

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL EDUCATION

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Basically culture is everything that characterizes a specific group of people. This group of people could be a religious group, a family, people from a specific neighborhood, town, city, or even country. It could be people who have a similar ethnic background, work culture, or even people who have similar life dynamics.

Culture often refers to the characteristics that are formed through language, history, food, geography, arts, beliefs and family values. A person can have a variety of cultures, such as their religious culture, their family culture, work culture, and even the culture of their age group. All of these cultures put together form an individual's personal culture.

Culture is basically the customs, beliefs and the way of living shared by a particular society/community/country. It refers to the values and norms shared by a specific group of people.

Culture influences how we see the world, how we see the community that we live in, and how we communicate with each other. Being a part of a culture influences our learning, remembering, talking and behaving. Therefore, culture determines to a great extent the learning and teaching styles also.

How is culture important for the child?

- Culture teaches values, beliefs and traditions.
- It influences the social interaction with parents, siblings, peers and teachers.
- It influences their language and communication.

Culture-based education is an approach in which teaching and learning happen based on the values, norms, beliefs and practices that are the foundation of any culture. Harvard Professor Jerome Bruner notes "Culture shapes mind, it provides us with the tool kit by which we construct not only our world but our very construction of ourselves and our powers".

This is why culture-based education gains importance.

Benefits of Cultural Education

- **Better understanding of the world:** Our world is filled with amazing, diverse people and cultures. The more cultures our children are exposed to, the more accepting they are of people and cultures that are different from them.
- **Valuing and respecting other cultures and our own:** It's not only important to be aware of other cultures, but also to value and respect them.
- **Reducing stereotypes:** The more we know about people and cultures, the less we're likely to fall into grouping people based on stereotypes. Everyone is different and what's true for one person may not be true for another.
- **Promotes effective communication:** Language is not the only player in communication. Culture can have effect on many different areas. Culture can affect speaking style, including speed, figurative language, details and more. It can also affect body language and gestures.

- **Increases opportunity to meet new and interesting people:** By joining in on different celebrations, visiting people from different cultures, and jumping in on new experiences, kids will begin meeting new people and making new friends. This will expand their social circle and make room for even more new friends of different cultures.
- **New experiences:** New experiences can be anything from hearing stories, participating in a traditional celebration or trying new food. A new art technique, or a musical instrument they've never seen before are fantastic experiences. The more you dive into cultural education, the more kids will be able to experience the world around them.

Influences of Education on Culture

1. **Preservation of Culture:** Culture is the blood vein of a society, which needs to be conserved. It is an important function of education to help in the preservation of culture or social heritage. Education, through its specialized agencies, tries to inculcate the traditions, customs, values, arts, morals etc. into the tender minds of pupils.

2. **Transmission of Culture:** In addition to preservation of culture, it is a task of education to maintain the continuity of culture by handing down the existing cultural experiences, values, traditions, customs etc. from one generation to another through its various programmes and practices. Without this transmission, the nation's survival may be the toughest task and the progress of mankind can be stifled. Society reels in utter chaos and confusion. The famous sociologist Ottaway writes, "The function of education is to transmit the social values and ideals to the young and capable members of society".

3. **Promotion of Culture:** Besides preservation and transmission, another vital function of education is to modify the existing cultural patterns in the light of changes visible in the needs and demands of the society. These cross-cultural variables. Thus, new cultural patterns are formed by replacing and reorienting the old outmoded cultural forms to suit the changing needs of time and man. Therefore, society makes ostensible progress. This part of education is called progressive function of education. As such, education performs by constantly reorganizing and reconstructing human experiences for the promotion and enrichment of culture.

4. **Equips Man to Adapt to Changing Cultural Patterns:** It is an admitted fact that every generation after generation modifies the old and archaic cultural forms and adds new ones to the best advantage of theirs. This is possible through educational means and methods. Moreover, education equips the individual to adjust him or herself to the changing cultural forms and patterns for better and successful living.

5. **Molding the Personality:** It is a universal element of culture that personality is shaped and molded by education. An individual's personality goes on developing when he or she continues to forge a web of relationships with other members of society. This form of interaction is made possible by education according to the behavioral patterns or culture of the existing society. In simple words, culture is an informal agency of social control.

which help in molding and shaping the behavior of the individual in a desirable way.

6. Restoring Unity of Mankind through Diffusion of Culture: It is a dire necessity of the civilization that unity of mankind is to be restored. It is to be made possible through education which assists in diffusion of culture in an effective manner. Education should treat human culture as a whole like a full-blossom flower whose different petals represent different groups. Education, further, helps in disseminating the modern cultural values like co-operation, unity, mutual understanding, brotherhood of men, love and appreciation for others etc. to mankind for its enduring survival.

7. Removing Cultural Lag: The concept of cultural lag is attributed to the famous sociologist Ogburn. When there exists a difference between material culture and non-material culture, this lag concept emerges. As it is seen, material culture is advanced due to the rapid strides in science and technology and people adopt modern lifestyles ignoring non-material parts of culture. Therefore, non-material culture lags behind the former. This situation is cultural lag which needs to be eliminated by education through its various programmes and myriad activities. Culture is antithesis to social change and progress of the civilization.

How is it possible to relate cultural education to children's development?

Children between 5 and 7 years of age reflect upon themselves, absolutely but they do so mainly imaginatively. Of course most teachers notice intuitively because they tell them stories, they let them play and that is where the self-reflection is. But if you want to really develop a curriculum in self-reflection or cultural consciousness then you have to be aware of this and you can relate to it.

Something for older children, starting from the age of 8 or 9. Their self-reflection becomes more conceptual, more collective. The peer group becomes more important, etc. So I think that is the kind of knowledge that teachers should require because it helps them to develop their cultural education curriculum.

Conclusion Culture and education are inseparable and yet complementary with multiple points of interaction. Culture paves the way for education while education is responsible for flavoring the cultural values in life. A sense of pride in our culture has to manifest itself through all the stages of an individual's growth. Primary education is where it all starts and the child begins to respect the importance of a value-based life as he sees things and events happening, and the behavior of others around. All these collectively form the personality that develops in the process. Therefore, it is necessary to inculcate the importance of education and value-based living for a truly

sustainable development of the rural sector. Education founded on strong culture and values will help students understand and acknowledge the significance of culture in the development and in social change context.

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