

## Promoting Cultural Heritage Education Programmes in Pre-service Teacher Education

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### ABSTRACT

*Teacher's work has become more multifaceted and technical in view of the new theories of psychology, philosophy, sociology, modern media and materials. Hence, teacher is required to acquire adequate knowledge, skills, interests and attitudes towards the teaching profession. Thus necessitates the crucial role of teacher education with which teachers can be made proficient with well planned, imaginative pre-service teacher education. Apart from teaching skills, content mastery and knowledge related to pedagogical aspects; it has become necessary to develop cultural competence among the pre-service and in-service teachers. Applying cultural competence and to promote social justice in teacher education is the need of the hour. Keeping in view this utmost demand from multi-cultural comprehensive teacher education, the present conceptual paper focuses on suggestive activities, programmes and projects for promoting cultural heritage education programmes in pre-service teacher education. This would further helpful to the student teachers for better transmission of the same, successfully in the future generations.*

### INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the quality and extent of learner achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. The current system of schooling poses tremendous burden on children. Educationists are of the view that the burden arises from treating knowledge as a given, an external reality existing outside

the learner and embedded in textbooks. Knowledge is essentially a human construct, a continuously evolving process of reflective learning. The NCF-2005, requires a teacher to be a facilitator for children in a manner that the child is helped to construct his/her knowledge. Education is not a mechanical activity of information transmission and teachers are not information dispensers.

Teachers have to increasingly play the role of crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted. Hence, teacher is required to acquire adequate knowledge, skills, interests and attitudes towards the teaching profession.

The teacher's work has become more multifaceted and technical in view of the new theories of psychology, philosophy, sociology, modern media and materials. Thus necessitates the crucial role of teacher education with which teachers can be made proficient with well planned, imaginative pre-service teacher education.

According to Dave (1999), major dimensions of a Competency based and Commitment oriented Teacher Education curriculum should be included five Performance areas (Performance in the classroom, School level performance, Performance in out-of-school activities, Performance related to parental contact and co-operation and Performance related to community contact and co-operation); Ten Competency areas (Contextual competencies, Conceptual competencies, Curricular and content competencies, Transactional competencies, Competencies in other educational activities, Competencies related to TLM, Evaluation competencies, Management competencies, Competencies related to parental contact and co-operation and Competencies related to community contact and co-operation) and Five

Commitment areas ( Commitment to the learners, Commitment to the society, Commitment to the profession, Commitment to achieve excellence and Commitment to basic human values). A critical analysis of the above underlined areas also signifies the development of cultural competence among the pre-service teachers.

Applying cultural competence and to promote social justice in teacher education is the need of the hour. One of the charges to teacher education is to prepare teachers to connect and communicate with diverse learners (Darling-Hammond & Branford, 2005). To develop capacity among culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse students, teachers first need to know their own cultures. They also need to hold high expectations for all students, understand developmental levels and what is common and unique among different groups, reach out to families and communities to learn about their cultures, select curriculum materials that are inclusive, use a range of assessment methods, and be proficient in a variety of pedagogical methods that facilitate the acquisition of content knowledge for all learners. Establishing a closer fit between pedagogy and culturally different learning styles positively impacts students both socially and academically (Gay, 2002). Culturally relevant pedagogy "not only addresses students' achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm

their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469).

Teacher educators should share the responsibility of helping pre-service and in-service teachers to understand these concepts and to apply them successfully in their classrooms. They do not merely understand the concepts underlying the definitions of cultural competency but clearly demonstrate how the concepts related to culture and heritage is applied in their own teaching and in that of their students. Thus, looking to the vital importance of cultural heritage education, the present paper focuses on suggestive activities, programmes and projects for promoting cultural heritage education programmes in pre-service teacher education. This would further helpful to the student teachers for better transmission of the same, successfully in the future generations.

### CULTURAL HERITAGE

‘Culture’ is a complex set of knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. It represents the total life of the society. It includes anything that can be communicated in the next generations. It represents the social heritage. A person

reflects the culture and also contributes for its development and preservation.

According to Anthropology, to know the culture and its objectives, it is essential to study Ethos (*Sanskar Kendra*). As for example.

