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NHRC takes note of blind school closure

NEW DELHI: Taking note of reports that 600 students of an NGO-run school in Okhla have found themselves without an educational institute for being unable to fulfill stringent RTE rules, the National Human Rights Commission has said this may violate their right to education.

The commission asked Delhi's department of education to reply through its chief secretary and secretary within the fortnight.

The school, Deepalaya, has been running to benefit poor children for the last 22 years. It comprised more than 600 students up to class eight at the time of its closure in April 2014.

HT had earlier reported that the school was forced to shut because it was not functioning from a piece of land that it owned or that was leased to it.

Deepalaya, started in 1992, used to teach kids from the slums in Okhla till 2014 when the deadline to get recognition from the Delhi government ended.

The school pays a nominal salary to its teachers but the facilities and teaching quality are considered on a par with those of several private schools in the city. It is the first option for parents from low-income families in Okhla.

The school's cause attracted other activists, who have started a petition on change.org to save it and has already gathered over 1,100 signatures.

As of now, the school has been shut down and is running as a tuition centre.

According to officials in the education department, the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, under which the land comes, is being consulted to find out if the land can be leased out to the school.

The issue of teacher salaries, however, will remain unresolved unless the government decides to fund the school.

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