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NGO files plea on 26k teaching vacancies

NEW DELHI: An NGO has approached the Delhi high court, seeking its intervention to immediately fill nearly 26,000 vacancies of teachers in schools run by the state government and municipal corporations. In its petition, Social Jurist has pointed out that despite a 15-year-old HC decision to recruit more teachers, these schools still have vacancies, depriving lakhs of students of their fundamental right to receive quality education.

Filed through advocate Ashok Agarwal, the plea seeks action against the Delhi government and MCD officials who should be held accountable for "such deliberate and intentional disobedience of the directions having been given by HC on December 20, 2001, which required these authorities to ensure that there should be zero vacancy at the commencement of each academic year."

Despite specific order of the court, the authorities "have sat over the vacancies for long, resulting in thousands of vacancies in teaching posts" said Social Jurist, explaining why it wants to revive contempt of court plea against the government and the corporations.

Giving out figures on the crisis that has gripped government-run schools, the petition points out that "15,40,691 students are studying in 1,011 schools run by the Government of NCT of Delhi; 3,29,000 students in 719 primary schools run by North Delhi Municipal Corporation; 2,86,000 in 579 primary schools run by SDMC; and 3.50 lakh in 387 primary schools run by East Delhi Municipal Corporation. Thus, a total of 25,05,691 students are studying in 1,977 schools run by the government of Delhi and the three MCDs."

While hearing a contempt plea on the issue in 2010, the HC had said that since the recruitment process as directed by the court was being followed and teachers were being recruited every year, "keeping of this contempt petition, only to put pressure on the respondents to continue to do recruitment, is not required."

However, the HC had then granted permission to the petitioners to approach it if they found that the government and the corporations had failed to recruit teachers in any year or were sitting over the vacancies for long.