

CHILDHOOD DEMANDS ATTENTION

Every stage of life has its own significance. But the most precious journey of life is childhood. In which there is no worry, anxiety, fear. There is no grudge against anyone. There are not many desires. Even a single rupee given by someone would give such happiness which would have no limit. Childhood is so sweet. But if you look, childhood is also a cornerstone. Childhood is also the basis of life. From the moment a child regains consciousness, he begins to accept the influence of those around him. Every incident that happens around him has a very strong effect on him. I often think that many very young children are abusive, there is no limit to my surprise when parents stop their children. Instead, it is shown with a smile. The child has no sense of right or wrong, the laughter of the parents' signals to his mind that perhaps what he is doing is right.

There is no doubt that cursing or other such activities are learned from home. Childhood is a reality, as the thinking will be in childhood, the personality of the child in the future will be the result of that. Before giving birth to a child, parents should consider whether they are capable of making a child a good human being, whether they are capable of raising their child in such a way that they will give a responsible citizen to the society in the future.

Childhood demands a lot of attention. I have often heard parents grieve over the loss of their children saying that we have not allowed any shortcoming in the upbringing of our child, but we are still being treated like this. My answer is that good food and comfort are not the only signs of proper upbringing! Explain to the child the difference between right and wrong, keep the home environment meaningful, spend time with the child, monitor his every move, rebuke the mistake and stand up for him when it is right, to make the child responsible for doing his own thing. Motivating, teaching women to respect are very small things that are worth paying attention to. But there are very few parents who understand this, because parents are so busy in their lives that they do not even have time to spend with their children.

Childhood is like a very small plant, which needs timely fertilization and watering in the beginning. If the child gets proper attention, meaningful environment, good manners, support then the society gets a responsible citizen in future. A new trend that is being seen in today's parents and children is that children are getting addicted to mobile phones. Mothers, in particular, do not have to give time to the child, they leave the child with the help of mobile phones, which has a very bad effect on the mental, intellectual and physical development of the child.

In this time of pandemic, everyone is forced to stay at home. This time can be best utilized by mixing up the children and providing them all the what they have missed till now, means valuable time. We often see people spending the time on watching some special web-series, matches, movies etc or surfing the social media without caring for their wards, who are sitting near them, for their want of an attention. Such a behavior must be shunned and proper time be given to children so that they can nurture well.

Childhood is a precious feeling and journey of life, it can be lived without materials or facilities, but not without affection and rituals because childhood demands attention.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Live a Meaningful Life

A majority of people live an ordinary life. A few people, however, make it extraordinary by giving it a beautiful meaning. Whatever they do has a purpose that transforms them, their surroundings, and, ultimately society. Those who live a meaningful life are happier and their every day is an exciting journey. You should also find purpose and meaning in your life and for that, it is never too late.

1. Understand What You Like To Do

Know what is important for you to lead a happy, prosperous and contented life. You may note down your top 5 things or top 10 things that you believe are the crux of how you want to spend your life. This can include efforts like 'work hard,' or 'help someone every day or 'plant a tree often and promote a positive habit in your surroundings.' You may also include more fulfilling ideas, like 'develop a new skill and start life afresh' or 'practice Yoga and meditation and teach others as well.' There could be thousands of ideas. All such ideas would give a new meaning to your life once you start pursuing them.

2. Stay Conscious

Stay aware of yourself. Stay mindful of what you do at all times and even in your free time. Make sure to live a life according to your choice, principles, goal, and passion. Review your actions daily and work towards correcting your actions through staying conscious. Yoga & meditation is a time-tested tool for achieving such consciousness. It helps you increase your self-aware-

ness every day.

Right now everyone is worshipping Goddess Durga in Chaitra Navratri. This is the best time to meditate by keeping various forms of Goddess Durga in the mind. These forms bestow bravery, abstinence, and willpower upon seekers so that they can achieve success in life by staying conscious and focused.

3. Collect Your Energy

It is futile to chase multifarious goals in a day. That won't lead anywhere. Collect all your energy and place them on one particular aim. With such attention, you will become able to lessen the stress linked with efforts. You must learn how to stay focused on a single goal despite distractions to find the true meaning of your life.

4. Practice Compassion & Give it Back

Compassion could give the greatest meaning to your life since it leads to ultimate happiness. Look around yourself you will see scores of people who need your support and help. Do something for them, talk to them about their problems and needs. You can show them the right path in life and through this small gesture, you can give something back to society.

Such small efforts will give a whole new meaning to your life. Take part in more of such activities. You will see your life has more meaning in it.

Remember, at any stage of life, it would be gracious to be able to say- 'I took many small actions that made life a little easier and better for others and that gave great meaning to my life.'

