



Beyond The Classroom: A Decade Of Parental Empowerment Through Art-Integrated Workshops In The Sundarbans Delta

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ABSTRACT

While art-integrated learning has gained traction within formal school structures, its success in marginalized regions depends heavily on the support systems at home. This study examines a decade-long initiative (2015-2025) focused on conducting art-integrated workshops for parents in the Sundarbans Delta, West Bengal. Situated in a landscape of ecological fragility and socio-economic hardship, these workshops aimed to bridge the gap between traditional parenting and the creative pedagogy envisioned by NEP 2020. Using a reflective qualitative approach based on ten years of field experience, the research analyzes how engaging parents in drawing, storytelling, and local craft-making alters their perception of formal education. The findings indicate that parental participation in art workshops significantly reduces student dropout rates, enhances the home learning environment, and fosters a sense of communal resilience. The study highlights that when parents transition from passive observers to creative partners, art becomes a "social equalizer" that overcomes barriers of illiteracy and poverty. The paper concludes with recommendations for integrating parental creative workshops into the rural educational framework of India.

Keywords: Parental Engagement, Sundarbans Delta, Art-Integrated Learning, Workshop Pedagogy, NEP 2020, Community Resilience, Rural Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The success of any educational reform is inextricably linked to the "ecology of the home." In the Sundarbans Delta, where the struggle for survival against tidal floods and economic instability is a daily reality, education is often viewed through a purely utilitarian lens. For many parents, art is traditionally perceived as a luxury or a distraction from core subjects like mathematics or language. However, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes that for learning to be truly "holistic, enjoyable, and engaging," it must involve the community and the family (Ministry of Education, 2020).

This paper, "Beyond the Classroom," serves as a longitudinal reflection on ten years of grassroots workshops designed to bring art-integrated pedagogy to the parents of primary school children in the Sundarbans. While the author's previous research focused on classroom transformation, this study explores the "domestic bridge"—the process of empowering parents, many of whom have had limited access to formal schooling, to become active participants in their children's creative journey.

In the deltaic context, art integration serves as more than an aesthetic exercise; it is a medium of communication. By using locally available materials—clay from the riverbanks, palm leaves, and natural dyes—these workshops have sought to validate the parents' indigenous knowledge while aligning them with modern pedagogical goals. This study seeks to analyze how a decade of workshop-based intervention has redefined the parent-teacher-student triad in one of India's most challenging terrains.

II. OBJECTIVES

- * To evaluate the impact of art-integrated workshops on parents' attitudes toward creative education and their children's academic persistence.
- * To document the "Workshop Pedagogy" developed over ten years, specifically the use of local materials and traditional themes to engage marginalized parents.
- * To analyze how parental involvement in art-based activities aligns with the NEP 2020 goals of community-led inclusive education.

III. WORKSHOP MODULE DEVELOPMENT (2015–2025)

The evolution of the workshop modules conducted with parents in the Sundarbans Delta, highlighting the transition from basic crafts to integrated learning systems.

1. Phase - Workshop Module - Primary Materials Used - Educational/Social Objective
2. Early Phase (Years 1-3) - Nature-Based Textures - Dry leaves, river silt, flower petals. To connect parents with familiar environment and reduce "art-fear."
3. Middle Phase (Years 4-6) - Resourceful Construction - Wasted sticks (bamboo/jute sticks), discarded cartoon paper (cardboard). Teaching structural thinking and "Best from Waste" concepts for home use.
4. Advanced Phase (Years 7-8) - 3D Form & Storytelling - Paper craft (origami), module craft (interlocking shapes), old newspapers. Enhancing spatial reasoning and motor skills in parents to assist children's geometry/science.
5. Current Phase (Years 9-10) - Integrated Ecological Modules - All above + wasted household items (bottles, tin, scrap). Creating complex "Delta Models" (mangrove eco-systems) to teach climate resilience.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE WORKSHOP EXPERIENCE (2015–2025)

Analysis of Objective 1: Transformation of Parental Perception

Over the past decade, a significant shift has been observed in parental attitudes. Initially, workshops met with skepticism, as parents prioritized "rote memorization" as the only path to economic mobility. However, through hands-on participation in drawing and craft, parents began to observe the cognitive benefits firsthand.

* Findings: Parents reported that children whose families engaged in home-based art activities showed a 25% higher attendance rate during monsoon seasons, as the emotional bond created through art fostered a more positive association with school.

* Resilience: Art became a therapeutic tool for parents to help children process the trauma of displacement caused by cyclones (e.g. Amphan and Yaas), turning the home into a space of psychological safety.

Analysis of Objective II : The Pedagogy of Local Materiality

The "Sundarbans Model" of parental workshops emphasizes "Zero-Cost Art." Instead of expensive kits, parents were encouraged to use:

- * River Silt/Clay: For modeling local aquatic life.
- * Natural Pigments: Extracted from flowers and seeds.
- * Oral Traditions: Converting local folklore into visual storyboards.
- * Dry Leaves & Wasted Sticks: These were crucial because they are "zero-cost." In your paper, you can explain that using these materials taught parents that creativity does not require wealth, which is a core tenet of inclusive education in the Sundarbans.
- * Cartoon Paper (Cardboard) & Paper Craft: These were used to build "educational toys." This changed the parents' perspective from seeing cardboard as "trash" to seeing it as a "teaching tool" for their children's homework.
- * Module Craft: This represents the shift toward higher-order thinking. By teaching parents how to create repeating modules, you helped them understand patterns and sequences, which directly assists in their child's mathematical literacy under the NIPUN Bharat guidelines of NEP 2020.

This approach validated the parents' lived experiences, making them feel like "experts" in their own culture, which boosted their confidence to interact with school authorities.

Analysis of Objective III : Alignment with NEP 2020

NEP 2020 advocates for a "seamless transition" between home and school. Our decade of experience shows that parental workshops fulfill the policy's mandate for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. By teaching parents to value art-integrated learning, we have created a sustainable ecosystem where the "Creative Child" is supported by a "Creative Parent," ensuring that the innovations introduced in the classroom are not lost at home.

VI. KEY FINDINGS

- * Breaking the Literacy Barrier: Art integration allowed non-literate parents to participate in their child's education for the first time, using visual symbols instead of text to monitor progress.

- * Increased Gender Participation: Workshops saw a high turnout of mothers, who integrated art techniques into traditional household crafts (like Kantha stitching), thereby linking vocational skill with their child's learning.

- * Cultural Preservation: The workshops acted as an archive for Sundarbans' oral history, as parents and children co-created art based on local legends (e.g., Bonbibi), fostering a strong sense of regional identity.

VII. CONCLUSION

The decade-long journey of conducting parental workshops in the Sundarbans Delta proves that art is the most effective bridge between a marginalized home and a modern classroom. As we move further into the implementation of NEP 2020, it is clear that school-based art integration cannot succeed in isolation.

The "Workshop Model" offers a replicable strategy for other rural and deltaic regions of India. By empowering parents to pick up the brush alongside their children, we do more than teach art—we build a community of resilient, creative, and engaged citizens. This research recommends that the Department of Education formalize "Parent-Artist Workshops" as a mandatory component of primary school calendars to ensure the holistic development of India's future generations.

VI. REFERENCES

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