

INDIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

**Report of the
National Seminar on the Role
of Arts and Crafts in Education
and Community Development**

held at

**KALAKSHETRA, ADYAR, MADRAS
7TH TO 12TH MARCH, 1957**



सत्यमेव जयते

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INTRODUCTION

The Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO at its first conference held in January, 1954, recommended that a Seminar on the role of "Arts and Crafts" in Education and Community Development should be organised with a view to studying all the aspects of this important problem at the national level. In accordance with this recommendation, this Seminar was held at Kalakshetra, Adyar, Madras from 6th to 12th March, 1957.

The State Governments were requested to nominate participants who should be fully conversant with the various aspects of this problem and should represent teachers in Art schools, persons teaching Arts and Crafts in Schools (primary, basic and secondary) as well as Social Education Centres and persons working in the Teacher Training Colleges, particularly in Basic Teacher Training Colleges. Most of the State Governments sent suitable participants. Besides these, a representative each of the All India Handicrafts Board, Lalit Kala Akadami, ministry of Community Development and a few specialists representing the fields of Arts and Crafts, Basic and Social Education and Teachers training for Arts and Crafts were invited. With a view to enable the participants to live together, the Indian National Commission provided free board and lodging to them during the period of the Seminar.

All the arrangements for the Seminar were made by the Kalakshetra. The Kalakshetra also organised a number of cultural programmes and visits to places of educational and cultural interest for the participants. Prof. R. Srinivasan acted as the Director and Shri N. Yagnesvara Sastry as the Assistant Director of the Seminar. Apart from the inaugural and closing sessions, the Seminar held six sessions where different aspects of the problem of the Arts and Crafts in Education and Community Development were discussed. The report, which is now being published, has been prepared by the Director of the Seminar.

I. INAUGURAL SESSION

Thursday, the 7th March, 1957

Amidst rural settings and under the shade of ancient mango trees, the function began with a prayer. Smt. Rukmini Devi welcomed the gathering and the delegates who had come to participate in the Seminar and particularly the Governor Shri A. J. John, who had kindly consented to inaugurate the Seminar. She referred to the recommendations of the Indian National Commission for UNESCO made in 1954 to the effect that a Seminar on the Role of Arts and Crafts should be organised and thanked the Union Government for having implemented that recommendation and arranged this Seminar at the national level.

She then requested Shri A. J. John, the Governor of Madras, to inaugurate the Seminar.

Shri A. J. John gave the following inaugural address :—

‘ Friends,

I thank you for your kind invitation to me to inaugurate the Seminar on the Role of Arts and Crafts in Education and Community Development, which is organised in Kalakshetra on behalf of the Indian National Commission for co-operation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. I am grateful to you for the warm welcome accorded to me.

This Seminar has been convened with the purpose of studying, at the national level, all aspects of education through arts and crafts and stimulating ways and means of promoting such education. Participants from several States and from the Centre who are fully conversant with the various issues arising out of this problem are taking part in this Seminar which will be conducted from the 7th to the 12th March. The Director of the Seminar and the Director of Kalakshetra deserve every praise for the excellent arrangements they have made for the Seminar so that the specialists participating in the deliberations and discussions will be able to perform their task in pleasant and agreeable surroundings.

I am very glad that Madras has been chosen as the venue of this Conference. This is one of a series of Seminars which began with the one organised in England in 1951 on the teaching of visual arts, and was followed by an international Seminar which was held in Japan in 1954. The UNESCO is doing great service in the promotion of international collaboration and understanding through education, science and culture. That Madras should have been chosen as the seat of the first Seminar at the national level in our country is itself a tribute to the great arts and crafts that Tamilnad can boast of. It needs no saying that this part of India has always stood in the forefront of art and architecture, music and dancing, sculpture and handicrafts. It gives me great pleasure particularly to see that this Seminar is held in the precincts of ‘Kalakshetra’ which really means the centre of art and culture. I may take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation and gratitude to Shrimati Rukmini Devi and the Kalakshetra

for the great services they are rendering to the cultural advancement of our country in general and our State in particular. If there is one person, more than anyone else, to whom the great credit of elevating the art of dancing to the realm of nobility and respectability is due, it is Shrimati Rukmini Devi, to whom all the art-lovers of South India would feel greatly indebted. It is, therefore, fit and proper that this Seminar which is intended to discuss the role of arts and crafts in general education and community life should be held in this centre of art and culture.

There is no need for me to emphasize the part played by arts and crafts in the balanced and harmonious development of the personality of the pupil. The teaching techniques in arts and crafts have undergone a profound change in recent times. It is, therefore, necessary that the techniques employed in this field should be carefully selected after considerable discussions, taking into account all aspects of the problem, for, any innovation brought about without careful thought bestowed on it may not be in the best interests of the society and may not give us the required results in the manner anticipated. We have inherited rich traditions in our arts and crafts, we have to study them carefully and explore ways and means for preserving the best in them. Our endeavour should also be to enrich them both in quality and variety by giving scope to creative impulses. Owing to annihilation of distance by the introduction of fast moving means of transport and rapid communication and advancement in commercial and industrial enterprise, our cultural contacts with other countries have increased. The effects of this cultural impact from outside have to be studied carefully and weighed with our own traditional techniques, and it would be the duty of experts in the line to do this by bringing to bear on the problem their full knowledge and experience both in theory and in practice, and by evolving a most acceptable scheme which could be worked with confidence to the satisfaction of all. This Seminar will no doubt devote itself to the great task of finding an agreed pattern of teaching technique which will suit the genius of our country. It would be good to take note of the sign of the times and to fall in line with the evolution of progress, but care will have to be taken to avoid pitfalls.