#### ■ People of..... Ethos is controlled by.....

- India Spirituality
- America Personal freedom
- Greece Intelligence
- Roman Systematization of society through laws

**Major Components:** Culture includes Art and Languages, Ideology, Technology, Social organizations, Economical organizations and Political organizations as its major components. Some philosophers have classified them as under;

- **Ideas:** Scientific truths, Religious beliefs, Myths (*purankatha*), Legends (*Dantkatha*), Folk stories, literature, superstitions, Aphorisms (*Sutras*), Proverbs
- **Norms:** Laws, Statutes (*laws passed by the legislature*), Rules and regulations, Customs, Folk ways (*lokriti*), Traditions, Taboos, Fashions, Rites, Rituals, Mores, Ceremonies, Etiquette
- **Materials:** Machines, Tools, Utensils, Buildings, Roads, Bridges, Weapons, Models, Clothing, Vehicles, Furniture, Foods, Medicines

‘Heritage’ is a conceptual identity of an area which includes not only built tangible heritage but has intangible aspects like its language, lifestyles, ceremonies, festivities, work cultures inherent /specific of a community. Hence, considering all above together is “Cultural Heritage”.

### **CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION: (CHE)**

Cultural heritage and education are not mutually exclusive: both aim at improving the quality of life through the medium of academics, imparting knowledge on various disciplines and sensitizing the student to aesthetics, moral values and creativity in thought and action, thereby refining his/her personality.

It is vital for an individual to excel not only intellectually, but also socially, physically, and emotionally, which can only be achieved by linking education with cultural heritage, and at the same time keeping pace with rapidly changing technology. For education to be effective and result-oriented, it has to be culture based, and it must take into account the cognitive, emotional and spiritual needs of the student. Such education aims to foster knowledge, encourage engagement and generate action towards understanding and revitalizing the diversity of Indian culture.

The National Policy on Education (1986) recognized the need of education to be culture-based. The role of education in

developing democratic citizenship was recognized. Knowledge of culture plays a prominent role in democratic thinking: a democratic citizen is known for his ability to sift truth from false and he/she is more receptive to new ideas. True education also brings clarity of thought, compassion and concern for mankind and is a basis for human rights.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) believes that heritage education is important for the following reasons:

- To bring history and the social science curriculum alive for the students through active learning and doing.
- To promote awareness of and involvement in heritage to inculcate a respect for diversity, tolerance, mutual understanding, patience and promotes peaceful co-existence in school students.
- To inspire young students and encourage them to build a future through an understanding of the past and the present.
- To equip students to understand and explore their local heritage and gain a confident sense of self.
- To encourage students to learn about national heritage as well as gain exposure to different heritages around the country.

Thus proves the importance of Cultural Heritage Education at school level or at pre-service teacher education level. It further necessitates selecting the major domains to be covered under CHE.

## DOMAINS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION

The major domains, as shown in the given figure would be covered under Cultural Heritage Education.



## CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Cultural Heritage Education is not merely recreation for student teachers or learners, but should be an important part of their learning process. It will help them understand arts, literature, history and society and will inculcate values of respect for diversity and tolerance. To create and enact a cultural heritage education programme, one needs to draw a Plan of Action comprising activities, programmes and projects planned throughout

the year depending on the resource availability. Very limited resources are required for the most basic cultural heritage education programmes. More involved programmes require some investment. But most activities under these programmes, like heritage walks and heritage clubs, require little capital investment but can go a long way in helping the learners experience culture and heritage and bring alive many of the things they read in the school textbooks.

### Suggested Activities:

- Celebration of special days (World Heritage day-12<sup>th</sup> January, Environment day, Teacher's day etc.)
- Heritage walks in historical areas of cities/towns/World Heritage Sites
- Nature walks/excursions to local parks, areas of bio-diversity, even agrarian sites
- Site visits to museums and archaeological sites.
- Essay competitions on literature (in English and local languages) and talks by writers. Student teachers should be encouraged to read and write creatively in their local language. An introduction to the heritage of the language would be very useful – this can be done by a writer or a poet in the said language or a teacher educator who is fluent in it.
- Small research projects for student teachers that can be put up as mini-exhibitions/ bulletin board displays on heritage.

