

REPORTS

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE STUDIES

BY

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IGNCA hosted a two-day workshop on 'Curriculum Development for Cultural Heritage Studies for School Children' on 30-31 March 2001. The workshop was organized to bring together people working in different areas in the field of education - from planning to implementation and innovative efforts - to try and find solution to the pressing problem of lack of cultural heritage input in our curriculum both at school level and at the level of college and higher studies. Representative of institutions such as NCERT, NEPA, principals, teachers, educationists, eminent persons from the field of art and culture were among the participants.

Dr. L.M. Singhvi, President IGNCATrust is his keynote address underlined the significance of the theme of the workshop and said, "Without education there can be no culture and without culture there cannot be education." He said the aim of the workshop was "to take cultural education and arts education to the place, where it is most needed, as a seed, which will blossom in time to come."

Introducing the theme and objective of the workshop, Prof. N.R. Shetty, Member Secretary IGNCA urged the participants to come up with strong recommendations, concrete and practical suggestions on how to incorporate the cultural values and ethos into the modern education system that will make our children feel secure in their edentates and will be part of a society that it at peace with itself and with the world.

Prof. R.S. Nirjar, Chairperson AICTE, in his inaugural address emphasized the role of cultural heritage and cultural values in the preservation of identity: "Art is eternal and all-pervading. Information Technology that is not related to our long-cherished values will only remain a mechanical tool. "He cautioned against putting art and culture under rigid definitions and boundaries."

Mr. R.P. Pereira of UNESCO appreciated the IGNCA initiative and said "Cultural heritage and Culture of peace are the heart and soul of UNESCO. Sustainable human development cannot be achieved unless there is peace, but peace cannot be there unless due regard is given to culture and heritage of the people of the world." "Culture", he said, "is not just site and monuments, but all that is part of community's life".

The theme paper looked at heritage in terms of intangible and tangible and stressed the need to present India as a cultural entity. The suggested themes were: i.) Cultural Mapping: Sacred Sites and Architectural Heritage; ii) Folklore and Lifestyle of Rural and Tribal India; iii) Visual, Oral and Aural Performing and Fine Arts of India; iv) Scriptural Heritage of India (Treatises on Architecture, Linguistics, Astronomy, Medicine, Aesthetics); v) Pre and Post-Independence Literature and Literary Figures; vi) Pre and Post-Independence Philosopher, Thinkers and Saints; viii) Mode of Transmission.

The first session stressed the need to go beyond the political and geographical boundaries and expose children to share heritage and values. However in order to sensitize the child to heritage, one has to begin with the locality, immediate surroundings, trips to museums, and sites, production of interactive multi-media. The session on folklore and life-style stressed the need to keep in mind the local variations

and distinct evenness of life-styles.

The workshop also emphasized on the need to introduce children to the wisdom tradition and creative skills adapted or developed by communities to sustain themselves. Artists, painters, dancers and theatre persons were the main discussant group in the session on oral and visual arts. Many of them recalled the *guru-shishya parampara* and stressed the need to introduce children to a larger canvas of life.

Scriptural heritage of India emphasized the need to introduce children to fundamental texts on aesthetics, architecture, linguistics and astronomy. It was stressed that the lifestyles of saints and *sufis*, and their preaching and literature should be taught to children for their personality development.

Modes of transmission, modalities of transecting a course of this nature to school children were discussed and debated upon, touching on the essentiality, duration levels, and course content and resource material, training for the trainers.



The recommendations churned out at the end of the workshop are being fine-tuned and are being given final shape by a sub-committee of participants.

Its members are Ms Vibha Partha-sarathy Chairperson National Commission for Women, Mr. G S Negi, Principal Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Mr. R P Pereira Programme Officer (Culture) UNESCO, Prof Bharat Gupta (Delhi University) and a representative on behalf of Director, NCERT.