

A STUDY OF PRESENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF FINE
ARTS AND CRAFTS EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF
DHAKA CITY

By

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Approval

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the students with whom I spent two years as their mentor, who shaped my mindset about education, about the socio-economic differences, and most importantly encouraged me to stand strong even during the toughest times.

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Abstract

This study is about finding out the present practices and challenges of Fine Arts and Crafts education in the primary schools of Dhaka city. The main problem that it addresses is about some gaps in the system. Our education policy mentions about taking different steps to address fine arts and crafts subjects. However, there are some differences in implementing and practicing what it has been said in the policy. This is where the gap lies in and this study intends to know more about that. Hence, this study aims to find out present practices and the challenges associated with fine arts and crafts, so that it can come up with a holistic overview of the education system in terms of these subjects and pave the way for further research in this regard. For understanding the present practices and challenges, this study collected data through two different methodologies which are interview and observation. The research participants included the arts and crafts teachers and the primary school students especially from grade 3 to grade 4. The study found that the schools have different strategies to implement these subjects. Another finding of the study is that some schools try to follow the curriculum in case of teaching these subjects, while most of the schools do not use the curriculum. Besides, the study also found that there are several challenges including shortage of trained teachers and other relevant resources and so on. The recommendations that this study came up with includes, making the use of curriculum mandatory for arts and crafts subjects, should keeping a fixed budget for supporting the practices of these subjects from both the government and the school authority in case of private schools, and doing further intensive quantitative and qualitative researches on these subjects to find out more details about the practices of these subjects in a broader perspective.

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Chapter 1 Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

“These kids are so imaginative that even when they write something for exams or anything, it reflects different elements of our culture. The effects of arts and crafts reflect in their behavior. Sometimes it seems like when they speak, there is a music in their words, a rhyme in their speech.” This is what one of my interviewees mentioned when asked about the impact of arts and crafts on their students. My own experience was quite similar to her regarding arts and crafts and this is something intrigued me to study about the present practices of fine arts and crafts in our primary schools.

This study is about the present practices and challenges of Fine arts and crafts in our education system. Although there are a lot of usual subjects in our education system that help students in different ways to grow, something that really need more attention in case of causing creative growth of our kids, is arts and crafts. Stockdale (2020) mentions, “When kids use their fingers to manipulate art materials, they develop their fine motor skills as they use those small muscles in their hands. Their bilateral coordination skills improve as they learn to use both hands at the same time.” Besides motor skills, arts and crafts can play a vital role in improving other skills like self-esteem, creativity, math skills etc. in the students from a very early stage of life. Not only in the early stage, arts and crafts can also help in the form of formal education. According to a research it was found that “Within the context of formal education, the subject supports personal, social, moral, spiritual, cultural and creative development, and enables participants to engage with and explore visual, tactile and other sensory experiences and how to recognize and communicate ideas and meanings” (*The Importance and Value of Art, Craft and Design*, 2016)

As mentioned about my own experience, being a person connected to music, I experienced a lack of scope in studying these subjects although I really wanted to know more about these subjects as a student too. Hence, being a teacher, I wanted to explore more about these subjects and especially the factors that affect the implementation of it in our education system and therefore chose to study this.

My study focused on finding the present practices and challenges of Fine arts and crafts subjects in the primary schools of Dhaka city. It focused mainly on the students from grade 3 to grade 4, the teachers involved with these subjects, and the parents of the students.

I believe this study will pave the way to analyze the education system more in terms of teaching-learning method, quality of education, and the scope of improvement in our educational curriculum. Firstly, findings of present practices of arts and crafts will help to understand how our curriculum is addressing these subjects. Besides, it will also depict how students and teachers are dealing with it. Moreover, understanding the involvement of students with these subjects may also delineate how our education system is dealing with multiple intelligence and its application. Although we are currently running the creative method in the educational institutions, this study will help us discover whether there are other options for us to develop more student-centric teaching-learning methodology. To sum up, this study will let us realize the potential of arts and crafts as well as pave the way to discover more about our present curriculum.

1.2 Research Topic

A study of present practice and challenges of Fine Arts and Crafts Education in primary schools of Dhaka city

1.3 Statement of the problem

Our education policy and curriculum have objectives and strategies to foster Fine Arts and Crafts education (2010, p.53). It aims to enrich learners' minds and intellect to nourish their attitudes and persuade them to exercise discipline in their mental world and work. Besides, it also aims for inspiring students to nurture and enrich their aesthetic life and assisting them to resist the danger of present decay of social value in the society. Children develop their social skills, their self-respect, and self-esteem through participating in different activities that involve arts and crafts. (Schirmmacher, 2002). Arslan (2014) asserts, "Art education affects all the developmental fields. Children learn how to express his ideas depending on their developmental levels and turn the concepts they learn into artistic forms. Such different branches of art as painting, music, dance, and drama offer significant opportunities for all the children from different age and skill groups." In addition, "Art and culture's core practice is one of the most participative, dynamic, and social forms of human behavior. It has the capacity to trigger reflection, generate empathy, create dialogue, foster new ideas and relationships, and offers a powerful and democratic way of expressing, sharing, and shaping values." (Common Cause Foundation, 2013)

From my own teaching experience as a Teach for Bangladesh Fellow, I have seen that arts and crafts subjects are given very less importance nowadays. Both teachers and students are busy with other

subjects which they name as main subjects for example, Math, Science etc. They do not give much attention to subjects like arts and crafts maybe because these are not properly valued in our society. To check validity of my experience more, I wanted to discover our curriculum to check if it has something regarding these subjects. As mentioned earlier our curriculum has a vast range of options regarding these subjects, I am curious to know what practices there are in real.

Jacobson (2011) stated that, John Dewey, an American Philosopher and educationist believed that Arts is a fundamental component in education because it fostered creativity and self-expression. Jacobson (2011) also cited another professor of arts and crafts in Stanford University explaining that, “Environment shapes artistic attitudes and that art education has unique contributions to make in the education and intellectual growth of children. (p. 4)” According to Howard Gardner cited in Tungate (2013), “Schools should help children create meaning from experience; this requires an education that includes a connection to the senses, meaning and the imagination. Curriculum should foster the theory of multiple intelligence and creative cognition.” Gardner (1999) himself in one of his own articles explained that Arts and Crafts assist students to develop other consequential academic activities. Hence, to foster the Arts and Crafts education there is an immense importance of curriculum to address these subjects. The article “Creativity and Arts in the Primary School” tries to depict the fact that to develop a learner’s ability to think, reason and understand the world and its culture, an Arts and Crafts education could provide a proper helpful curriculum. Our own education policy states several strategies to foster these subjects. Education Policy (2010) aims that “Fine Arts and crafts will be introduced at the primary and secondary levels as an optional subject. Measures will be taken for phase-wise teaching of different

forms of Fine Arts and crafts education at both levels in all the educational institutions. Necessary steps will be taken to develop Fine Arts and Crafts education to achieve professional ends.”

However, although the arts and crafts have enormous positive impacts on the student’s holistic development, our educational context considers these subjects in a different manner. The information mentioned above confirm that our policy consists of at least a minimal guideline on these subjects, whereas my personal experience says something different in case of its application. Considering the afore-mentioned issues, I am curious and interested to do research on how at present Arts and Crafts Education is practiced in our primary schools.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does our curriculum address fine Arts and Crafts education in Primary schools?
2. What are the current practices of Fine Arts and Crafts education in primary schools?
3. What are the challenges in implementing Fine Arts and Crafts education in primary schools?

