

The Assam government bill on Madrasa & History of Madrasa

December 15, 2020

In news

The Assam government is planning to table a bill to repeal provisions of madrasas & Sanskrit tols, and convert them into educational institutions imparting general studies.

A brief note on the issue

The State education Minister stated that all High madrasas would now be secular after the word 'Madrasa' is removed. They would now be known as High School, not High Madrasa. There would be no distinction anymore. So far, they were providing 90 per cent general education and 10 per cent religious teaching. Now, the religious subject of 50 marks on Quran would be dropped

According to the cabinet decision, the State Madrassa Board would be dissolved, and the academic and administrative authorities under this board would be renamed as 'Director Secondary Education'.

What is Madrassa/Madrasa?

The madrassa is the Arabic word for any type of educational institution, secular or religious (of any religion), whether for elementary instruction or higher learning

In India, The majority of these schools follow the Hanafi school of thought. The religious establishment forms part of the mainly two large divisions within the country, namely the Deobandis, who dominate in numbers (of whom the Darul Uloom Deoband constitutes one of the biggest madrasas) and the Barelvis, who also make up a sizeable portion (Sufi-oriented)

The world's oldest *madrassa* is situated in Fez in Morocco, and it was established in 859 CE

History of the Madrassa system in India

- This system was introduced to India with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate.
- The earliest madrassa in India is said to have been set up in Ajmer in 1192 CE, following the conquest of the region by Muhammad Ghorī.
- During the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (1290-1351 CE), Delhi alone was said to have around one thousand madarassa with salaries paid from the royal treasury. Which were also promoted by Firuz Shah Tughluq
- According to contemporary chronicler Ferishta, 180,000 slaves acquired an education in science, arts and crafts during the rule of Firuz Shah Tughluq
- The Moroccan traveller Ibn Batuta also writes of 13 madrasas for girls, which were also operational in India at the time
- Madrassas were also promoted by regional kingdoms of Gujarat and Bengal, one of the greatest centres of Islamic arts and learning was the city of Jaunpur, under its Sharqi Sultans.
- Madrasas thrived under the Mughals as well, especially under Emperor Akbar. During his reign, there was a special emphasis on rational sciences
- During Akbar's time, Iranian scholar Mir Fatehullah Shirazi is said to have introduced books on astronomy, mathematics, medicine, natural sciences and logic
- It was under the hardline religious scholar Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1703-1762) that the syllabus got restricted to core religious topics
- During the 1857 revolt Madrassas had become hubs of nationalism
- Darul Uloom Deoband, India's most famous madrassa was founded in 1866

- During the British era (1757-1947) an initiative was taken to bring a part of the madrasah education in Bengal under the government control and to reform this education system for modernization
- Calcutta Madrasah, **the first educational institution was set up in the Indian subcontinent by Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General of East India Company in 1870.**
 - It became a leading centre of Islamic and Muslims' education.
 - This Madrasah has a long heritage of the 230 years old as an educational and cultural institution.
 - Currently this institution has been upgraded as Calcutta Madrasah College and then as the Aliah University by the government of West Bengal