

The Tribune

Education hit as posts of teachers lying vacant

Education seems to have taken a backseat in government schools of Bathinda district as most schools are facing the shortage of staff. These vacancies include a large number of vacant posts of teachers, non-teaching staff and Class IV employees in the schools.

As per the latest data from the District Education Department, in Bathinda district alone, 33 high schools have been functioning without headmasters. Interestingly, 30 government senior secondary schools of the district were also functioning without principals till March 30.

These schools were, however, got their heads after lecturers were promoted to the post of principal.

Students pursuing higher secondary education in government schools are also in for a rude shock as several posts of subject lecturers have been lying vacant. Five posts of biology lecturer, 18 of commerce, 28 of economics, 21 of English, 51 of history, 22 of mathematics, 33 of physical education, 47 of political science, 32 of Punjabi, two of chemistry, four each of Hindi and geography and three posts of sociology lecturers have been vacant in these schools.

Even higher number of posts of master cadre teacher is lying vacant. The highest number of vacant posts, 58, is that of science masters. Mathematics is another jinxed subject as 48 posts of teachers of the subject are lying vacant in government schools of the district.

Twentyeight posts of DPED teacher, 24 posts of social science master cadre teacher, six posts of Hindi teacher, five posts of home science teacher, three posts of Punjabi teacher and one post of English teacher have been lying vacant.

The numbers are also dismal when it comes to the non-teaching staff in government schools. As per data collected by the department, 16 posts of workshop attendant, eight posts of waterman have been lying vacant in schools. While 44 posts of peon, 15 posts of gardener-cum-chowkidar, 62 posts of gardener, five posts of library attendant, two posts of lab attendant, 56 posts of clerk, 18 posts of chowkidar and four posts of beldaar are lying vacant in government schools of the district.

Apart from these, while 65 posts each of sweeper-cum-chowkidar and peon-cum-chowkidar, 32 posts of sweeper have not been filled and two posts of peon-cum-chowkidar are also lying vacant. In the absence of non-teaching staff, school heads and teachers are left with no option but to do the paperwork themselves and also shell out money from their own pockets to hire someone to do the work of class IV employees.

In a bid to take up the issue of the vacant posts in the schools, the District Education Department has now directed the school heads to check the vacant posts in their schools and then submit the details with the department.

OFFICIALSPEAK

"In March, the department had compiled lists of vacancies in government schools of the district. Lecturers were promoted and all vacant posts of principals in the schools were filled. While the vacant posts may be filled only after the government begins recruitments, the department may initiate the rationalisation and transfer process which will solve the problems." Maninder Kaur, District Education Officer (DEO Secondary)

"We want that posts of maths teachers should be created in elementary and high schools in the state government schools. It is a pity that till Class VIII, students are taught mathematics by teachers of other subjects." Sukhdev Mittal, a mathematics teacher at Government Senior Secondary School, Deon.

"The situation in government schools is similar. There are several posts of subject teachers, which have been lying vacant for years. Students are not good at languages and science as there are not enough teachers. The authorities must fill the vacant posts as soon as possible to ensure better education in government schools." Resham Singh, a committee member of the Democratic Teachers' Front

"While qualified and trained teachers are being made to work on a contract basis, posts of permanent teacher are lying vacant and students are being taught a subject by the teachers of some other subjects. The state government has turned teachers into protesters and students into sufferers." — Komal Kataria, a resident of Panchavati Nagar

"If the state government fills all the vacant posts by either fresh recruitments or by regularising the services of teachers who have been working in the Education Department on contract basis, it will have to start paying them salaries and allowances as per the revised pay grade."