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Perception of Teachers, Parents and Students about Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation at Elementary School Level in Odisha

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Abstract : *The investigator undertook a study related to perception of teachers, parents and students about continuous and comprehensive evaluation. Qualitative survey method was followed for the present study. Samples of twenty elementary schools were selected randomly from Jajpur district of Odisha. Thirty elementary school teachers and fifty parents consisted the sample of the present study. Seven focus group discussions were done with students in different elementary schools. The size of focus group was varied from 8 to 10. Students were taken from upper primary classes (VI to VIII) between the age group 11 to 14 years. A questionnaire for teachers and an interview schedule for students were developed by the investigator in Odia language to collect relevant data. Data were analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. It is found that though most of the teachers said that they are aware about CCE, but the way they responded the items shows that they are not much aware about CCE. Similarly, parents and community members are also not aware about CCE. Teachers are least bothered even to inform the parents about the assessment results. It is found that lack of adequate teachers is one of the major reasons for not implementing CCE scheme in true spirit.*

Keywords: *Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, Perception, Teachers, Parents, Students*

Backdrop

One of the guiding principles of National curriculum framework (NCF 2005) is "ensuring that learning is shifted away from rote methods". Hence, importance should be given for comprehensive evaluation to assess development of important skills and abilities, higher order thinking skills like, problem solving, reasoning, creative thinking and judgement, etc. Learners should be assessed about their competency in curricular subjects, other curricular subjects, curricular activities and socio-personal qualities. Curricular subjects include assessment of subjects like, language, mathematics, science and

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social sciences. NCF (2005) identified four other curricular areas which need to be assessed: work, the arts and heritage crafts, health and physical education, and peace. Curricular activities include assessment of Literary and scientific activities (such as, library reading, debate, recitation, creative writing, speech-making, science club, etc.); Cultural activities (such as, drama, music, dance, drawing and painting, sculpture, artistic embroidery); and Outdoor activities (such as, games, sports, Scouting, NCC, First Aid, Junior Red Cross, study tour, excursion, community services, gardening, etc). Socio-personal qualities include assessment of regularity, punctuality, discipline, habits of cleanliness, emotional stability, initiative, cooperation, sense of responsibility, entrepreneurship, civic consciousness, spirit of social service, attitudes (towards teachers, studies, schoolmates, school programmes, school property), physical health, etc.

Another guiding principle of NCF (2005) is "making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life". Constructivists say learners who have been engaged to construct new knowledge are expected to learn more during assessment (Brooks and Brooks, 1993). Hence, assessment should be a continuous process. Sustained efforts of learners should be evaluated on a continuous basis instead of one time term-end examination. There should be regularity in assessing learners. It may be through class test, unit test, monthly test, half-yearly or annual examination. Techniques of assessment may include written, oral, practical examination; observation; medical check-up; etc.

Hence, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), refers to a system of school based evaluation of students that cover evaluation of curricular subjects, other curricular subjects, curricular activities and socio-personal qualities on a regular basis. It is a development process of assessment which emphasizes on two fold objectives: 1) Comprehensiveness in evaluation covering all aspects of students' personality and 2) continuity in evaluation which should be both process and product oriented.

Rationale of the study

NCF-2005 says, "Each school should evolve a flexible and implementable scheme of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), primarily for diagnosis, remediation and enhancing of learning" (p.115). Right to Education Act, 2009 in its section-29 (2), clause-h recommended for comprehensive and continuous evaluation of child's understanding of knowledge and his/her ability to apply the same. NCF-2005 has already been implemented in almost all the states. The CBSE had initiated the scheme of CCE and Grading System in all schools affiliated to it. By and large the scheme has been accepted and implemented whole heartedly by the schools. NCF-2005 has already been implemented in Odisha. States instituted curriculum and textbooks reform based on child-centric assumptions elaborated in NPE-1986/92, NCF-2005, and RTE Act, 2009. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has initiated number of steps towards improving the quality of elementary education in the state. SSA provides support under Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP). LEP funds are utilized for developing modules and exemplar material for teaching learning, teacher training and for implementing CCE scheme.

