



## There is no Alternative to This

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Six to ten years of age is appropriate, suitable and wonderful for natural learning. What one learns at this age proves decisive for future plans and laying the quality foundations of a subject. A child of this age coming to school is most ready for learning. It is based on this that many of the recommendations for the implementation of educational schemes, including CCE, are made. These schemes are still on their way, dreaming of reaching their destination.

The Right to Education Act 2009 may well be considered to be the beginning of a new, second era in the field of education. In its light not only has there been an expectation of trying to develop an understanding about the child with utmost attention, an initiative has also been taken to create an environment for every class of society to surely pay attention to this. Changes in points of view, the way we look at things, is a major component in the journey of civilisation and in these thousands of years human beings have been able to understand that to be human is the only achievement worth being mentioned. As Ghalib has said -

*‘Bas ke dushvaar hai har kaam kaa aasaan honaa  
Aadmi ko bhi mayassar nahin insaan honaa’*

(It is difficult for each task to become easy. So much so that it is not given to Man to become a human being)

What is the journey from being a man to becoming a human being? This is the journey we know as being that of education – this at least is the expectation from education. When a child joins this journey, (s)he becomes a sensitive and responsible person who can be called a human being, not by bookish knowledge but through practical, self-constructed knowledge that is naturally put into practice.

But it seems that we have got ourselves into a situation in which a child is transforming into an instrument rather than a human being – or growing up into a man, living and viewing life from just one angle. We have tied him to examinations, made the examinations more traditional and forced him to memorise books like a parrot. We are doing nothing but testing and examining, without becoming a teacher - a ‘guru’ – expecting the child to continue demonstrating his being a student. We forget that

*Parakhna mat, parakhne mein koi apna nahiin rahtaa  
Kisii bhi aaine mein deir tak chehra nahiin rahtaa*

‘Test and examine not, for in doing so none remains our own

No mirror can retain a face for long’

Any way of examining in which whatever is aimed at does not remain, could be dangerous. And what is aimed at is supposed to be someone full of feelings, someone who understands relationships. I have no hesitation in saying that the present, recommended scheme of Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation encompasses this aim within its framework.

For CCE to be projected amongst the children, first the teacher, including the learning institutes, will have to re-establish beliefs and postulations in accordance with changes in the present. Monitoring agencies will also have to not only accept this but make efforts towards establishing this. If this happens, it is possible that our community too will accept it. I write on the basis of my experiences in implementing it in my school as the Headmaster of a school that while interacting and working with students, each one of these influences will have to adopt just one principle – of continuing efforts with hope and patience.

We begin the daily routine of our school with a prayer meet. This prayer should not be considered as just the practice of spiritual joy and bliss, nor should one nurture a big hope in this context. The only significant thing here is the collective spirit. Following this, children have to go through self-evaluation in the class. This is an interesting, creative task that can be done, the only condition being that the one who conducts it is a committed and enthusiastic person. Undoubtedly, children understand the meaning of daily routine when the teacher does just this much. If CCE is able to create this awareness, this is adequate enough because a person is successful in life only after being able to manage his daily life. It is actually not easy to manage a group of children with different individual capabilities but this is difficult only till such time as the one who manages them is passive or works without a context. CCE also teaches how

alert a teacher should be, for (s)he is driving a class and has a great accountability.

Children in the six to fourteen age-group are playful and naughty and there is bound to be a lot of noise when there are many of them around. But why be bothered by this? A teacher with even a little bit of wisdom and understanding can make use of this situation in such a way that children begin talking about useful things. There are elements for creating such an understanding in the CCE – working on project-tasks, getting activities done, teaching in an interesting manner in consonance with the nature of subjects, examining home-work, commenting, preparation before teaching, encouraging children etc.

There are some formulae that are the bases of CCE and are the backbone of the teaching method of the new times. I feel that this a method without alternative, and whenever teaching methodologies will dream of a change within themselves, the help and support of CCE will surely have to be sought for the dream to become a reality.

*(Translated from the Hindi by Sri Ramnik Mohan)*

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