So far as we in Madras are concerned, I have no doubt that the specialists who are taking part in this Seminar would place before you all details about the pattern of education obtaining here in arts and crafts. I may be permitted to say a few words also. With the reorganisation of Secondary education in 1948, the craft-teaching based on the principles of Basic education was introduced. A study of the arts and crafts even in the general educational set-up is always helpful to the student in imbibing all-round knowledge and in receiving a wider range of practical instruction and broader cultural education. This may not be true in the case of old type artisans, who had training in the practice of arts and crafts on the traditional apprenticeship basis without the advantage of developing their personality. The introduction of arts and crafts in the Middle School stage serves a double purpose. Not only does it help towards the meaningful study of the general subjects through arts and crafts but also it renders it possible to explore the pupil's interest in the world of work and to discover the latent skill and talent in him. Crafts like handloom weaving, wood-work, agriculture and gardening for boys and home craft for girls are taught in our schools. I understand that as many as 17 additional crafts have been approved for introduction in the various schools to be utilised according to the choice of the managements. The State Government as well as the Government of India are aware of the importance of the study of arts and crafts in schools and they have always come forward to help in the imple-

mentation of schemes designed for the purpose. Under the Government of India Scheme for the improvement of craft teaching in Secondary Schools, 36 schools are selected every year under the Second Five-year Plan and give necessary grants for the introduction or improvement of crafts.

As far as the higher forms of Secondary schools are concerned, the diversified courses lay great emphasis on arts and crafts. Courses like Engineering, Agriculture, Textile Technology, Secretarial and other courses are available in the scheme of diversified study. Those pupils who have exercised their choice in favour of academic courses of study have been offered a wide range of hobbies and practical work for their choice in various spheres like pottery-painting, card-board work and 35 other items. You will no doubt give your deep thought and consideration to the various details of these schemes and compare notes in regard to other schemes which are in vogue in different States.

Another important factor which we should not forget in the scheme of crafts education is the teacher who is expected to impart education in various crafts. The teacher should not only be a skilled artisan in his own line, but should be capable of imparting his skill to the pupils. It is, therefore, highly imperative that these teachers should be qualified in every way and receive the necessary intensive training in arts and crafts. In this State, there are courses of instruction of six weeks' duration for teacher-trainees in drawing, painting, music, needle work and dress-making, etc. These are conducted in various centres of the State during the summer vacation.

Your discussions will be followed with great interest and attention by people from all parts of the country for you are engaged in the work of drawing up a general picture of the various situations obtaining in your States and of giving your considered views on the appropriate place to be assigned to arts and crafts in national life, in methods of teaching and in preservation of our traditional arts and crafts and their development in general in tune with the progress of the times. Our arts and craftsmanship are intimately bound up with the general pattern of culture, with religions, traditional customs and basic economies and, therefore, education by means of arts and crafts has to be integrated traditionally with general preparation for living in the community.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this Seminar. I am sure you will devote your attention to all aspects of the problem and come to conclusions which will be conducive to the development of our arts and crafts in the best interests of the community at large."

Professor R. Srinivasan, Director of the Seminar in explaining the object of the Seminar and the subjects to be discussed at the various sessions, said:

"We are indeed fortunate in having secured Mr. A. J. John, the Governor of Madras, to inaugurate this Seminar. It is a happy augury and ensures success for the Seminar. We are very grateful to him.

It is too late in the day to begin to justify such Seminars. There was a time when the importance of Arts and Crafts in life in general and in education in particular was not well recognised. I remember my own school days; if anyone had talked of teaching music, painting, dance, etc. in schools, people would have laughed at the idea; some of the more puritanic people might have even been shocked to hear it, but those days are gone. We have now come to realise the important place which arts and crafts occupy in any scheme of education. Human personality has been recognised to be rather complex; man is not his body alone. He has his emotions and

his mind and it is believed that there are regions beyond the mind. Psychology recognised all these aspects and more. If education is intended to make for a balanced, harmonious and all-round growth of human personality, one of the vital parts of that personality, that is the emotions, cannot be overlooked. It is here that the need for artistic pursuits comes. In fact what really distinguishes man from the beast lies in his ability to appreciate art and beauty. There is an old Sanskrit verse which says

There are two instincts fundamental to all living organisms—self-preservation and race-preservation. In the lower orders of creation almost all the time is taken up with meeting these physical needs and the rest of the time is spent in sleeping, but as life evolves, the time given for meeting the physical needs is minimised and more time is released for higher, cultural, aesthetic and literary pursuits. In fact one may say that the true mark of culture is seen in the amount of time one releases for these higher pursuits. We may presume that there is a culture quotient which can be represented by the ratio of the amount of time given for higher pursuits to the time given for the discharge of the normal bodily functions.

Dr. Tagore has remarked that in a fairly civilised human individual there is a fund of surplus energy left over after meeting the physical needs and it is intended that this surplus energy must be directed to higher, ennobling things. If this surplus energy is not properly utilised it might lead to serious consequences. It seems to me that many of the problems of modern youth—indiscipline, lack of respect for law and so on—may be traced to the absence of right channels for the outlet of this surplus energy. Here comes the need for artistic activities which are the most natural and fruitful channels along which that energy can be directed to serve noble purposes.

Realising the place which arts and crafts hold in human life, it is only logical that we should think seriously about the problems of the Role of Arts and Crafts in our National life and education. Seminars such as this are intended to deal with problems arising out of the need for co-operation between artistic pursuits and education. We shall be having six sessions devoted to consider.

1. Place of Arts and Crafts in National Life
2. Present situation of Arts and Crafts in general Education and in the Community Centres
3. Teaching of Arts and Crafts in Schools
4. Teaching of Arts and Crafts in Community Centres
5. Training of Arts and Crafts Teachers—Present position and suggestions for the future.
6. Preservation and development of traditional Arts and Crafts

Each of these subjects will be dealt with in a Section which will have a Chairman to guide and lead the deliberations. We have many participants, persons who have given their whole life for the study and teaching of arts and crafts and we have other experts as well, they come from various parts of India. It is hoped that the discussions will be fruitful and the final report will contain many constructive suggestions in the matter.

We are glad that it has been possible for Dr. Junankar to come and take part in our deliberations. We are also happy to have Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, and Mr. G. Venkatachalam who have agreed to take part in the discussions.

With the good wishes of all of you, we hope to make a success of this Seminar.”

