

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Indian Constitution assures all citizens the right to equality of status and opportunity, including educational opportunities. It means all children should have equal opportunities to participate in educational processes, including children with special needs or children belonging to specific groups.

In this context, the Right to Education (RTE Act 2009), which makes elementary education a Fundamental Right of every child is of great significance. Our classrooms, now more so than before, need to be prepared to include students from different backgrounds with differing needs and abilities.

The written text of NCERT's Mahatma Gandhi Fourth Memorial Lecture, delivered by Justice Ajit Prakash Shah, also elaborates on the right to education of the disabled with focus on Indian context. The lecture concludes by stating that government should ensure all children with disabilities to have access to an inclusive education system.

Besides, corporal punishment which is classified as an act of violence and verbal and non-verbal abuse of children is banned in all Indian schools by law. However, it continues to feature in many schools and is used to humiliate children in front of their peers. Many teachers and even parents still believe that such punishment is important, unaware of the immediate and long-term detrimental effect of these practices. Benudhar Chinara and Soma Banerjee in their research paper reported that corporal punishment is given to students in some elementary schools of Nagaon district of Assam and even parents of the children are in favour of punishment in those schools.

Equal access to opportunity of women is another issue discussed in an article. Women are actively involved in economic activities inside and outside home at workplace. It is highly required that they are protected against sexual harassment at all work places to improve their participation in overall progress resulting in their economic empowerment and inclusive growth as a whole. India has recently passed the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013. Shraddha Deva in her paper examines the problem of sexual harassment of female teachers in select Kendriya Vidyalayas situated in Agra.

A lot of measures have been initiated by government and non-government organisations to improve education of children belonging to SC, ST and children from other religious minorities. Three papers in this

issue highlight that concern. Malli Gandhi in his paper advocates mother tongue as medium of instruction for tribal children and suggests taking suitable measures to help tribal children bridge the gap between their home languages and state language. Manoranjan Pradhan's study on perceptions of teachers about issues and problems associated with schools located in tribal areas and presents suggestive measures given by teachers to provide quality education to tribal children. Savita Kaushal in her paper analyses the policies and schemes initiated to improve participation of Muslims in Indian education and identifies gaps that are responsible for the educational backwardness of Muslims.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched to provide quality education to all children with provision of Alternative Schools. In this respect, Chiter Rekha analyses the role, functions and activities of Alternative Schools functioning under SSA for elementary education of children in Delhi.

Technology has brought about a huge transformation in the education system. Now students and teachers are increasingly making use of information and communication technology in teaching learning processes and, as a result, overall efficiency and quality of the education system is bound to improve. Two articles talk about the use of ICT facilitating teaching learning.

Rajaram S. Sharma in his article tries to explain the genesis of National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER), an initiative of NCERT and the Government of India whereas Pranita Gopal discusses the use of some problem solving skills by pre-service student teachers to develop online Question Bank using the Hot Potatoes software.

The issue also includes written text of speech given by Honourable President of India on the occasion of Teachers' Day 2014 and a review of book, entitled 'Pedagogy of Science: Textbook for B.Ed. (Physical Science) Part II', done by Jasim Ahmad and Aerum Khan.

Academic Editor