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Cancellation of municipal school rooms leased to NGOs, unions sought

To reclaim its 628 municipal school classrooms for "solely educational purposes", the BMC education committee has demanded the lease to social institutions to use these rooms for purposes "other than educational" be revoked.

The cancellation could affect nearly 100 NGOs and unions that have rented the classrooms at nominal rates.

"The demand has been made based on a civic education department report that more than 90 per cent of the classrooms are being used for professionally run private classes. These organisations are running a business paying a nominal rent," said newly elected education committee chairman Manoj Kotak.

"The corporation is losing revenue," he wrote to additional municipal commissioner Mohan Adtani in-charge of public education.

The report based on on-going inspections claims professionally run private dance, music and tailoring classes and art galleries were found to operate from the classrooms.

Ninety-eight of the 628 classrooms rented out are being used by NGOs such as Praja Foundation, Dignity Foundation, Alcoholics Anonymous, Pratham and Naandi Foundation. Other lessees include Shiv Udyog Sena, Mumbai Shikshak Sena and Municipal Kamgar Sena.

In March, BMC had issued notices to six educational trusts to immediately vacate rented rooms in municipal school buildings.

While BMC wanted to use these as reading rooms, libraries and virtual classrooms, the trusts argued the notices should have been issued a year in advance to give time for the transition.