Rosario (2012) conducted a study on whether continuous assessment in higher education support student learning. The findings illustrate the need to consider more effective and efficient ways in which feedback can be better used to facilitate student learning. Cano (2011) conducted a case study on students' involvement in continuous assessment methodologies. Analysis of the results established that most students preferred to participate in the course following the new methodology. Cruickshank, et al. (1975) found that majority of students in all years preferred a continuous examination system to conventional final exams. Most students also thought that they worked harder under the present scheme than they would have done with final exams and found that examinations helped their attempts to

study seriously. However, some students complained that continuous assessment put them under a perpetual strain.

Singhal (2012) revealed that teachers are not adequately prepared for the effective execution of CCE in government schools. Further, large number of students in the classes, lack of appropriate training, inadequate infrastructure and teaching materials and increased volume of work act as barriers in smooth execution of CCE. Bhattacharjee and Sarma (2009) found that co-scholastic activities have not earned a proper place in the school routine. Teachers did not have any kind of formal training to handle the co-scholastic activities. There was also no evaluation of these activities either half yearly or annually. Rao (2006) found that as a result of training in CCE, teachers had improved their questioning skills in the classrooms and other evaluation practices pertaining to scholastic areas and personal and social qualities of students which were continuous and comprehensive in nature.

Pani (2004) found that CCE has significant effect on both scholastic areas and coscholastic areas. Kumar, et al. (2004) found that CCE is in practice upto different levels of school education in states and UTs. In more than 50% states/UTs hard spots in learning are being identified at all stages of school education. Only in some states project work techniques is being used at all stages of school education for assessing students' performance. Approximately half of states/union territories analyses the results for different purpose. Rajput, Tewari and Kumar (2003) revealed that the systematic implementation of the scheme of CCE helps in developing and providing both scholastic and co-scholastic areas. It further revealed that the scheme itself ensures the continuous assessment of students' performance, diagnosis and remediation. Khandelwal (2002) found that there is a need to understand the accountability that tends to be the purpose for the assessment of students achievements and school performance.

Introduction of the continuous and comprehensive evaluation is a very revolutionary project at elementary level. The aim of continuous comprehensive evaluation can be effectively implemented when all the stakeholders concerned with children realize its importance in the regular teaching learning cycle. Parents and public are new to the concept of continuous and comprehensive evaluation. "Continuous and comprehensive evaluation without raising community awareness and apprehension may not be delivering the desire goods" (NCERT, 2012).

CCE scheme has already been implemented in our schools. However, whether the real aim of CCE is achieved or not needs to be studied. We have many problems at elementary school level such as, lack of adequate teachers, low salary of teachers particularly, for contractual teachers, poor background of children, illiteracy of parents, lack of infrastructure, lack of coordination among teachers, students, parents, community, and government. Numbers of studies have been conducted on CCE which the investigator has discussed above. Nevertheless, the investigator has not came across any study related to perception of various stakeholders about continuous and comprehensive evaluation. Furthermore, most of the studies are conducted at secondary, senior secondary and higher education level. There is hardly any study conducted at elementary school level particularly, in Odisha. So, the investigator is keen to study the perception of teachers, students and parents about continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

Methodology of the Study

Since the study attempts to bring out relevant details from students, teachers and parents regarding various practices adopted and the problems and issues related to the continuous comprehensive evaluation, qualitative survey method was appropriate for the present study. A sample of twenty

elementary schools was selected randomly from Jajpur district of Odisha. Thirty elementary school teachers were selected from these schools through random sampling method. Fifty parents of elementary school students were selected conveniently. Seven focus group discussions were done with students in different elementary schools. The size of focus group was varied from 8 to 10. Students were taken from upper primary classes (VI to VIII) between the age group 11 to 14 years.

For collecting the relevant data related to the perception of teachers about CCE, a questionnaire was developed by the investigator in Odia language. The questionnaire consisted of 17 items altogether. For collecting the relevant data related to the perception of parents of elementary school students about CCE, an Interview Schedule was developed by the investigator in Odia language. The schedule consists of altogether 14 items of both closed and open-ended in nature. For collecting data related to the perception of students of elementary schools in Odisha about CCE, seven guiding questions for focus group discussion was developed by the investigator in Odia language.