1.5 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this research is to investigate how the Fine Arts and Crafts curriculum is being practiced in the primary schools' classrooms. Our education policy and curriculum have a detail description of Fine Arts and Crafts education, how these subjects have to be included in schools and how these have to be practiced. This study also intends to find out whether the curriculum is implemented accordingly or not. On the other hand, there may have various challenges in case of implementing what it has been planned in the curriculum. This study aims to find out those challenges as well. It will certainly address how these subjects are taught in the primary schools, whether there are teachers for these subjects or not, whether the schools are following the curriculum or not or any other challenges related. In addition, this study will also try to investigate some probable solutions that might be helpful to address the present challenges.

1.6 Significance of the study

Education is not something that brings marks only rather it is something that helps a human being to be versatile in this modern era through implementing knowledge. Education should give a student the opportunity to grow in his/her own way. Our education system is also changing its nature from rote learning to activity-based learning implementing several aspects of multiple intelligence. Nowadays we face a social decay of moral values especially among the youth. Science and technology are making our lives easier but also leading us towards a more isolated lifestyle. The new generation get easily indulged in digital platforms but at the same time they are becoming more self-centered. There is no problem in being technologically advanced, but humanity and moral values should not be compensated for this. Therefore, the education system must take measures to keep the social values alive among the young stars. Fine arts and crafts can play a vital role in this regard. Fine arts & crafts subjects nurture creativity among students, instill values, and keep the practice of own culture alive among the new generation. Considering the present creative system in Bangladeshi education system, these subjects can play a vital role at least in terms of creativity. Hence, this study will find out present practices and challenges related to these subjects. Finding out how these subjects are practiced in our schools will lead us understand different aspects of these subjects and different scope of holistic improvement of our students as well as the overall education system. Besides, once we know the challenges and present practices, we can look for ways moving forward. In addition, this may help to understand the aspects of fine arts and crafts as an education tool and what role these subjects play in students' academic or co-curricular activity. The findings of this study on the present practices of our present curriculum can help the education policy

makers bring necessary changes in it. If we know the challenges that are being created by the present curriculum and present practices, we can work on those, bring more effective and impactful changes in the curriculum and the overall policy. Moreover, this will pave the way to do more research on similar issues so that we can understand more ways to improve the present educational system.

Chapter 2 Literature review and conceptual framework

2.1 Literature review and conceptual framework:

What is 'Fine arts and crafts' and importance of fine arts and crafts:

Arts and crafts refer to subjects that add a new dimension to a student's education in terms of intellect, creativity, and learning. These are subjects that enhance students' creativity and learning capability through nourishing their interests. Jacobson (2011) stated that, John Dewey, an American Philosopher and educationist believed that Arts is a fundamental component in education because it fostered creativity and self-expression. He also explained that Students' artistic attitudes are shaped by practicing arts and crafts education and there is a huge contribution of these subjects on holistic education and intellectual growth of children. Hence, these subjects play a vital role in case of a student's overall growth. Vohra (2019) describes that, "Learning the arts and crafts doesn't just foster the creative development of a child, but also assists in advancing and refining his or her core skills, which in fact goes towards boosting academic achievement as well." Building on the same point and also denoting to the future of the world economy, Jones (2019) mentioned in his article, "Giving children a fine-arts education is essential to create the kinds of skills necessary for the modern, creative economy, according to UCLA's Anderson Forecast School of Management." A research from Eastwood College in Lebanon (2019) grabs our attention to the importance of these subjects by describing that different skills including confidence, creativity, imagination, and competence build among students through multiple sensory

experiences such as visual, tactile, etc. Therefore, suffice it to say that these subjects play a vital role in students' holistic growth.

Practice of fine arts and crafts:

But the question is who are responsible for fostering these arts and craft subjects? The educational institutions especially schools should play the vital role in this case. Schools may provide opportunities for students so that they can avail the chance to participate in these subjects according to their interest. Howard Gardner has been cited in Tungate (2013, p.8) stating that "Schools should help children create meaning from experience; this requires an education that includes a connection to the senses, meaning and the imagination. Curriculum should foster the theory of multiple intelligence and creative cognition." Gardner (1998) himself also denoted in one of his articles about the connection of arts and multiple intelligence and about what schools should keep in practice saying, "I believe schools should strive to develop individuals of a certain sort-civic-minded, sensitive to the arts, deeply rooted in the disciplines." If we take multiple intelligence into our consideration arts and crafts pave the way for students to practice their own intelligence through implementing that in their own way and thus help them learn a way better than the traditional method. "Using arts and crafts in the classroom can be an excellent way to facilitate learning with young learners. For mixed age and level classes' arts and crafts activities can supplement a course book which is not always appropriate for all students. Arts and crafts can be great way to include cross-curricular activities in the classroom." (Trowbridge, 2006). To support this idea reference from Howard Gardner's own article could be rephrased that Arts and Crafts assist students to develop other consequential academic activities (Gardner, 1999). Tungate (2013) explained

that children should get chance to visualization of meaning of what they learn by the help of schools. This would be possible through bridging students' senses with the meaning of their learning and their imagination.

An Assistant Professor of Music from Meghalaya, states in her article about the impact of integrating Music Therapy, an application of Music as an art form. Deka (2017) states, "Music therapy uses music as a tool for communication and expression. Making connections through music can have a positive impact on self-esteem, sense of identity, communication skills, and social skills. If a child or adult is well equipped in these areas, they are more likely to engage positively in their education". To sum up, be it music or be it crafts, or any other form of arts, fine arts and crafts help a human being to grow up in a more human centric manner; it helps an individual to grow up with more human elements such as emotion, positivity, socializing capacity etc.

Challenges in practicing fine arts and crafts education in school:

However, although the arts and crafts subjects are found to leave impact on students' growth, imagination and overall learning, there have been challenges in fostering these subjects as per students' and institutions' requirements. Problem has been found that in many cases these subjects are taught in primary sections of schools while providing facilities for these in secondary or higher secondary sections are tough. A study on Swedish education by Arvidsson (1989, p.3) depicts that, "Arts and crafts education has occupied an obscure position in upper secondary schools in Sweden. Fine art education is an elective subject in most of the 25 lines of upper secondary school, but its scope is very limited. Crafts are an elective subject in two lines only and are very seldom actually arranged. Though Government

Commissions have drawn attention to this shortcoming of upper secondary schooling, with the result that the Ministry of Education has suggested an experimental scheme of practical and artistic studies in upper secondary schools.” In addition to this, there are challenges with attitude of both students and institutional authorities towards these subjects. Also, there are problems with the curriculum and policy as well. Olafsson & Thorsteinsson (2010)’s study on crafts education in Iceland found that the lessons for these subjects are provided with less time than that of the common core academic subjects. It also found that even the students give more emphasis on their theoretical subjects. Besides, challenges lie in educational structure for these subjects, availability of related resources, institutional premises and so on. Hanna (2013, p. 15) research on Namibian aspects of arts and crafts education discovered that, “Due to the neglectful attitudes described before, primary art education in Namibia suffers from a serious structural problem. Schools do not have a common practical art teaching manual. The teachers are challenged by space limitations, for both work and storage. Working with the hands requires a workstation for everyone.”

