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India As A Sensitive Background For Art Education.

BABU K

Artist

Abstract: "It was fundamental for the diverse cultural institutions in India which managed establishments of inimitable education to society in the course of its constant existence even if this relation restricted all resources of fortitude during its subsistence, due to various factors but religious reasons were at prime. They continued teaching until got vanished from history, Hinduism, Buddhism, Brahmanism and Jainism are major among them and each of them introduced unique art education systems through ideological expansion and own survival. It was followed by Mughal Empire who encouraged Miniature Painting and Company School came into survival on prolongation to this which supported materialization of art activities to appeal Western sensibilities. Ravi Varma was totally criticized for his manifestations with oil painting: a Western device but Bengal school proved its name for being more Indian through their propaganda. The school established by Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan was answer for many questions: the new beginnings from here and with emergence of Individual activities by various geniuses, a style accepted Pan Indian level began to stage in India and which lead to new developments in Art education."

Key Words: Art Education, Religion. Buddhism, Mughal, Company school, British, Miniature Painting, Ravi Varma, Bengal School, Rabindranath Tagore, Santiniketan, Somnath Hore, N S Bendre, Individuals.

Research Paper: India As A Sensitive Background For Art Education.

Various cultural institutions in India managed establishments of unique education to society through its constant existence: this relation restricted all resources of endurance during its subsistence. It was essential for them to accept various circumstances presented by the society in which they phenomenally existed. The conditions to what they adjusted were of anonymous nature including religious, social, behavioural, geographical, historical, ethical, psychological, and economical aspects and so on. A major factor affected and supported production of art in India, amazingly reflected on them is religious aspiration. Inventions of art objectivities by religious systems confirmed their productions not only reflect the visions of that particular religion, but insisted to stage its performance to make the viewers feels necessity of spiritual ideals in society for long. (*Note-1*) Each religious attitude dramatically plat formed necessity of its existence to the surrounded society as it is the most important element for social existence through their astonishing creations.

Following to the above factors, the specialties and limitations of traditional art education systems were lacked understanding about requirements of society in which they stood alive. Learning art straightforwardly from a teacher was a renowned feature. At the same time, the religious systems which were very robustly embedded in Indian society introduced a system highly appreciable for the subsistence and pronouncement of religious extremity. Art was a highly cherished apparatus to edify religion, wherever it sprouted and remained subsistence strappingly. Taking shape of art objectivity was equal to generating a language for communication of ideals- ideals of any mean. Those productions continued their teachings until they faced destruction by natural calamities, implementation of calculated enforcement by human generations or extinction due to self decompose.

The acceptance of Buddhism and its establishment in India and elsewhere on earth opened new ways for the birth of valuable art and art education systems with reverberations worldwide. The religious believe and practices of Cave Architects, Sculptors and Painters on Buddhism during its establishment, become the reason for the creation of world's best art objects, Paintings, Sculptures and Architectural wonders. Based on Buddhism and utilizing all explorations of traditional possibilities, the ideals of visual possibilities the religious systems developed could astonish beholders of it from all generations. This was made possible by keeping of improvised visual habits and whole minded acceptance of all limitations and explorations of all possibilities by its creators the human beings. The successors materialistically witnessed and ideologically accepted the visual ideologies of their predecessors with mixed feelings. Each religious pedestal (founders and establishers) gave birth to aesthetic ideals in the directions they thought was best for their religious ideological and materialistic growth (*Note-2*). They introduced a social art education system anticipating innumerable possibilities for their own progress in the existing society, through the expansion of their religious ideologies.

During the rule of Mughal Empire witnessed notable growth in artistic activities. With his warm hearted approaches to Aesthetic means Akbar the great proved his most loving personality towards fine arts among rulers (*Note-3*). He loved all art forms and encouraged all creative activities. Hundreds of artists were appointed in his royal court to engage in painting and most legendary priceless paintings in Indian miniature style with connections to Persia were painted during his period of rule. Another remarkable incident is that he brought some remarkably proved artists from West to his court on invitation to interact with Indian artists. The European artists brought and introduced a new surface for painting, the canvas. They also came with a new medium, which was unknown to the Indians until then, the oil colors (*Note-4*). Many Art Historians commented in their writings, that introducing oil medium was the most relevant activity in modernization. Following the incident of introducing a new medium, there are evidences for creation of images of Jesus and mother Maria in Miniature style during 15th Century in court of Akbar- a venue in history where the religious connotations and signatures turned meaningless. The efforts of Akbar to generate communication of Indian Artist with Western artists and bring new ideologies to Indian art are considered as innovative by many Art Lovers, Art Historians and Art Practitioners.

