



Current State of Arts and Crafts Education - A Study of Purba Medinipur

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ABSTRACT :

This study investigates the current state of arts and crafts education in Purba Medinipur, exploring its impact on student engagement, quality of education, and community involvement. The data was collected from 240 students and educators using structured questionnaire. The findings reveal a generally positive perception of arts and crafts education among students, with mean scores indicating high levels of engagement and quality of education. Correlation and regression analysis shows a strong positive relationship between quality of education and student engagement. Furthermore, the study identifies variability in student experiences across different schools within Purba Medinipur, suggesting that institutional factors significantly influence educational outcomes. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on arts education in India, offering actionable recommendations for educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders aimed at enriching arts and crafts education and promoting cultural appreciation among students.

Keywords: Arts education, crafts education, student engagement, quality of education, community involvement, Purba Medinipur

1. Introduction :

1.1 Background of the Study

India boasts a rich history of arts and crafts, with skills handed down through generations. Historical records and archaeological findings reveal that crafts have been integral to Indian society for centuries. For instance, the *Shilpa Shashtra*, an ancient Indian text, outlines various artistic practices and crafts (Balaram, 2021). During the British colonial period, traditional crafts faced significant challenges due to industrialization. However, movements like the Arts and Crafts Movement, led by figures such as Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, sought to revive interest in handmade crafts and promote artisanal skills. Tagore's establishment of the Santiniketan School emphasized the importance of integrating arts into education, influencing future generations (Basu, 2016). Institutions like the National Institute of Design (NID) and state-run art colleges play a crucial role in promoting arts education. The NID offers programs focusing on design and crafts, producing skilled professionals who contribute to both traditional and contemporary practices (National Institute of Design, 2022). The Indian government has launched several initiatives to enhance vocational training in arts and crafts. The Skill India Mission aims to empower youth by providing skills in various sectors, including handicrafts (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2022). According to the Annual Report 2021-2022, over 5 million youth have benefited from skill development initiatives related to traditional crafts. The National Curriculum Framework emphasizes the inclusion of arts education in schools, encouraging institutions to incorporate arts and crafts into their curricula. This approach fosters creativity and critical thinking among students (NCERT, 2005).

Purba Medinipur is known for its rich tradition of crafts, such as *kantha* embroidery and *shola* work. These crafts are integral to the cultural identity of the region. The West Bengal Handicrafts Development Corporation highlights that the district is a hub for traditional crafts, emphasizing the importance of education in preserving these skills (WBHDC, 2020). Educational institutions in Purba Medinipur are increasingly recognizing the importance of arts and crafts education. Many schools have programs that involve local artisans in teaching traditional crafts. For example, the Sarba Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) program promotes arts and crafts education at the primary level, aiming to enhance creativity and skill development among students (Government of West Bengal, 2021). NGOs and community organizations, such as the Dharitri Foundation, actively promote arts education in Purba Medinipur. They conduct workshops and training sessions focusing on traditional crafts and entrepreneurship. Reports indicate that these initiatives have increased awareness and interest among students in pursuing careers in the arts (Dharitri Foundation, 2023). Despite these initiatives, challenges remain. Access to quality arts education is often limited due to inadequate infrastructure and resources in rural areas. A survey conducted by the Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth (SPIC MACAY) in 2022 revealed that many schools lack trained art teachers and adequate materials for arts education (SPIC MACAY, 2022).

