Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to study, in a historical perspective the important developments in the history of formal art education in Panjab. Scholars in the past namely W.G Archer, Karl Khandalawala, B.N Goswamy, W.G Archer, R.P Srivastava, Urmii Kessar and K.S Kang have made references to the art activity and the context of the art in their works. W.G Archer in his works like 'Indian Painting', Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills: Essays' and 'India and modern art' deals extensively with the stylistic development, its derivations as also its diffusion through various centers. B.N Goswami's comprehensive work 'The Social background of Kangra Valley paintings' is a seminal work dealing with the socio-cultural context as also specific information regarding the training of the artist. 'Punjab Painting: A study in Art and culture' by R.P Srivastava has been greatly helpful in studying the art scene of Punjab in the pre-independence India. Urmii Kessar's work on art scene in India and Punjab viz., 'Social content in Modern Indian Painting' and 'Twentieth century Sikh Painting; Presence of the Past' also collates information on various aspects of modern Indian painting and these have been of invaluable help in creating a pattern in which various dimensions of modern Indian art and its background would dovetail neatly.

We get references to a somewhat informal system of art training in the Panjab hills in the late medieval period which in a way is a reflection of the Mughal system of training in art. The kind of art education that prevailed at the Mughal court atelier was followed by
the artists in the Panjab region. At this time the pattern of art education was based on the ‘Guru Shishya Parampara’ in which unique methods of training were adopted by a master in order to train his pupils. Later the artists of Panjab became subject to the western art and artists in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Panjabi artist’s rendezvous with the European artists and the subsequent developments in the form of British establishments of the art schools in India, at this point of time, added a new dimension in the system of art training in Panjab.

Essentially however the scholars mentioned above have remained focused on the historical perspective and critical examination of the form and content in art particularly to their social relevance. Works of few other scholars deal more comprehensively with the history and philosophy of art education in India with a focus on art education movement in India in the colonial period, which began with establishment of schools of art by the British. Prominent among these are Ratan Parimoo’s “The Painting Of Three Tagores: Chronology And Comparative Study”, Baroda, 1973, Ratnabali Chatterji,’From the karkhana to the studio - a study in the changing social roles of patron and artist in Bengal’, New Delhi,

1 See Chandra,Moti, “The technique of Mughal painting”, 1949, Lucknow, pp 74-75
1990, Parth Mittar’s “Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art”, Oxford, 1977, Tapti Guha Thakurta’s “The Making Of A New Indian Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal, C. 1850-1920”, Cambridge, 1992 and others. Even though the approach of the afore mentioned scholars does open up new and interesting pathways for further investigation it can be seen that art education as an independent field of study still remains an uncharted territory. It is in order to try and make a first tentative and small attempt towards filling in this lacuna that the present study, “The study of development of formal art education in Punjab” was undertaken. The scope of the work however is necessarily restricted geographically and spans essentially the period from the British accession of the Punjab to the close of the twentieth century (Ca. 1850-2001 AD). This dissertation focuses on the formal pattern of art education in Punjab and it also seeks to undertake a peripheral study of the representative examples of art education system in the semi-formal institutions or academies of art. I have sought to make my approach to the subject both historical and analytical as it takes into account not only the types of schools and institutions of art and their history but also the concepts, theories and methods of teaching of this discipline. While art education systems in post 1947 Punjab have been dealt with more extensively yet in order to create a proper institutional framework which establishes the essential norms on which the post independence structure rests, this study discusses in some detail the role of seminal institutes of art like the Mayo School of art in Lahore since not much collated and literary
information was forthcoming as a first step towards creating a scaffolding for this effort.

To begin with, we prepared lists of names of artists, art teachers, heads of institutions and art masters that belong to colonial period up to 1947 and the post colonial Punjab. After collecting information about the important persons involved in the art activity during British and post British period in Punjab from literary and other sources, we were able to establish a tentative chronology of events from the beginning of British education in India, the phase of industrialization, growth of technical and industrial education and the establishment of government schools of art and crafts up to the contemporary period. Sincere efforts were made to collect information about artists, art teachers, heads of the art schools and their contribution to the field of art education.