There was another remarkable turn in effort on art education is by British in India. They initiated for creation of aesthetics suitable to western ideologies in India, which was largely accepted in the beginning and highly acclaimed. It provided ambience to Indian artists by introducing creation of line drawing with following scales, anatomy and standards, water color soluble vanishing- wash techniques made illusion of thickness,

perspective and three dimensional feelings. British focused on teaching these techniques to Indian traditional craft persons during the ages of Company School in India. (*Note-5*).

Teaching western thoughts – the values of western art – to Indian artist is completely a modernization procedure. When Westerners tried to imbibe new ideologies by introducing new values to Indian platform, first they tried to identify eligible hands for transfer the basics. First of all they tried to find people from the families of artists who were Akbar's court painters. It took great effort to find the grand sons of old Miniature artists from the geographical areas where the traditional miniature artists made their settlements centuries' ago. It was a powerful ideology for creating transformation. Similarly foreign artists were introduced to Indian Royal Families, Land owners, and Rulers, and got their (Royal) Images static as Paintings done, as per special requirements of British East India Company, which was a great visionary act on educating Art.

Even if it was to establish their superiority and their psychic ego over Indian artists, in the name of documentation, European artists were appointed to create portraits of Great Land Owners and Royal Family members turned as an innovative social art teaching program to colonies of British and its people. Hundreds of European artists were appointed all over India, to portray powerful people, for creation of exact replica of places, Buildings and incidents as making of history. The entire procedures initiated a new kind of social art teaching and social art academic atmosphere. In this gene Thomas Daniel and William Daniel travelled along nook and corners of India, studied historical places, every details of it, by making replicas of landmarks, conducts of customs, religious diversity, living styles, mode of transportation, flora and fauna and soon(*Note-6*). It was a social art teaching program initiated by British to make Indians acknowledged how the art should work in any nation.

The break from surroundings created Indian artist Ravi Varma was an outstanding one. He was introduced to Oil color as an aftermath of British rule in India. I have already mentioned that British tried to establish art as tool to document Indian situations, including images of Royal family members. Theodor Jenson was a European Artist who was appointed to document images from members of Royal Family in Travancore. He came with an introductory letter to the king of Travancore from Madras Resident of British. By then young Ravi Varma was already an artist at the Royal Court of Travancore under supervision of his own uncle, who acted as a guardian figure for Ravi Varma during his entire growth as an artist, Raja Raja Varma, approached Kingdom of Travancore to get Ravi Varma tuition in Oil Painting professionally from any of the visiting artists particularly from Theodor Jenson.

It was noted by an early art historian that Arumugham Pillai, then a court painter of Travancore, who was able to handle oil color, was not interested in teaching Ravi Varma oil medium, because he could visualize in Ravi Varma, a powerful opponent, who could appropriate and challenge his position as "great painter of Travancore". Simultaneously when Theodor Jenson came to Travancore with order from British Residency to portray Royal Family of Travancore, Raja Raja Varma the guardian figure approached him through Royal Family to teach Ravi Varma the usage of Oil Medium. But the highly considered artist Theodor Jenson had no special interest and pride in training oil painting somebody particularly any Indian (*Note-7*).

But with the interference of Royal Family in the matter, Ravi Varma was permitted to witness how Theodor Jenson mixed oil color. It have been previously noted by an art historian that this was the only training in oil medium accessed by Ravi Varma. The training of Ravi Varma was through engaging himself on numerous

experiments in the new medium by trial and error. Ravi Varma succeeded in achieving a challenging mastery in use of Oil color by hard work and with use of his merit, inborn talent. By this challenging opportunity Ravi Varma could gather fame and recognition as the First Modern Indian painter who could handle a western medium successfully and professionally in challenging manner. He made his name wrote in History with sparkling alphabets.

During British rule, the westerners, began Art and Craft educational centres in various cities including, Madras, Calcutta and Mumbai. These schools were initially for production of skilled laborers suitable for commercial purposes – production of Utility Objects, Ornaments and Jewelries, Great architectures and so on, rather than individual artists. E.B Havell, was working for renaissance in cloth weaving technology at Chennai in the beginning and was later appointed to work with Art Educational Institution at Calcutta (*Note-8*). There was a style of production known as South Kensington Style was popular. But nothing could remain persistent long against currents of changes that took formation since then after.

