

# Art as a Medium of Cultural Transmission: An Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Perspective in School Education

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## ABSTRACT

*Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) emphasize the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage through diverse mediums, among which art plays a significant role. In the context of school education, art serves not only as a creative expression but also as a powerful vehicle for transmitting cultural values, traditions, and indigenous knowledge. This paper explores how art functions as a medium of cultural transmission within the framework of IKS, particularly at the school level. It highlights the integration of traditional art forms, local crafts, and aesthetic practices into pedagogy to foster cultural awareness, identity formation, and holistic development among students. The study adopts a qualitative and conceptual approach, drawing upon policy documents, educational theories, and cultural practices. The findings suggest that art-based learning rooted in IKS strengthens cultural continuity, promotes value education, and aligns with the vision of holistic and multidisciplinary learning as emphasized in NEP 2020. The paper concludes with pedagogical implications and recommendations for integrating IKS-based art education in school curricula.*

**Keyword: - Indian Knowledge Systems, Art Education, Cultural Transmission, School Education, NEP 2020**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education has always been a means of transmitting culture from one generation to another. In the Indian context, culture is deeply embedded in traditions, customs, rituals, and artistic expressions. Art, in its various forms—visual, performing, and craft-based—has historically functioned as a carrier of cultural knowledge and social values. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) encompass a rich repository of indigenous wisdom that integrates art, philosophy, science, and spirituality. Within this framework, art is not merely aesthetic but also educational and ethical in nature. In school education, especially at the middle stage, art can play a transformative role in helping learners connect with their cultural roots while developing creativity and critical thinking. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly advocates for the integration of art and culture into education, emphasizing experiential and multidisciplinary learning. In this context, understanding art as a medium of cultural transmission becomes highly relevant.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Cultural Transmission

Cultural transmission refers to the process through which knowledge, beliefs, values, and practices are passed from one generation to another. Schools act as formal institutions where this transmission is structured and systematic.

## 2.2 Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

IKS represent traditional systems of knowledge developed in India over centuries. These systems are holistic, context-specific, and deeply connected to local culture and environment. Art forms such as folk paintings, classical dance, music, and handicrafts are integral components of IKS.

## 2.3 Art Education in Schools

Art education includes activities that develop artistic skills, aesthetic appreciation, and cultural understanding. It goes beyond drawing and painting to include storytelling, music, dance, and craft traditions.

## 3. ART AS A MEDIUM OF CULTURAL TRANSMISSION

Art serves as a bridge between past and present by preserving and communicating cultural narratives. The following dimensions highlight its role:

### 3.1 Preservation of Traditions

Traditional art forms such as folk paintings, tribal art, and local crafts embody the history and lifestyle of communities. When introduced in classrooms, these forms help preserve endangered cultural practices.

### 3.2 Transmission of Values

Art reflects moral and ethical values such as harmony, respect for nature, and community living. Through artistic activities, students internalize these values in an experiential manner.

### 3.3 Development of Cultural Identity

Engaging with indigenous art helps students develop a sense of belonging and cultural pride. It strengthens their identity in a globalized world.

### 3.4 Intergenerational Learning

Art enables interaction between students and local artisans or elders, facilitating the transfer of knowledge across generations.

## 4. IKS Perspective on Art Education

From an IKS perspective, art is integrated with life and learning rather than treated as a separate subject. Key features include:

- a) **Holistic Learning:** Art connects cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.
- b) **Contextual Relevance:** Learning is rooted in local culture and environment.
- c) **Experiential Approach:** Emphasis on learning by doing and observing.
- d) **Value Integration:** Ethical and cultural values are embedded in artistic practices.

Traditional Indian theories of aesthetics also emphasize the emotional and experiential aspects of art, making it a powerful educational tool.

## 5. INTEGRATION OF ART IN SCHOOL EDUCATION (NEP 2020 CONTEXT)

NEP 2020 highlights the importance of art-integrated learning as a cross-curricular approach. It recommends:

- a) Inclusion of local and traditional art forms in curriculum
- b) Use of art to teach other subjects
- c) Promotion of creativity and critical thinking
- d) Engagement with community artists

At the middle school stage, students are at a crucial developmental phase where exposure to cultural elements can shape their values and worldview.

## 6. PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR IKS-BASED ART EDUCATION

### 6.1 Contextual Integration of Local Art Forms

Teaching should incorporate region-specific art practices such as folk painting, crafts, music, and dance. This helps learners relate academic content to their immediate cultural environment and strengthens cultural continuity.

### 6.2 Use of Storytelling and Oral Traditions

Traditional narratives, folktales, and epics can be used as pedagogical tools. When combined with drawing, dramatization, or music, storytelling enhances imagination, comprehension, and cultural awareness.

