

## **Minority schools upset over swapping of surplus teachers**

Minority institutions are upset with a new government order dated July 13 that asks them to let their surplus teachers be transferred to local municipal schools in cities or Zilla Parishad schools. The government wants aided-school teachers to move to schools within or outside their districts, wherever a vacancy may arise. It may also work the other way: surplus teachers from municipal or local self-government schools could also be sent to schools run by aided private or minority institutions.

An education department official, speaking on behalf of Education Minister Vinod Tawde, said, "We pay the ZP schools as also the teachers from the minority institutions. So, technically, teachers from both these schools are employees of the state government. On the one hand, we have surplus teachers and on the other, we are running short of staff in some private schools. The teachers will be sent wherever vacancies are available."

The government is citing from Section 5 of the Maharashtra Employees of Private Schools (Conditions of Service) Regulation Act, 1977, that asks private schools to fill vacant posts by first absorbing the surplus staff available with the education department. The government has already capped the recruitment process in minority institutions asking them to intake from the surplus staff pool available.

While minority institutions include a gamut of institutions run by Jains, Gujaratis, Sindhis, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Muslims, most institutions are run by the Christian community.

The Archdiocese Board of Education, which runs 150 schools with 2.94 lakh students in Mumbai, Thane and Raigad districts, has taken up its objections with the government. The ABE already faces a cap on hiring teachers on its own.

Father George Athaide, spokesperson, ABE, said, "We have the right to run and administer our own minority institution as per Article 30 of the Indian Constitution. As per the July 13 GR, the government has brought in the no-work-no-pay policy to stop salary of surplus staff of minority institutions. However, this rule is not applicable for non-minority schools. How can the government make a distinction between the teachers of the minority and non-minority institutions?"