Dr. N. S. Junankar, Deputy Educational Adviser and Secretary of the National Commission for UNESCO then addressed the gathering as follows :—

“On behalf of the Central Ministry of Education, and Indian National Commission for UNESCO, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the Governor, Shri A. J. John for having graced this occasion and given the inaugural address. I am sure his address will enable us to conduct our deliberations in a manner which will lead to fruitful conclusions in this very important field of Arts and Crafts in our national life. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Shrimati Rukmini Devi and Kalakshetra for the arrangements they have made for this Seminar. For a Seminar of this kind, Kalakshetra provides an ideal atmosphere and ever since we have been here—here I am voicing the opinion of all participants—we have felt completely at home. I know from my personal experience of the last UNESCO Conference in New Delhi, how much effort one has to put in for a conference or seminar and we are all grateful to Shrimati Rukmini Devi and her people in this Institution for the trouble they have taken in providing all the comforts for the participants. I would also like to thank the State Governments and others who have deputed participants to this Seminar, and last but not the least, I would also like to thank this distinguished gathering for having given encouragement to this venture of the Commission. The Indian National Commission, like UNESCO, has really a catalytic function in the national life and a Seminar of this kind will go a long way in focussing the attention on problems which are really important and mobilising official and non-official effort for their solution.”

The function closed with the singing of the National Anthem

After the inaugural session, the participants met to decide the plan of work for the Seminar. Dr. Junankar was also present and explained the implications of the Seminar idea. It was decided that the work for the Seminar may be carried on in six sessions with a Chairman and a Rapporteur for each session. It was also agreed that at the final session on the morning of the 12th March, 1957, the Sectional Secretaries should present the reports of the proceedings of their respective sections. The plan was as follows.—

<i>Session</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Rapporteur</i>
I.	Place of Arts and Crafts in National Life.	Shri G Venkatachalam	Shri S. C. Garg
II.	Present Situation of Arts and Crafts in General Education and in Community Centres.	Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya.	Shri T. K. Venkiteswaran.
III.	Teaching of Arts and Crafts in Schools	Shri S. C. Garg	Shri J. C. Banerji
IV.	Teaching of Arts and Crafts in Community Centres.	Shri A. N. Sehgal	Shri V. D. Kanitkar.
V.	Training of Arts and Crafts Teachers.	Shri A. Kalam	Shri I. D. Manocha.
VI.	Preservation and Development of Traditional Arts and Crafts.	Shrimati Rukmini Devi.	Shri V. Padmanabhan.

II. SESSIONS OF THE SEMINAR

SESSION I.—THE PLACE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS IN NATIONAL LIFE.

Friday, the 8th March, 1957

Chairman : G. Venkatachalam.

Rapporteur : S. C. Garg

The deliberations of the Seminar on the Role of Arts and Crafts in National Life were conducted under the canopy of a big shady mango tree, surrounded on all sides by beautiful crotons and the calm atmosphere of the Kalakshetra grounds. Shri S. C. Garg suggested that the members of the Seminar may be divided into smaller groups so that they may be able to devote more time and do full justice to each topic, and discuss these in the spirit of a Seminar-cum-workshop. The suggestion was accepted in principle, but it was decided to discuss each topic collectively in view of the fact that the number of the delegates was small.

The Chairman initiated the discussion by citing examples of the various Arts and Crafts which formed an integral part of the daily life of an average Indian home. The textiles worn by men and women, the brass and earthen ware used in the kitchen and other places bore proof of the exquisite Indian designs, shapes and forms, which combined utility with beauty. Unhappily, a decline in aesthetic standards is visible in all Arts and Crafts produced in the country today. The Chairman then traced the various causes which brought about the decadence in Indian Arts and Crafts, which he attributed to the lack of leisure under the changed conditions of life, the disappearance of the patronage of the kings, landlords and temples and the fast spreading materialistic tendencies. He attributed the fall of standards to the lack of such enthusiasm, zeal, devotion as enabled craftsmen to produce really beautiful articles in olden days. The Chairman further remarked that at present there seemed little hope for the revival of the ancient glory that was India's. It was pointed out that there was however no reason for any despondency or a pessimistic outlook about it because with the introduction of machines to do most of our work to produce more food, there is bound to be more of leisure which can be adequately utilised in creative endeavours.

The discussion then centred round the finding of ways and means for improving the present position of Arts and Crafts in India. One of the factors which has been kept in view is the integration of aesthetic and functional realms. Shri Kalam emphasised that utility aspect of the craftwork should be of primary importance. Shri V. T. Kantkar pointed out that the standards of beauty change from time to time, and hence a discussion of these may not lead to any concrete decision. Shri Banerjee, at this juncture, suggested that a proper artistic environment should be created for our children so that they may develop a right attitude towards beauty. Shri Sehgal suggested that the artist must give his heart and soul to his work

without which he will not be able to produce anything intrinsically beautiful. In order to encourage the artist and the craftsman, Government should buy their creative works and organise sales in the country and abroad.

Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya complained that individual craftsmen often find it difficult to compete with machine-made things, and in order that his craftsmanship may be amply rewarded he should try to satisfy the present day needs of the consumers. He should develop good taste to supply only those things to the people which have a traditional bearing both in design and form. Hence it is necessary that he should be given a sound education, and a training in the new techniques to evolve new patterns for different crafts. Mere imitation leads to bad art and kills the creative instinct.

Shrimati Rukmini Devi dealt with the need for the development of a sound artistic taste amongst the people through the textiles they wear, the musical instruments they use, the stage they set up for their cultural programmes, the utensils employed in their kitchen and all other things which are a part of their daily living. They should be encouraged to use only these things which are beautiful, and naturally in due course, they will develop a true aesthetic sense, which will evoke in them an urge to create things really artistic.

The Seminar was of opinion that the following recommendations be made to the Government, so that the traditional standards in Arts and Crafts may be revived :—

- (1) That traditional Arts and Crafts be an essential part of the educational curriculum in schools and colleges.
- (2) That exhibitions of such Arts and Crafts be frequently organised, and the village folk encouraged to see them.
- (3) That Government should organise Co-operative Production and Sales Depots for providing raw materials and the sale of the finished articles.
- (4) That Research Centres for reorientating old designs to suit modern needs and requirements be set up in all the States.
- (5) That the exhibitions of ideal homes for different socio-economic groups be organised and widely publicised to educate people in beautifying their homes aesthetically.
- (6) That with a view to remove the existing disparity between the status of the traditional artists and craftsmen and those trained in institutions and having diplomas from recognised institutions, it is recommended that they will be considered as equally qualified, provided they satisfy the required test.

