

Textbook delay dogs Delhi govt, civic schools

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New Delhi: Elementary students in nearly 2,500 government and municipal schools in Delhi have not received all their textbooks despite the academic session starting in April.

Students enrolled in elementary classes (I-VIII) are provided textbooks in schools run by the Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

Mayank, a student of Class VI at Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya in Nand Nagri in North-East Delhi, got a few books on Wednesday but some are still pending.

"I have not got social science, Sanskrit, and Khel Yatra textbooks. We haven't been taught much in school in the last month because of the lack of textbooks," said Mayank, whose school had its last working day on Friday before the summer vacation lasting till June 30.

Chahat, a student of Class VII at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya in Nand Nagri, said she was yet to receive science, social science and vocational education textbooks. "I only got a few textbooks last week. Without textbooks, I was unable to study anything in the last month," she said.

Amit Kumar, a parent, said that teaching in government and municipal schools was centred on textbooks, unlike in private schools, where teachers and students can download books from the website of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

"The teachers do not take classes, citing a delay

in the distribution of textbooks. They have little interest in teaching because their children are not enrolled in government schools," Kumar said.

Lawyer Ashok Agrawal, a former member of the Delhi University executive council, who had filed a PIL in Delhi High Court, told **The Telegraph** that nearly 10 lakh elementary students of Delhi government schools have received some of the books while nearly eight lakh students of classes I to V in MCD schools have not received any textbooks.

"Ideally, students should be provided with textbooks in the first week of April when the new session starts. But one month has passed, and summer vacation has started. They didn't learn anything in April. They are hardly expected to study during summer vacation. How can they compete and excel in academics?" Agrawal said.

During a hearing in the high court last month, the Delhi government had said textbooks would be made available to all students before the summer break.

On April 28, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan reviewed the availability, printing and distribution of textbooks published by the NCERT for the ongoing academic session.

"Emphasising that no student should face inconvenience due to delays, Pradhan directed officials to strengthen supply chains, augment printing capacity where necessary, and closely monitor last-mile delivery," a media release by the Press Information Bureau had stated.