CHAPTER – 6
THE ROLE OF INSTITUTES OF MUSIC AND FINE ARTS IN J&K.

To promote and espouse the cause of the development of culture and creative arts as envisaged in the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, it was in the year 1965 that the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages decided to set-up the Institute of Music and Fine Arts in Jammu & Kashmir, to make it a centre of learning of Music in ‘Vocal, Sitar, Tabla, Dance, Violin’ and in Fine Arts ‘Painting and Sculpture’ as hobby classes. Young boys and girls came forward in large numbers, to participate in the art movement and after it gained considerable momentum of activity in the Music and Fine Arts under the Jammu University’s statutory control. This decision was implemented in 1973, to start Bachelor Degree courses in Music & Fine Arts. Since then, IMFA has trained new batches from Music & Fine Arts. The result has been very fruitful and encouraging as the Degree holders from this Institute, are being readily accommodated for admission to the higher courses. In all the prestigious universities of the country J.J.School of Arts, Mumbai, Shanti Niketan, MSU, Baroda, B.H.U, Delhi College of Arts, National Institute of Design (NID), P.G. Deptt. of Music, Delhi and Punjab Universities, the J & K graduates have won state and national
awards and fellowships/ scholarships offered by the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Lalit Kala Academy and also International agencies. In IMFA, the ancient tradition of classical music is still in practice. Because of the IMFA instructors, IMFA is continuing the traditional music. Our alumni’s are also serving the society in various capacities, as teachers in colleges, govt. and private schools, artists/modelers in govt. departments, designers in advertising industry and music directors in television industry and freelances musicians and artists.

Of Course the state of Jammu and Kashmir is known the world over for its scenic beauty – a perfect setting for creative activities in the field of Music & Fine Arts. For the last so many centuries this region has been producing artists of eminence who were responsible for creating immortal pieces of art representing various aspects of the human spirit. The art movement, however, received a set back during the British period because of the absence of patronage but the post-independence period can be considered a period of renaissance which saw the renewal of hectic activities throughout the country. There is absolutely no doubt that with the systematic and hard training the students will be conducive for the promotion of art activities in whole of J&K.
To start the hobby classes, the Academy required a building to accommodate the classes, then it started the courses in rented accommodation in Jammu as well as in Kashmir. In Kashmir, the classes were taken in ‘Riverview Hotel’ in Chinar Gali, on the bank of the river. Later on the premises was shifted to a building in Lalmandi area. Then to Jawahar Nagar and ultimately to Rajbagh now, near zero bridge. The premises is still on rent. Till now there is no proper arrangement of the college building.

But on incorporation of the Institute in Kashmir University has announced by the Govt. in 2008.

In Jammu, the hobby classes started in a rented building in Wazarat Road, after that in Kacchi Chawni area, and when its strength increased and the college started Degree classes, But this was bifurcated in 1983, music classes being conducted in Kacchi Chawni building and the Fine Arts Department was shifted to Poonch House, Bohri, Talab Tillo, Jammu. This heritage building previously belonged to the Poonch Raja, who used to stay there in summer season. The building though out of date, still has an artistic look because of the stuccos, beautifully designed minakari work of Mughal tradition, high ceilings, roman type pillars. This itself appeared as a work of art. The outside look of the building is beautiful, indeed and magnificent. Probably in 1996 or 1997,
the music department too was shifted in Poonch House on the request of the students of the college to Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who was Chief Minister of the State at the time. The Accountancy College which occupied the 1st floor of the building was shifted to Kacchi Chawni and instead of Music Department was accommodated in 1st floor and Fine Arts department was set up in the ground floor of the Poonch House building.

Fine Arts comprises of three departments viz. painting, applied and sculpture. Print making is also included but it is still in its infancy, it does not have a full fledged department. For the Applied, Sculpture & Painting, five years degree used to be awarded (but now the pattern has changed) in which 1st year, IIIrd year and IVth year Examination was conducted internally, but IIInd year and Final year degree was given by the University. Now the pattern has changed again. The students can apply only if they have completed their 12th class.

The Institute gives scholarships to the toppers every year, just to boost their morale. To start with, the Institute required teachers as trainers, who had to train the students for this purpose. The teachers were brought from outside the state. Afterwards, of those who completed the training from the Institute, some had to be adjusted in the same college as teachers and a few went outside the State for P.G. courses. After
having degrees from outside they came back and started teaching in the same Institute as full fledged teachers on permanent basis and they still are continuing in the college. In the music section too, students after completing their degrees, took up jobs as staff artists in different departments, like Radio Station, T.V. Cultural Academy, Information Department or as free lancers. The artists from this Institute get preference in jobs as their base is purely classical and systematic too.

In 1965 the Academy decided to set up an Institute where art could be taught, But when the Technical Institute was already working for a couple of years there was a lot of instability in the state which effected the social, cultural and political life a lot. The setting up of the Academy itself was an effort in this direction to save the state from the above mentioned chaos. The purpose of the Academy, to start the Institute in 1965 was that the music and fine arts training should reach to the general public so that they could take it up as a professional course. For this there was the stipulation of the trained staff to train the students in different disciplines. But there was dearth of trained teachers to teach students in different trades. Before the opening of the institute in 1965, there were a few places where art and music subjects were taught in ITI Jammu as well as in Kashmir, some ITIs trained personnel were brought to the Institute so that they could train students and so a few people were
brought from outside J&K to be engaged as teachers in the Institute. Apart from this, a few ITIians were sent outside for specialization in the field so that they were capable of training the trainees of the Institute and establishing their departments in a full fledged manner, sponsored by the Academy.