Single mindedly the basic philosophy of “Bengal School” was laid by E.B. Havell, Ananda K Kumar Swamy and Abanindranath Tagore at the end of 19th Century (*Note-9*). With energy acquired from their surroundings the artists of Bengal school involved in Painting with the understanding that they are creating new art. Bengal school was innovative, outstanding and modern, when the historical atmosphere and society in which these activities were introduced are on consideration. Understanding the limitations of British Art Education system which followed South Kensington Style through European Models and teaching of Geometry, then Superintendent of Calcutta School E B Havell experimented to teach with introduction of Miniature style, Wash technique and purely Indian thoughts with help of cousins of Rabindranath Tagore.

Abanindranath Tagore, the founder of Indian Wash style was appointed as the main recourse person and major teacher there. With confidence E B Havell was able to sell off the European models brought from home town for teaching in Calcutta. Soon E B Havell was called back from Britain to return due to the “Psychological Problem” from which he was suffering. After a long time of ‘treatment’ E B Havell only could come to India to pack for hometown permanently. Again a new principal was appointed at the Calcutta School, said to be a stickler to discipline, Mr. Percy Brown (*Note-10*). Soon after the arrival of new teacher, Abanindranath Tagore left his teaching assignments there. But the Bengal school continued its growth in to a pan Indian level with establishment of its Indian terms and terminologies.

During the days of Bengal famine, the society was facing various economic failure issues including starvation. “Chitto Prasad” a Naxalite (*Note-11*) activist from villages of West Bengal acted powerfully through woodcut prints. He visualized the human conditions during starvation and transferred it to outer world. Situated in Village “Lal Bandh”, “Somnath Hore” was his follower, studied the technique from Chitto Prasad and continued his communication span for human generations with a most appreciable humanistic manner. The style of public teaching was absurd and arrogant to then ruling commune but it showed pathways to a new generation, an art teaching style and methodology. It was rash, rude and turmoil to consider as development of a teaching system, but it renders soft modules of affectionate potentials when its humanitarian grounds are under consideration. This the unique use of a creative medium in a very open manner for social purpose takes space here due to its social content.

On closure of Bengal School activities in Calcutta School, Poet Rabindranath Tagore began Kalabhawana within Visvabharati University his dream space of education. The visions of Rabindranath Tagore were entirely different from the ones of his nephews. He questioned them for their over refinement and repetitive qualities for which they were trying to moot up in the banner of renaissance. The establishment of Rabindranath Tagore as an art enthusiast and supporter contributed largely to the establishment of modernism. He ridiculed his nephews - for lying back in Indian style, rendering from Mughal period, making wash paintings- instead of learning developments in the West-and provoked them to work towards new tendencies of Modernism in the west. He tried to initiate a teaching system in his school with presence and teachings of Nandalal Bose the preeminent disciple of Abanindranath. Finally after visiting Europe again and visits of Okakura Kakuzo from Japan, Rabindranath Tagore himself began to paint, and established as an artist.

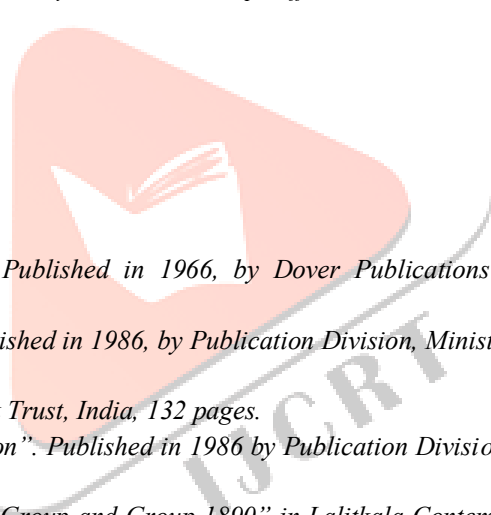
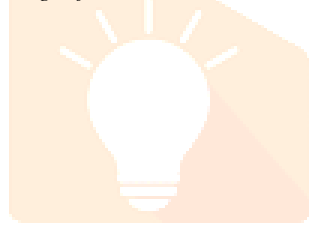
Stella Kramrisch was invited by Philosopher, Poet and Artist Rabindranath Tagore (*Note-12*) to Santiniketan during the end of 1920s. It was the time when the genius among the ordinary began to think the necessity of building art historical awareness in Indian artists. It was the announcement of modern age in art education of Indian continent.