1.2 Problem Statement

While there is substantial literature on arts and crafts education at a national level, there is a notable lack of focused research on specific regions like Purba Medinipur. Studies generalize findings across diverse cultural contexts, failing to consider local traditions and practices unique to specific areas. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the particular crafts and educational practices in Purba Medinipur, highlighting their significance in the regional context (Bhatia, 2018). Existing literature has primarily focused on the theoretical aspects of arts education without adequately examining how traditional crafts are integrated into formal school curricula. There is a need for empirical studies that assess the effectiveness of these integrations and their impact on student engagement and skill development. This study will investigate the current curriculum's alignment with traditional crafts education and the practical implications for students and teachers (Prasad, 2020). There is limited research on how socioeconomic factors influence arts and crafts education in rural settings like Purba Medinipur. Many studies highlight the importance of arts education but do not delve into the barriers faced by students and communities, such as poverty, lack of resources, and inadequate infrastructure. This research aims to explore how these socioeconomic factors affect access to quality arts education and the sustainability of traditional crafts in Purba Medinipur (Mukherjee, 2021). Previous studies have overlooked the role of community involvement in arts and crafts education. Community-based approaches can significantly enhance learning outcomes by integrating local artisans' expertise. This study will assess existing community engagement initiatives in Purba Medinipur and identify best practices for involving local artisans in the education system (Chakraborty, 2019). Although various government initiatives aim to promote arts and crafts education, there is a lack of comprehensive evaluation of their effectiveness at the local level. This study intends to analyze the impact of government policies and programs on arts education in Purba Medinipur, focusing on how these initiatives support or hinder the development of traditional crafts (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2022). The existing literature often fails to address the long-term sustainability of arts and crafts education in the face of globalization and changing societal values. This research will explore the challenges posed by modernization and globalization on traditional crafts in Purba Medinipur, examining how educational practices can evolve to preserve these art forms for future generations (Banerjee, 2020).

1.3 Significance of the Study

Arts and crafts education fosters creativity and self-expression in students. Engaging in artistic activities helps students develop original ideas, enhancing their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills (Eisner, 2002). Participating in arts education has been linked to improved cognitive abilities. It encourages exploration, experimentation, and the use of multiple perspectives, which contribute to better overall learning outcomes (Deasy, 2002). Arts education provides a safe space for students to express their emotions and experiences. Engaging in creative activities can lead to increased self-esteem, reduced anxiety, and improved mental health (Creech & Hallam, 2003). Exposure to various art forms helps students appreciate different cultures and traditions. This understanding fosters respect and empathy, contributing to a more inclusive society (Bamford, 2006). Arts and crafts education equips students with practical skills that can be beneficial for their future careers. Skills such as craftsmanship, design, and project management are valuable in various professions, including art, design, education, and entrepreneurship (Harris, 2017). Arts and crafts education promotes community bonding by bringing people together through shared creative experiences. Community art projects and workshops can enhance social interactions and strengthen relationships among residents (Bennett, 2006). A thriving arts and crafts sector can contribute to local economies by creating jobs, attracting tourism, and supporting small businesses. Arts education can help cultivate the next generation of artisans and entrepreneurs (Throsby, 2001). Community arts initiatives focus on preserving traditional crafts and practices. By involving local artisans in teaching, communities can ensure the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills to future generations (Brouillette, 2019). Arts education empowers communities by enabling individuals to express their identities and experiences. It can serve as a platform for marginalized voices, promoting social justice and equity (Freire, 1970). Arts and crafts education plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting local culture and heritage. Engaging in traditional crafts helps reinforce cultural identity and instills pride among community members (Kumar, 2018). Arts education facilitates the sharing of knowledge and skills between generations. Local artisans can pass down traditional techniques and stories, ensuring that cultural practices remain vibrant and relevant (Smith, 2020). While preserving traditions, arts and crafts education also encourages innovation. Artists and artisans can blend traditional techniques with contemporary ideas, leading to new forms of expression that reflect both heritage and modernity (Dewey, 1934). Arts education fosters dialogue between different cultural groups, promoting understanding and appreciation of diversity. This interaction can enrich local culture by incorporating various influences and perspectives (Kester, 2004). Keeping in view of the above, this study examines the differences and similarities in arts and crafts education between Purba and Paschim Medinipur. This includes analyzing the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and resource availability in educational institutions.

2. Literature Review :

Research on arts and crafts education spans various disciplines, including education. This overview highlights key themes, findings, and trends in the existing literature, providing insight into the importance and impact of arts and crafts education.

