EDITOR'S NOTE

The education system does not function in isolation from the society of which it is a part. Socio-cultural, economic and political contexts of a country influence the education system. India is a pluralistic society marked with cultural and religious diversity. These diversities are also reflected in our educational institutions in general and school in particular. Anita Rampal and Deepti Srivastava in their paper 'Understanding Religious Diversity: I, the Other and Us' explored how children view themselves and other children in a school. The paper also analyses how the NCERT textbooks address the issue of religious diversity.

We are committed to ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender and social category, have access to quality education. This commitment is reiterated in various flagship programmes and initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act-2009 and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. Anita Nuna in her study tries to find out some of the barriers which prevent Muslim girls from entering into secondary stage of school education. Further, our cultural diversity is also reflective of its linguistic diversity with more than 1600 languages across the country. English has also created an important space in the multilingual scenario of our country. Now there has been a tremendous increase in public demand for teaching of English language from the primary classes in our multilingual country. The great demand for admission in English medium schools throughout the country is a testimony to the attraction of English among people living in rural and remote areas. Meenakshi Khar in her paper focuses on some of the reasons behind the spread of English in our country. R. Meganathan in his paper illustrates the ongoing exercise of curriculum renewal and development of material in English language education in Rajasthan.

National Curriculum Framework, 2005 advocates that there is a need to recognise children as natural learners having abilities to construct their own knowledge and to develop their capacities in relating to the physical and social environment around them. To realise this need, S.K. Mishra and Ajit Singh in their article discuss the changing role of both teachers and learners in the Constructivist Classroom. A Constructivist Classroom has a democratic environment supporting the active involvement of all students in collaborative activities. Rishabh Kumar Mishra's paper reports that pedagogic practices based on social constructivism can help our children in sustaining the essentials of 'learning to live together'.

Assessment and examination is an indispensable component of our educational system. This issue has been deliberated upon in four papers related to assessment and examination. Ranjana Bhatia, Sandhya Vij and Deepti Madhura in their paper highlight the stress level of secondary school students of Delhi especially during examination. Veer Pal Singh's paper elaborates some of the strategies which could be used by teachers to reduce examination stress among students. R.P. Rai in his paper analyses some of the causes of scholastic dishonesty among graduate students and concludes that teachers, students, guardians and administrators are collectively responsible for it. Nikita Rathod and A. Ramachary's study ascertains the significance of focal point and command word identification ability of B.Ed students in enhancing their answering competencies.

Educational researches being conducted in educational institutions provide new directions to teachers, teacher educators and educational administrators for curriculum development, its transaction and assessment strategies as well as policy formulation. Dipankar Tripathy in his paper shares his experiences regarding getting access, re-access and informed consents of the participants gained in an Indian school to conduct a qualitative study.

The issue concludes with Najmah Peerzada's essay reflecting on educational philosophy of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

— Academic Editor