly, efficiently and simply. Emphasis needs to be given on paintings based art education in classrooms and other places to address the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-religious concerns of the contemporary society. Education programmes require additional knowledge on how to prepare strategies and programmes related to art education for future (Bedir, 2019). The emerging scenario will need a renewed thinking and planning to invigorate art based education.

Painting can play a useful role in art education for the students or learners. According to De Pellegrin (2018), the techniques and tools of painting make major contributions of a poetic pedagogical experience to the specialized creation of Art teachers. The art teachers must keep themselves alive to the latest developments in non-verbal communication through paintings.

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