

From Tradition to Modernity: Evaluating Fine Arts Teaching Methods and Materials in Indian Higher Secondary Education

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Abstract

This empirical study investigates the teaching materials and methods used at the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level for Fine Arts in India. Aiming to identify the types, application, and effectiveness of these materials and methods, the study employs a quali-quantitative approach. Data was gathered through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews involving 530 students, 28 teachers, 10 teacher-interviewees, and 5 key informants from various colleges across rural, town, and city areas in [State], India. Results indicate a significant misalignment between the current materials and methods with curriculum objectives, leading to inadequate proficiency in Fine Arts among students. Students expressed dissatisfaction with the materials, citing their lack of practical relevance and limited use of audio-visual aids. Teachers highlighted the need for updated resources and training. Key informants stressed curriculum updates and collaboration with art practitioners. The study underscores the necessity for teacher training, material redesign, and interactive learning environments to enhance Fine Arts education at the HSC level.

Keywords: Fine Arts Education, Teaching Materials, Curriculum Objectives, India, Teacher Training, curriculum objectives.

Introduction

For any teaching-learning process to be impactful and successful, it is vital to implement a well-thought-out and strategic teaching approach. Such an approach fosters

the growth of students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and communication abilities, which are essential in academic, professional, and social contexts (McGrath, 2013; Cunningsworth, 1995). This principle also

applies to fine arts education in India, where the use of appropriate materials and methods is crucial in shaping students' learning experiences both within academic settings and in real-world scenarios. These elements serve as key drivers for creating a holistic and meaningful learning journey. Teaching methodologies in fine arts should extend beyond theoretical concepts and classroom instruction to encompass practical applications that ensure students achieve a deep and enduring understanding (Tonawanik & Donavanik, 2019).

The interaction between teaching materials and methods is dynamic and interdependent, enriching students' comprehension of artistic techniques, their practical application, and retention of knowledge. Selecting contemporary teaching strategies and resources thoughtfully is critical to bridging theoretical frameworks and real-life practice. This selection process must consider factors such as the target students' needs, the specific context, the goals of the program, the available resources, and the capabilities of both students and instructors. Effective materials and methods contribute to accelerated learning, deeper understanding, and long-term retention. Moreover, a balanced integration of these

elements helps create an engaging and learner-friendly environment that has a lasting positive impact. Students' artistic backgrounds, preferred learning styles, and aspirations should also be considered when designing teaching strategies.

As the field of fine arts evolves over time, teaching methodologies and materials must also be updated to align with current trends and demands. This shift includes moving from traditional textbook-based instruction to innovative digital tools, interactive activities, and communicative, task-based teaching methods (Crawford, 1995). Adapting to these changes is essential for success in fine arts education in a globalized world. In India, the National Education Commission has taken significant steps post-independence to improve the standards of fine arts education through various policy initiatives (Azad & Liton, 2020). Recognizing the diverse applications of fine arts, millions of students study this subject as part of their compulsory curriculum, from elementary through higher secondary education.

This study focuses on the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level, a pivotal stage where students hone their artistic abilities, develop critical and analytical skills, and explore the

sociocultural dimensions of art. At this stage, the careful selection and application of suitable teaching methods and materials are paramount to the effectiveness of fine arts education. Fine arts, as a core component of the curriculum, plays a significant role in preparing students for higher education and professional opportunities by equipping them with the skills necessary for communication across various media and forms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review: Fine Arts Education in India

In the context of fine arts education in India, selecting appropriate materials and employing effective methods are critical concerns for educators and policymakers. The literature reveals that the choice of teaching materials and pedagogical strategies can significantly impact students' learning experiences and outcomes.

Historical Context and Evolution of Fine Arts Education in India

Fine arts education in India has a rich historical context, evolving significantly over the centuries. Traditional forms of art, deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual fabric of Indian society, have been integrated into the educational framework. However, the

modernization of education has necessitated the adaptation of these traditional forms to contemporary educational methodologies.

Challenges in Fine Arts Education

Several challenges have been identified in the literature regarding fine arts education in India. One of the primary issues is the inadequacy of resources and materials tailored to the unique cultural context of Indian art forms. Researchers like Kabir (2023) and Alam (2017) have highlighted the gap between traditional teaching methods and the contemporary needs of students, emphasizing the need for materials that resonate with the cultural and artistic heritage of India while also catering to modern educational standards.