Nevertheless, Bangladesh is also addressing Fine Arts and Crafts education in our educational institutions. Our Education Policy (2010, p.53) aims that, “Fine Arts and crafts will be introduced at the primary and secondary levels. Measures will be taken for phase-wise teaching of different forms of Fine Arts and crafts education at both levels in all the educational institutions. Necessary steps will be taken to develop Fine Arts and Crafts education to achieve professional ends.” However, there are challenges faced in implementing these. Rahman (2019) mentioned in one of his articles that in the past there were a lot of opportunities for students in schools, colleges, and universities of our country to participate in

various cultural activities which have been lessened in an alarming rate in most of the educational institutions nowadays. He also cited one of the renowned child literary person and organizer H. T Imam saying that there are several human elements that help a human being grow up in the right manner, be it through stories, be it music or dance. But unfortunately, all of these are missing in our educational institutions at present. Our country has gone through different historical challenges that have affected our art and culture and thus the education system especially in case of these subjects. Hence, we need to think about these subjects as Selim (2014) found that solidarity and cultural differences must be rethought in order to minimize the changes and challenges in arts and crafts in a holistic approach.

Although there are a lot of international research found on the effects of fine arts and crafts education and also on challenges, I have found a smaller number of research done in our own context while importance of these subjects have been highly emphasized in our curriculum and education policy.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research Approach:

My research approach would be Qualitative approach. My research is going to find out what practices of Fine Arts and Crafts subjects are in place at present. From my own experience I found that schools are focusing more on core subjects such as Math, English, Science, and other relevant subjects. From my own point of view, common subjects help students in different aspects, but arts and crafts attract the students more than anything and help them grow in a more creative manner. However, because this study intends to discover more about present practices of these subjects in our schools and look for similar experiences as my own and causes behind this, the approach of the study is qualitative. As qualitative study tries not only to find out ‘what’ from the research field, but also the ‘why’, this study also targets to find out the causes behind present practices of arts and crafts subjects and the challenges related to these and therefore selects qualitative approach for this study.

3.2 Research site:

I have selected two government and two non-government (NGO) primary schools and their students for my research. The selected schools were established in between 2000-2005 and average number of teachers is 20-30. The average students’ number is 500-700. The NGO School is situated in underprivileged areas. On the other hand, one of the government schools belongs to similar background but the other two have students from middle class background. The idea behind selecting schools from both underprivileged and middle-class community is to get the picture of reality in case of practicing these subjects since the major portion of our population belong to either of these. In addition, the NGO

run schools usually follow different education modules and methods besides the main curriculum. Hence, selecting an NGO school along with the Govt. schools will allow understanding the practices in both places and thus will help to get a holistic idea.

3.3 Research participants:

My research participants were the students, teachers, and parents of primary schools. The selected grades were grade 3 and 4. I focused mainly on the students who participate in fine arts and crafts education classes as well as several activities related to these subjects. Secondly my research focused on the teachers of fine arts and crafts subjects' who have training on Fine Arts and Crafts and whose academic background is related to these subjects. In addition, the parents of participating students were also supposed to be my participants to understand how these subjects are working for the children and to understand the context and the problems better. Parents could have helped me to gather data on students' interest on these subjects, what they think about these subjects, and why are those important for them or why not etc. I will use Purposive sampling for my research.

3.4 Data collection methods:

I have conducted 3 observations in 3 different schools, 45-60 minutes each. My research topic needed to focus on the fine arts classrooms so that I could understand what the present practices problems are in classrooms and in practice field. That is why I selected Observation as my data collection method. I have also conducted 3 Interviews. The interviewee were Fine arts and crafts teacher who are adequately knowledgeable on these subjects. The interviews were half an hour to forty minutes long each. I selected

interviews to understand the importance of these subjects in schools and to find out how these subjects could be integrated in the mainstream education and how this is being done at present.

3.5 Data analysis:

For data analysis, I used the Miles and Huberman framework. This framework is a comprehensive stable relationship among social phenomena based on the regularities and sequences that link these phenomena (Punch, 2004, pp 202-204). This framework focuses mainly on three components which are data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data reduction is important for data analysis because this helps to extract the most relevant and important parts from the collected data. In this process, analysis continues through editing, segmenting, and summarizing the data. There are other processes associated with this such as coding and memoing along with finding different themes and patterns from the data. Sometimes developing abstract concepts is also important for data reduction. The second step data display involves displaying data through charts, graphs, or any other way. Displaying data helps to understand how organized our data is and where we have reached in our research. Drawing and verifying conclusions involves extracting the final data that is most relevant to the research. This basically happens simultaneously with the first two steps during reduction and displaying of the data. However, the conclusions must be verified so that the data extracted through the analysis process is meaningful and most relevant to the research. As mentioned in the data reduction part, this framework also involves coding and memoing, that are two important procedures that help to reduce the unnecessary data from the initially collected data. Coding refers to the process in which we can use some codes for example: colors and different themes in the collected data and extract the most relevant data under those

categorizing data. Johnson and Christensen (2004) mention about coding in his book that, “Coding is defined as marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or category names.” I have used coding to analyze my data in the data reduction part of the process.

First, I collected all the data from different sources and then I started analyzing data by dividing them under different themes. I defined the themes based on the research questions so that it becomes easier for me to analyze the data in an organized manner. I used color coding for differentiating the themes selected. I had four different themes and used four different colors for those. I read through all the collected data and assigned colors to all the data relevant to specific theme. Once I was done with color coding all the data, it became easier for me to understand which information goes under which theme and also helped me reduce unnecessary and irrelevant data for my research. For displaying data, I have used mentioning different information collected from my participants and sometimes direct quotation from the participants based on the different themes that I assigned to different information. This helped me draw conclusions properly. This basically happened during the first two steps while coding and displaying data and finally became easier to draw meaningful conclusions.

3.6 Ethical issues:

Before I conducted the interview and observation, I took participants' consent. The participants were informed beforehand and permission was taken as well. They were informed about the purpose of the study and the introduction of the researcher was given properly. In addition, confidentiality was maintained through keeping all the data records only within the participants and the researcher. In case of using and analyzing data, pseudonyms were used so that the participants' names remain confidential. Moreover, the recordings of the interviews were kept confidential through pre-commitment and not sharing with anyone except the researcher and the participants.

I conducted the whole research in a bias-free manner so that the research remains purely objective oriented. Although I have strong connections with the community surrounding arts and crafts, I tried my best to be purely objective oriented. For that, I tried to bring in as much objective based questions as possible in the interviews and also analyze the data from the interviews and observations from a nonjudgmental perspective. My questions tried to find out true data from the participants instead of guiding them towards the result that I might want to see. This is how I tried to keep this research bias-free and also respect the rights of the human subjects.

3.7 Credibility and Rigor:

As part of my master's degree, I have completed several courses which are directly relevant to this study and especially qualitative research. The course on educational theories and practices helped me understand different education theories, for example multiple intelligence theory which motivated me to study more on this. This has a strong reflection on selecting the topic of this study. Besides theories I

learned about curriculum and how that works from another course titled Principles of curriculum and development of learning materials. The course named leaders as learner: how children and adults learn helped to understand the difference between andragogy and pedagogy which also made me curious to find out more relevant subjects and teaching methods for the children leading me towards working on the topic of this study. The most important courses that helped me understand about the difference between qualitative and quantitative research was research methods I and II. The course materials not only helped me to understand the research types, rather helped me develop a better understanding of the whole research process through applications. Overall, my master's studies assisted me develop as a researcher and provided with proper direction towards doing this study.