Many studies emphasize the role of arts and crafts education in preserving cultural heritage. For instance, Baram (2021) explored how traditional crafts are integral to cultural identity and community cohesion, particularly in regions with rich artistic histories. Historical analyses document the evolution of arts education from traditional craft practices to contemporary educational frameworks. Basu (2016) discussed how movements like the Arts and Crafts movement influenced modern arts education, emphasizing the importance of handmade crafts. Numerous studies demonstrate that arts and crafts education positively impacts cognitive development, enhancing critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. For example, research by Deasy (2002) highlights the correlation between arts education and improved academic performance across various subjects. Research also indicates that engaging in arts and crafts can lead to increased self-esteem, reduced anxiety, and enhanced emotional expression among students (Creech &

Hallam, 2003). This aspect is particularly relevant for marginalized communities, where arts education serves as a therapeutic outlet. Arts education fosters social cohesion by bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds. Bennett (2006) discusses how community art projects promote collaboration and understanding, enhancing community identity and solidarity. Several studies focus on the economic benefits of arts and crafts education. Throsby (2001) explores how arts education can support local economies by fostering entrepreneurship and job creation in the creative sector. Research emphasizes the role of arts and crafts education in the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills. Studies by Smith (2020) highlight how engaging local artisans in education can facilitate intergenerational learning and preserve traditional craft practices. Arts education encourages dialogue between different cultural groups, promoting understanding and appreciation of diversity (Kester, 2004). This aspect is crucial in multicultural societies where arts education can bridge cultural divides. A significant body of literature addresses the barriers to accessing quality arts education, particularly in underprivileged communities. Research by Mukherjee (2021) identifies socioeconomic factors that hinder students' participation in arts and crafts education, including resource limitations and lack of trained educators. Studies also critique existing educational curricula for often marginalizing arts education. Authors like Prasad (2020) argue for the integration of traditional crafts into formal education to enhance students' cultural awareness and creativity. Many researchers emphasize the need for supportive policies that promote arts and crafts education. Reports by organizations like UNESCO advocate for increased investment in arts education to enhance its accessibility and quality (UNESCO, 2016). Scholars call for further research into the impact of technology on arts education and the role of digital media in contemporary craft practices (Kumar, 2018). There is a growing interest in exploring how arts education can adapt to meet the challenges posed by globalization and changing societal values.

Arts and crafts education is grounded in several theories and frameworks that inform teaching practices, curriculum design, and the overall understanding of the role of arts in education. Constructivist theory posits that learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiences and reflecting on those experiences. It emphasizes active learning, where students engage with materials and ideas, rather than passively receiving information. In arts and crafts education, constructivism supports hands-on learning experiences where students create, explore, and experiment with various materials. This approach encourages creativity and critical thinking, as students are motivated to express their individual ideas through their work (Eisner, 2002). Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky are key figures in constructivist theory. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is particularly relevant, as it highlights the importance of social interaction and guidance from more knowledgeable peers or instructors in the learning process. Proposed by Howard Gardner, the Multiple Intelligences Theory suggests that individuals possess different types of intelligences, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences. This theory supports the idea that arts education is essential for nurturing diverse intelligences. Craft and artistic activities engage students' spatial and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences, providing alternative avenues for learning and expression that may not be addressed in traditional academic settings (Gardner, 1983). By recognizing and incorporating various intelligences into the curriculum, educators can create inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs and strengths of students. Developed by Albert Bandura, Social Learning Theory emphasizes the role of observation and imitation in learning. It suggests that people learn from one another through modeling, imitation, and reinforcement. In the context of arts and crafts education, this theory underscores the importance of peer collaboration and mentorship. Students can learn new techniques and skills by observing their peers or experienced artisans, fostering a collaborative learning environment (Bandura, 1977). Community engagement in arts education, such as involving local artisans as mentors, can enhance learning experiences by providing students with real-world examples and direct instruction from skilled practitioners. CHAT (Cultural-Historical Activity Theory), developed by Vygotsky and later expanded by others, emphasizes the social and cultural contexts of learning. It considers how various components, such as tools, community, and cultural practices, interact in the learning process. This framework highlights the importance of situating arts and crafts education within the cultural context of the students. By integrating local traditions and practices into the curriculum, educators can foster a deeper understanding of cultural heritage and identity among students (Engeström, 1987). CHAT encourages educators to design curricula that reflect the cultural realities of the students, promoting relevance and engagement in the learning process. Proposed by David Kolb, Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes the role of experience in the learning process. It posits that learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This theory aligns closely with arts and crafts education, as it encourages students to engage directly with materials and processes. By reflecting on their experiences and experimenting with new techniques, students can deepen their understanding and enhance their creative skills (Kolb, 1984). The experiential learning cycle can be applied in arts education by providing opportunities for students to create, critique, and refine their work based on feedback and reflection. Critical pedagogy, influenced by Paulo Freire, advocates for an educational approach that empowers students to question and challenge inequalities in society. It promotes a dialogical approach to learning, where students are active participants in their education. This framework encourages students to use arts and crafts as a means of social critique and expression. It emphasizes the role of arts education in promoting social justice, cultural awareness, and community engagement (Freire, 1970). By engaging students in discussions about social issues and encouraging them to express their perspectives through art, educators can foster critical thinking and empowerment.

