

DIVERSIVE

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WHAT DOES THE TERM 'HERITAGE' MEAN TO CHILDREN?

By Dr. Shruti Shankar Gaur

The following research article is extracted from Pole Star, a children's book on the theme of culture & heritage, published by RIEDU in 2021.

Continuing with the last question talked about in [newsletter 7](#), the next question in the survey was, "What do you mean by the term 'Heritage'?"

Most children had heard of the term before. Even if they couldn't quite describe what it was in their own words (32% of the participants were unable to), they placed it close to culture and the past. The concept of heritage being both our past - our inheritance - as well as our future - what we choose to keep - eluded them.

Heritage is all that influences us, past or present, and how we choose to respond to them by choosing what carries on to the future. Even this newsletter is heritage in the making, and if we survive long enough, it will be deemed such too.

The responses received from the respondents were shortlisted into six categories. The most highlighted finding was that children associated heritage to intangible things (language, traditions, music, dance etc.) more than the tangible (forts, monuments, property/ money from ancestors. The thought of the natural habitat being part of heritage didn't cross their minds.

them to the richness and diversity of cultures worldwide. Be it their roots or the fruits of others; cultures are experiences well worth partaking in.

As parents, educators, and members of society, we are responsible for fostering a positive understanding of culture and heritage among children. Visiting museums, participating in cultural events, reading books, or watching movies portraying different cultures are good starting points.

Ask your child today: "What is your understanding of heritage?"

Feel free to share the responses with us at themarshmallow.riedu@gmail.com

RIEDU TEAM

Editor-in-Chief

[Dr. Shruti Shankar Gaur](#)

Content Creator & Editor

[Ayushman Harlalka](#)

Designer

Riddhima Gangwal

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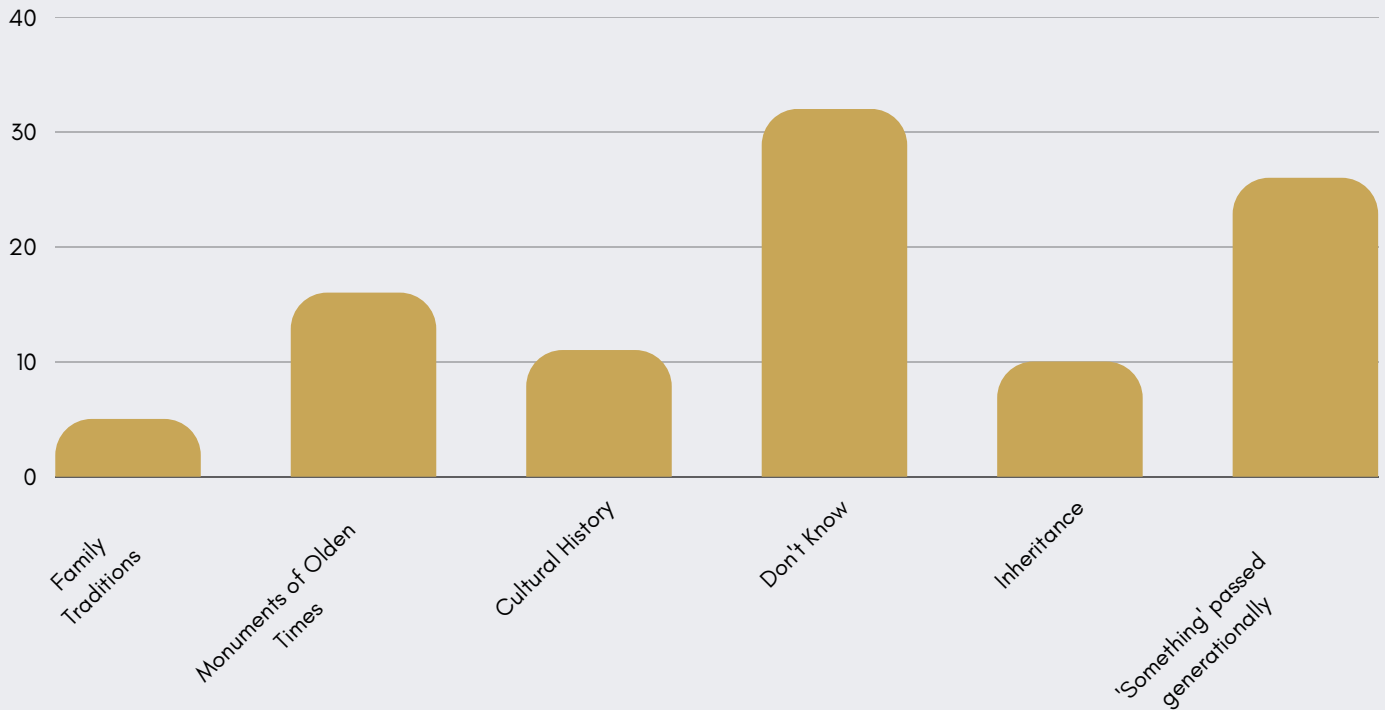
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WHAT DOES THE TERM "HERITAGE" MEAN TO CHILDREN?