SESSION II—PRESENT SITUATION OF ARTS AND CRAFTS IN GENERAL
EDUCATION AND IN COMMUNITY CENTRES.

Friday, the 8th March, 1957

Chairman : Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya.

Secretary : T. K. Venkateswaran.

The Seminar felt that education in general has a direct bearing on the development of Arts and Crafts. Instead of the three Rs which were stressed in the old days, the three Hs namely 'Head, Heart, and Hands' should be stressed. The Seminar was of opinion that since the advent of the foreign system of education, Arts and Crafts went out of the picture so far as institutional education was concerned.

While there is something to be learnt from foreign artists and craftsmen, we should not neglect our indigenous background. The arts and crafts in olden days were patronised in the temples and palaces. Now the artist or the craftsman does not know his patron and his tastes and hence deterioration has set in.

Those who work with their hands are being looked down upon by society. The traditional artists or craftsmen do not want their children to take up their profession, not because they have no taste, but because they feel that by working with the hands their social position is degraded.

The fact that a system of education suitable for the entire community is necessary should be stressed. The importance of arts and crafts should not be over emphasized at the expense of general education. There must be a balanced and harmonious development of all aspects of the human personality, that is intellectual as well as cultural.

At present, in the scheme of Primary, Basic, as well as Secondary education, an important place has been given to arts and crafts. But the fact remains that it is not properly taken care of at present for various reasons. It is not an examination subject; the teachers and the pupils are not given the environment and facilities for the teaching and the learning of the various arts and crafts. The syllabus is not suited to local environment. There is no scope to bring out the creative faculty in children.

Good works of art and craft do and can find a proper market, provided the artists and craftsmen are given economic help by the State in the way of raw materials and designs for manufacture of new articles for modern use. It must be borne in mind that there can be no civilization without the use of hands, and arts and crafts form a very rich heritage of a nation.

Though the use of books is not taboo, the entire dependence on books will not help anyone to create works of art and craft. So also the blind dependence on the teacher. Hence the creative instincts in the pupils should be developed.

The following recommendations were made:—

- (1) Expert traditional craftsmen may be employed in craft schools along with craft teachers, as these traditional craftsmen have better mastery over the crafts and bring a professional quality to the work.
- (2) As the creative instinct is inborn in children, teaching of arts and crafts for their own sake can be started from the childhood, viz. in the pre-primary and primary stages. But at the end of the eighth standard some definite type of art and craft having utility value should be introduced according to the taste of the pupil.
- (3) Children should be surrounded by good works of arts and crafts in the school rooms through museums.
- (4) Refresher courses for Arts and Crafts teachers should be conducted.
- (5) Special courses should be conducted for traditional craftsmen who should be educated as to the present needs and shown the way to improve their old standards where they have deteriorated and try to attain the standards of the old days.
- (6) Children should be taught to differentiate between the beautiful and the ugly and the useful and the useless.
- (7) The socio-economic condition of the craftsmen should be improved by bringing their products into the wider market and finding regular sale for them.
- (8) Research institutions should be started to do research work on patterns, methods of production, etc.
- (9) The public should be properly educated to appreciate real pieces of arts and crafts and also the men who produce them, and thus dissuade the people from looking down on those who work with their hands.
- (10) Specially qualified people should be appointed by the Education Departments to inspect the works of arts and crafts in schools.
- (11) The State should give financial aid to the schools to start museums in the schools and also to improve the facilities for teaching of arts and crafts by getting better trained and qualified teachers.
- (12) In introducing arts and crafts in schools, stress should be on their educative value and not on their monetary return value. But this should not mean the lowering of the standard of production. The instruction should not be superficial as it now is, but of good quality.

SESSION III.—IMPROVEMENT IN THE METHOD OF TEACHING ARTS AND CRAFTS IN SCHOOLS.

Saturday, the 9th March, 1957

Chairman : C. Garg.

Secretary : J. C. Banerji.

The Chairman initiated the discussion by pointing out that in order to find a method for teaching of arts and crafts in schools, we must first understand what we really mean by art or craft. He pointed out that according to the Hindu conception of art, it is an embodiment of Satya, Shiva and Sundara, which means that art is the quest for truth, beauty and goodness. According to the western conception it is accepted to be an application of the word "form" used both as a noun and a verb. A synthesis of the above two views may help us to arrive at a correct conclusion about what we really understand by art. Art may be defined as the free and spontaneous expression of our thoughts, feelings and emotions through some medium, in such a way that that expression gives some aesthetic pleasure both to the creator as well as to the appreciator. Thus it takes us out of the limited horizon in which we are to a broader region and elevates us to a higher level of emotional ecstasy. These objectives should be kept in view when we plan any method for Art education.

In the definition of art given above, we find that three things—the media, the technique and the art principles—play a very important role, and as such, in evolving a method for teaching art, we should see that the children use various kinds of art materials, evolve new techniques to use them properly and conform to correct art principles, *i.e.*, regard for utility, media, tools, proportion, perspective, and the rules of composition, which consist of balance, symmetry, repetition, contrast and emphasis. So, for the achievement of these ideals, and for adopting a sound method of teaching, we should take into consideration the ages and the stages of the growth of the child as well as the society.

The stages of development of the artistic faculties in children may be divided as follows:—

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Classes</i>
1. The Manipulative stage	1—7	I & II
2. The Symbolic stage	8—10	III, IV & V
3. The Quasi-realistic stage	11—13	VI, VII & VIII
4. The Realistic stage	14—17	IX, X, & XI

Shri Kalam was also of the view that the child passes through these stages of development, and said that due consideration should be given to suitable methods for the teaching of arts and crafts in schools. Shri G. Venkatachalam characterised these ages as the stages of physical, emotional and intellectual growth and said that we should try to bring out the potent faculties of children which they have inherited from their past lives.

With regard to the stages of growth of art in India and its influence on society we find the following distinct periods :—

- The Pre-historic age,
- The Ancient age,
- The Buddhist age,
- The Rajput age,
- The Moghul age, and
- The Modern age.

The child according to psychologists passes through the same stages of development as the human civilization before it reached its present stage. With a view to giving a clear understanding of our traditions to the child, we should acquaint him in a general way with the characteristics of Indian Art in its various stages of development so that the future art of India may grow out of our own cultural past.