After the collection of relevant data through questionnaire for teachers, interview schedule for parents and focus group discussion with students, the investigator transcribed the data into written text. Data were analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. Quantitative data analysis includes frequency and percentage. Qualitative data analysis includes thick description.

Perception of Teachers about continuous and comprehensive evaluation

Awareness of teachers about CCE

When the investigator asked, "Do you know about CCE?" most of the teacher respondents (90%) said 'Yes' whereas, only few respondents (10%) said 'No'. Those who said 'yes', their perceptions were as following:

- Continuous evaluation means to assess students' progress every day and each period.
- By CCE, we can evaluate students' curricular subjects, curricular activities and socio-personal qualities through unit test, monthly test, semester test and annual test.
- CCE involves both qualitative and quantitative assessment of students' learning.
- CCE not only assesses students' performance but also assesses teachers' work ability, teaching aptitude and examination organization skills.

Evaluation of students' performance in various areas

When the investigator asked, "Do you evaluate students' performance in various areas?" most of the teacher respondents (83%) said 'Yes' whereas, only few (17%) said 'No'. When the investigator asked about the areas in which students are being evaluated and how, following responses came.

- We evaluate curricular subjects like, Language, mathematics, science, social sciences, etc.; curricular activities like, debate, sports, Art; and socio-personal qualities like, personality, character, leadership quality, behavior, etc.
- We cannot properly evaluate curricular activities or socio-personal qualities of learners due to lack of training, shortage of teachers, inadequate supporting infrastructure, paucity of time and heavy workload.

Tools and techniques in curricular subject evaluation

When the investigator asked, "Do you use various tools and techniques for student evaluation?" all the respondents said 'Yes'. When the investigator asked about what are the tools and techniques they are using in curricular subject evaluation, following responses came.

- We adopt written examination because it is very easy to administer and it saves time, money and effort.
- We use practical test in science subjects.
- We give assignments to students.
- We are administering unit test, monthly test, half-yearly and annual examination.

Perception of teachers about equal emphasis on all types of examination

When the investigator asked, "Do you give equal emphasis on all types of examination?" all the teacher respondents said 'Yes'. They said that they give importance to written test, oral test, and other examinations according to state guidelines. Organization of various types of evaluation helps them to know about students' strengths and weaknesses. However, they said "This is a formality to maintain record. Practically, we cannot give importance to oral and other methods of evaluation. We do not give importance to evaluation of curricular activities such as, evaluation of participation in games and sports, literacy activities, examination of personal-social qualities, etc. We have lot of pressure for organizing various types of examinations e.g., questions setting, conducting examination, maintaining records, evaluating answer scripts, etc. Due to CCE, lot of time is wasted in maintaining records only".

Effect of CCE on students' performance

When the investigator asked, "Do you feel any effect of CCE on student's performance?" all the teacher respondents (100%) agreed that there is significant effect of CCE on students' performance. They said:

- CCE helps students to enhance their mental ability and creates a competitive attitude.
- Continuous curricular evaluation gives periodical scenario of students' development that helps teachers to develop proper plan for personal attention. Students can also know their strengths and weaknesses.

Identifying learning difficulties of students

When the investigator asked, "Do you identify learning difficulties of students?" most of the teacher respondents (83%) said 'Yes'. They said that they identify learning difficulties through observation and diagnostic test in curricular areas.

Providing remedial teaching

When the investigator asked, "Do you give remedial teaching?" most of the teacher respondents (90%) said 'yes'. They said:

- Students those are academically poor, they need remedial teaching. Remedial teaching is very important in government elementary schools because students do not come to school regularly. It should be given in such a way that other students do not feel bore. It should be given according to the extent of difficulties faced by the students.
- We cannot give remedial measures to students in curricular activities because it is not important aim of school. We have lot of obstacles such as, lack of physical and art instructor, lack of school time for curricular activities. Students need to be given more time to participate in curricular activities in school.

