

Chacha Nehru Scholarship for Artistic and Innovative Excellence

Primacy to Art Education

The importance of arts in the education system has been repeatedly discussed and recommended over the decades. Rather than encouraging the pursuit of arts the education system in the country tends to relegate arts to be 'useful hobbies' and 'leisure activities'. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) - 2005 reiterates the importance of Art Education at all stages of school education so that 'we retain our unique cultural identity in all its diversity'. NCF - 2005 recommends four major areas of Art Education at the Secondary and Senior Secondary stages. These include Music, Dance, Visual Arts and Theatre. NCF - 2005 also stipulates that students must be introduced to the rich and varied art traditions in the country with due emphasis on learning rather than teaching. The approach should be participatory, interactive and experiential, rather than instructive. Such an approach should foster self-expression and self-awareness among children. It should create aesthetic awareness and develop imagination, enhance confidence in movement and speech, promote tolerance and sensitivity.

National Bal Bhawan: Bal Shree programme:

The National Bal Bhawan has played a vital role in the promotion of Arts throughout the length and breadth of the country. Currently there are 73 state and district Bal Bhawans in the country. The National Bal Bhawan has instituted a system of honouring talented children in different age groups in the year 1995 through the Bal Shree scheme. The Bal Shree programme recognizes talent in the following areas:

1. Creative Performance
2. Creative Arts
3. Creative Scientific Innovations
4. Creative Writing

The National Bal Bhawan makes a selection of creative children through activities conducted at three levels, viz:

1. Local level by organizing 2-day camps in which 8 children (2 in each stream) are identified at the local level

2. Zonal Levels by organizing 3 days camps in which local experts, specialists from six zones, namely North, East, West, Central, South-I and South -II participate for selection of children
3. National Levels by organizing 4 day camps from the six zones in the country. A panel of experts and resource persons representing the four streams are identified to observe and assess the creativity of children.

On an average 150 children participate in the National level camp and approximately 50 children are chosen for the Bal Shree honour. The criteria for selection of children for the Bal Shree award includes (a) originality, (b) innovative approach, (c) fluency, (d) flexibility, (e) divergent thinking, (f) elaboration of ideas, (g) creative processes culminating into meaningful products, (h) effective functioning in the group, (i) analytical and critical approach. The National Bal Bhawan has developed a comprehensive activities' bank in order to identify the creative skills of the children. During the selection process children are provided a barrier free environment and an interactive and supportive environment aimed at bringing out the best in children. Children thus selected are honoured by the President of India and presented a Bal Shree certificate.

Chacha Nehru Scholarships for Artistic and Innovative Excellence:

With a view to further encouraging and nurturing talent NCERT will support the children who participate in the National Camp organised by the National Bal Bhawan through a scheme of Chacha Nehru Scholarships for Artistic and Innovative Excellence. The Chacha Nehru Scholarships for Artistic and Innovative Excellence will be available to children pursuing secondary and senior secondary education in classes IX – XII. The salient features of the scholarship scheme will be as follows:

1. Children participating in the National Camps of the National Bal Bhawan and pursuing studies in Classes IX – XII will be awarded an scholarship of Rs 500 per month for a period of four year till they complete Class XII.
2. The National Bal Bhawan will continue to independently design and evolve its testing tools and evaluation/ assessment schemes for identification of Bal Shree awardees. The National Bal Bhawan will also independently administer the activities/ tests for identification of Bal Shree awardees.
3. The National Bal Bhawan will submit to NCERT a list of children studying in classes IX – XII who have been selected for participation in the National Bal Bhawan Camp for award of the Chacha Nehru Scholarships for Artistic and Innovative Excellence. This list will be accompanied by detailed information on each child as per proforma developed by NCERT.

Advisory Committee:

An especially constituted Advisory Committee will monitor the implementation of the NCERT-Bal Shree scholarships with the following membership:

1. Chairperson will be a person of repute from the world of arts and culture.

2. The Director, NCERT, Director, National Bal Bhawan, Chairman, CBSE and Director General CCRT will be ex-officio members of the Managing Committee
3. There will be four nominees of the National Bal Bhawan and NCERT representing the areas of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Creative Writing and Scientific Innovation.
4. The Department of Educational Measurement and Evaluation (DEME) in the NCERT will provide the secretariat support for the functioning of the Advisory Committee. Accordingly the Head, DEME will function as the Member Secretary of the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee will give policy recommendations from time to time to improve the content of the scheme and give specific suggestions on other avenues for spotting and nurturing talent in these arts, particularly in remote, inaccessible and educationally deprived areas.

The Advisory Committee will consider ideas and proposals for longitudinal research based studies to assess whether the creativity of the Bal Shree awardees has been sustained and identify factors conducive to developing creativity, etc.

The Advisory Committee will take decisions on a case-to-case basis for continuation of financial support to children to pursue further professional studies in Arts beyond class XII.

The Advisory Committee will oversee, monitor evaluate the implementation of the scheme of scholarships. It will be responsible for evolving a mechanism for tracking the progress of each child so that each child awarded the Chacha Nehru Scholarships for Artistic and Innovative Excellence can achieve her/ his full potential.

Non -official Advisory Committee members invited to the meetings of the Managing Committee will be entitled to facilities (TA/DA, local travel, etc.) available to Class I Government Officers for the purpose of attending meetings.