Shri Kanitkar emphasized that Art in Basic Education should be taken up as a basic activity and a means of correlating other subjects.

The Seminar discussed at length the problem whether art should be taught in the form of absolute free expression for the different stages or in a guided or controlled form allowing at the same time a freedom to the child to select, suggest and interpret things according to his own likes and dislikes. Shri Junankar at this stage suggested that for the proper guidance of the teacher as well as the child some sort of direction in the form of syllabus should be maintained in order to avoid slipshod teaching of art.

The Chairman pointed out that Art teaching based on the considerations discussed above was known as the structural method of teaching art; and that it was elastic enough to suit the needs of the individuals, the locality and the subject

The Seminar made the following recommendations:—

- (a) That a Committee of at least five members be formed to plan out a syllabus for the teaching of Arts and Crafts in accordance with the principles discussed above. (This recommendation should be sent to different State Governments).
- (b) That there should be more of the educational aspect in the teaching of Art in the lower classes up to V than on the economic or the utility aspect of Art
- (c) That in order to create a suitable Art environment in schools some Central Agency should bring good specimens of our traditional arts so that these may be available for constant display before the children. This will develop a sense of proper art appreciation and encourage children to create works of Art and Craft really Indian in style and spirit
- (d) That there should be a greater collaboration between the Art teacher and other teachers so that Art teaching may be more purposeful.

SESSION IV.—METHODS OF TEACHING ARTS AND CRAFTS IN
COMMUNITY CENTRES.

Saturday, the 9th March, 1957

Chairman : A. N. Sehgal.

Secretary : V. D. Kanitkar.

Shri A. N. Sehgal pointed out that Arts and Crafts have not been taken up as a programme for all the Community Centres established in the Urban or Rural areas. It is only in a few places that Arts and Crafts activities have been started, but in general, the educational and cultural aspects of these activities are somehow ignored. The purpose of the Community Centres, Mr. Sehgal added, is to enable the individual to live an integrated life within the sphere of the community. He is not to act as an "individual" in behaviour and aptitudes; but should live in conformity with the traditional, social and cultural values prevalent in the community life. Some of the amenities and activities provided in the Community Centres, he continued, are reading and writing, entertainment programmes, etc., but in addition, arts and crafts, if organised well, will give the people many other advantages. For example, these activities will give the participants an opportunity:—

1. To have healthy relaxation
2. To understand their art heritage
3. To express their thoughts, feelings and emotions
4. To live in cooperative manner

It was emphasized that these activities should not only be started in rural Community Centres, but also in urban areas. With the rapid industrialisation, people from the rural areas are emigrating into urban environments. This results in the disintegration of the rural communities. The migrated individuals somehow find themselves loose in the new environment. Such individuals definitely need opportunities to have a compact community living, where they can carry on their traditional culture. For that purpose it is strongly felt that Community Centres must be established in these urban environments and Art activities organised for the benefit of the people. Some of the members of the Seminar observed that the present work in some of the Community Centres was negligent and that there is need for sincere and hard working people to develop the Centres on proper lines. Further it was pointed out that if the Arts and Crafts activities are properly organized at the Community Centres, there can be a revival of traditional folk arts, and the people will also develop an aesthetic sense which will enable them to lead fuller and richer lives. It was agreed that there was no proper planning for the leisure hours available for the villagers; especially during the off season crops, it is generally found that there is mental as well as physical lethargy amongst them. Most of the ills of our society are due to lack of facilities provided to use this leisure time. Lack of general

education is also a contributing factor. A member pointed out that there is no adequate supply of raw materials and so the people cannot engage themselves in productive handicrafts. People should be taught how best to use the raw materials and the natural resources available in their environments. Shri G Venkatachalam referred to the working of Community Centres in Russia where they are known as cooperative or collective farms with a "palace of culture" which is the centre of artistic life of the community. Here the people find scope and opportunities to develop hobbies and choose professions of their choice and aptitudes. Shrimati Rukmini Devi stated that the old system of compact life in a village community was somehow the best for providing the individual a fuller participation in all activities which centred round the temple, *i.e.*, fine arts, dances, music etc. It is not desirable that the Community Centres should be established on the lines as they are done in the west, because it will not be in consonance with the Indian traditions. Furthermore, the Indian villager should be given a good knowledge and education about his folk arts so that he does not live a life divorced from traditional culture.

Shri Sehgal then discussed at length the question as to who should organise the activities of Arts and Crafts in Community Centres. There was quite a variety of views and opinions in this regard and finally it was agreed that the teacher and the village craftsman can definitely help in the organisation of these activities. It was further suggested that the Development Department should give necessary funds to the village teacher and the village craftsman for organising such activities.

The Seminar then made the following recommendations:—

- (1) That the Arts and Crafts activities be organised in the Community Centres so as to provide people a healthy relaxation and also enable them to understand their art heritage (These activities will enable them to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions in creative activities.)
- (2) For organizing these activities in Community Centres the teacher craftsmen should be asked to initiate the programme.
- (3) The Development Department should provide funds for organization of such activities in the Community Centres.
- (4) The Arts and Crafts education in the Community Centres should be given according to the needs of the individuals, the raw materials available, etc.

SESSION V—TRAINING OF ARTS AND CRAFTS TEACHERS—PRESENT
POSITION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE

Saturday, the 9th March, 1957

Chairman : A. Kalam.

Secretary : I. D. Manocha

The Seminar discussed this problem and was of the view that the present condition of training teachers in Arts and Crafts is most unsatisfactory. It is not based on the philosophy of Art and Craft education which alone will enable the teacher concerned to know the aims and objectives and therefore it is very essential to evolve such a philosophy. The Seminar recommended that Art and Craft education should be based on the following principles :—

- (a) The Arts education must develop the personality of the individual in terms of individual's own needs, ability and aptitudes.
- (b) The Arts education must provide opportunity for pupil-teacher participation in planning, direction and evolution of the art and craft programme.
- (c) The Arts education would provide opportunities to share and work together through real situations for the common good of the individual and society.
- (d) The Arts education should provide opportunity for free expression, discussion and communication of individual emotional experiences as well as to fulfil the utilitarian and aesthetic needs of the daily life.
- (e) The Arts education should provide ample facilities for solving problems in the light of intelligent thinking and examination
- (f) The Arts education should help to utilize materials and resources of the community in the school programme.
- (g) The Arts education should help one to gain better understanding of the conditions and problems of the present day society, including those of home, school and community.