In 1950s the well known artist N S Bendre (*Note-13*) together with university administrator Markhandeya Bhatt initiated studies on art at M S University of Baroda during its foundation work out. It was much before, with the interest of famous Sculptor D P Roychowdhury, modernization was initiated at Madras. Slowly the school at Madras reached a completely and ideologically higher status since the arrival of K C S Paniker as its head. K C Paniker (*Note 14*) was a visionary of art education and creatively involved in art creation and establishment of Artist's profession. The teaching of art in a professional level was begun by artist B C Sanyal at Delhi in early 1970s and he was able to establish art education there elaborately. Later by the end of 1980s, by the arrival of O P Sharma (*Note-15*) to head the institution made remarkable changes in its teaching styles. O P Sharma established Bauhaus initiatives since he studied art from Bauhaus school. Initiatives of all art institutions in India within past twenty five years have made remarkable changes in the growth of Art Education. The art education in India took rebirth with capabilities of International acceptance along with growth of art educational institutions in various cities of India.

One of the most important facts was the understanding about newly developed art in Indian society. It included acknowledgements of expansion in art education system in countries abroad. Several artists of Indian origin were unhappy about the teaching in existing art educational institutions and began to acquire education from institutions established abroad. With their return, they created an elaborate functional atmosphere on joint efforts with natively educated artists. The artists happened to be settled in big cities began to work jointly with understanding of established ideologies, new philosophical contents and several active groups were born. Progressive artists groups in Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta and Delhi established in newer and higher levels which were unique in History. These groups were established with new ideologies in visionary habits and rendered a new aesthetic vision to society they survived in. Establishment of such groups gave an outlook on society on general awareness of understanding towards art. Also the efforts of numerous Individual artists worked regularly and enthusiastically for ideological and practical enhancement of Art and Art education is also mentionable here.

Notes

- Note-1:** Differences between ideological consumption of Buddhist, Brahmanic, Jain Buddhist ideologies during various centuries of creation of caves in Ajanta, Ellora and temples in various parts of the Globe are on reference here. ,
- Note-2:** Referring the stylistic differences between visuals in the form of sculptures and paintings in caves made during various centuries in Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta, or anywhere else.
- Note-3:** The Royal court of Akbar included thousands of artists to make paintings in Miniature style. Akbar was a true lover of art and there are no equals for him took birth in the globe.
- Note-4:** Many historians' points to the fact that Akbar made initiatives to establish new medium, oil on canvas, invited western artists to his court to teach oil painting to our painters.
- Note-5:** Referring to company school painters brought by British and Indians learned art during company establishment.
- Note 6:** There were many hundreds of people travelled all along India, visualized the activities, Places, Festivals, Behavior, Kings, Customs, Jewelleryes, and so on. Daniells are just example.
- Note-7:** All major art historians in the past stated and discussed about emergence of Ravi Varma as the First Modern Indian painter.
- Note-8:** E. B. Havell tried his level best to replace art tendencies prevailed in India, replaced British models from the art school, appointed people favoring new art practice with Indian elements etc during his principal ship at Calcutta School etc and gained success to an appreciable level.
- Note-9:** E B Havell tried to bring revelations through implementing new teaching styles with seeking from Abanindranath Tagore for practical support and Ananda K Kumarswamy for philosophical support.
- Note-10:** Mr. Percy Brown was a differently person by temperament, a stickler to discipline, who objected the freedom enjoyed by Abanindranath Tagore and his students.
- Note-11:** Chittoprasad taught Samnath Hore and appointed for visual reporting from various parts of Bengal during Famine.
- Note-12:** Rabindranath Tagore invited several personalities from various parts of the globe to South Verandah of Jorasanko Family house in Bengal, and later to Santiniketan after establishment of it, to find remarkable changes in Philosophic approaches towards progress in Art, Literature, music, Theatre and culture generally and it turned fruitful.
- Note-13:** Artist/Painter N S Bendre was the founder of Faculty of Fine arts in Baroda M S University.
- Note-14:** K C S Panocker was the student of D P Roy Choudhury and later Principal of College of Fine Arts at Chennai. He took initiations to begin Cholamandal Artists village in a later period of his life and become leader of the movement there.
- Note-15:** O Pm Sharma was the Principal of College of Art, New Delhi late 80s and early 90s who made ample efforts to build a new school there.