### 6.3 Emphasis on Experiential Learning

Learning through direct engagement—such as painting, crafting, and performance—enables students to understand concepts through practice rather than passive listening. This promotes deeper and long-lasting learning.

### 6.4 Interdisciplinary Teaching Approach

Art should be used to connect different subjects. For example, patterns in traditional art can explain mathematical concepts, while folk stories can support language learning and social science topics.

### 6.5 Community Involvement and Knowledge Sharing

Involving local artists, artisans, and cultural practitioners in classroom activities provides authentic learning experiences and helps preserve indigenous knowledge systems.

### 6.6 Promotion of Reflective Thinking

Students should be encouraged to interpret and discuss the meaning, symbolism, and relevance of art forms. Reflection enhances critical thinking and cultural understanding.

### 6.7 Learner-Centered and Activity-Based Methods

Teaching should shift from lecture-based methods to participatory approaches such as group work, projects, and collaborative art-making, allowing students to actively engage in learning.

### 6.8 Skill Development through Traditional Crafts

Activities like pottery, weaving, and handicrafts help develop fine motor skills, creativity, and an appreciation for traditional occupations and livelihoods.

### 6.9 Use of Indigenous and Natural Materials

Locally available materials such as mitti (clay), leaves, natural colors, and recycled items can be used for art activities, promoting sustainability and environmental awareness.

### 6.10 Integration of Performing Arts

Music, dance, and theatre should be incorporated to provide embodied learning experiences, enhancing expression, confidence, and communication skills.

### 6.11 Incorporation of Digital Tools

Technology can be used to document, present, and share traditional art forms. Digital storytelling and multimedia projects can enhance engagement while preserving cultural content.

**6.12 Multilingual Approach in Art Education**

Using regional languages in art-related activities supports better understanding and preserves linguistic diversity along with cultural expression.

**6.13 Flexibility in Lesson Planning**

Teachers should design open-ended activities that allow creativity, exploration, and individual expression rather than rigid, standardized tasks.

**6.14 Encouragement of Collaborative Learning**

Group art projects promote teamwork, cooperation, and peer learning, reflecting the collective nature of many traditional art practices.

**6.15 Focus on Value-Based Themes**

Art activities should highlight values such as respect for nature, harmony, cooperation, and cultural appreciation, contributing to holistic education.

**6.16 Alignment with Learning Objectives**

Art-based pedagogy must be meaningfully connected with curriculum goals to ensure that creativity supports academic achievement rather than remaining an isolated activity.

**7. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION**

Despite its potential, several challenges exist for its implementation such as :

- a) Limited teacher preparedness and lack of training in art-integrated pedagogy
- b) Insufficient understanding of Indian Knowledge Systems among educators
- c) Overloaded curriculum leaving minimal time for art-based activities
- d) Perception of art as a non-academic or secondary subject
- e) Inadequate infrastructure and scarcity of art materials in schools
- f) Lack of exposure to local and indigenous art forms
- g) Minimal collaboration between schools and traditional artists/artisans
- h) Absence of clear curricular frameworks for art integration
- i) Difficulty in assessing learning outcomes through art-based methods
- j) Exam-oriented education system discouraging creative approaches
- k) Variability in implementation across rural and urban schools
- l) Language and cultural barriers in diverse classrooms
- m) Risk of superficial or tokenistic use of art without deep cultural context
- n) Limited institutional and administrative support
- o) Financial constraints affecting program sustainability
- p) Lack of research-based models for effective integration
- q) Resistance to change among educators accustomed to traditional methods
- r) Time constraints for planning and executing art-based lessons
- s) Digital divide restricting access to digital art resources
- t) Challenges in aligning art activities with subject-specific learning objectives

## 8. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Integrating art as a medium of cultural transmission has significant implications.

- a) Preservation of Cultural Heritage
- b) Holistic Development of Learners
- c) Value Education and Ethical Formation
- d) Experiential and Joyful Learning
- e) Strengthening Cultural Identity and Pride
- f) Social Inclusion and Diversity Awareness
- g) Pedagogical Transformation
- h) Integration with Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)
- i) Skill Development and Livelihood Awareness
- j) Global Competence with Local Roots
- k) Encourages creativity and innovation

## 9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the integration of art as a medium of cultural transmission aligns with the broader goals of education in the 21st century, which emphasize creativity, critical thinking, cultural awareness, and ethical responsibility. For meaningful implementation, it is essential to move beyond tokenistic inclusion of art and adopt a systemic approach that embeds art within the core curriculum. Future research may explore the long-term impact of art-integrated pedagogy on student outcomes, as well as strategies for effective implementation in diverse educational contexts. Through such efforts, education can become a transformative force that preserves cultural heritage while fostering innovation and inclusivity.

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