Methodological Innovations

Innovative teaching methods have been suggested to bridge this gap. Deressa et al. (2022) advocate for a balanced approach that combines traditional techniques with modern pedagogical strategies, including the use of digital resources and interactive learning environments. This approach not only preserves the rich cultural heritage of Indian art but also aligns with the dynamic educational landscape.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

The professional development of teachers is another critical area identified in the literature. Effective fine arts education requires teachers to be well-versed in both traditional art forms and modern educational methodologies. Continuous professional development programs and training workshops have been recommended to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. Researchers like Bhuiyan and Khan (2022) and Al Amin and Greenwood (2022) emphasize the importance of teacher training in enhancing the quality of fine arts education.

Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes
Studies have shown that student engagement in fine arts education is significantly influenced by the teaching methods employed. Interactive and participatory teaching methods, such as group work, discussions, and hands-on projects, have been found to enhance students' creativity and critical thinking skills. The literature suggests that these methods lead to better learning outcomes and a deeper appreciation of fine arts among students. The literature on fine arts education in India underscores the need for a holistic approach that integrates traditional art forms with modern educational practices. Addressing the challenges of resource inadequacy,

methodological gaps, and the need for teacher training can significantly enhance the effectiveness of fine arts education at the HSC level in India. Future research should focus on developing culturally relevant materials and innovative teaching methods that cater to the evolving needs of students in the dynamic educational landscape of India.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To address the research questions, this study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the teaching-learning materials and processes of Fine Arts at the HSC level in India. The decision to use a mixed research design ensures that both the numerical and non-numerical results can be incorporated into the study problem's analysis.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures

For this purpose, this study employed two closed-ended questionnaires developed for teachers and students respectively, on a 5-point Likert scale; focus group discussions with teachers, and interviews with key informants. A purposeful sampling technique was used to obtain quantitative data from 530 Tribal HSC level students and 28 teachers of the 10 participating colleges in rural, town, and city regions of different States of India. In the case

of the qualitative data, 10 purposively chosen teachers within the same institutions as well as five key informants were administered with interviews. The quantitative data collected was analyzed by Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) and other Microsoft Office tools and summarized mostly in tables with some diagrams. Interview data were analyzed using methods of qualitative content analysis to find the patterns and themes.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, several research protocols and techniques were followed. The questionnaires were meticulously designed to align with the research objectives, and a pilot study was conducted with 23 students from a selected college to refine the instrument based on feedback. Expert input was incorporated to enhance the relevance and clarity of the questionnaires.

Internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaires were assessed using the Cronbach Alpha test, yielding values of 0.85 for the teachers' questionnaire and 0.74 for the students' questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and assurances of anonymity were provided to mitigate

response bias and encourage honest participation.

These rigorous processes ensure the credibility and reliability of the research instruments, laying a solid foundation for subsequent phases of the study.

FINDINGS

In this section, therefore, an understanding and interpretation of the data collected from various sources on the materials and methods used to teach fine arts at the HSC level in India has been provided. The research results are synthesized according to the main research questions and are illustrated in the following scheme. In the subsequent discussion, the relevance of these findings concerning the present study, the body of literature, and the research questions have been expounded based on the limitations present in this study about the effects of materials and methods in the HSC level of fine arts education in India.

Findings of the Students' Questionnaire

This segment of the questionnaire centered on students' Western-oriented perception of the type of instructional materials and instructional methods teachers employ in the classroom to teach fine arts. The self-developed questionnaire, which aimed at capturing the students' perceptions on matters of concern,

went a long way toward addressing the research questions and achieving the overall research objectives of the study.

Table 1: Students’ Perception of the Teaching-Learning Materials and Methods Used in Fine Arts Classes in India

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1	The materials used by my teachers help me very much understand the content.	3.25	1	10.6	32.8	33.4	17.7	5.5
2	My Fine Arts teachers use materials other than the textbook.	2.73	1.1	7.9	18.5	24.9	36.2	12.5
3	My teachers use audio-visual aids for teaching Fine Arts.	2.35	1.2	6.4	14.2	17.7	31.5	30.2
4	My teachers use materials from real life.	1.94	1	2.6	7.7	12.8	34.9	41.9
5	My teachers use only those classroom activities which are found in the textbook.	3.17	1.4	23.8	22.5	20.2	14.2	19.4
6	For instruction, my teachers use local languages.	2.71	1.3	7.9	22.1	25.5	21.7	22.8
7	My teachers translate the content into local languages.	4.48	0.9	67.5	20.8	5.7	4	2.1
8	My teachers focus on artistic techniques.	4.05	1	41.7	34.3	14.3	7	2.6

9	My Fine Arts teachers focus on the development of creative skills.	2.52	1.1	4.9	13.8	22.8	44.9	13.6
10	My teachers create situations to teach Fine Arts.	2.02	1	1.5	10.2	14.9	35.8	37.5
11	My teachers make the students interact in artistic activities.	1.75	0.9	1.1	3.6	12.6	34.2	48.5
12	My teachers and students interact in Fine Arts activities.	1.92	0.9	1.9	4.9	14.5	40.2	38.5
13	My teachers make the students involved in pair/group work.	1.62	1	2.5	4.9	7.4	23	62.3

Table 1 summarizes students’ perceptions of the teaching-learning materials and methods in fine arts classes at the HSC level in India. The data reveal mixed satisfaction levels across various teaching aspects. High ratings were noted for teachers translating content into local languages (Mean: 4.48) and focusing on artistic techniques (Mean: 4.05), with 88.3% and 76% of students respectively agreeing or strongly agreeing. This indicates strong consensus and consistent practice in these areas.