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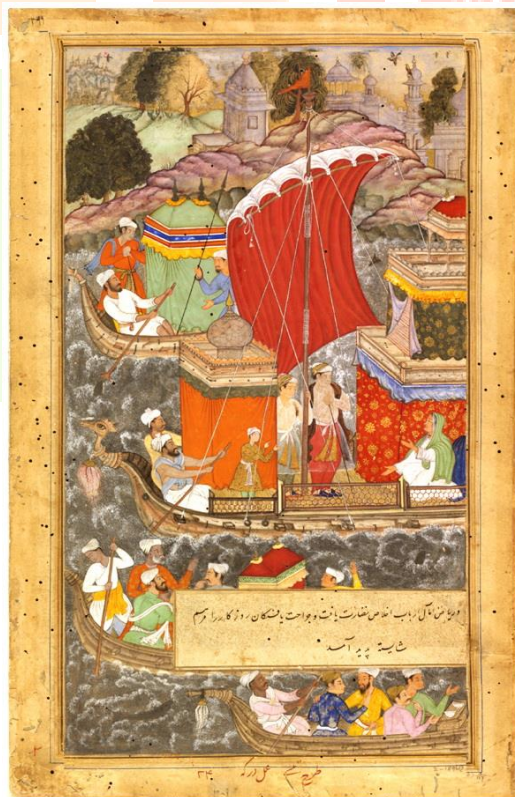


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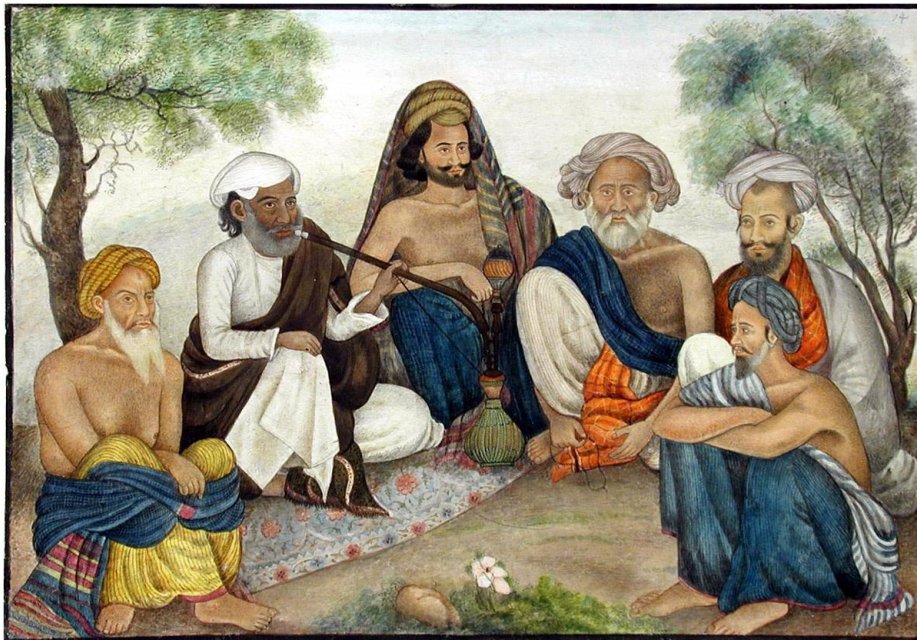


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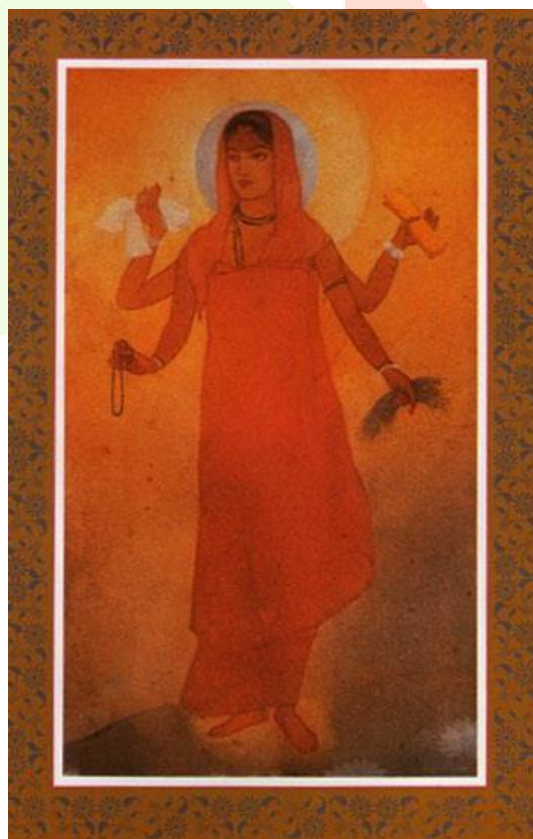