I have completed my Fellowship in Teach for Bangladesh which consisted of two years of rigorous training in teaching and learning along with educational leadership through rigorous challenges in several socio-educational projects and initiatives. This gave me the opportunity to explore the condition of the primary schools of Dhaka city. I got the opportunity to work with the teachers from different backgrounds along with a substantial number of Fellows in different schools. Before we were placed in different schools, the fellowship started with a rigorous one and a half month training where I learned about different teaching and learning methodologies, theories, and techniques which gave me a whole different perspective about education. Beside this, we were given multiple trainings throughout two years of the Fellowship that enabled me to dig deep into the education system in our schools. The day-to-day experience in the schools enriched my capabilities to understand different critical issues that need to be improved. In addition to the rigorous teaching and learning experience, I have 15 years of training

in Indian Classical Music as disciples of different maestros and renowned institutions. Currently, I am completing my sixth and the final year of training in Najrul Sangeet in Chayanat — the most renowned cultural foundation of Bangladesh. While being a person affiliated with Music, I have met several people from other forms of arts and crafts too. This long experience created an enthusiasm in me to dig deeper into our education system and to explore the opportunity to study these subjects more. In addition, I had the opportunity to represent Bangladesh for three consecutive times in India in Saud Asian Universities Youth Festival (SAUFEST). I knew there from the participants from different countries that they had ample opportunity to nurture their arts and crafts subjects from schools till the universities and even beyond. That experience made me more intrigued to study about the present practices of these subjects in our education system.

My experience mentioned above helped me to design the research proposal and the outline for this study. While developing the research proposal I tried to keep in mind that this study should discover multiple factors that work behind the present situation of fine arts and crafts however that is. In order to make this study more meaningful and valid, I used data triangulation through collecting data in different methods instead of depending on only one. This helped me to understand the overall context in the schools in a more organized manner.

3.8 Limitations of the study:

Similar to all the studies, I also have faced limitations during this study. The most important and a must mentionable one is the Covid-19 situation. Although I had planned to collect data from different schools and participants, I could not do so. First of all, I was supposed to collect data through interview,

observation, and focused group discussion. I could manage interviewing and observing classes before the schools were locked down due to Covid-19. I also wanted to conduct 3 Focused Group Discussions, with the parents of the students to know parents' perspective regarding these subjects, to understand what they think about these subjects, how these subjects may help students and in what aspect, and what impacts these have on children. Unfortunately, I could not manage to organize the FGDs with the participants. Once the schools were closed, it was nearly impossible to reach the students and their parents physically.

Another limitation was unavailability of the teachers during Covid-19. I had to interview one of the teachers over phone due to this situation. In addition to Covid-19, there was limitations in case of observations because of the limited space for the teachers and the students. This caused me take extra cautions while observing the class so that the class does not get disturbed through my presence.

Chapter 4 Results

4.1 Results

In most cases these subjects are not taught according to any specific curriculum, rather based on personal experience and knowledge of the teachers assigned for these subjects. There is a difference in case of using the curriculum while teaching these subjects between govt. schools and private schools. Govt. schools usually get trainings on these subjects while the private schools usually depend on the experience of the teachers of these subjects. However, many of the schools at least have Fine arts and crafts subjects for their students to practice occasionally. They have specific days to teach and practice these subjects. Students are also eager to learn more of these subjects. The schools arrange different activities and programs where the students participate with great effort and enthusiasm. There are several challenges associated with teaching fine arts and crafts. The main challenges include financial backgrounds of the students, number of students, space to practice these in the schools, availability of teachers etc. To mitigate these challenges few of them are trying at an individual level while others directly look towards the government for solutions.

As my research focuses on the present practices and challenges of Fine arts and crafts subjects, I have divided the findings into four themes which are as follows:

- How the arts and crafts curriculum is implemented
- Present practices of Fine arts and crafts
- Challenges in practicing arts and crafts

- Approaching the challenges

The data under these themes are given below:

How the arts and crafts curriculum is implemented:

It was found that in most cases there is no particular use of curriculum in case of teaching these subjects. However, teachers of these subjects feel the importance of a curriculum. As Ms. Sultana mentioned, “No, we do not follow the curriculum. But we know that there is one and it is important to have a curriculum. However, this seems a bit backdated and needs to be updated according to the present needs. That would also help us to understand how we should teach these subjects in a more student centric manner.” (na obhabe kono curriculum follow kora hoyna. Tobe j curriculum ache seta adhunik kora joruri aro amar mone hoy. Kibhabe shikhale bacchader jonno bhalo hobe seti niye research kroa uchit. Tahole amader jonno bujhte bhalo hobe j kibhabe classe oderke shikhale bhalo hobe.) However, I found that teachers use curriculum or at least some guidelines specially for teaching arts. As Ms. Sharmin said, “We use the curriculum in case of arts mainly. In that case, teachers teach arts to the students based on their age following the curriculum.” (Art er khetre curriculum ta aro bhalobhabe use kora hoy. She khetre shikkhok boyosh onujayee bacchader haate dhore curriculum onujayee shikhan.) Nevertheless, Ms. Fahmida from a Government primary school utters that, “Yes, we follow the curriculum. We usually do a training from the government and we get to know about the curriculum there. The curriculum contains age-appropriate arts and crafts topics for example for music and arts in an organized manner. This include all the sectors of our literature and own culture.” (Ji follow kori. Amra ekta training kori and sekhan thekei amra etir bepare jani. Curriculum e age onujayee arts and crafts er bishoygulo sundor

bhabei deya ache. Sekhane amader sahitter sob dhoroner bishoygulokei rakhar cheshta kora hoyeche.) In case of assessing these subjects', teachers express different ideas and information. Ms. Fahmida informs, "We take exams on these subjects. For arts, we ask them to bring some hand-made crafts and we mark them based on that. We also include written exams. For example, students are asked to draw pictures, write lines of songs etc. We mark those written staffs." (amra ei bishoygular porikkha niye thaki. Arts er jonno amra shikkhardthiderke haate toiri bibhinno jinish niye ashte boli ebong segular bhittite tader ke mark diye thaki. Echara amra likhito porikkhao niye thaki. Udahoron hishebe bola jay, shikkharthiderke chobi aakte bola, gaaner bibhinno line likhte bola ittadi. Amra sei likhito bishoyguloke mark kori.) While Fahmida in her school is assessing these subjects, Ms. Sharmin from another school thinks that, "I think subjects related to our mind and soul should not be assessed. We can assess their performances in different programs since the real application is also show cased in those events." (Ei mononer sathе jorito bishoygular porikkhar aotay ana khub dorkari na bole mone kori ami. Tobe ora j bibhinno onushthan kore segulokei assessment hishebe count kora jete pare. Tokhon egulor application tao bujha jay.)