Some of the important artists from these two major periods that I personally interviewed are B.C Sanyal, P.N Mago, Amarnath Sehgal, R.P. Shrivastava, Manjit Bawa, Paramjit Singh, Nand Katyal, Ranbir Kaleka, Biman Das Gupta, Jagmohan Chopra, Jai Zarotia and Krishan Ahuja among others. Undoubtedly B.C Sanyal formed one of the major source of primary information for us on art activity and particularly the developments in art education in the above-mentioned periods as he had been on the faculty of the major institutions of art education during both the British and the post independence India. He gave me ample information about the art and craft courses and art teaching practices followed in the Mayo School of Art in Lahore, Calcutta School of art and crafts and the Delhi
Polytechnic as he had had long association with these institutions. He had studied at the art school in Calcutta and taught at the Mayo School of art and Delhi Polytechnic. Similarly P.N Mago and Amarnath Sehgal both among the most important artists from the periods in question, gave me not only valuable information but also allowed me to access the written and tape recorded sources of information available with them quite liberally. For example, P.N Mago, besides providing me information about Sir J.J School of Art, Bombay, Mayo School of Art, Lahore and Government School of Art and Crafts, Simla; allowed me to listen to his tape recorded personal interview with Late Sardari Lal Prasher about the art scene as well as the art education in India.

Our further step involved the gathering of information from the literary sources. In order to collect the specific and relevant information from the vast array of published sources, we categorized these into books, journals, magazines, exhibition catalogues, souvenirs etc. so that we could lay our hands on every bit of relevant information about the topic.

Among the major published sources of information are :- The Journal Of Royal India Pakistan And Cylon Society, Journal of Indian Art and Industry, Art in Industry, Art News, Art and Letters, Design, Lalit Kala Contemporary, Modern Review, Marg, Roop-Lekha, Vishwa Bharti Quarterly and so on. Among the major libraries and government offices that were visited for the consultation of material are:- National Archives, New Delhi, Central Archaeological Library, National Archives of India New Delhi, Lalit Kala Academy, Reference Library Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi,
Also we prepared a list of institutions for the purpose of interviewing the heads of various institutions, meeting the art teachers, interacting with the art students and to study and observe the art teaching practices in the art studios of these institutions.

I made regular visits to the art institutions namely Government College of Art Chandigarh, Apee Jay College of Fine Arts, Jalandhar and College of Art, New Delhi. In order to get desired information from my visits to these institutions, I beforehand studied the curriculum of the art courses followed in these institutions and made separate questionnaires for the teachers and the students. At the same time I sought permission of the teachers and the heads of these institutions to interact with students in the studios of Graphic/Printmaking, Painting, Sculpture and Applied arts.

Besides, I visited several Museums and art galleries with the objective of studying the art works of artists and also to take photographs and reproductions of the works that I considered useful for my study. I visited National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, National Museum, New Delhi, Rabindra Bhavan Gallery, Lalit Kala Academy, All India Fine-Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi, Central Sikh Museum, Golden Temple, Amritsar,
Government Museum, Chandigarh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum, Amritsar, Museum and Art Gallery, Panjab University, Chandigarh and several private art galleries.

A list was prepared of artists and art teachers who have received art training and taught in one or the other schools of art. Every possible effort was made to meet as many number of senior artists and academicians as possible with the purpose of recording their experience either as a student or art teacher and also to know their general as well as personal opinions about the prevailing system of art education and its merits and shortcomings which were either written down or tape recorded during my interviews with them. Separate questionnaires were prepared for artists who have been art students, art teachers who are not professional artists and artists who are teachers at the same time.

While in the process of collecting information regarding art teaching practices in the major art education institutions in Punjab and elsewhere I had formal interviews with the eminent art educators, at the same time I actually became a part of the art workshops and studios in the institutions of Design and Fine Arts that revealed to me the infinite scope of further study in the field of art education especially a need for a comprehensive study focusing on art education practices in the professional and general education with respect to their fundamental theories, both psychological and sociological objectives.

Chief among the problems that I encountered was the insufficient archival material pertaining to the art education institutions in the pre-partition Punjab. Despite the best efforts to
collect the primary information regarding the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, either through correspondence or by personal visit it was somewhat impossible to access many such sources of information that could further help in my investigation. Also there was quite a passive response by the administrative authorities of most of the institutions in the country that were approached through correspondence in view of building a data base pertaining to the range of art education practices across the nation. One of the problems encountered while consulting the colonial government records was the way some of the terms like 'Art School', 'Industrial School' and 'Art Society' are used in various official documents. For example in the context of Mayo School of Art at Lahore, Richard Temple in his note from, Home Department Proceedings (General) no. 2 Jan 1875, refers to 'Industrial School of Art and Design at Lahore', whereas H.H Locke and Baden Powell in their Memorandums dated 1873 and 1872 respectively on the formation of the same set up refer to 'Mayo School of Art' at Lahore. Interestingly, J.L Kipling in his proposed plan for the organization of Mayo School of Art dated 27 May 1875 to the Secretary of the Government; Punjab uses the nomenclature, 'Lahore School of Art'. So it is important to mention here that the term 'Art School' in this dissertation refers to the Government Schools of Art that impart training in fine art and crafts. The term 'Industrial Schools' refers to the smaller institutes or trade schools giving instruction in one or more branches of industrial arts. The term 'Art Society' refers to the individuals or groups of people who formulated an art society to promote art activities like-photography, industrial or fine arts etc.
Also the names of the early artists of the 19th century are problematic as various scholars give them very different dates often separated from one another by 30-40 years. So it is quite possible that there were more than two artists of the same name.

