

WORKSHOP

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CULURAL HERITAGE IN CURRICULUM RECOMENDATIONS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

THE sub-committee set up at the conclusion of a two-day workshop on Cultural Heritage in School Curriculum has unanimously said that the present school system in India is too centralized, elite-dominated and urban-oriented. The system will have to undergo several modifications to relate itself to the needs and conveniences of various communities and young learners, if India is to have a strong base of Heritage Education, the members of the committee said. The sub-committee's recommendations are based on two days (March 30-31) deliberations by school principals, educationists and prominent persons from the field of art and culture.

The recommendations suggest that the new cultural curriculum and pedagogy must take into account the life-view and living styles of the communities to which the school going children belong and adapt the content of learning to their needs and aspirations. Severe neglect of the sense of belonging to the community makes the present-day system of schooling uninteresting and even unacceptable to many.

The report has drawn nine concrete steps to include cultural heritage in the curriculum and inculcate Indian cultural values among children. The Cultural Heritage studies should be named as Heritage Activity (HA). The name is meant to highlight that the students are not being asked to memorize facts about culture but learn heritage in a tangible way, through activities [re-scribed by the Committee. The Heritage Activity shall NOT be extra curricular but shall be evaluated as other curricular subjects. It shall be taught in all classes in the school curriculum right from Standard 1 to 12.

HA will be taught through child-friendly activities like dance, painting etc, in the lower classes. There will be a gradual transition from the experiential in the lower classes to the conceptual in higher classes. At all levels students shall be involved practically, by their teachers in knowing the material heritage (such as archaeological sites, temples, museums etc.) and abstract heritage (philosophies, poetry, scriptures), forms of Indian Heritage through workbooks, projects and visits to sites and less through text-books to be memorized for ex-aminations.

The instructional materials of various subjects shall be de divided into practical and conceptual modes of instructions but shall be transmitted though projects and activities.

Besides the school system, other cultural resource centres such as museums, historical sites, documentation centres, research institutions, places of worship, holy sites, pilgrimages etc., shall be used to give a proximity to and respect for the living heritages and the regions of India.

In order to provide room for heritage activity and not impose additional workload on students obsolete and repetitive content from the various existing subjects may be shed after proper scrutiny.

Training shall be given to teachers to teach the Heritage Activity. Teachers from diverse existing subjects can very well teach HA after training. HA need not require additional hiring of teachers.

Special care shall be taken to use the local, regional and geographical aspects of Heritage around the school to accommodate the diversity of Indian culture. The HA workbooks and projects shall be prepared at State level and also reflect some national elements.

They are : (a) Cultural mapping of the sacred sites and architectural heritage; (b) Folklore and lifestyles of

Rural, Tribal and Urban India; (c) Visual, Oral and Aural Performing and Fine Arts of India (d) All the Scriptural Heritage of India; (e) Pre and Post Independence Literature and Literary Figures of India; (f) Pre and Post Independence Philosophers, Thinkers and Saints; (g) Modes of Transmission.

The detailed syllabi for projects, cultural activity, workbooks, community activity, teaching of arts and crafts etc., shall be designed by experts in various heritage subjects from class I to XII.

The members of the sub-committee were : Chairperson Prof. N.R. Shetty, Member Secretary, IGNCA; Convener Dr. Bharat Gupt Reader, Delhi University; Members: Ms. Vibha Parthasarathi, Chairperson, National Commission for Women, Prof. Nalini M. Thakur, Department of Architectural Conservation, School of Planning & Architecture, Dr. Sudha K. Rao, Senior Fellow, NIEPA, Mr. G.S. Negi, Principal, Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan's Mehta Vidyalaya, Dr. Yogesh Kumar, Reader, Curriculum Group, NCERT, Dr. Molly Kaushal, Senior Research Officer, IGNCA and Mr. Kailash Kr. Mishra, Janpada Sampada, IGNCA, (Coordinator).