- Involving student teachers in documenting local living heritage like festivals, performing arts or craftsmen and women.
- Establishment of heritage clubs for heritage debates, quizzes, discussions and activities like presentations, field trips and documentation.
- Adopt-a-Monument scheme where student teachers /heritage clubs can adopt a local monument, clean up its environs, investigate its local official and oral history, study the monument and make drawings of its details as well as overall plan, understand the challenges in its conservation and upkeep and campaign for its preservation.
- Painting and drawing competitions for student teachers at built heritage sites.
- Workshops with artists and craftsmen and women, both traditional and contemporary to help student teachers understand the basic vocabulary and techniques involved.
- Workshops with experts which involve hands-on learning. For example, a local classical or folk musician could conduct a workshop over five sessions to introduce student teachers to the basic vocabulary of their musical form so that whenever students have occasion to hear the music, they can understand its basic outlines.
- Traditional recipes may be collected by the students from their parents and grandparents and a show-and-tell can take place introducing the importance of the recipes and their relevance to certain occasions like festivals or seasons.
- Comparisons of names for different fruits, vegetables and spices in different local languages can be done.
- Encouraging student teachers to trace and write their own family histories and traditions, to understand historical change through this.
- Site visits for students to crafts centers, textile loom units, handicraft workshops and factories to understand craft and industrial heritage.
- Student teachers may be asked to create a nature trail in their own college premises (if possible), marking trees, plants and other flora.
- Theatre workshops in which students are encouraged to learn the nine emotional states and how to express them, how to make and use traditional puppets as well as other aspects of Indian performance theory.
- Celebration of food festival
- Workshop on yoga and meditation
- Workshop on preparation of TLMs (e.g. making of different puppets and their use in education)
- Organizing special classes for “*Sanskrit sambhashan*”
- Activities related to Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW)
- Organizing Film shows for creating awareness and development of cultural software.

- Production of short educational films based on cultural heritage aspects, social issues etc.
- Organizing sports festival (e.g. *Khel Mahakumbh*)
- Campus beautification (e.g. making Decorative paintings, Plantation etc.)

There are many more activities which can be planned to achieve the objectives of multi-cultural comprehensive teacher education. But, it also requires micro level planning for their effective implementation.

For example, Heritage walks/tours equip student teachers to understand and explore their local heritage and gain a confident sense of self. The student teachers also learn about national heritage and are exposed to different heritages around the country.

#### **Pre Heritage walk activities:**

1. Interaction of the faculty with the student teachers on the selection of the heritage site/museum to be visited.
2. Audio-visual presentation of the site and its significance-designed in accordance to the school subject/s.
3. Student teachers should make their own presentation based on pre-visit research and on related school textbooks on various aspects of the site and its history/heritage.
4. Hand-out of dummy models of the architectural elements (ex. Arches,

pillars and sculptures extra),CDs and print-outs with diagrammatic representation of the site along with photographs among student teachers for a better understanding of the heritage site.

5. To get questionnaires (specific to the site) completed by each student teacher to understand their aptitude and interest.

#### **During Heritage walk activities:**

1. Assistance by faculty / guide.
2. Site tour with special reference to practical understanding of the structure and its significance. It may be conducted by an expert or a trained teacher educator.
3. Arrangement of on-site activities (quiz/painting competition/clay modeling/debates and extempore/photography etc. in accordance with the general interest.)
4. To again get questionnaires (specific to the site) completed by each student teacher to trace their progress and emphasize certain aspects of the site like natural heritage, architecture, structural engineering and how people lived there (if applicable).

#### **Post Heritage Walk activities:**

1. Student teachers who performed particularly well in the activities may be given certificates recognizing their efforts.
2. A group of student teachers may be assigned to maintain a heritage corner as it is important to recall the visit for them. This could include drawings, photographs, essays and objects.

## CONCLUSION

The above conceptual matter shows the importance of CHE and suggestive guidelines for implementation of CHE programmes in Pre-service Teacher Education. This would definitely fulfill the demands of multi-cultural comprehensive teacher education and making the multi-cultural classrooms in the schools. Looking to the fixed schedule of Pre-service Teacher Education course, it seems challenging to implement CHE Programmes throughout the year. But this would be very much helpful to the pre-service teachers in achieving the curricular objectives at school level, in long run.

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