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All vacancies will be filled throughout the state within this week

As many as 46 of 109 government primary schools in Dharamkot tehsil of Moga district have only one teacher. While 25 such schools in block-1, 21 are in block-2, said a source in the education department. Two of these schools have been without a regular teacher for over a year.

With 669 of 1,705 sanctioned posts of primary school teacher lying vacant in the district, students are at the receiving end.

It is in stark contrast to what Punjab education minister Daljeet Singh Cheema has been claiming in his speeches -- provision of "quality education" in the state.

LONE TEACHER FOR 140 STUDENTS AT REHARHWAN

Kulwant Singh is the only teacher at Reharhwan primary school, which has 140 students. The school has six sanctioned posts: one headmaster and five junior basic training (JBT) teachers.

While the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act mandates a studentteacher ratio (PTR) of 30:1 to ensure better classroom learning, here the ratio is 140:1.

"Either I have to teach all the students in a single class or have to assign duty to some students to maintain discipline in other classrooms. It is difficult for a single teacher to handle five classes," he said.

Prabhdeep Singh, a Class 5 student of the school, said sometimes in the absence of the teacher, he has to manage the class, including maintaining the discipline and teaching other students.

STUDENTS 'MANAGING' JALALPUR SAID SCHOOL

The primary school at Jalalpur Said has no regular teacher or even a peon. The 40 students that are enrolled in the school have been left to fend for themselves. "Even keys of this school were handed over to one of the students, who opens the building daily," a teacher, who was temporarily deputed at the school for a week, said, seeking anonymity.

In the absence of regular staff, teachers are deputed here, mostly on weekly basis, for the past two years. Gurmeet Singh, a student, said: “Often no teacher turns up at the school and we have to return home.”

In the first three weeks of July, the education authorities failed to depute even a temporary teacher, said sources.

‘VACANCIES WILL BE FILLED SOON’

District education officer (DEO, primary) Balwinder Singh said he had taken charge recently and was not aware of the vacancies.

“All vacancies will be filled throughout the state within this week, as about 4,500 teachers have been recruited for elementary education,” he said.

Agriculture minister Tota Singh, who represents Dharamkot assembly segment, said: “The government was helpless due to the stay on the recruitment of 4,500 teachers. But now the teachers have been recruited and all vacancies will be filled soon.”