The art historical approach of this dissertation involves a study of how the style and other technical features are conveyed from the teacher to the student and as to how because of the close interaction between the students; the artists and artistic constituents act and react upon each other. An excellent example is that of Amir Baksh, a student of the Mayo School of Art in whose studies of hookas and other such traditional objects, not only is a drawing by Lockwood Kipling superimposed but also resembles closely the South Kensington manner favoured by him.

The discussion has been divided into chapters in order to clarify and categorize the various dimensions of the work. Chapter-I, ‘Institutionalization of Art Education: A Brief Survey’ is a concise account of art education movements in the west which in a way establishes the premise of this dissertation, since these practices imparted in a large measure the Indian situation, it was considered relevant to include the theories of certain eminent artists, art educationists and theoreticians in this chapter.

Chapter-II, ‘Art Education in India in the Ancient and Mediaeval Period: A Brief Survey’ discusses the development and stages of a system of imparting training to the artist in ancient and medieval India. This brief survey brings the study to the emergence of a new style of painting called the Company Painting in which the western ideals of chiaroscuro, anatomical
rectitude, scientific perspective jostled with the traditional Indian principles of art had become popular in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

Chapter-III, The British Impact and the Development of Institutions of Art Education, seeks to take a detailed view of the development of art educational practices in India from the 19th century onwards when the British pattern of governance generally and a new system of education, including art education had begun to acquire a firm grounding. A discussion of major art schools established during the 19th century at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras follows. The last section of the chapter attempts an overview of other developments both formal and semi formal or informal which took place in the 20th century like ISOA and other such establishments.

Chapter-IV, ‘Development of Art Education in Panjab: Informal Beginnings’, seeks to discuss in brief the historical background of the art activity in the kingdoms of Panjab hills and the Panjab plains out of which emerges the pattern of informal art education practiced among the medieval artist communities of Panjab where rigorous training, in consonance with the normative guru-shishya tradition was imparted. Important developments occurred during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A description of the artwork of the important art communities i.e., Naqqash and Mussavars in this period is given leading to the phase of European influence on the work of indigenous artists in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This reveals how the influence of western art transformed the style, subject matter and medium of the painting of the Punjabi artists who
gradually assimilated the elements of western art into his own idiom, by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chapter-V, ‘Art and Art Education during the late 19th and early 20th century in Punjab’ focuses on a new phase of formal art training that began in Punjab with the establishment of the Mayo School of Industrial Arts that laid the foundation of formal art education in Punjab. An attempt is made in this chapter to give as detailed an information as was possible for us to access on the teaching methodologies, art curriculum, teachers and students on the basis of some of their relevant works could highlight the concept of art teaching practices in the colonial period up to 1947. Also, a brief account is given of the lesser-known art and craft schools functioning at that time in Panjab. By the end of the chapter, there is a discussion on the major artists associated with the art schools and their contribution to the field of art education in Panjab to create a new art world coinciding with the freedom of India.

The last chapter, i.e., chapter-VI, ‘The partition of the country: Emergence of a new ethos in Art Education’, focuses on the development of art education in the post-independence Punjab. There is a brief discussion about the challenges for the cultural and artistic life in Panjab and the efforts of the department of industries to rehabilitate the artistic communities, the establishment of various industrial schools and later a school of art to nurture the creative talent of the state. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the establishment of the Government College of Art, Chandigarh, the institution of formal art education in the Punjab, its genesis, history and further developments. Also this section
includes the discussion on the growth of the discipline of Design Education under the aegis of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The second part of this chapter discusses the beginning of and growth of art education courses in the academic stream in the colleges affiliated to Panjab University Chandigarh, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar and Punjabi University Patiala. It is important to mention that the discussion on the progress of art education in the academic stream in the form of an elective subject of study at the graduate and the post graduate level is based on the study and observations of the representative institutions of this nature and we have left out many other such institutions not because they are not important but because of the necessarily restricted scope of this dissertation. This chapter elaborates the information on the changing socio-economic and artistic patterns of life and the beginning of a new phase in the development of art education in Panjab that focused primarily on the design and fine-art courses for art students. In this chapter a sincere effort is made to give a detailed description and discussion of the curriculum followed in the art school in order to understand the concept of art education formulated and prescribed by the contemporary art educationists at various levels of education. Conclusion at the end of the dissertation details our observations derived from this survey.