Referring to the observation data under this theme, the teachers assessed students' pre-learning in all the schools in case both music and arts. Based on the age and the students' interest, they select new lessons (songs and arts or any other form of crafts). In school A the teachers preferred students' interest, age, and her own list of songs rather than using any particular curriculum. In school B I found that the teacher enters the class with a mobile phone and besides singing herself, she plays the song on the mobile phone so that the students understand it better with the whole music arrangement. Considering the curriculum,

I only found that the teacher from the govt. school C, selected materials from the curriculum designed for that class.

Present practices of fine arts and crafts:

As mentioned in the summary of the key findings, schools try to teach Fine arts and crafts subjects along with all the other subjects. These subjects are not taught everyday rather they usually have particular day in a week for this. As Ms. Sultana rightly pointed out, “There is a specific day in the week for these subjects which is Thursday. We usually come on Thursday to teach music, dance and other arts and crafts subjects.” (Amader school e shadharonoto gan, nach ebong e dhorer bishoygulo jonne ekti din dharjo kora ache. Seti hocche Thursday. Edinei amra ekhane asi ei bishoygulo shikhanot jonno.) These subjects are taught based on the students’ age. In addition, many schools try to teach the traditional fine arts and crafts elements — which refers to something related to the Bengali culture and literature such as Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrul Sangeet, folklore arts and crafts, etc. To build on this, Ms. Sultana adds, “In case of Music, different songs are taught based on the students’ age. We usually select different songs including different rhymes, Tagore songs, Nazrul songs, modern songs, and so on. We do the same for dance as well.” (Boyosh onujayee gaanto obossoi shekhano hoye thake. Gaan ebong nach dutir khetrei boyosh onujayee bibhinn chora gang theke shuru kore Rabindranath, najrul er gan ebong adhunik gan o deya hoye thake.) Ms. Fahmida from another school adds on the same point, “Songs taught based on students’ age and capacity to absorb the meaning of the songs. Same thing is done in case of arts too.” (Sadharonoto gan gulo shikkharthider boyosh ebong capacity onujayee shekhano hoye thake jeno tara sohojei ganer ortho bujhte pare. Arts er khetreo ek e kaj kora hoye thake). Besides teaching these

subjects, students get to participate in different programs in different occasions. Ms. Fahmida mentions about her school adding to this point, “Our students participate in different competitions on different national occasions.” (amra bibhinn jatiyo utshob gulote anto school protijogitay ongshogrohon kore thaki). The most important part is students are highly enthusiastic in participating in these events and activities. Ms. Sharmin ensures us about this by saying, “We arrange, even if not in a large scale, different yearly programs on different national events.” (Bibhnno jatiyo program gulote amra choto porisore holeo bibhinn onusthan ayojon kore thaki) Another important finding is that the students who participate in these subjects related activities, are very creative and they showcase difference in their attitude than other usual kids. Ms. Sharmin provides crucial information on this. She said, “These kids are so imaginative that even when they write something for exams or anything, it reflects different elements of our culture. The effects of arts and crafts reflect in their behavior. Sometimes it seems like when they speak, there is a music in their words, a rhyme in their speech.” (Ei bacchagulo eto imaginative j ora jokhon leche tokhon oi lekhar omddheo ei songskritir bishoyti protifolito hoy. Tader achar-achoron o onek smart hoy. Kotha bolar moddheo ekta sur paoa jay), Ms. Sultana also said similar: “Their behaviour, their style of speaking is definitely different than others. The effect of these subjects can be of different types, but holistically, practicing these subjects certainly brings change in their overall growth” (Eder chalcholone kothabarta ektu onnorokom. Asole ei bishoyer probhab onek rokom hote pare. Tobe sarbik bhabe egulo obossoi bacchader achoron ke sundor kore). Interesting fact found in my research is that there are students who are not that good in their academic results but showcase extraordinary talents in fine arts and crafts subjects. Ms. Fahmida gives us information regarding this.

She said, “There are students who are not that active or attentive in usual subjects like Math or English but highly active and talented in arts and crafts subjects. We have a student who does wonderful sketches and portrays from class one.” (Je shikkharrthi dekha jay j Gonite ba English class e khub ekta active n, seo eshob subject er khetre onek beshi active. Amader school er e class three er ekta student ache j class one theke khub sundor sketch korte pare, portrate o korte pare) Ms. Sultana also mentioned similar that, “We have a student who sings really well. He can sing pretty long lyrical songs easily while his academic performance is really poor.” (Amader ekhane ekta student ache jar ganer gola khub sundor. Onek boro boro gan she nirbhulbhabe geye dite pare, othocho or academic results bhalona konobhabei.) Besides the interview data, my observation data also adds more information about the present practices of these subjects. These data show how the teachers deliver these subjects during classes along with other crucial information. My observation from school A found that the teachers along with the students are also very enthusiastic about these subjects. In case of music classes, the teacher started the class with basic ‘reyaj’ so that the students get the vibe of the class first. The concentration given on individual students was also noticeable. The teacher starts with the previous song taught in the previous class and tries to ask every student individually so that s/he understands the accuracy level of the student. In case of new lessons, s/he tries to describe the meaning of the whole song and then start teaching it. The scenario was similar in school B and C too. In school B, I found that students are also very eager to learn new songs. They try to join the class being prepared for new lessons. In all the schools, I found the teachers are prioritizing the student’s interest rather than imposing their own choice in case of lessons. The most

important thing that I noticed was the students greet the teachers with high energy in the beginning, they keep the materials ready for the classes by themselves, and they really enjoyed the classes.

Challenges in practicing arts and crafts:

“The biggest challenge here is the financial condition of our students.” (Amader ekhane shochtheke boro challenge hocche bacchader arthik dikta.) Ms. Sultana asserts when asked about the challenges in case of teaching and practicing arts and crafts. I found that in most of the primary schools, be it govt. or be it private or NGO run, students’ financial ability plays crucial role in their studies. Ms. Sultana adds, “Students need different dresses, props, etc. for dancing. They need money to buy instruments for music too. Most of the time they are unable to practice at home due to unavailability of the instruments and proper props.” (nacher khetre prochur dress, props ittadi laage. Egulor jonne takao proyojon. Ganer khetreo instrument er obhabe ora barite practice korte parena.) Similar information was found from other schools as well. Besides, while observing the classes in person, I found that students sit on the floor. There was a harmonium and one pair Tabla that were merely of medium quality. There was a lack of space for the students and the teachers to take classes, lack of proper instruments and other logistics required for these subjects. Besides, space and logistics, another big challenge in our schools is the number of students. In most schools, the number of students in each class is really big that it becomes nearly impossible for a single teacher to reach out to every individual especially for these subjects. Ms. Fahmida asserts, “One of the main challenges is the large number of students and lack of instruments against the student number.” (Main challenge gulor moddhe ache boro akarer shikkharthir songkhya ebogn se onupate bhalo instrument er obhab.) This resonates with the fact that number of students

determines other factors like availability of instruments and other logistics for arts and crafts and also space for the students to practice and learn these properly. In addition to this large number of students, availability of trained teachers in these subjects and also teacher-student ratio are the other challenges. Ms. Fahmida adds on this point, “Even if we want to keep new teachers, this involves payment for them. Government schools may have some protocols regarding this but most of the time it becomes a challenge for the private schools.” (Shikkhok rakhar khetre tader beton bhatar bishoyti ache. Sorkari school er hoyto kichu protocol ebong bebosth e bepare thake. Kintu besorkari schools er khetre seti ekti challenge hoye jay.)