What we need most is that every child at Primary school must be allowed to have full freedom for self-expression, so that he could manipulate his creative powers and could release his emotional tensions. Creative and constructive instincts should have a full play through art and craft at the primary stage.

At the Secondary stage the instincts of skill and technique have a powerful demand on the child, and therefore opportunities should be provided for scientific guidance and for the achievement of technical perfection,

The training courses for primary as well as secondary school Arts and Crafts teachers consist of the following subjects :—

- (a) Practical training in arts and crafts,
- (b) Knowledge of child psychology and the psychology of adolescence,
- (c) Art and Craft appreciation,
- (d) Study of traditional Arts and Crafts,
- (e) Practice teaching,
- (f) History of Art and Principles of aesthetics,
- (g) Study of modern methods of education.

The Primary School Teachers Training Course in Arts and Crafts must be of at least two years duration and this training must be imparted after Matriculation.

For the Secondary School Art and Craft Teachers Training course the duration should be of one year and this training should be imparted to only those students who have already completed a full course of Art or Craft education in a recognised Art school.

Care should be taken that only such candidates should be admitted to these Training Courses of Arts and Crafts as show a definite inclination towards the same and have creative ability and power of imagination.

The Seminar was of the opinion that the most important factor in organising such Art and Craft courses for prospective teachers of Art and Craft in Primary and Secondary schools is the environment; and such training should be provided where a rich and an artistic heritage of art is to be found. It is generally accepted that much of this kind of aesthetic education could be imparted by the environment alone.

The Seminar disapproved the absence of uniformity which now exists as regards the type and content of courses, scales of pay, teacher's status and the time allotted to such training. The Seminar made a strong recommendation calling upon all the State Governments and others concerned to formulate a policy where uniformity in the above matter could be achieved.

The Seminar made the following recommendation :—

As regards the staff of the training institutions the Seminar was of the opinion that most of the personnel lack professional aptitude and skill. Skilled and experienced artists and craftsmen should be employed to impart such training. If necessary, their appointment could be based on tests formulated by Government authorities. Such appointments will not only help to enrich the creative and constructive sides of our art and craft, but also help a great deal in leadership in art and craft education in our country.

SESSION VI.—PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL ARTS
AND CRAFTS.

Monday, the 11th March, 1957

Chairman : Rukmini Devi.

Secretary : V. Padmanabhan.

The Seminar started with an introductory speech by Shrimati Rukmini Devi, who made a powerful plea for the preservation and development of the traditional arts and crafts. "Our entire culture and civilisation lies in the traditional arts and crafts, if these traditional arts and crafts are not preserved and revived," she said, "I am afraid that not only the traditional arts but our entire arts and crafts will die" Continuing, she said. "Such a resuscitation will necessarily mean a change in our attitude to art and the taste we cultivate for it. The traditional arts can be developed in their genuine significance and purity only if the very structure of art is built on the invulnerable foundation of good taste and love for art. The political domination of the west over this country has so much corrupted our conception of beauty and aesthetics that we have been subservient to western ideas of art and architecture even to the point of scorning the very culture and heritage from which we have emerged. It is therefore essential that we should educate and re-educate ourselves in good taste and appreciation of art, before we embark on the task of preserving what is traditional in arts and crafts. Such an education must indeed include the study of our great religions and a training to appreciate nature in its exquisite and inexhaustible beauty. Only then will it be at all possible for us to become creative and original in our thought and life.

Next, Art, if it should live through the ages, must become part of our daily living. The numerous articles that are used every day, the clothes which attire our physical body, the utensils we handle, the very customs and habits which we have developed should drastically change if the arts and crafts of old have to grow". [To demonstrate how the homes are centres of the growth of art and beauty, two homes—one that was arranged in the traditional style and the other in the modern fashion—were shown to the delegates at Kalakshetra].

After the speech, there was a general discussion on the topic. Sri G. Venkatachalam and Sri Shankara Menon of Kalakshetra spoke in favour of retaining the traditional arts and crafts in their own purity and uniqueness without attempting to blend what is traditional with what is understood and taken to mean modern.

Shrimati Kamaladevi drew pointed reference to the strong undercurrent and sub-conscious feeling of inferiority we are suffering from and the great impact of the technical advancement of science on our sense of values. She emphasised the need to teach the youth of our country the great epics, *puranas* and ancient literature to develop their emotions and at the same time retain the Indian traditions in the homes. She also stressed

that all our creations should distinctly be Indian in character if our faculty of imagination should not further get impoverished

The Seminar unanimously made the following recommendations.—

- (1) To educate the public in the proper appreciation of the traditional arts and crafts and develop in them good taste and an eye for beauty, exhibitions, similar to the one organised by Kalakshetra, should be arranged in all important places of the country
- (2) In view of the fact that the traditional arts and crafts were intimately woven with our religious life, instruction in the religions to the youth of the country is a pre-requisite for the preservation of the traditional arts and crafts
- (3) A campaign must be undertaken to make our homes essentially Indian in atmosphere and in all details

III. CLOSING SESSION

Tuesday, the 12th March, 1957

The closing session began with a speech of the Director of the Seminar, Professor Srinivasan.

“This is the last Session of the Seminar. The Reports of the various Sessions will now be presented. Before we go to that item, I should like to express my thanks to you all for the co-operation and friendliness which have characterised all our deliberations. We have lived as one family and freely exchanged our views. I trust we have all been benefited by such an exchange of experience and knowledge. You have come here, each with his own experience in the realm of Arts and Crafts in relation to National life, General Education and Community Centres. We have pooled all our knowledge and experiences and we have added to that pool in the various Sessions of the Seminar, thereby that pool has become wider, deeper and richer, and I trust we shall all go back to our places with a greater knowledge and deeper understanding of the problems we have been discussing all these days.