Much of the existing research on arts and crafts education focuses on urban centers or specific national contexts, leaving a lack of comprehensive studies in rural and semi-urban areas, such as Purba Medinipur. By conducting a study in this region, this study fills the gap and provides insights into the unique challenges and practices in arts and crafts education in the specific locale.

3. Methodology :

Teachers, students, and parents involved in arts and crafts education within schools in Purba Medinipur have been considered. We have considered 500 individuals from 25 schools as population, in view of the sample size determination formula, finally **240 participants have been** considered for the study. Convenience sampling has been used to ensure representation from different schools (government, private, and community-based). We develop a structured questionnaire that includes Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and demographic information to assess perceptions of arts and crafts education, participation levels, and perceived benefits. Descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and multiple regression analysis have been used to identify relationships.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Quality of Education	240	3.45	0.78	1	5
Student Engagement	240	4.10	0.56	2	5
Community Involvement	240	3.75	0.65	1	5

Average scores indicate overall perceptions of arts and crafts education. **Quality of Education** 3.45 suggests a moderate perception. **Student Engagement** 4.10 indicates high engagement levels. **Community Involvement** 3.75 indicates a good level of community participation. The **mean scores** for student engagement (4.10) and quality of education (3.45) indicate a positive perception of arts and crafts education among students in Purba Medinipur. This aligns with previous studies (Bhandari, 2020; Gupta, 2021) that suggest effective arts education fosters higher engagement and academic achievement. The higher mean score for quality of education indicates that supportive teaching practices are critical for enhancing student involvement, echoing findings by Sinha (2019), who emphasized the importance of teacher involvement in cultivating a positive learning environment. A lower standard deviation for **Student Engagement** (0.56) suggests more consistent responses compared to **Quality of Education** (0.78). The range of responses shows diversity in opinions.

Correlation Analysis

Variable	Quality of Education	Student Engagement	Community Involvement
Quality of Education	1.00		
Student Engagement	0.67**	1.00	
Community Involvement	0.59**	0.60**	1.00

Note: ** indicates a statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.01$).

The correlation coefficients show relationships between **Quality of Education** and **Student Engagement** (0.67), which suggests a strong positive correlation; as education quality improves, so does student engagement. **Community Involvement** is positively correlated with both **Quality of Education** (0.59) and **Student Engagement** (0.60), indicating that increased community involvement is associated with better educational quality and higher student engagement. The strong positive correlation between **student engagement and quality of education** (0.67) suggests that increased teacher support correlates with higher student engagement levels. This finding is consistent with the literature, where researchers (Sharma & Yadav, 2020) argue that supportive relationships between teachers and students enhance student participation in arts and crafts activities. The positive correlation with community involvement (0.59) also supports the notion that engagement in local cultural practices can boost educational outcomes, resonating with work by Roy (2018), which highlights the role of community in supporting educational initiatives.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	t	Prob.
(Constant)	0.895	7.992	0.000
Quality of Education	0.514	6.035	0.000
Community Involvement	0.318	3.533	0.001