Shri Sudhanshuji Maharaj

Academics with cultural & co-curricular activities-need of hour

■ DR DUSHYANT PRADEEP

There were the days when only academics and attending classes were the only activities organised in schools and colleges, and all the students used to focus on that. Now a days, the trend has been changing as we have noticed a major change in the field of education. Students don't want to be bookworms; they look for other options that could help them in future. In this Technological era, everyone wants to acquire knowledge in every field to stay updated. The Co-circular activities play a vital role in the life of students during this shift towards new and updated world. All of us very much familiar with a well know quote, 'All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy'.

In classrooms, corridors, activity rooms, and playgrounds of many schools, it is very common to hear questions like 'Why am I doing this activity', 'What is the importance of co-curricular activities' etc. We might have asked these questions or thought about it.

Co-curricular activities are those activities which are undertaken along with regular academic studies. Basically, these activities are carried outside the normal classrooms but they supplement academic curriculum and help in learning by doing. These activities help students to develop self-confidence, reasoning, creative thinking, critical thinking, communication, team work, problem-solving, and collaborative abilities. Co-curricular activities in school should be compulsory such as music, art, or drama classes that take place during the day. Others could be voluntary such as participating in a school sports team, school debating teams, or student newsletters editorial team, etc. In any of these cases, participation helps students in emotional development, social skill development, and overall personality development and helps to create a social emotional learning environment in the classroom and the school. That's why there is immense importance of co-curricular activities in the student life.

In the present era, the world of education is changing fast. The conventional education system, which was developed in the early twentieth Century, has to pave the way to a new era of education and learning. The renowned authors Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel in their book titled '21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times', have mentioned clearly that 'the world has changed so fundamentally in the last few decades that the roles of learning and education in day-to-day living have also changed forever'. There are so many modern concepts which emphasize that education and learning has to come out of the conventional four walls of a classroom to an open world of opportunities and activities. The basic aim of learning and education should be to create holistic development of the learner. The importance of co-curricular activities cannot be bypasses in fostering holistic development and creating the

required environment for doing so. Holistic development of a learner means physical, emotional, intellectual and social development which can be achieved only through proper education. Education plays a fundamental role in holistic development while co-curricular activities play an integral role in holistic development of students and assist in developing critical skills and abilities to be successful and happy in the present era of competition in each and every field. Therefore, importance of co-curricular activities is immense during school and college education.

Co-curricular activities are very important because even though they are not a part of core curriculum, they play a very crucial role in giving boys and girls the ability to shape up their lives. The school activities have to be designed purposefully to give an apt mix of student's participation in academics and also to create a chance for all-round development. The importance of co-curricular activities cannot be ignored. To understand the importance of co-curricular activities, let us see how these activities benefit students:

In the present era, a student or a learner is required to have holistic development through his or her education. Regular involvement in more than one activity reflects the talent and potential of the student. When theoretical curriculum and co-curricular activities are integrated together, then the chance of learning more and exploring more about your strengths, interests, and abilities becomes higher. Therein lies the importance of co-curricular activities which are supplementary to the theoretical curriculum. It is true that much of your intellectual development happens, to a great extent, in the classroom itself. But, various other aspects of your personality such as emotional development and social skill development happen through co-curricular activities to a large extent. The key role and importance of co-curricular activities cannot be denied in holistic development. Besides, this when applying for admission in colleges for higher degrees, these students get a preference too. While pursuing these activities in college along with education students learn prioritization and time management skills too. These academically and co-circularly talented students have well-groomed personality, which helps them to face the world in a better way.

Such activities increase opportunities interaction with society and development of new relations. Most of these activities are group- activities which includes the students from different backgrounds, these interactions give them a chance to more know about people of different passions and cultures. Besides, this they can also form find clubs or houses or groups that share similar social and cultural interests for socialization. Interaction with people of different niches backgrounds helps in development of interpersonal skills of students.

The goal of co-curricular activities is to give better fitness to students and inculcate a sense of sportsmanship, competitive spirit, leadership, meticulousness, cooperation and team spirit. Thus, many institutions are appreciating the importance of co-curricular activities and integrating a number of co-curricular activities in their syllabus and making it mandatory for the students to choose their interest in co-curricular activities from a list of options. The hidden motive behind all this is to develop self-confidence and trust in others. Co-curricular activities in school help hone the talents of young minds and give them an opportunity to develop their specialized skills. Competitions that are organized can create a competitive environment and help them work towards continuous improvement in their skills. Therefore, a number of schools are now understanding the importance of co-curricular activities right from the early stages of school so that students can benefit in the future as well.

Studies have shown that students pursuing their hobbies achieved better results in their studies. Their academic performance goes way up as they learn to balance their co-curricular activities with their academic pursuits. They also better understand how to manage their time efficiently and also increase their interest in the school. It is essential to understand the importance of co-curricular activities in improving academic performance.