There are two or three points, which stand out as highlights and I wish to make a brief reference to them. One of our participants was referring to the case of a child who found an outlet for her emotional tension in drawing caricature pictures of the people concerned. As we all know, real art expression is generally the result of some emotional exhilaration or excitement or tension. Deep down in our nature some emotion may well up, it might have been provoked by an external factor or by a subjective experience. Such an emotional up-welling generally finds an outlet in some art expression. Devotion is perhaps the highest, noblest and most unselfish form of emotion. Such devotion has generally been the source of all our great works of art. The great masters of old who have left for us such wonderful and exquisite treasures of art as we find in temples have been impelled by sincere devotion. In India devotion and art expression have gone hand in hand. We have to keep this in our mind when we think of vivifying or regenerating real Indian Art.

When we were discussing the problem of teaching arts and crafts in schools, there were two different view points put forward, almost diametrically opposite, and that is natural. There are two ways of approach in dealing with this problem, as perhaps with many other problems as well. One may be called the idealistic approach and the other the realistic approach. The idealist is perhaps a dreamer or a visionary. He perhaps aims at the impossible. On the other hand the realist deals with conditions as they are and tries to apply the ideals to the existing conditions. Both of these are necessary. There must be an ideal and there must also be a way of approach to that ideal, to link up the practical with the ideal. It is perhaps because the idealist aims at the impossible, that it is possible for the realist to do at least what is possible.

Again in considering the problem of preserving and developing traditional arts, Shrimati Rukmini Devi made a point of very great importance. Traditional arts are the expression of the soul of the nation. Any tinkering

with them may lead to disastrous consequences, as Plato said with regard to dangers attending the tinkering with the style of music of a nation. But here there are two aspects, essential and non-essential, the permanent and the ephemeral, the spirit and the form. As the basis of our art expressions, there are certain fundamental concepts which are of a permanent nature. None can tamper with them with impunity. They are the very soul of art. But there is also the non-essential aspect, where perhaps the individual's distinctive touch may be seen, these individual variations however will be almost negligible by the side of the essential vital factors which go to make art. True traditional art is ever new as truth is ever new. Truth can never be old at one time and become new at another time. So also true tradition is always new and is ever throbbing with vitality. We see more of that vitality in what we now find as ruins of ancient monuments, while some of the modern works of art are imitative and lack life and expression.

I am personally very happy to have been the Director of the Seminar and I thank you all once again for having made my work so easy, so pleasant and so fruitful. Now we shall take up the reports of the Sessions one by one".

The various Sectional Secretaries presented the Reports of their Sections (already given) and they were approved.

Shri Yagnesvara Sastri, the Assistant Director, then addressed the session as follows :—

"The Seminar has given us an opportunity to know each other and to discuss many aspects of art. I hope the discussions have been as beneficial to you as they certainly have been to me.

Art is natural magic, for during the time that you are under its spell, it makes you a yogi capable of the most unselfish response seldom found in love or even in devotion. Consider, for instance, your reaction to an object of art. It may not belong to you and cannot give you food, shelter or any other return but still you love it for no other reason than that it is beautiful. Is there not something magical in this transformation of our natural acquisitive instincts, however temporary ?

If objects of art produce an impersonal response in the one who looks at them, a similar impersonal attitude on the part of an artist seems to give to his productions a spiritual and lasting quality. It is very rare, for instance, to meet with a masterpiece of ancient art, whether in India, Egypt or Greece, which has the name of the maker engraved on it. Such self-abnegation has made the living artist die while conferring on his productions life and immortality. Social conditions and the struggle for life make complete self-forgetfulness very difficult in modern times, but we may remember the high ideals of art and the qualities necessary to make man imitate God in the creation of beauty.

The various awards and distinctions, formal and informal, have their value, but have this defect also in that they do not encourage impersonality but stimulate mental and calculating elements in art. They may even introduce extraneous considerations in judging merit. Ways and means of getting the best out of these systems of recognition, while avoiding the unsatisfactory repercussions, may be thought of.

While India is prominent in many cultural fields, the art of criticism—learned, to the point, impersonal, which extends sympathy for all while reserving approbation for the few, is practically non-existent. There are many art journals but they have not raised criticism to the level of art and do not have those high qualities which animate great productions. Is it not possible for India to produce such a magazine which would be a distinctive achievement commanding even international approbation? It would be a

continuous education in good taste and a reminder of the ideals of the Seminar.

Once again let me say how happy I have been to meet you all. I hope you have had a comfortable stay and will take away with you happy memories of this Seminar”

In concluding the Seminar, Shrimati Rukmini Devi made the following observations —

“We have now heard the recommendations of the various Sections of the Seminar. We hope that Government would give due consideration to these recommendations. There is nothing new for me to add. I feel that we have had a very useful session. I have not arranged any Seminar before, my work has all along been in educational and cultural lines. But under the able guidance of the Director, Prof. R. Srinivasan, who has had much experience in such matters, I agreed to organize the Seminar at Kalakshetra. I am very grateful to him for his help and guidance. Without him, I am afraid, I would have felt helpless. I am sure we will all go back to our places with new ideas as the result of this Seminar.

One word with regard to traditional arts and crafts. In India Arts and Crafts are inter-woven with religion. You really appreciate a sculpture, but not the signature of the artist who did it. Art and Craft go a long way in the building of one's character. When you see somebody you like you are happy for the time being, but in a sculpture or in any work of art your emotions are preserved for ever. Therefore true art preserves beauty and sublimates our emotions.

I wish to say here something about renovation of arts in old temples. Once I went to Thiruthani to see ancient arts and crafts in the old temple. To my surprise every figure had been newly covered with cement and every picture had been coloured new, and this completely marred the old beauty. I was surprised to hear the authorities say that it was an improvement, because they looked so ugly! So, at this particular juncture it is very dangerous to experiment with and try to “improve” old traditional arts. No, if we attempt this, we are only destroying the ancient art and culture. We really find more art in ruins of old monuments than in such renovation, they should be left as they are though in ruins. We are not yet able to create anything that will equal the old. Therefore I feel that it is most important that we must pay proper respect to old arts and must reverence those who have left such a wonderful treasure for us to see and feel inspired. Artistic spirit was the very soul of ancient India.