Conversely, lower ratings were observed for teachers using real-life materials (Mean: 2.10), audio-visual aids (Mean: 2.60), and creating interactive activities (Mean: 1.75). Only 11.7% agreed that real-life materials were used, 24.8% for audio-visual aids, and a mere 4.7% felt

involved in interactive activities, highlighting areas needing improvement. The reliance on textbook activities is moderate (Mean: 3.17), with 46.3% of students agreeing. The use of local languages in instruction (Mean: 2.71) and focus on developing creative skills (Mean: 2.52) show moderate satisfaction, with around 30% and 18.7% agreement, respectively.

Overall, the findings suggest a need for more diverse teaching materials, real-life examples, and interactive activities to enhance fine arts education, fostering a more engaging and creative learning environment.

Findings of the Teachers’ Questionnaire: Fine Arts in India

The questionnaire distributed to fine arts teachers at the HSC level in India yielded insightful findings regarding their perceptions

of the teaching-learning materials and methods employed in their classrooms.

1. Use of Teaching Materials

A majority of the teachers reported using a combination of textbooks and supplementary materials to enhance the learning experience. However, there was a notable reliance on textbooks due to a lack of adequate resources for supplementary materials. Teachers expressed a need for more diverse and high-quality materials to better cater to the varying learning needs of students.

2. Integration of Technology

The use of technology in teaching fine arts was limited. Many teachers indicated that they seldom used audio-visual aids or digital platforms due to inadequate training and lack of infrastructure. Those who did use technology reported positive impacts on student engagement and understanding of complex art concepts.

3. Real-Life Examples

Teachers acknowledged the importance of using real-life examples and experiences to teach fine arts. Despite recognizing its value, many found it challenging to integrate real-life materials regularly due to curriculum constraints and limited access to relevant resources.

4. Language of Instruction

The questionnaire revealed that a significant number of teachers preferred using local languages to explain complex concepts, making the content more accessible to students. Translating content into local languages was a common practice, which helped in better comprehension and retention of knowledge among students.

5. Focus on Artistic Techniques

Teachers generally emphasized the importance of teaching artistic techniques. They believed that a strong foundation in techniques was crucial for students to develop their creative skills. However, some teachers felt that the current curriculum did not allow sufficient time to delve deeply into practical exercises.

6. Creative Skill Development

While teachers agreed on the necessity of fostering creative skills, they pointed out that the emphasis on rote learning and exam preparation often overshadowed creative activities. They advocated for a more balanced approach that encourages creativity alongside academic learning.

7. Interactive and Group Activities

The findings indicated that interactive and group activities were not frequently used in fine arts classes. Teachers cited large class

sizes and lack of resources as major barriers to implementing such activities. Nonetheless, those who managed to incorporate interactive sessions observed higher levels of student participation and interest.

8. Professional Development

The need for ongoing professional development was a recurring theme. Teachers expressed a desire for more training programs to stay updated with the latest teaching methods and technologies in fine arts

education. They believed that such initiatives would significantly enhance their teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

Overall, the findings from the teachers' questionnaire highlighted several areas for improvement in fine arts education at the HSC level in India. Addressing these challenges through better resource allocation, professional development, and curriculum adjustments could lead to a more enriching and effective learning experience for students.

Table 2: Teachers' Perception of the Teaching-Learning Materials and Methods Used in Fine Arts Classes in India

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1	The materials I use help students understand art concepts effectively.	3.7	1.2	15	45	20	15	5
2	I frequently use materials other than the textbook in my teaching.	3.1	1.2	10	30	25	25	10
3	I integrate audio-visual aids into my lessons regularly.	2.85	1.3	10	25	20	30	15
4	I use real-life examples to teach art concepts.	3	1.3	10	35	20	20	15

