

Delhi: 100 unaided pvt schools get closure notice over freeship issue

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The Delhi High Court on Tuesday issued notices to over 100 unaided private schools asking why they should not be closed down for failing to give free education to about 25 per cent of children from weaker sections despite having agreed to the condition at the time of land allotment at throwaway prices.

A Division Bench of the acting Chief Justice B A Khan and Justice Madan B Lokur asked the schools, giving only zero to 10 per cent seats to poor students, to explain their stand by September 28, the next date of hearing.

[SC takes Delhi private schools to task](#)

The Bench also asked the directorate of education to convene a meeting of the action committee of unaided private schools with the chief secretary, law secretary, land and development officer, Delhi Development Authority vice chairman and Municipal Corporation of Delhi commissioner within 10 days to explore ways and means to implement the High Court order.

The meeting, to be chaired by Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, will also be attended by petitioner's counsel Ashok Agrawal and DPS counsel K C Mittal and Puneet Mittal.

The order was passed after senior counsel Salman Khurshid submitted on behalf of the schools that such a meeting could lead to resolution of the issues involved in the case.

Earlier, DDA vice chairman, director of education and the land & development officer were summoned by the court on August 25. The authorities have already submitted the list of defaulting schools.

Ashok Agrawal, counsel for petitioner 'Social Jurist,' urged the court to expedite the matter as the process of admission for the next academic session had already begun.

He said schools did not adhere to the land allotment condition and the authorities failed to enforce it despite court's order.

The court had on August 18 observed that it was needless to say that "public land had been allotted to these schools on the condition that they would grant freeship to poor and weaker section students, the obvious object being to provide free education to them."

"The object of allotment has allegedly not been achieved because of the private commercial interest of the schools. It is also alleged that the municipal authorities were watching this breach as spectators leaving no option to the court but to intervene in the matter," the Bench had observed.

Earlier, the court had asked Delhi government to probe if over 1500 such schools, allotted land on the condition of giving about 25 per cent seats to poor students and grant them freeship, were complying with it.

Disposing of the petition, the court had on January 20 last year asked the directorate of education to give copies of the report to the DDA for taking action against "erring" schools.