Students are introduced to a whole new horizon of activities that give them better insights and let them choose what they enjoy and what they wish to learn. It broadens new horizons for them. These activities stimulate playing, painting, acting, dancing, singing, speaking, and many other skills in students. Thus, co-curricular activities broaden the scope of students in learning and exploring new activities. Thus, the importance of co-curricular activities is a lot in this aspect. When students in their early life are given some responsibility or a task to handle like an application of first aid or managing the class painting board, etc. their efficiency to handle such situations becomes much better. This fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability. Extracurricular activities teach students to work for a common goal that ultimately develops a sense of responsibility in these students. It increases the level of confidence and also build cooperation among them. They learn about team work and leadership. They learn to face the challenges that will come later in education and then in career. Extracurricular activities like sports require a person to be physically fit. Thus students have to be particular about their health and diet. Co-curricular activities require students to stay active at school by participating. As students have no option to skip these activities such as athletics, gymnastics, yoga, indoor games, and meditation, etc. because they are part of their curriculum. This makes the importance of co-curricular activities very high. Co-curricular activities are helpful for students as they enhance physical fitness as well as mental health of a student and also help in relieving students from academic stress.

Some skills and values that can be developed through cultural and co-curricular activities are:

- Critical thinking - examining concepts, ideas, problems, and issues
 - Logical and analytical thinking - analyzing reasons behind events and situations
 - Problem-solving skills - solving problems utilizing various concepts, solutions, etc.
 - Creative thinking - thinking of newer ways to solve problems; visualization; thinking of new ideas
 - Problem-solving skills - solving problems utilizing various concepts, solutions, etc.
 - Leadership skills - taking initiatives and responsibilities; influencing others in working for a good purpose; setting goals; motivating others to work towards goals; taking accountability
 - Social skills - collaboration; teamwork; building good relationships with others
 - Emotional skills - understanding your strengths and weaknesses; controlling your emotions; empathy for others
 - Technology skills - using various computer software and apps for getting things done
 - Communication skill - the power of expression; listening to others; public speaking
 - Social values - respecting differences among individuals; respecting others values and culture
 - Ethical values - maintaining ethics in public life; good moral values
 - Recreational values - understanding the importance of leisure and recreation; participating in leisure and recreational activities.
- Hence the students should be given more and more opportunities to explore their interests and abilities as importance of co-curricular and cultural activities cannot be denied. In order to instill the 'all-rounder' or 'holistic' factor in students, co-curricular activities in school are being integrated with academic curriculum in schools across the world and this integrated school curriculum is being appreciated. The rewards of co-curricular activities in schools have been researched pretty well and it is now ascertained that students who participate in these activities show better academic results, stronger relationships in schools and are more likely to lead a healthy and active lifestyle. Moreover, students also feel a sense of belonging to the school and have higher self-esteem by participating in structured activities like music, dance, performing arts, etc. In addition to this, students become more motivated to perform better in their academics. This makes the students feel happier, healthier and involved. This establishes the importance of cultural & Co-curricular activities clearly.

Cracking Civil Services exam

■ VIJAY GARG

The civil services main examination is not only a test of the knowledge of the candidates. It also tests their ability to write well- structured answers in limited time. Writing 'good' i.e. marks fetching answers in the UPSC examination is not something that comes naturally to most candidates. Not even those with a flair for writing. The ability to write good answers is developed by regular practice. An aspirant should aim at developing a personalized style of writing answers while meeting the requirements of the examination. Many candidates are under the misconception that a good answer is unique and exceptional. In fact, one will be ill-advised to aim to write 'perfect' answers or those which 'stand out' in the IAS exam. Then, what constitutes a 'good' answer? In the UPSC exam; a good answer is one which is relevant, meets the demands of the question, sticks to the word limit and is finished in time.

Here are some tips for writing good answers in the examination:-

Read questions carefully: It is extremely important to first, read the question properly. The candidate may highlight the important words in the question. They should clearly understand the demands of the question. Certain words in the question; like elucidate, critically analyse, enumerate, etc. need to be paid special attention to. They determine the main demand of the question. It is important for the candidate to be aware of their meanings. Careful reading of the question helps the candidate to write an answer which is relevant.

Organising answers: It is important that one's answer has a broad, well laid out structure. It makes the answer more presentable and easier to read. The answer may begin with a short

introduction. Typically, one may define the key terms in the introduction, quote a recent report or highlight some relevant facts. In the main body, the candidate may give appropriate sub-headings for each part of the question. The content may be presented in points form to facilitate an easy read. The conclusion may sum up the main arguments in the answer. Alternatively, you may end the answer on an optimistic note. If the question deals with certain socio-economic or governance-related issues; one may offer practical solutions in the end. A well- structured answer is easier said than done. Towards this end, one may develop a rough sketch of the answer in 30-50 seconds, before actually penning it down.

