

Centre to set up preschools, plan to be ready by June 30

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: The Union government plans to set up preschools across the country as part of the proposed Samagra Shiksha scheme, an overarching programme for school education, extending from preschool to Class XII. The NCERT has already prepared a syllabus framework that will be submitted to the human resources development ministry by June 30.

“Preparatory work has to be carried out before the policy is rolled out. We are studying how preschools will work in the government domain and the necessary approach that needs to be taken,” said school education secretary of human resources development (MHRD) Anil Swarup, who was in Kolkata on Tuesday for a programme at ASSOCHAM.

Asked about the uncontrolled fee hike by several private schools that led to vociferous protests by parents, the school education secretary said Uttar Pradesh had brought about a legislation on fees. “Under the legislation, the stakeholders can come to a compromise if any of the sides finds the fee hikes unacceptable,” Swarup said. But he pointed out it was up to the individual government



Union school education secretary Anil Swarup in Kolkata on Tuesday

whether it should follow the model or not.

Elaborating on the Centre’s plan to set up preschools, the MHRD secretary said when he had first joined the department he had no clue about preschool. “When I visited a play-school in Kolkata, I found out how a child evolved there. My officials back in Delhi pointed out preschools were important as a child can be taught things before reaching Class I, by when the mind was reasonably older,” he said.

Swarup pointed out preschools were present in only a handful of states. “We have to work out how a preschool will work in a government domain. Several factors are being considered, like whether an anganwadi worker can be trained for preschool or new teachers have

Several factors are being considered, like whether an anganwadi worker can be trained for preschool or new teachers have to be recruited or those teaching in classes I and II can handle the preschool kids

Anil Swarup | UNION SCHOOL EDUCATION SECRETARY

to be recruited or those teaching in classes I and II can handle the preschool kids,” he said. They will also have to find out the infrastructure and equipment required. “There will be teething problems, but we are convinced to have preschools. We will issue guidelines. We declared our preschool plan earlier, but by June 30, we will finalise the proposals, such as the financial assistance from the government,” he said, proposing a tie-up between the private sector and government.

“Samagra Shiksha will extend from pre-education to classes XI and XII. It will not be segmented like earlier,” the HRD secretary said at the session where ASSOCHAM submitted “preschool policy recommendations” to the HRD secretary.