Insights

- The responses were shortlisted into six categories.
- 32% respondents were unable to describe Heritage in their own words.
- 26% children believed Heritage as 'something' intangible passed from one generation to another.
- 10% respondents believed Heritage as tangible things we get from parents/grandparents.
- 16% & 11% respondents related heritage to historical monuments & cultural history respectively

WONDER TO WANDER

Scientists still scratch their heads over how the pyramids were built. Ancient Indus Valley Civilization's sewage system is better than many modern cities' sewage systems. We still need to find out how several temples across India were built. The Greeks had proclaimed the world to be around much before it was established as fact.

We still need to understand that much was accomplished before the contemporary era. Whether it be indecipherable symbols of the Egyptian hieroglyphics or the burned books of Nalanda University, much will remain lost to time.

If ruins, despite their shambles, are magnificent enough to inspire awe, how do you think they looked at their peak? What things, tangible or not, do you think we will leave behind when the present becomes humanity's past?

Feel free to share the responses with us at themarshmallow.riedu@gmail.com

HERITAGE WITH A HEART OF STORIES

An article by Ayushman Harlalka

If heritage were a heart, literature would be its set of arteries; and veins. Arteries because they propagate the important. Veins because they challenge the prominent. Surely literature wouldn't be the entire circulatory system, but I digress.

Literature carries an important part in humanity's story; it has always been the species' capability to store and transmit information in time-resistant methods that led to its growth. Be it oral, written, analogue, or even digital, literature is a means of communicating with the present and the future. It is a means of listening to the past. It is the medium of intervening emotions and information for them to last. And in those combinations, in those stories, we find tidbits of ourselves and the world at large.

Heritage is what we get, what we make do with, and what we leave behind. If Shakespeare's words were to be taken true, if we truly were just actors in the world's play, then heritage is the plot we contribute to. Simply by living, by believing in certain ideas and rejecting others, by making our choices, good or bad, we contribute to it. Literature then captures it all. It is a snapshot of how things are and, for the revolutionaries, of how things ought to be too. It is both descriptive and prescriptive, driving us forward. They may serve as cautionary tales to help society (like how fairy tales discourage children from entering the forest and encourage traits like kindness) or commentaries like Jane Austen, whose works stand up for women.

And once literature gets old enough, it tells us about old structures. Just like how the Odessey tells us about ancient Greece, or the Epic of Gilgamesh illustrates what was important to Mesopotamia, it gives a peek into the past. It enables us to interact with ideas older than empires (Meditations by Marcus Aurelius has, at this point, guided leaders for longer than the entire Roman empire has reigned) and enables future aspiration (a lot of scientists today were influenced by sci-fi literature when they were young).

Literature has a significant role to play in creating the shared 'imagined reality' that Yuval Noah Harari mentioned in Sapiens. It mirrors the world we live in. Similarly, banned literature mirrors our shame as a society. Or it mirrors the very ideas that can lead to growth or social change. Either way, literature inherits it all – present and the past; our shame and laurels; social beliefs and the future visions. It is up to us to choose what we want to do with it.

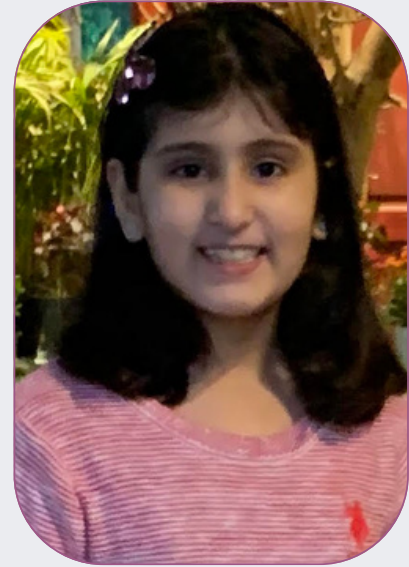


WHAT CULTURE & HERITAGE MEANS TO ME

Article by Tashvi Arora

To me, culture is the native food, dress we wear, language we speak. It is practically the common way of life for a group of people. It means the way we do common things that bind us. Thus, culture represents the practices followed, food, dresses, language, festivals, religion etc. Heritage is the characteristics that are passed down through the years from one generation to the next. I learned about heritage when I researched my family tree. It brought me closer to my family & ancestors. I love to celebrate different festivals with my friends and family. I am proud of my culture and heritage. Most of the time we follow & learn from our culture and heritage, but we should not follow it blindly, rather try to find the plus and minus values of it. Often during festivals, when we all are merry celebrating, I think of the poor. They don't have anything yet I see them smiling & celebrating in simple ways. I would like to start a new culture of helping the poor & needy especially on every special occasion. As per me it will be a good gesture. Who knows it is carried forward by the coming generations and they call it 'Tashvi's Heritage' and I create a new culture. Wow! How wonderful it would be!

RIEDU INSPIRE



Tashvi Arora
9 | Delhi-NCR, India

CROSSWORD

Across

5. The music band whose songs include "We Will Rock You" and "Bohemian Rhapsody"
6. study of the origin and development of human societies and cultures
7. A massive city of the Indus Valley Civilisation
8. mythological creature with a lion's body and a human head

Down

1. The statue given by France to USA, portraying the goddess of freedom
2. Patron God of the Aztec priesthood
3. One of the world's first collection of fairy tales
4. An iconic American monument in the mountains

