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The Minister of Education Kapil Sibal fixed the admission into Kindergarten at 5 years while the age of 6 was finalized as age for admission into class 1. The principals of schools in Delhi in the month of March this year had a meeting regarding the increase of the minimum age for admission into nursery to four years on March 31 and that was Pre-schools united decision to cater to a lower age group because its instruction required a different infrastructure and norms. In keeping with this, Non-formal schooling had to be demarcated from formal schooling.

In such cases a child would start formal schooling at the age of 6 years, with the first two years spent in a nursery school. Infact, Nurseries and playschools in the capital were now posing to be a problem because they were growing at an alarming rate and, more so, because each of them was beginning to follow their own rules. Sadly, there was no centralized body that could govern the overall affairs of management when it came to these informal schools. This was the menace that education was facing!

There were also a number of pre-schools that were thriving but weren't even registered. In a survey a number of principals felt that the pre-schools at present were not controlled by any authority and for that reason went unchecked. There were others that considered it to be a business racket that stood a chance of survival as long as parents willingly paid for their services. "How can a nursery function, if no one pays?" asked an angry parent on a popular talk show. The largest need in this sector of education has been the need for some amount of standardization.

In a TV talk show on play school education, a parent said: "there should be change in the teaching pattern for these children because they compete with the children of age 4 and 5." A principal from a popular school in South Delhi argued "a child in a non-formal education system needs to be free to play" he or she should be kept away from the formal system of education". Thousands of parents viewed the move as a relief because they've all undergone the trouble of the nursery admission rush when their children are barely two and can barely sit up straight leave alone talk. A large number of parents felt that the existing system of admissions in the capital was traumatic for the child because the children were either scared at the interview seeing new faces or thought the school to be some kind of a clinic where the children would meet a doctor who would give them an injection.

In a nutshell, most of them felt it was not fair for a child of three to go to school. "Increasing the age from three to four years would not solve the problem that parents faced during nursery school admissions" remarked a senior official from the department of Education. Delhi was facing a problem of the paucity of schools which was now reaching the nursery sections. But on the whole, when are parents ever going to understand that if the Government decides to increase the age for formal schooling to six, then the age for university admissions would accordingly also increase by a year. Would you like your grown up son's and daughters over 18, still in school? Im sure they wont relish the idea themselves!

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