

## **PRE –SCHOOL EDUCATION IN PUDUCHERRY**

Although the Government recognizes that the school education starts from 1<sup>st</sup> Standard or after completion of 5 years of age, all the private schools in the UT of Puducherry have had Pre-Primary classes functioning in their schools. Information is available that even in the academic year 1971-72, pre-primary classes were functioning in popular private schools.

Since the catchment age of schooling has shifted from the age 5+ to the age of 3+, due to the availability of pre-primary classes, the private schools enjoyed an advantage of capturing enrollment in the age 3+ itself. As the government schools admit children only at the age 5+, they were in a disadvantageous position and they had to capture only the left over enrollment of those children who were not admitted in pre-primary classes, or, to be precise, the private schools.

This formed one of the major reasons for the dwindling enrollment in government schools.

The government perceived this reason and decided to start pre-primary sections in all the government schools that have primary sections. The implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also helped the administration to make this attempt a success.

In the pre-primary sections, children of age 3+ are admitted in Lower Kinder Garden (LKG) and children of age 4+ are admitted in Upper Kinder Garden (UKG). Pre-primary School Teachers (PPSTs) were appointed and existing “Bala Sevikas” were also engaged to handle pre-primary classes.



*The NCERT officials recently visited the Pre-Primary classes.*

The DIET, Puducherry conducts Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) certificate course. “Bala Sevika” who have completed certified course of ECCE are handling classes for pre-school education in Govt. Schools. The Lecturers are handling classes for ECCE students through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). However, there is a need for training and capacity building of Bala Sevikas handling pre-school classes.

- In the UT of Puducherry, Pre-School Education is being imparted from 2002 itself.
- Almost all the Government Schools with Primary Sections have Pre-Primary Classes of LKG and UKG.
- Separate cadre of teachers was engaged for this and is termed as Pre-Primary School Teachers (PPSTs). They are specially trained teachers qualified in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).
- Cursive writing books and



other materials are given free to the students.

The improvement in the pre-primary enrollment in Govt. Schools is evident from the table given below:

Year	Pre-Primary Enrollment in Govt. Schools	% to total enrollment
2015-16	6519	2.29
2014-15	6062	2.11
2013-14	6355	2.18
2012-13	6386	2.19

From the above table it is evident that the intake enrollment has gradually increased over years. The National Education Policy 2016 has recommended the implementation of Pre-Primary sections throughout the country. Hence, it is opined that the opening of pre-primary sections can be emulated by the other states also.