What were mentioned in case of challenges by the teachers during the interview were quite true since I found in school A that the class was taking place in a very small room. The students were sitting on the floor along with the teacher. In addition, there was a scarcity of proper props for the class as only an old pair of table and harmonium were found for using. The student number, on the other hand was pretty big to accommodate everybody inside that small room. Besides accommodation and scarcity of proper props for these subjects, in school C I found that the number of students was so huge that the teacher was struggling to reach every individual which eventually was hampering the whole classroom learning environment.

Approaching the challenges:

As I continued studying different schools for collecting data on present practices and challenges of fine arts and crafts subjects, the participants did mention about some recommendations and solutions based

on their experience and ideas. Although there are different challenges, there are some initiatives taken from government as well as individual authority of the schools to mitigate the challenges. Ms. Fahmida provides data on this point mentioning, “The government is providing six days long subject based training on these subjects.” (Sorkarer torof theke amderke ei bishoygular upor training deya hoye thake. Jegulo shadharonoto 6 diner hoy.) In addition, teachers also try to mitigate these challenges by taking initiatives like, “We try to teach and complete their learning in the schools since they get minimum opportunity at their home to practice these subjects” (Amra chesta kori amader pokkhe jototuk sombhob school ei oderke shikhiye dite jehetu bashay ora oirokom poribesh ba sujog payna.) Besides, some are trying to build new spaces to help students learn and practice these subjects in the school premises like Ms. Sultana adds, “We are trying to build new buildings to make some space for the students to practice these subjects.” (Amra try korchhi notun kore building toiri korte jeno oderke space dite pari ei bishoygula practice korar jonne.) However, the participants of my research look forward to the government to take actions special regarding the curriculum and also recruiting more qualified teachers for these subjects to ensure the best learning experience for the students. Ms. Fahmida adds on this point that, “Since the government can control the teacher’s recruitment process in government schools, they can emphasize more on this and recruit more expert teachers for these subjects which might mitigate these challenges” (Sorkari school e jehetu shikkhok niyogta sorkar niyontron kore thake, tai sorkarer e bepare aro beshi jor deya uchit ebong aro dokkho shikkhok niyog deya uchit jeta ei somossa gulo kichuta holeo komate pare.)

As the teachers was saying, I fund similar in case of my observations too. In school A, the teachers were very friendly. Even though the room was too small to even sit properly, they did not wait for that convenience to take place rather tried to manage the class inside that small room. I found that the teachers are trying from their own end to mitigate the challenges as much as possible. For example, in school B, the teachers managed to have a mobile phone and a laptop to show different live music, dances, etc. Even though there were scarcity of materials, students were found to have some of their hand-made crafts, pictures, paintings hanging on the walls for decoration in both school A and B.

Chapter 5 Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Discussion

Referring to the result section of this study, the data are based on the four different sections including present practices of arts and crafts subjects in the schools, how the curriculum is used for these subjects, what challenges there are in case of practicing these subjects, and finally how we can deal with the challenges in near future. My observation during data collection and throughout the study process is that the participants were really engaged while providing data and they seemed to be true to their words as much as possible. My other observation is that the schools are also very eager to learn a lot about these subjects and want to do something for the students in this regard. This has made me more enthusiastic to know more about these subjects and run further studies if necessary, on this.

However, although the literature on arts and crafts for example Julie (2019) mentions that these subjects help students to develop different skills and also cause a holistic growth, the data in the result section of this study suggest that the present practices are not enough for nurturing the true essence of arts and crafts subjects among the students. It is found that the teachers and the students are trying their best from their end to nurture these subjects among the students in particular schools as much as possible. They have particular days to practice these subjects, they arrange different programs surrounding this and also participate in different national events throughout the year. They do all these things to make sure that their students at least get some sort of opportunities to nurture these subjects. Though these initiatives help the students at least get introduced to these subjects, but considering its actual outcome, these are not substantial. Tungate (2013, p.8) also depicts the importance of the schooling system in connecting

the students' learning with their experience and making connection to the senses, experience, and imagination. It also refers to the importance of having a curriculum which includes arts and crafts as teaching-learning tool to ensure the aforementioned outcomes. Although some schools use the curriculum, and some are not. Therefore, there is a difference in every different school in case of teaching these subjects as well as in the outcomes. The data shows that the teaching-learning method is mainly self-experience based of the teacher. However, all the teachers from the schools interviewed and observed, have some sort of realization that they need a curriculum which helps them to understand how to teach these subjects, how to practice these subjects, and how to engage students in these more and more to ensure their learning and nurture their potential in these subjects. In addition to this, the teachers find any sort of training on these subjects relevant and urgent to enhance their knowledge on these subjects as well as their teaching capacity on these subjects. Nevertheless, they all agree that the present curriculum has some good sides including how it is organized in terms of syllabus and contents, how it guides teachers how to teach these subjects and what and how to include while teaching. Besides having these positive sides, the curriculum and the whole system has negative sides too. As mentioned by the worldwide educators in different literature reviews for example Arvidsson (1989, p.3) from Sweden and Olafsson & Thorsteinsson (2010)'s from Iceland, there are several challenges in different schools worldwide in case of implementing these subjects. Our schools face similar issues too. Referring to different experts from our country such as Rahman (2019) and Selim (2014) mention that the scope of practicing these subjects in our educational institutions is gradually getting squeezed day by day. The data found in the study also depicts similar outcomes. Most of the schools, considering their socio-

economic background, face several challenges especially in case of arranging enough spaces for the students to practice these subjects, lack of efficient teachers, challenges in arranging proper props related to these subjects, proper guideline on what and how to teach regarding these subjects and so on. All these challenges make it more complicated for the teachers and the students to practice their full potential. I must refer to one specific case found in the data that there are students in different schools and classes who are not that active in tradition academic life but are exceptionally talented in arts and crafts. Unfortunately, they do not get the proper opportunities to nurture their potential only due to the educational system and other constraints which is currently running in our schools. All these data denote that we must do something regarding these issues.

All these data are important for us to understand the present practices and challenges in case of arts and crafts subjects in our education system. These data denote that we need to take some steps to improve the present condition in different aspects. As our present education system is focusing on the creative methodology of teaching and learning, if we want to make the best out of it, we must take care of these subjects as well. The data shows that arts and crafts pave the way for the students involved in these for nurturing their creativity and their true potential. The data refers to some recommendations in the last part of it where the teachers and the participants refer to some steps for addressing the present challenges regarding these subjects. Besides the government take necessary measures, the private schools and organizations can step forward in this case to address the issues and make some sort of actual progress on these issues as soon as possible. As mentioned earlier my background related to these subjects, I had some assumptions regarding the present practices of these subjects along with personal experiences. This

study has found the results like my assumptions. I assumed that there must be some challenges in practicing these subjects. The study also suggests similar challenges similar and to some extent even beyond my assumptions. However, considering all the data and results of this study, I do believe that there needs to be more studies done on these subjects and multiple aspects of these subjects so that we can discover more of its challenges and find out more probable solutions in order to work on those and make progress accordingly.

5.2 Conclusion

Reflecting on the whole research project, I find that this research is the first one of its kind especially in terms of the topic and subjects. Although I tried to find some previous research on similar topics, I hardly found ones. However, while studying this, I could investigate the different aspects of these subjects. The whole experience helped me learn a lot.