Writing in limited time: Important challenge candidates face in the UPSC exam - writing short and to-the-point answers in limited time. When a typical candidate begins writing practice, it takes him anywhere between 15 and 25 minutes to answer a 10 marks question. In the UPSC exam, one has to attempt a 250 marks question paper in 180 minutes, leaving one with 7.2 minutes for a 10 marks question Increasing one's writing speed to answer a 10 marks question in 7.2 minutes satisfactorily may seem daunting at first, but is imperative.

Creative presentation: Using creative presentation tools like flow charts and diagrams make the answers more appealing to the examiner. They can also help the candidate save time. It is thus, important to be innovative while using them. However, their optimal use requires familiarity. Thus, their repeated use during answer writing practice helps.

Sticking to word limit: It is important to not only know what to write, but also what not to write. Crossing the word limit will not fetch more marks. Instead, you will lose precious time. It

will make it difficult for you to answer the other questions in the paper satisfactorily. The keywords in the answer may be highlighted by underlining or writing in capital letters. The typically highlighted words include scholars' names, key facts, government reports and important concepts. This helps the examiner easily identify the important points of your answer. Last but not the least, developing a writing style in sync with the needs of the UPSC examination requires rigorous writing practice. Regular writing practice is one of the most vital and also most neglected aspects of the UPSC preparation. The candidate may start with writing at a lesser frequency. As he proceeds in preparation, the candidate may increase the number and frequency of questions attempted. Particularly after the preliminary examination, the candidate must attempt several full length practice tests. With practice, the candidate's answer writing technique will evolve.

Candidates may get their answers checked by an experienced examiner. They may also compare their answers with model answers prepared by teachers and mentors. Alternatively, one can benchmark against the answers written by previous years' successful candidates. Continuous evaluation of one's answers by self as well as others is very important. Feedback offered by others should be a source of learning, and lead to improvement. Any shortcomings that are noticed should be rectified in the subsequent answers. Importantly, most of the successful candidates attempt all the question papers fully, which requires a lot of speed and practice. Each successful candidate eventually develops a unique and individualized writing style. Even a few more marks earned here and there can transform your story of struggle into a success story.

people, wherever they settled all over world gelled with local people just like sugar in milk but suddenly they are viewed with lenses of suspicion. Why?

Chinese Public if go back a little this global perception started changing soon after Hu Jintao was succeeded by Xi Jinping. Even during Hu Jintao China was growing but nobody was feeling threatened. Investments in China was considered safest bet. Entire world shifted their manufacturing to China making it a Global Factory. Perception started to change soon after Xi took charge. Why?

China always had border issues with many neighbouring nations both land and Sea but border issues were never hindered Chinese close alignment with neighbours. Infact border issues always remained secondary but Commerce remained a primary Bonding factor. Again all this started to change since 2014 Why?

Today China is Supply Chain Hegemon. Entire world is relying on Made in China production. Image of China is - Set up factory in China and forget everything. But now all those who invested in China are looking for alternative. China + one is new Global manufacturing Mantra. CHINA + one means keep alternative to Made in China. Such is the extent of insecurity. China started looking insecure manufacturing unit. Why?

China never had Democracy and good human rights record even then China was never criticised that much in past. Today China still doesn't have Democracy but there is great improvement in human rights (leaving apart Xingiang & Hongkong) but there are attempts to counter

China on Human Rights issues wherever possible. China is forced to defend its image. China is forced to engage Wolf warriors to counter global image. It was never like this. Why?.

All over Globe there is a havoc courtesy COVID-19 Pandemic. Wuhan was first city where it was noticed first. Various theories were floated regarding origin of virus. Wuhan animal market, Wuhan laboratory leak, Bat to animal transmission etc. Somehow China took it as National Insult and started dodging these theories. China did its best to settle Investigation at global forums. China deliberately tried to delay and hinder WHO investigation. Its result was - China trying to clean Crime scene. WHO presented its report it says - All Theories regarding Virus Origen possible. China just did not co operate. Why?

China always maintains that it is most peaceful Nation. China always conveyed it never had aggressive designs. China is sharing border with 14 countries and is having border issues with 18 countries. Border issues are not new as I mentioned earlier. Border issues never overshadowed Chinese foreign relations. Now situation is different. All smaller nations who felt being bullied by China are uniting and putting up a united front. International Grouping like QUAD is gaining momentum. My question all these developments are taking place for last few years. WHY?

If somehow common Chinese man able to read this letter then they must 'think over it'.

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