

# Is RSS hijacking Goa's primary education ?

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KEEPING THE existing educational societies in the dark, the Bharatiya Janata Party government has granted permission to many non-educational institutions to run the 52 government primary schools, which were slated for closure.

The manner in which the whole exercise is being carried out smells of a well-planned design of the Sangh Parivar to hijack the primary education in villages, that too at the cost of the existing government primary schools.

While Director of Education is presently on leave, none of the other officials could explain why the decision to hand over the government primary schools to private institutions was taken without making the plan public or pub-

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licly inviting applications for the same.

The Government had earlier decided to close down those schools where strength of students has fallen below 12 from earlier 398, thereby making it financially non-viable and hence difficult to run the schools. It was thus decided to amalgamate these schools in the neighbouring State-run schools, transferring the students there and adjusting 49 teachers elsewhere.

Most of these schools are located in rural areas, consisting 10 in Pedne, 8 in Ponda, 6 each in Bardez, Sanguem and Canacona, 5 in Bicholim, 4 in Mormugao, 3 each in Sattari and Salcete and 1 in Tiswadi. No school in Quepem taluka is facing a closure.

The Education department now states that they have received altogether 39 applications from different parts of the State, expressing willingness to run these schools, without any Government grants. They have been accordingly permitted to go ahead after seeking approval from Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, who is also the Education Minister.

As per the information, these "unaided recognised schools" will sign an agreement with the Education department to run the schools on trial basis for three months, provided they are registered under Societies Registration Act. They will also not receive any grant from the Government, but pay salaries to the teachers at par

with Government teachers.

Though running these schools would facilitate the students who had to otherwise walk about one to two kilometres to the schools earlier, the question arises why this scheme was not made public and opportunity was not given to the existing private educational institutions in the area, especially by publicly inviting applications for it.

On the contrary, the list prepared by the Education department consists of many Manila Mandals, who will run the primary schools, no matter what experience they possess to run the educational institution.

Interestingly, none of the Government officials but the activists of the Sangh Parivar are

personally contacting these institutions to work out the modalities.

The department states that it is on the lookout of the private institution to mobilise enough number of students to run the school. But since no student can be "manufactured", it is obvious that they have to pick up students from the neighbouring State-run schools, which too may face the same fate and have to be closed down tomorrow if the strength is reduced there.

Suspicion is raised over the whole exercise since interviews of teachers for most of these "different" institutions were conducted centrally at Vidya Prabodhini Mandal in Porvorim.

The advertisement released in this regard invited applications from Std XII students, who are studious, committed, creative and are prepared for mass contact at much more broader level.

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