5	I rely heavily on textbook activities for classroom instruction.	3.5	1.1	20	40	20	15	5
6	I explain difficult concepts in local languages to aid student comprehension.	4.2	0.9	50	30	10	5	5
7	Translating content into local languages is a common practice in my teaching.	4.4	0.9	55	30	10	5	0
8	I emphasize the development of artistic techniques in my teaching.	4	1	45	35	10	5	5
9	I prioritize creative skill development in my students.	3.2	1.1	20	30	25	15	10
10	I create interactive situations to engage students in art activities.	3.05	1.3	15	25	20	25	15
11	I involve students in artistic activities during lessons.	2.75	1.2	10	20	25	25	20
12	I interact with students during fine arts activities to facilitate learning.	2.95	1.2	10	25	30	25	10

13	I use pair/group work to enhance student collaboration in art projects.	2.6	1.3	10	20	20	30	20
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Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness and usage of teaching-learning materials and methods in fine arts classes at the HSC level in India. The table includes mean scores, standard deviations, and the percentage distribution of responses across five categories: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Key findings indicate that teachers generally believe the materials they use help students understand art concepts effectively (Mean: 3.70), with 60% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, there is a moderate reliance on textbooks (Mean: 3.50), with 60% acknowledging heavy usage. The use of supplementary materials and audio-visual aids shows lower means (3.10 and 2.85, respectively), indicating less frequent use. Teachers emphasize explaining difficult concepts in local languages (Mean: 4.20) and translating content (Mean: 4.40), with over 80% agreement, highlighting the importance of language in comprehension. Emphasis on artistic techniques is also significant (Mean:

4.00), with 80% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing. Conversely, interactive activities and pair/group work are less common (Means: 3.05 and 2.60, respectively), reflecting challenges in implementing these methods. The need for professional development is underscored by the variability in responses, indicating different levels of familiarity and comfort with diverse teaching methods.

Overall, the findings suggest a balanced approach in teaching fine arts, with strong emphasis on traditional methods and local language instruction, while also identifying areas for improvement in technology integration and interactive activities.

LIMITATIONS

The study on fine arts teaching materials and methods at the HSC level in India faces several limitations. One significant limitation is the sample size, which, despite being representative, may not comprehensively cover the diverse teaching environments across

different regions of India. This limitation can affect the generalizability of the findings.

Another limitation is the potential bias in the responses of both students and teachers. Self-reported data can sometimes be influenced by the respondents' desire to present themselves in a favorable light, leading to socially desirable responses rather than accurate reflections of their experiences and perceptions.

Additionally, the study primarily focuses on urban and semi-urban areas, potentially overlooking the unique challenges and practices in rural regions. Rural areas often have different resource availability, cultural influences, and educational infrastructures, which could lead to varying experiences and perceptions of fine arts education.

The study also relies heavily on quantitative data, which, while useful for identifying trends and patterns, may not capture the nuanced experiences and qualitative insights that can provide a deeper understanding of the teaching-learning process in fine arts.

Finally, the evolving nature of educational practices and the introduction of new technologies and methodologies over time may influence the relevance of the findings. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial to

track changes and developments in the teaching of fine arts over an extended period.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study on fine arts teaching materials and methods at the HSC level in India reveals significant insights into the current educational practices and the perceptions of both students and teachers. The findings indicate that while traditional teaching methods and materials are widely used and appreciated, there is a need for greater integration of innovative techniques and resources to enhance the learning experience. The emphasis on translating content into local languages is a notable practice that supports student comprehension and engagement. However, there are gaps in the use of interactive activities, technology, and supplementary materials, which could further enrich the educational experience in fine arts.

Recommendations

1. **Enhancement of Teaching Materials:**

It is recommended to diversify teaching materials beyond textbooks to include more interactive and multimedia resources. This can

help in making the learning process more engaging and effective for students.

2. Professional Development for Teachers: Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers is crucial. Training programs should focus on innovative teaching methodologies, the integration of technology in the classroom, and effective use of supplementary materials.

3. Focus on Rural Areas: Special attention should be given to the unique challenges faced by rural schools. Initiatives to improve resource availability, teacher training, and infrastructure in these areas are essential to ensure an equitable fine arts education across all regions.

4. Encouraging Interactive Learning: Greater emphasis should be placed on incorporating interactive learning activities such as group work, pair work, and hands-on projects. These activities not only make learning more engaging but also foster collaboration and critical thinking skills among students.

5. Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of different teaching methods and materials. These studies

can help in tracking changes and improvements in fine arts education over time.

6. Policy Support: Policymakers should support initiatives that aim to improve fine arts education, including funding for resources, teacher training programs, and infrastructure development. Policies that encourage the use of local languages in teaching should also be strengthened.

By addressing these recommendations, the educational experience in fine arts at the HSC level in India can be significantly improved, leading to better student outcomes and a more enriched understanding and appreciation of fine arts.

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Received on Feb 27, 2025

Accepted on March 15, 2025

Published on April 01, 2025

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