

Value creation of students

Design contributes to harmony in our lives and determines its quality, so it is imperative to inculcate a scientific temper in young talent and catalyse them towards economic re-invigoration

STUDENTS from 15 Delhi and NCR schools will play the role of modern-day Shah Jahans when they take up the onerous task of redesigning the face of the centuries-old Chandni Chowk.

Titled "Future Cities India 2020", the competition is aimed at building a scientific temper among students, said Dr R Sivakumar, the pioneer of the project and head of the NRDMS, Department of Science and Technology.

The task may seem tough but "it is quite challenging to redesign the oldest and one of the most crowded places in Old Delhi", said Harsewak Singh of Manava Bharati India International school, winner of last year's competition.

The busy trading centre is a part of Shahjahanabad or the "Walled city". Built in the 17th century by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, over an area of 569 hectares to house 60,000 people, it now houses over three lakh and is bursting at the seams.

Students have proposed underground parking, solar-powered trams, conversion of havelis into hotels, open-air eateries, ducting of cable wires, increased availability of water, improvisation of roads, raising the width and providing of 3 lanes of 3 feet. Said Arjun Hans of Amity



INNOVATIVE: Award winning model of 2008

International, Saket, "It is very interesting and takes us beyond the text book".

"They can visualise using the technology, using the software how real world can be projected on paper and understand what is the spatial relationship of one object between another object. It increases the inquisitiveness of the children and whets their appetite for innovation," said Dr Sivakumar, adding that some of their ideas are indeed innovative and taken up for consideration.

Last year the topic was the remodeling of New Delhi railway station. It was appreciated by the ministry of railways. They picked up all the top six models and it was displayed at their railway ministry premises. It was a very big achievement by the students, said Mohit Bradoo, programme manager, Bentley Systems, who are organising the competition along with the Department of Science and Technology.

This year they have to develop a conceptual model for the redevelopment of Chandni Chowk that will utilise the existing land and infrastructure. They have to propose at least three activities for social and recreational land use and to promote tourism while respecting the heritage structure in the region. A congestion-

free transportation plan and integrating principles of environmentally-sustainable design is also part of their task. Each school has one or two teams of four members each from 11th standard. The participants are shortlisted on the basis of an essay on the current topic, said Bradoo.

On why no

government school featured in the list, he said nobody qualified. Last year a Kendriya Vidyalaya participated.

Launched in 2006 as a pilot project with eight schools, it was proposed by former president APJ Abdul Kalam.

Future Cities 2020 is the replica of the competition held in the US for the last 18 years. The same format is adopted here except that it is customised to Indian levels. There the student focus is on seventh and eighth graders.

Bradoo explained that the children are given a challenge, given software and training but it is they who actually perform. Besides four students, the team has one faculty member from the school plus a mentor. A sum of Rs 5,000 is provided to each team.

A total of 100 hours is required to fulfil the task but since the challenge is more exciting some put in even more. The winner gets \$2,000 while the runners-up get \$1,000. The evaluation will be done in January next year.

Children are given concepts which take care of the existing scenario, issues and futuristic aspects. In the process, they learn many things not only about being an engineer or an architect but also how to work together as a group. Good team work and marketable skills are learnt, Bradoo concluded.

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