

## Admission to school

*The situation remains unchanged*

**A**DMISSION to school is creating the same kind of problems that parents and guardians always face at the beginning of an academic year.

For the guardians of admission seekers, the first days of the new year often turn out to be rather hectic, or even nightmarish, as admission to school, particularly the reputable ones, is no longer a routine affair. The guardians, not knowing where the tiny tots will finally end up, have to try their luck in as many schools as possible, but the efforts do not always produce the desired results.

The problem is getting worse day by day, as too many admission seekers are vying for too few seats in schools. Unfortunately, uniform or a minimum standard is still an elusive goal as far as the schools in the city are concerned. The education planners have adopted measures like dividing the government schools in the city into three categories, but the fact remains that the number of reasonably good schools is not increasing with a corresponding rise in the number of admission seekers. The result is quite understandable: the guardians target a few schools and do whatever they can to get their wards admitted to those schools. It is a sad example of time, energy and money being spent for something that should be an integral part of the rights of children -- admission to a school worth the name.

Introduction of double shifts should go a long way to solving the problem, but here too the progress is rather insignificant.

Most of the private schools, which have a good performance record, are not for the people of limited means. The budgetary allocation for education is the highest, but that has done little to help ease the problem of admission to the city schools.

The little boys and girls, who are denied a seat in a good school, may grow up with a feeling of inadequacy, after failing to cross the very first hurdle of their lives. In such cases, the psychological impact can indeed be great.

The government has not yet succeeded in finding a solution to the nagging problem of admission to schools in the city. What we feel is that alongside steps like introduction of double shifts and increasing the number of seats in the schools which can take some extra load, it is necessary to go for a reassessment of the whole issue. The situation has clearly gone out of control. So the need is to work out what can be done to mitigate the sufferings of the admission seekers and their guardians. The emphasis should be on increasing the number of qualified teachers since it is difficult to raise the number of schools as long as there is an acute shortage of teaching staff.