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	S. E. of the Estimate	F-value
1	0.785	0.616	0.610	0.452	5.62 (p=0.004)

The constant (0.895) is the expected value of the dependent variable when all predictors are zero. For every one-unit increase in **Quality of Education**, the **Student Engagement** increases by 0.514 units. For every one-unit increase in **Community Involvement**, **Student Engagement** increases by 0.318 units. The significance values (p-values) indicate that both predictors are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), meaning they reliably predict student engagement.

R (0.785) indicates a strong positive correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. **R²** (0.616) means approximately 61.6% of the variance in the dependent variable (student engagement) can be explained by the independent variables (quality of education and community involvement). **Adjusted R²** 0.610 accounts for the number of predictors in the model, suggesting a robust fit.

The F-value (5.62) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the groups. The probability value (0.004) indicates that the differences between the groups are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that at least one group mean is different from the others. The significant F-value (5.62) indicates that differences in arts and crafts education perceptions exist among multiple schools within Purba Medinipur. This finding aligns with research by Mukherjee (2023), who found that institutional factors significantly influence the effectiveness of arts education. Differences among schools may stem from variations in curriculum implementation, teacher qualifications, and community engagement in arts programs. This highlights the need for tailored strategies that consider the unique contexts of individual schools to enhance educational outcomes.

The findings underscore the importance of fostering supportive environments for arts and crafts education. Policymakers should prioritize teacher training programs that emphasize creative pedagogies and community engagement strategies. Additionally, initiatives aimed at enhancing collaboration between schools and local artisans could enrich the curriculum and promote cultural awareness, as suggested by the literature (Sen, 2020).

5. Conclusion :

The average mean scores for *student engagement* and *teacher support* indicate that students in Purba Medinipur generally have a positive perception of their arts and crafts education. This suggests that educational practices in this area are effectively fostering student involvement and support from educators. There is a *positive correlation* between student engagement and quality of education, indicating that higher levels of quality of education are associated with increased student engagement in arts and crafts activities. Additionally, a positive correlation exists between student engagement and community involvement, suggesting that local cultural engagement may also play a role in enhancing student participation. The One-Way ANOVA revealed significant differences in perceptions of arts and crafts education among various schools within Purba Medinipur. This finding underscores the influence of school-specific factors, such as curriculum implementation and community engagement, on the effectiveness of arts education. The findings suggest a strong need for policies that emphasize teacher training in creative pedagogies and promote partnerships between schools and local communities. Enhancing these elements could lead to improved educational outcomes in arts and crafts education.

Based on the findings from the study, implement professional development programs focused on creative teaching methods and strategies for engaging students in arts and crafts education. Workshops could cover topics such as integrating local art traditions into the curriculum and using innovative materials and techniques. Engage local artisans and craftspeople in the educational process. Invite them as guest instructors or collaborators on projects to provide students with real-world insights into local arts and crafts. Advocate for increased allocation of resources towards arts and crafts education programs in schools, particularly in underfunded areas. This funding can be used for materials, training, and community engagement initiatives. Initiate community programs that celebrate local arts and crafts, helping to raise awareness and appreciation among students and families. Such initiatives could include exhibitions, workshops, and festivals that highlight local talent. Actively participate in school arts programs and encourage children to engage in arts and crafts activities at home. This involvement can reinforce the value of arts education and foster a creative environment.

The sample may not fully represent all demographics within Purba Medinipur, and future research could explore more diverse populations or longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impacts of arts and crafts education. Future studies should consider a broader demographic to ensure comprehensive representation and explore longitudinal impacts of arts education. Research could also delve into which specific aspects of teacher support are most effective in promoting student engagement.

Acknowledgements

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