

1. In the July-October, 2012 issue of *The Primary Teacher*, a teacher from SDMC, Pratibha Vidyalaya asked if it is all right to have one section with English as medium of instructions at primary stage.

**Dr Kirti Kapur, Associate Professor, Department of Education in Languages (DEL), NCERT replies:**

- \* Primary education is essentially language education. The medium of instruction at the level of primary school must be the mothertongue(s) of learners, building upon the rich experiential, linguistic, and cognitive resources that they bring to schools.
- \* Where qualified teachers and adequate infrastructural facilities are available, English may be introduced from the primary level, but for the first couple of years it should focus largely on oral-aural skills, simple lexical items, or some day-to-day conversation.
- \* Use of the language of children should not be forbidden in the English class, and the teaching should as far as possible be located in a text that would make sense to the child. If trained teachers are not available, English should be introduced at the post-primary stage and its quantum increased in such a way the learners should soon reach the levels of their classmates who started learning English early.
- \* Every possible effort should be made to build bridges between the languages of home, peer group, and neighbourhood, on the one hand, and the languages of the school, on the other. Even in English-medium schools, mothertongues should be developed to function as media and to allow learners to switch from one medium to the other without a change of school.

**2. Marks as eligibility criteria for admission/scholarship tests**

The Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) suggests that there should be no terminal or summative evaluation. CCE discourages awarding marks or grades and classifying students on the basis of marks. The CCE schemes developed by NCERT and also SCERT, Uttar Pradesh, do not recommend awarding marks or adding these to arrive at a 'terminal' score.

However, the eligibility criteria for appearing in admission test of Navodaya Vidyalaya is 60 per cent marks, at the end of Class V. Schools are required to certify that a student has achieved 60 per cent or more marks. How can schools certify percentage in case of CCE? Also the eligibility to apply for scholarship tests such as National Talent Search Examination has eligibility criteria in terms of marks.

There is need for dialogue between agencies conducting these tests and NCERT and SCERTs to reach a common understanding. Guidelines may be issued to schools and teachers.

— A Teacher  
Government Primary school  
Ghaziabad, U.P.