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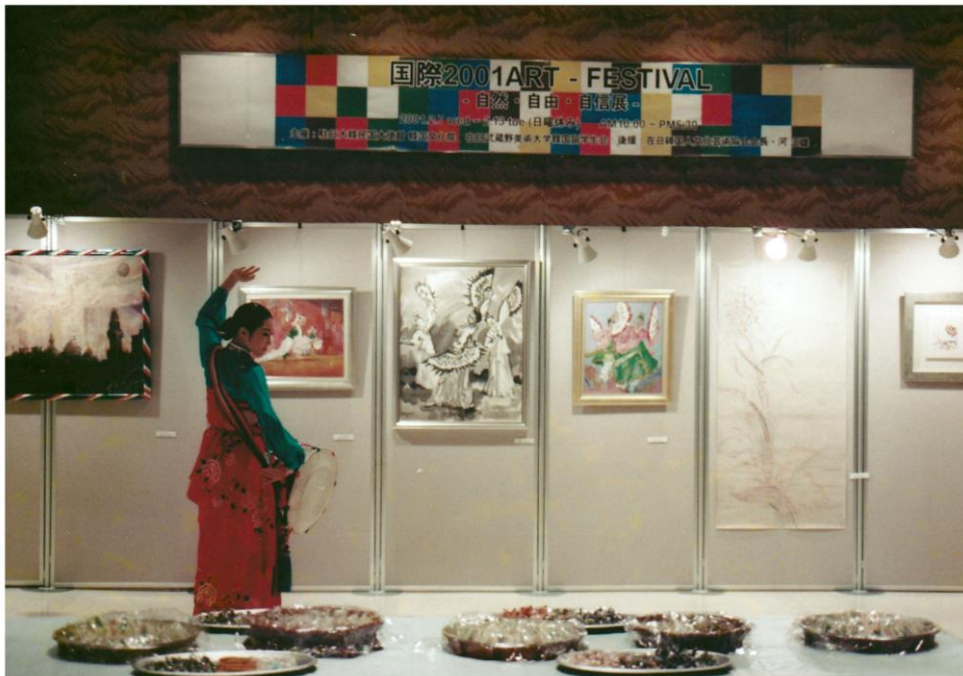


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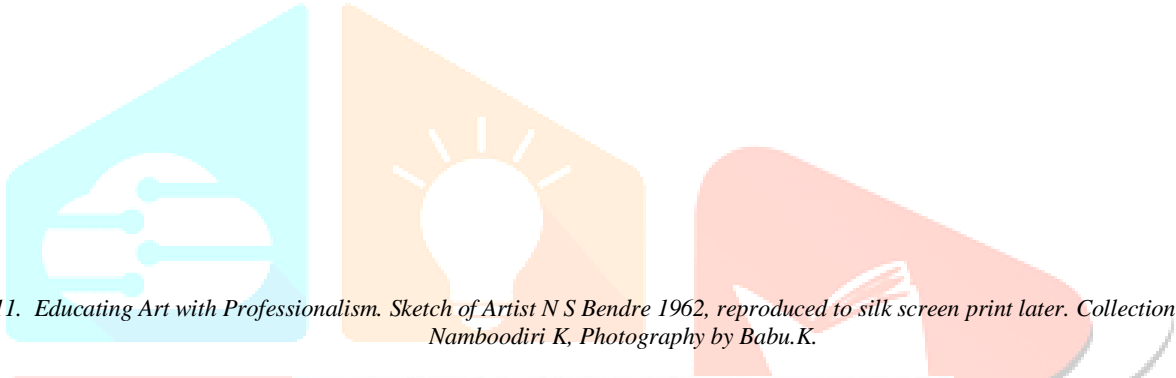


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