

## EDITORIAL

### **Non-detention Policy**

The low learning levels reported in National Achievement Survey conducted by NCERT and also in a study by Pratham raised questions about non-detention policy. Teachers say that promoting all children to next higher class, irrespective of their learning achievement, is responsible for low learning levels in Classes IV and V. Parents say that teachers do not teach and students do not learn because there is no terminal examination and no fear of failure. With no examination and no failure, there is no check on the performance of teachers and students.

To find answer to the question 'why students do not learn and achieve the desired levels of learning', we need to look at our existing school practices. In a traditional teacher-centred classroom, teacher teaches and covers the syllabus by reading the textbook and writing questions and answers on the blackboard. Students listen to the teacher and copy from the blackboard. Students are examined on the information provided by the teacher. Students memorise the questions and answers, and reproduce same in the examination. Students learn by 'rote'. Students are not engaged in learning activities. Self-learning is not encouraged. With rote learning practices, children fail to solve new/unfamiliar problems or to write anything on their own. Teachers need to reflect upon their traditional teaching practices and also reconsider their philosophies of teaching and learning.

The *National Curriculum Framework-2005* observes that students study to pass the examination and teachers prepare them to pass the examination. This represents a distortion in the aims of education. The aim of education is all-round development of children – physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. School should provide learning experiences that facilitate development and learning. Teaching to tests leads to rote learning, and fails to achieve the major objectives of education.

The non-detention policy presumes that teachers teach and ensure that all children achieve the learning levels required for their all-round development. Students learning progress is assessed continuously and corrective measures are taken when teaching learning is still fluid.

The RTE Act envisages a child-centred classroom, where children are provided opportunities to explore, discover and learn through activities. Each child must be engaged in meaningful activities. Teachers need to design learning activities that are relevant, useful and related to children's life and context. Learning progress of children must be assessed continuously. The feedback

from this assessment must be used to improve teaching-learning process. The RTE Act recommends continuous and comprehensive assessment of children. Teachers need to maintain record of students' work as evidence of learning.

Researches reveal that children learn when they are actively engaged in the process of learning. Learning is an active process and children are active participants in the learning process. How can a child fail if she/he is actively engaged in the learning process and her/his progress is continuously assessed? There is need to develop capacities of teachers to design a variety of learning activities and to assess learning progress of children on these activities.

To make non-detention policy a success, teachers and schools need to ensure that each child develops and learns. Learning environment is child-friendly, free from fear, trauma and anxiety.

— **Academic Editor**