To name a few among locals, Sh Rajinder Patwari engaged in Jammu Institute, Sh.T.S. Batra established the Applied Art Department, Sh. A.R. John, Sh. M.A. Mehboob, Ram Mohan Sarkar for hobby classes was called from outside for painting deptt, who established the department of painting and for sculpture Shri V.R.Khajuria (trained from M.S.U. Baroda) established the Department of Sculpture. Similarly for dance the people brought from outside were Shri R.E. Dasakkar, Shujat Hussain Khan, Malviya (Tabla) V.V. Sh. Khande Vocalist those who were appointed for dance, vocal, Tabla department. Till 1973 the Institute awarded Diplomas to successful pass outs. Some of the trainees of the Institute were absorbed as teachers in the same Institute. After 1973, 5 Year Degree Courses were started and with it the Department of Art History was opened in Jammu as well as in Kashmir. In Jammu Sh Lalit Gupta (a product of Baroda) was the person who established the Deptt. of Art History, in Kashmir the same deptt. was established by Sh.Sunil Khosa.
The syllabi of the Degree Courses was set on the Baroda pattern in both the Institutes. The syllabi of Music courses was not the copy of any college or pattern but was made after consulting different music patterns throughout the country. The traditional classical music was continued throughout all the sessions without any modification or changes.

The Institute provided a strong base to the music students, and since their traditional training was strong, they adjusted themselves in the contemporary scene while still retaining their traditional base. In Fine Arts Department there is the very valuable contribution of a Model, who enabled the artists to do life study which played a very important role in visual arts. Without this, it would have been very difficult to create creative works.

The college conducts study a tour every year, whose financial burden is undertaken by the Academy, also, there is a little contribution taken from the students. The culture of study tour is prevalent in each and every college but the concept of the tour is different in different disciplines. The trainees of the fine arts are taken usually to South India and to different parts of India where they make sketches of sculptures and architecture. This type of study proves useful to them in their future work. The students of Applied art usually go to Bombay etc. for over there they see professionals working in Advertising agencies which broaden their
visual outlook. Similarly in music also, the tours prove fruitful, where the trainees are taken to auditoriums where music shows too are being conducted. The main purpose of these tours is to entertain the trainees as well as to give them deep experience. The Institute conducts art exhibitions every year in the galleries of the Cultural Academy, but right now these are conducted in Kala Kendra, under the auspices of Cultural Academy. In the beginning, this sort of annual feature used to be conducted in Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, where the participation was mainly of the students from the Institute. This was the main source, through which the artists of the Institute, could showcase their art and also interact with the artists from all over India and get themselves equipped with their knowledge, besides updating their own knowledge. This experience paved the way for the artists to gain the knowledge of gallery culture viz. cataloguing, invitation to buyers etc., display, framing and fresh experience in their professional work in future.

In dance and music, these annual musical programmes like Basant Panchmi, annual musical programmes serve as a platform for their future professional performances. And they overcome the stage shyness and inhibitions behind. The Institute also invites dignitaries in the musical field, so that the performing artists of the Institute, can interact and learn a lot from them which is some what different from what they have learnt
in their own Institute. This way they get a kind of encouragement and moral support in the sense that they don’t lag behind and can further their studies. The successful pass outs serve society in various capacities, as teachers in colleges, Govt. and private schools, artists/models in Govt. Deptts., designers in advertising industry, art and music directors in television industry and freelance musicians and artists.

Every year the Institute conducts workshops and camps viz. sculpture camp, print making workshops, photography workshops, wherein the senior artists are invited from outside the state, so that the students here can interact and communicate and imbibe knowledge from them in a very congenial, cooperative and friendly atmosphere, thus enhancing to their horizon. For print making, the Institute invites senior print makers from the J&K itself or from elsewhere in India so that, they demonstrate the techniques of print making viz. etching, litho, woodcut etc. etc. There is another reason for inviting artists from outside, because there is no full fledged department of printing in Fine Arts still. There is no trained staff in print making. The idea to bring people from outside, was to enable students to make themselves fully prepared to take up advance courses, after getting degrees in printing from the Institute.
In photography workshops, the different techniques in photography are introduced as how to handle manual and digital cameras. These workshops are being conducted by professionals. This enables students to gain experience in professional photography, which is a part of the concerned study. These trainees get chance to work as professional photographers in newspapers, advertising agencies in different govt. departments or as free lancers.

The year 1965 the Academy decided to open the Institute, for the political conditions had stabilized by that time. For the development of art, and the development of other things too like political, social and economic, for these too are necessary for its promotion. The Institute was the brain child of the ‘intellectuals’ who were associated with the Academy in order to save or promote the art in the State. The trainees were required to run the Institute, for this the locals were recruited in the initial stages when Degree courses were introduced after the Diploma courses, and a proper syllabus was framed which was on the Baroda pattern. Most of the teachers were therefore trained in Baroda. It was due to the existence of the Institute, that art was introduced in society. This way people were inclined towards art and music. Students trained from the Institute, whether in music or in fine arts, got encouragement at state level or national level. Some of the artists got jobs in government
departments viz. Radio, Doordarshan and the Art, Cultural and Language Academy or in the Institute itself, in technical as well as in the teaching department and this improved their financial condition also. The alumni of both the Institutes from Jammu as well as Srinagar, established themselves well in the art field and so got recognition in the national as well as the international art scene in music, as well as in the fine arts.