Evaluation of socio-personal qualities

When the investigator asked, "Do you evaluate socio personal qualities of students?" most of the teacher respondents (93%) said 'yes'. They said that they evaluate students' cleanliness, behaviour, character and responsibility. It should be evaluated through observation. However, one of the respondents said, "Evaluation of Socio personal qualities is very difficult as teachers are biased by previous observation and personal relationship. Some students behave well in school but not at home. Hence, it is difficult to evaluate. Sometimes, students do not behave normally. It is artificial. So, we face difficulty to assign grades in socio-personal qualities."

Strengths and weaknesses of CCE

When the investigator asked, "What are the strengths and weaknesses of CCE?" the responses are summarized as follows:

- Previous examination systems did not emphasize upon evaluation of curricular subject, curricular activities and socio-personal qualities. CCE only can do it
- We don't have adequate fund and supporting environment for smooth implementation of CCE.
- Acute teacher shortage and lack of resources and infrastructure are major hindrances towards implementation of CCE properly.
- CCE is a burden because teacher has to do lot of things other than teaching.

Perception of Parents about Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

Awareness of parents about present evaluation system

When the investigator asked, "Do you know about CCE?" most of the parent respondents (90%) said that they are not aware about CCE.

Informing parents about child's progress

When the investigator asked, "Do the teachers inform you about your Child's progress or problems?" most of the parent respondents (80%) said 'no'. They said that teachers sometimes give remarks about the child such as, how to take care of the child, sending the child to school regularly, etc.

Showing Report Cards

When the investigator asked, "Do teachers send or show your child's progress card?" most of the parent respondents (88%) said 'no'.

Discussion with teachers about progress of the child

When the investigator asked, "Do the teachers discuss with you about your child's progress in school?" all the parent respondents said 'no'.

Suggestion of parents to teachers

When the investigator asked, "Do you give suggestions to teachers for improvement in evaluation process?" most of the parent respondents said 'no'. They gave following reasons:

- We do not give suggestions because teachers have better knowledge about evaluation system.
- We are illiterate. So we are unable to give suggestions for improvement of evaluation practice.
- We have no knowledge about examination pattern.

Discussion about oral examination with children

When the investigator asked "Do your children discuss with you about oral examination?" most of the parent respondents (80%) said 'no'. However, some parents said that sometimes children from their own side discuss about the questions asked by the teachers, how they have answered, who gave good answers, etc.

Discussion about written examination with children

When the investigator asked, "Do your children discuss with you about written examination?" most of the parent respondents (68%) said 'no'. They said that since they are illiterate, they do not ask about written examination. Even they do not have any idea about written examination.

Parents' perception about evaluation of participation in curricular activities

When the investigator asked "Does your child discuss with you about evaluation of curricular activities?" most of the parent respondents (90%) said 'yes'. They said that their children curiously discuss about their performance in curricular activities, who else performed in curricular activities and what are the events they performed good or bad.

Perception of parents about evaluation of socio-personal qualities

When the investigator asked "Does your child discuss with you about evaluation of socio-personal qualities?" more than half of the parent respondents (58%) said 'yes'. They said that children talk about how they are appreciated by teachers for their good behaviour, maintaining discipline, cleanliness and leadership quality and how they are being awarded for attending classes regularly. However, a sizeable number of parents said 'no' to above question.

Parental help to prepare for examination

When the investigator asked, "Do you provide any help to your child for examination?" most of the parent respondents (64%) said 'no'. They said that since they are illiterate, they cannot directly help their children in their study. Besides, due to lack of time they cannot help their children for examination. Because of poverty, they cannot send their children for private tuition. However, one-third of the parent respondents said 'yes' to aforesaid question. They said that they regularly send their children to private tuition; help them how to speak with correct pronunciation, help them how to recite rhymes, help them in sports, art, debate and other activities where they know something, etc.

Helping child for socio-personal qualities evaluation

When the investigator asked, "Do you help your child for socio-personal qualities evaluation?" most of the parent respondents (60%) said 'yes'. They said "We advise our children how to become good citizen and good social being. Children learn from what their parents and family members do. So we maintain a good social and spiritual life".

Perception of Students about Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

The summary of focus group discussions are presented below:

- a. We are very happy in continuous evaluation because it evaluates our competencies. Curricular evaluation helps us to know what we are lacking in curricular subjects. However, teacher should give equal importance to both written and practical examination. It minimizes students fear to appear examination.