I hope all of you have been happy and comfortable and have enjoyed your stay at the Theosophical Society. I am very happy we lived together as one family during this week. I hope this feeling will continue and we will keep in touch with each other, wherever we are. We shall all try to fulfil the objectives we have set before us”

The Director then thanked the President and the Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society for having kindly agreed to accommodate all the participants of the Seminar and provide boarding and lodging. He then thanked Dr. Junankar for having come all the way from Delhi to be present at the opening function and two subsequent Sessions. He also thanked the Assistant Director Shri Yagnesvara Sastry, Shrimati Norma Sastry, Shri Balaji Rao, Shri K. Prabhakar, Shri S. Natarajan and Shri Krishnamurti, Superintendent of Bhojansala.

Shri Sehgal and Shri Kalam also spoke expressing the thanks of the Seminar to Kalakshetra for having provided all possible facilities to the participants to enjoy and get the most out of the Seminar.

APPENDIX A

NAMES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

- 1 Dr N S Junankar, Deputy Educational Adviser and Secretary, Indian National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Education, New Delhi.
- 2 Shrimati Rukmini Devi, Kalakshetra, Adyar, Madras-20
3. Prof R Srinivasan (Director of the Seminar), 2, Rangachari Road, Mylapore, Madras-4
- 4 Shri N Yagnesvara Sastry (Assistant Director of the Seminar), The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras-20.
- 5 Shri Amar Nath Sehgal, Art Consultant, Ministry of Community Development, New Delhi.
- 6 Shri Biswanath Mukherji, Principal, Government College of Fine Arts, Hyderabad, Deccan
- 7 Shri S C. David, Superintendent, Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur, Rajasthan.
- 8 Shri S C Garg, Lecturer, Government Basic Training College, Lucknow, U P
- 9 Shrimati Iris Poonen, Art Teacher, Government Model School, Ludlow Castle, Delhi
- 10 Shri Jagadish Chandra Banerjee, Headmaster, Experimental Model School, Agartala, Tripura
- 11 Shri Jibeswar Barua, Principal, School of Arts, Gauhati, Assam.
- 12 Shri A Kalam, Director, Institute of Arts Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jamianagar, P O , Delhi
13. Shri V D Kanitkar, Government Training College for Men, Wai (District N Satara), Bombay Presidency
- 14 Shri Kanubhai Gordhandas Shah, Seth Chimanlal Nagindas Talim Vidyalyaya, Ahmedabad-6.
15. Shri I D Manocha, Senior Lecturer, Government Post-Graduate Basic Teachers' Training College, Chandigarh, Punjab
- 16 Shri H L Merh, Superintending Craftsman, Government College of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow, U P
17. Shri Nanda Dev Sharma, Principal, Kala Parishad, Laban Shillong, P O , Assam
- 18 Shri V. Padmanabhan, Dy Director of Industries & Commerce (Community Projects), No 2, 3rd Canal Cross Road, Gandhinagar, Adyar, Madras-20.
- 19 Shri Radha Mohan, Principal, Government School of Arts and Crafts, Patna, Bihar.
- 20 Shri V. S Rajagopala Chari, Arts Master, Basic Training Centre, Vidyanagar, Bangalore District, Karnataka State
- 21 Shri Ram Lal, Art Master, Government Teachers' Training College, Bikaner, Rajasthan.
22. Shri A. M. Satya, Meston Training College, Madras-14.

23. Shri T. S. Seshadri, Superintendent, School of Arts, Trivandrum, Kerala State.
24. Shri D. H. Sivashankar, Drawing Master, Government Training College for Men, Mysore, Karnataka State.
25. Shri Sudhanshu Bhusan Mukherjee, Specialist Instructor, Arts and Crafts Senior Training School, Mahandru, Patna-6, Bihar
26. Shri Tarlok Singh Chadha, Craft Teacher, Government Model School, Ludlow Castle, Delhi
27. Shri T. K. Venkiteswaran, Head Master, Kunnamangalam High School, Kunnamangalam (near Calicut), Kerala State.
28. Shri G Venkatachalam, 6 John's Road, Bangalore
29. Shri K C Panikar, Lalit Kalā Akadamī, New Delhi
30. Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Chairman, All India Handicrafts Board, Ministry of Community Projects, New Delhi.

APPENDIX B

PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

Thursday, the 7th March, 1957

Inauguration—6 p m

1. Welcome Speech by Shrimati Rukmini Devi.
2. Inaugural Address by Shri A. J. John, Governor of Madras.
3. Speech by Prof. R Srinivasan, Director of Seminar
4. Speech by Dr N S. Junankar, Secretary, Indian National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Education, New Delhi.

Friday, the 8th March, 1957

Morning Session—8 to 11 a m

1. Place of Arts and Crafts in National Life
2. Present Situation of Arts and Crafts in General Education and in Community Centres.

Afternoon Session—3 to 5 p m.

Continuation of morning's discussion

Evening—6-30 to 7-15 p m.

Entertainment (*Bharata Natya*).

Saturday, the 9th March, 1957

Morning Session—8 to 11 a.m

General discussion.

- (1) Improvement of Methods of Teaching Arts and Crafts in Schools.
- (2) Improvement of Methods of Teaching Arts and Crafts in Community Centres

Afternoon Session—3 to 5 p m.

General discussion:

Training of Arts and Crafts Teachers—Present Position and Suggestions for Future.

Evening—6-30 to 7-15 p m.

Entertainment (Music).

Sunday, the 10th March, 1957

Morning—Excursion to Mahabalipuram

Evening—6-30 to 7-15 p m Entertainment (Kathakali).

Monday, the 11th March, 1957

Morning Session—8 to 11 a m

General discussion:

Preservation and Development of Traditional Arts and Crafts.

Afternoon—Visits to local institutions:

- 1 Fort Museum
2. Madras Museum,
3. Government School of Arts,
4. Thaker Baba Vidyalaya,
- 5 Victoria Technical Institute,
- 6 Handicrafts Emporium.

Tuesday, the 12th March, 1957

Morning—8 to 9 a m Visit to Kalakshetra

- 9 a m Closing Session.
- 1 Director's speech and report of the Seminar.
- 2 Assistant Director's speech
- 3 Concluding address by Shrimati Rukmini Devi.
- 4 Thanks giving