Nevertheless, this research has achieved its purpose. The purpose was to understand mainly the present practices and challenges of arts and crafts subjects. Through this research I could discover different facts related to these subjects as well as different factors behind different challenges related to these. In addition to this, this research has also found out some of the recommendations to deal with the challenges which are at present creating hindrance in practicing these subjects for teachers, students, and relevant stakeholders. Besides achieving its purpose this study has helped me learn different aspects of arts and crafts from a different perspective. It has changed some of the pre-assumptions that I had regarding these. I learned how talented our students are despite challenging socio-economic backgrounds. I came

to know that given proper opportunities, our students can also excel in these subjects regardless of their background. In terms of research process, I learned a lot too. I learned how to keep different factors in mind while running a qualitative research, what to focus most and what less. The most significant learning was different data collection methodologies and how to execute those. To sum up, this research has helped me develop as a qualitative researcher besides achieving its purpose.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of this research the recommendations are as follows:

- It should be mandatory to follow the curriculum in all the primary schools, be it a government school, be it a private school. The data found in this study shows that the teachers agree that a curriculum can provide with a proper guideline for these subjects. Also, from my teaching experience, I found following a curriculum helpful. It helped me in designing a session based on its objectives, learning outcomes, and overall students' growth.
- The curriculum should include proper directions and instructions for the teachers on how to teach these subjects in a student-centric manner so that it helps the teachers understand the instructions more easily and design their sessions prioritizing students' need.
- Government should recruit expert teachers on arts and crafts in every primary schools so that the students get the opportunity to learn from the expert ones.

- Government can allot a particular amount of budget behind these subjects for the government schools and should make it mandatory for the private schools also to keep a particular amount of budget for these subjects.
- Trainings are provided for only the government teachers at present. This should be available for the private school teachers too.
- Arts and crafts subjects should be included as main subjects like other subjects to improve the condition of its practices and help students nurture their potential. As these subjects have positive impacts on students' behavior, incorporation of these subjects more in our curriculum and syllabus will help students in their positive mental growth.
- As this research has tried to find out the present practices and challenges regarding arts and crafts, more quantitative and qualitative research should be done in a larger scale on similar topics to find out relevant factors and other opportunities in this sector.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Interview questions

1. How long have you been working as a Fine Arts teacher in this school?
2. What do you teach in this role? Do you teach Music or dance or what else? Could you please explain?
3. How do you or your school teach these subjects to the students? Do you have any specific activities?
4. Do you think that these subjects should be assessed like other subjects? Do you assess your students for these subjects? If yes how do you do that? If not, why do you think so?
5. Do you face any challenges while teaching these subjects? What are those?
6. How do you address those challenges?
7. Do you follow any curriculum while teaching? If yes, then how?
8. How do you think our curriculum helps you to teach?
9. Do the students enjoy learning these subjects? Do they participate in these eagerly?
10. How is the students' performance in these subjects?
11. Do you observe any effect on the students after studying these subjects? If yes, what are those?
Are those physical, mental or behavioral?
12. Do you think that these subjects affect students' academic outcome? If yes, how?
13. The challenges that you have talked about, do you think that our curriculum requires some changes in it to address those? Do you have any suggestion?

Appendix B. Observation checklist

Observation Date:

Observation time:

School name:

Name of class teacher:

Experience: years

Subject:

Class:

Enrolled students:

Boys:

Girls:

Attendance:

Boys:

Girls:

Main indicator	Sub indicators	Observation notes	Comments
Teachers' and Students' activities	Engagement of the lesson (is the teacher following activity-based teaching learning or not) (e.g. Asking Questions, interact with each other, Use of proper Fine arts and crafts materials etc.)		
	Making classes effective through interactive presentation of the lesson, activity-based lesson, assessing students pre-learning		
Classroom setting	Classroom decorated with fine arts and crafts materials,		

	students work, other sample works etc. Sitting arrangement of students		
Teaching aids	Used materials		
	Arts and Crafts logistics (Harmonium, Tabla, Different Colours, Art papers, Colour Brushes etc.)		
	Students made materials		
	Natural materials		

Appendix C. Interview data sample

1. আপনি কতদিন ধরে এই স্কুলে এই বিষয় পড়াচ্ছেন?

উত্তরঃ ৩ বছর

2. কোন বিষয় বিশেষ করে আপনি এখানে পড়াচ্ছেন? একটু ব্যাখ্যা করবেন প্লিজ!

উত্তরঃ বাংলা (প্রাইমারি সেকশন)

3. আপনার স্কুলে এই বিষয়গুলো কীভাবে পড়ানো হয়? কোনো বিশেষ এক্টিভিটি কি আছে এর জন্য?

উত্তরঃ এই স্কুলে সাধারণত শনিবারে এই বিষয়গুলোর জন্য সময় রাখা হয়। এখানে গানের ক্ষেত্রে একজন শিক্ষক ক্লাসে বসে হারমোনিয়াম এবং তবলার সাহায্যে শিক্ষার্থীদের গান শেখান। শিক্ষার্থীদের বয়স অনুযায়ী এবং তাদের ক্যাপাসিটি অনুযায়ী গান সিলেক্ট করা হয় এবং সাধারণত দুই বা তিন দিন ধরে একটি গান শেখানো হয়। আর্টের ক্ষেত্রেও একইভাবে ক্লাস করানো হয়।

4. আপনার কি মনে হয় যে এই সাজেক্ট গুলো এসেস করা বা পরীক্ষার আয়ত্তে আনা জরুরী? আপনাদের এখানে কি কোনো রকমের এসেসম্যান্ট হয় এই বিষয়গুলোর জন্য?

উত্তরঃ এই বিষয়টা আসলে কন্ট্রাডিক্টরি। কেউ কেউ হয়তো মনে করতে পারেন যে জরুরী। তবে আমি এটা মনে করিনা। আমার মনে হয় এই মননের সাথে জড়িত বিষয়গুলো পরীক্ষার আয়তায় আনার দরকার নেই। বরং এতে ছোট বলেন বড় বলেন সবারই সেই সুন্দর ইচ্ছাটা নষ্ট হবার চান্স আছে। তাই আমি মনে করি এগুলো ওভাবে পরীক্ষার মধ্যে না আনাই ভালো। তবে অনুষ্ঠান গুলো যখন হয় সেগুলোই একরকমের এসেসম্যান্ট বলতে পারেন। কারণ তখন ওই বিষয়গুলোর প্রকৃত এপ্লিকেশনটাও বোঝা যায়।

5. এই বিষয়গুলো পড়ানোর ক্ষেত্রে কোনো চ্যালেঞ্জ ফেইস করেন কি? সেগুলো কী?