- b. Curricular subject evaluation should be continuously organized in school. We can know our progress through continuous evaluation.
- c. Curricular activities should be organized every month because students have interest in sports, debate, arts and other activities. Teachers should not only consider what students are performing in school but also what they are performing at home, and in community.
- d. Evaluation of socio-personal qualities is not properly organized. Teacher should continuously observe students' socio personal qualities and consult with parents about the behaviour, character and other qualities of the child.
- e. We enjoy examination. Unit test makes us confident for next other important examinations.
- f. While assigning grade to the students, teachers should consider opinion of parents and community members.
- g. We feel happy when teacher thanks us or recognizes us in classroom in presence of our classmates. We feel very happy when teachers appreciate us in the classroom. When we do something good, teachers, friends and our family members feel very happy and encourage us how we will perform better. We get rewards and prizes for this. Teacher also motivates us. Those who do not get good grades, if they do well and get prize and encouragement, they are motivated to learn.
- h. Earlier, only subject knowledge was evaluated. Now our teachers also give emphasis on performance in sports, debate, arts, etc. So, we enjoy it. Teacher also looks qualities such as, cooperation, punctuality, character, responsibility, etc. However, Because of lack of human and materials resources, many curricular events are not organized in school.
- i. Parents and teachers give us punishment if we are engaged in undesirable activities in school and break the rules and regulations of the school.
- j. In the present examination, there is no detention system which is a positive point of examination as students now enjoy examination. Earlier it was a panic.
- k. Our parents do not know about our performance in school because teachers do not discuss it with parents. They never discuss about our progress or show our progress card to our parents. Our parents feel very happy when we discuss about our achievement in school. However, they come to school only when they have any complaint against us. Teachers do not want to meet personally with our parents and discuss about our progress and problems. Teachers should consider parents' opinion while evaluating child's behaviour, attitude, personality and other socio personal qualities because they can give actual data about the child. Teachers should suggest our parents about how we will overcome about some study related problems
- l. We are from poor family and we try to do our best in curricular subjects. Instead of giving rewards, prizes, encouragement, if the school could provide some amount of money, it will be helpful and real inspiration for our future study.
- m. Because of no-detention policy, we enjoy examination process. Most of us are from poor family. If we fail in examination, our parents will not send us to school.
- n. We are scared of evaluation. We do not feel good when unit test examination conducted in school because we are very poor in curricular subjects. We do not enjoy examination as teachers do not teach us properly what to write in examination. We think evaluation should be conducted yearly. However, curricular activities should be organized monthly or quarterly.

Discussion

1. Though most of the teachers said that they are aware about CCE, but the way they responded the items shows that they are not much aware about CCE. Teachers should clearly understand aim, objective and function of continuous and comprehensive evaluation. They should have a favorable attitude to evaluation and actively organize evaluation process. Hence, time to time in-service training and workshops for teachers should be organized on CCE. Sufficient training modules and learning materials should be developed on CCE in Odia language.
2. Similarly, parents and community members are also not aware about CCE. Teachers should motivate parents how they should be involved in the evaluation process. They should be motivated to regularly attend PTA meetings.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to use various methods, tools and techniques of assessment such as, portfolio, rubrics, anecdotes, observations, projects, etc.; oral and written test; self, peer and collaborative assessment; etc.
4. CCE scheme could be successful when there is continuous dialogue between teacher, students, parents and community members. It is found from the above study that teachers are least bothered even to inform the parents about the assessment results. Teachers and SMC members should be oriented about the role of parents and community members towards assessment process.
5. It is found that lack of adequate teachers is one of the major reasons for not implementing CCE scheme in true spirit. Government should provide sufficient number of teachers at least as per RTE-SSA norms so as to implement CCE scheme.
6. Because of time limit investigator conducted study with small sample. The same study can be conducted by taking large sample.
7. Studies can be conducted on different areas of continuous and comprehensive evaluation such as, curricular subject, curricular activities and socio-personal qualities, etc.
8. In-depth case studies may be undertaken about the practices of CCE in few schools.
9. Present study is conducted on State-run government elementary schools. Same study can be undertaken by taking schools from Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Private schools, etc.

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