

GTA Sabhasad writes to state education minister on regularisation of voluntary teachers

GTA Sabhasad and education department executive Roshan Giri has written to state education minister Partha Chatterjee reminding him about his assurance to regularise the voluntary teachers engaged on temporary basis since several years in various schools of the hills.

Around 515 voluntary teachers under the aegis of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha-affiliated Janmukti Insecure Secondary Teachers' Organisation (JISTO) who are demanding permanent status have even threatened to quit the organisation if the party leadership failed to find a solution to their case. The Sabhasad has brought to the notice of the minister the assurance given by him during a meeting in Kolkata in December 2015 to regularise all voluntary teachers. "A GTA and JISTO delegation had met minister Chatterjee in Kolkata last year. Chatterjee had then assured them to form an ad-hoc board to appoint the 515 voluntary teachers based on their eligibility and register of appointment. At that time the minister had also said the appointment would be confined only to the 515 voluntary teachers," Giri said.

On the contrary, on May 20 of this year, the joint secretary of the state school education department wrote to the home and hill affairs department informing him that regularisation, absorption and appointment of voluntary teachers in the GTA could not be entertained until they secure their candidature through the West Bengal School Service Commission. "We want the voluntary teachers to be regularised but it is the state government that is creating obstacles. There is lot of resentment among the voluntary teachers who have given their prime time. The growing frustration can lead to bigger problems in the future and anything can happen," warned Giri.

There are presently 515 teachers in more than 129 junior, high and higher secondary schools in the GTA area working on voluntary basis. However, these teachers have not been able to appear or take their SSC examination as it has become defunct since 2003 during the tenure of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council.

Giri, who is also the GJM general secretary, said that Basudeb Banerjee, the then state home secretary, said in a meeting in 2014 that a decision had been taken to enhance the salary of the voluntary teachers but this is yet to be implemented. He said the party has also written to state panchayat and rural development minister Subrata Mukherjee, requesting

him to fill vacant posts in the Sishu Siksha Kendra (SSK) and Madhyamik Siksha Kendra (MSK). “In the 539 SSKs in the hills there are 1,060 vacancies, while in 67 MSKs 63 posts are available. But nothing has been done to fill the posts.

We have also requested the minister to establish a separate accounts section of the SSK and MSK in the hills,” Giri said.