উত্তরঃ মেইন চ্যালেঞ্জ গুলোর মধ্যে আছে একটা বড় আকারের শিক্ষার্থীর সংখ্যা এবং সে অনুপাতে ভালো ইন্সট্রুমেন্ট এর অভাব, বাচ্চাদের বাসায় গিয়ে এই বিষয়গুলো প্র্যাক্টিস করার সুযোগটা ওরকম নেই যার কারণে স্কুলেই যতটুকু সম্ভব

ওদেরকে শেখানোর চেষ্টা করা হয়। এছাড়াও কিছু কিছু ক্ষেত্রে অন্য বিষয়গুলোর পড়াশোনায় অনেক প্রেসার থাকার কারণে এই বিষয়গুলোর ক্লাস অনেক সময়ই নেয়া হয়না। কারণ অনেকেই মনে করেন এগুলোর থেকে অন্য বিষয়গুলো বেশী জরুরী। এছাড়াও এ বিষয়গুলোর জন্য জিনিসপত্র কিনতে অনেক অর্থেও প্রয়োজন হয়। সেক্ষেত্রে আলাদা শিক্ষক রাখার ক্ষেত্রেও তাদের বেতন ভাতার বিষয়টিও আছে। সেক্ষেত্রে সরকারি স্কুলের হয়তো সরকার থেকে কিছুটা ব্যবস্থা থাকে। তবে বেসরকারি ফাউন্ডেশনগুলোর ক্ষেত্রে অবশ্যই এগুলো বড় চ্যালেঞ্জ।

6. কীভাবে সেই চ্যালেঞ্জগুলো এড্রেস করেন?

উত্তরঃ আমরা চেষ্টা করি আমাদের পক্ষে যতটুকু সম্ভব স্কুলেই ওদেরকে শিখিয়ে দেয়ার জন্য যেহেতু ওরা বাসায় গিয়ে এগুলো নিয়ে কাজ করার ওইরকম পরিবেশ বা সুযোগ পায়না তেমন। আমাদের স্কুল ফাউন্ডেশনের হওয়ায় একটা হারমোনিয়াম এবং তবলা রয়েছে এবং আর্টের ক্ষেত্রে কিছু নেসেসারি ইন্সট্রুমেন্টস আছে। তবে সেগুলো যথেষ্ট নয়। সেক্ষেত্রে আমরা চেষ্টা করি এগুলোকেই যতটুকু কাজে লাগিয়ে ম্যাক্সিমাম শিক্ষার্থীদেরকে শেখানো যায়।

7. বিষয়গুলো পড়ানোর ক্ষেত্রে কোনো কারিকুলাম কি ফলো করেন? সেটা কীরকম?

উত্তরঃ গানের ক্ষেত্রে শনিবারে ক্লাসের সময় আমি নিজে যখন গান শিখেছি সেই ডাইরী বা সিলেবাস অনুযায়ী আমি চেষ্টা করি ওদের বয়স অনুযায়ী শেখাতে। বিশেষ করে দেশাত্মবোধক গান, রবীন্দ্র সংগীত বেশী শেখানোর চেষ্টা করি। ছড়া গানও শেখাই। তবে আর্টের ক্ষেত্রে কারিকুলাম টা আরো ভালোভাবে ব্যবহার করা হয়। সে ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষক বয়স অনুযায়ী একদম হাতে ধরে বাচ্চাদেরকে আর্ট শেখান। যেমন ডটস দিয়ে লাইন আকা শেখানো থেকে শুরু করে বিভিন্ন আকার আকৃতি এবং আঁস্তে আঁস্তে একদম বিভিন্ন কনক্রিট বস্তু গুলো আকা শেখানো হয় প্রাইমারীর স্টুডেন্টদেরকে।

8. কারিকুলাম যদি ফলো করে থাকেন তাহলে সেটি আসলে কীভাবে আপনাদেরকে সাহায্য করে?

উত্তরঃ আর্টের ক্ষেত্রে আমাদের বুঝতে সুবিধা হয় যে কোন বিষয়গুলো আমাদের পড়ানো দরকার এবং কীভাবে। আর গানের ক্ষেত্রে আসলে আমার নিজের শেখা এবং অভিজ্ঞতাই বেশী কাজে লাগে।

9. এই বিষয়গুলো পড়ার ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষার্থীদের আগ্রহ বা সার্বিক মনোভাব কেমন?

উত্তরঃ আমাদের বাচ্চাদের সাধারণ বিষয়গুলোর পাশাপাশি এই বিষয়গুলোর প্রতি প্রচলিত আগ্রহ আছে। তাদের ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ড যেমনই হোকনা কেন, এরা অনেক মেধাবী এবং আগ্রহী। আমি বলবো অনেক ভালো স্কুলের বাচ্চাদের থেকেও এরা বেশী আগ্রহী। বিভিন্ন জাতীয় প্রোগ্রাম গুলোতে আমরা ছোট পরিসরে হলেও বিভিন্ন প্রোগ্রাম আয়োজন করে থাকি। এগুলোতে আমাদের বাচ্চারা অংশগ্রহণ করে খুবই আনন্দ নিয়ে।

10. যারা এই বিষয়গুলোর ক্লাসে বা কার্যক্রমে অংশগ্রহণ করে তাদের উপর কী কোনো প্রভাব এই বিষয়গুলোর রয়েছে?

সেটা মানসিক বা একাডেমিক যে কোনো রকমেরই হতে পারে।

উত্তরঃ হ্যাঁ অবশ্যই। সংস্কৃতির সাথে যারা জড়িত থাকে তাদের আচার আচরণ একটু ভিন্ন হবেই। আমাদের শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্যেও সেটা দেখা যায়। এই বাচ্চাগুলো এত ইমেজিনেটিভ যে ওরা যখন লেখে তখন তাঁর মধ্যে এই সংস্কৃতির বিষয়টি প্রতিফলিত হয়। তাদের আচার আচরণ ও অনেক স্মার্ট হয়। কথা বলার মধ্যেও একটা সুর পাওয়া যায়। আমি এটা মোটেই বেশী বলছি না। আপনি ওদের সাথে কথা বললেই বুঝতে পারবেন। এছাড়া আমি বাংলার শিক্ষক যেহেতু সেক্ষেত্রে ওদের লেখাগুলোর মধ্যেও এর প্রতিফলন হয়। তাই আমি মনে করি ওদের মধ্যে অবশ্যই এই বিষয়গুলোর প্রভাব রয়েছে। তবে আমার মনে হয় সবাই তো আর এসব সাজেক্ট ওভাবে পড়েনা। সেক্ষেত্রে আমাদেরকে চিন্তা করতে হয় যে কারা এগুলো নিতে পারবে আর কারা পারবেনা। সেভাএই আমরা এই বিষয়গুলোর জন্য শিক্ষার্থীদেরকে শেখাতে চেষ্টা করি।

11. আপনার কি মনে হয় যে এই বিষয়গুলো পড়ানোর ক্ষেত্রে আমাদের বর্তমান কারিকুলামে কোনো বিশেষ পরিবর্তন

আনা প্রয়োজন? আপনার কি কোনো সাজেশন আছেন এ ক্ষেত্রে?

উত্তরঃ কারিকুলামে সিলেক্টেড গান বা মিউজিক বা আর্ট না থেকে কীভাবে এগুলো শেখানো যায় সেটি থাকা উচিত। কীভাবে শিক্ষার্থীরা শিখবে এবং শিক্ষকরা শেখাবেন এ বিষয়গুলো নিয়ে অবশ্যই থাকা উচিত। কারণ সিলেক্টেড কিছু থাকলে আমার মনে হয় এই সাংস্কৃতিক বিষয়গুলোতে এক ধরনের ব্যারিয়ার দিয়ে দেয়া হয় বলেই মনে হয়।