

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers

One of the aims of education is to inculcate values and attitudes of 'tolerance' among children. In the recent past, there has been sensational media reports about government, political leaders, institutions and constitutional bodies. There has been a tendency in general to pass on this information, often based on unfounded allegation, to next person without filtering it on a screen of truth. It does not do any good to the society and functioning of democratic institutions. The first article "The Need for a Restraint" under 'Impressions' impress upon exercising restraint and being objective in our dealings. It is important for all of us, but more so for teachers, who have the responsibility to transmit values and attitudes in children for building a tolerant society and strengthening democratic institutions. The article suggests, rather than sensationalizing media reports further, we should analyze and discuss social issues like violence against women, rape of girls/women, dowry, female feticide, etc.

Under the section Early Childhood Education (ECE) two articles have been included. The first is on "Fostering Creativity among Young Children" and the second is "Emerging Challenges in Early Childhood Education: A Psycho-social Perspective." The first article highlights how children's own work could be effectively used to foster their creativity. Examples of children's drawings and paintings have been given to prove the point. It provides guidelines for teachers what to do and what not to do for developing creativity among children. The second article analyses programmes of ECE in three sectors, viz. government, private and NGO. The challenges and issues to enhance the quality of these programmes have been highlighted.

There have been numerous feedbacks from the field about the gaps between the theory and practice as far as implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) is concerned. It has been our endeavour to interact with teachers, educators and other stakeholders to achieve effective implementation of CCE and keep them abreast about the new initiatives and experiences from the field. In this issue we have included three articles on CCE focusing on different aspects of its implementation. The first is titled "Assessment Integrated with Learning of Mathematics at Elementary Stage". It attempts to define assessment, evaluation and grading to make things more clearer and implementable for teachers. It explains through suitable examples how CCE can be implemented in constructivist

paradigm. The article focuses on formative, summative evaluation and integrating evaluation with teaching-learning process at the elementary stage. The second article “Assessment Practices at School Stage: The Case of CCE – A School-based Assessment Implemented by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in its Affiliated Schools” analyses the existing assessment practices in CBSE-affiliated schools vis-à-vis what is ideally expected from the CCE. It highlights that the basic purpose of CCE is misunderstood and the practices appear to be ritualistic in nature rather than child-centred. The paper suggests that for effective implementation of CCE teacher education has to be more sensitive to emerging demands of school system. It recommends that pre-service and in-service training of teachers need to be reoriented to bring CCE in its right perspective.

The third article “Continuous Assessment in Classroom – Prospects for Improvement” critically analyses how CCE is being practised in schools and what are the gap areas in existing practices in government and CBSE schools. It explains the meaning and purpose of formative and summative evaluation and the role teacher is expected to perform in the learning paradigm of constructivist approach. Suggesting ways how planning for CCE could be done, it visualizes future prospects for improvement in CCE implementation.

Two studies have been included in this issue pertaining to the quality of elementary education. The focus of Right to Education Act, 2009 implemented from 1st April 2010 has been that all children in 6-14 age group have the access to elementary education and all children receive education of comparable quality. To achieve this target it would be necessary to focus on children of urban slums and other disadvantaged sections of society. The first research study “Factors Affecting Learning Outcomes of Children at the Elementary School Level” is an attempt to highlight those factors which influence children’s learning outcomes. It analyses school and home factors which are associated with children’s learning and interpreting the results of the study in the context of slum children’s background. It suggests ways to improve the learning outcomes of children by addressing those issues which influence learning outcomes of children negatively. The second study is on “Gender Discrimination in Primary School English Language Textbooks in Tamil Nadu”. It analyses the English textbooks from Classes I to IV and points out the nature and magnitude of sex stereotypes that have been perpetuated. Gender specific games, toys, dress, school uniform, names of children and gender specific use of language like mankind, manpower used in these textbooks have been

highlighted to indicate the gender biases being practiced. There are two articles related to implementation of RTE Act-2009. The first article 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Elementary Education-2009' brings into focus various issues of quality at elementary stage. It emphasizes quality of elementary education as prime determinant of whether 'Education for All' will be achieved by 2015 or not. It suggests various measures to improve teaching-learning process, infrastructure facilities, training of teachers and monitoring of pupils' progress for better learning outcomes. The second article "Understanding the Role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in the context of Effective Implementation of the Right to Education Act-2009 focuses on the urgent need to empower and mobilise community for effective RTE implementation.

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Editorial Team

G. C. Upadhyay, Padma Yadav, Kirti Kapur
Kavita Sharma, Kiran Devendra