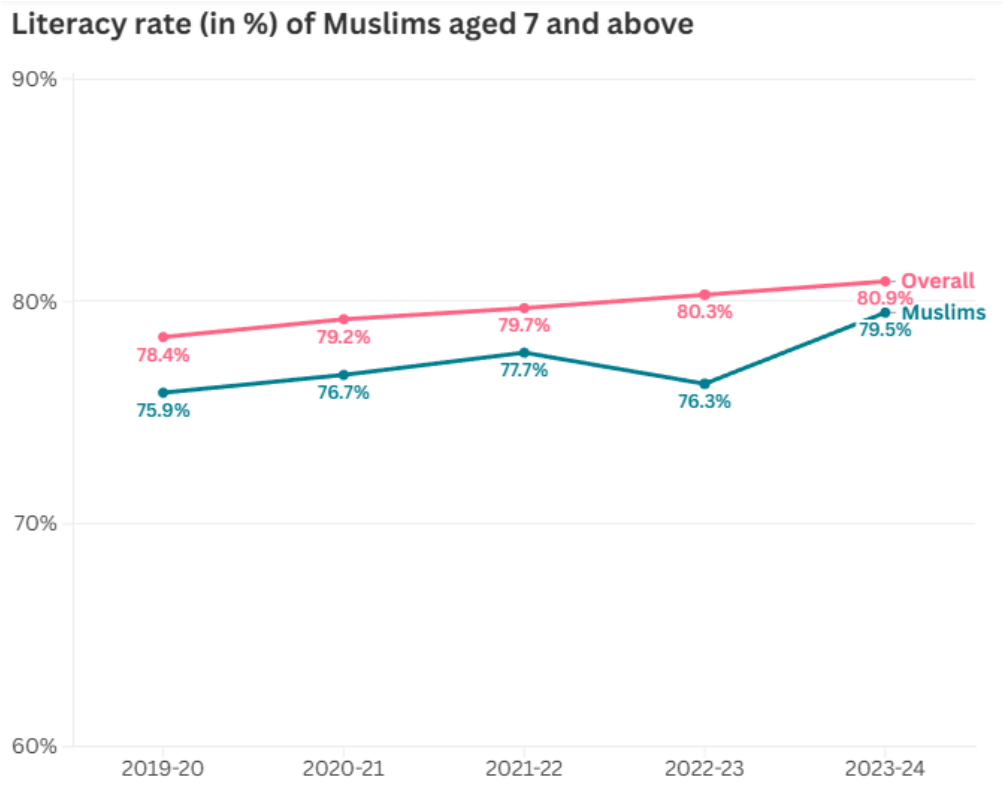
Educational Schemes of Waqf and Madrassa

Why in news?

Recently, the Centre had revealed that the budgetary allocations for madrasa and Waqf educational schemes had been lashed almost to nil.

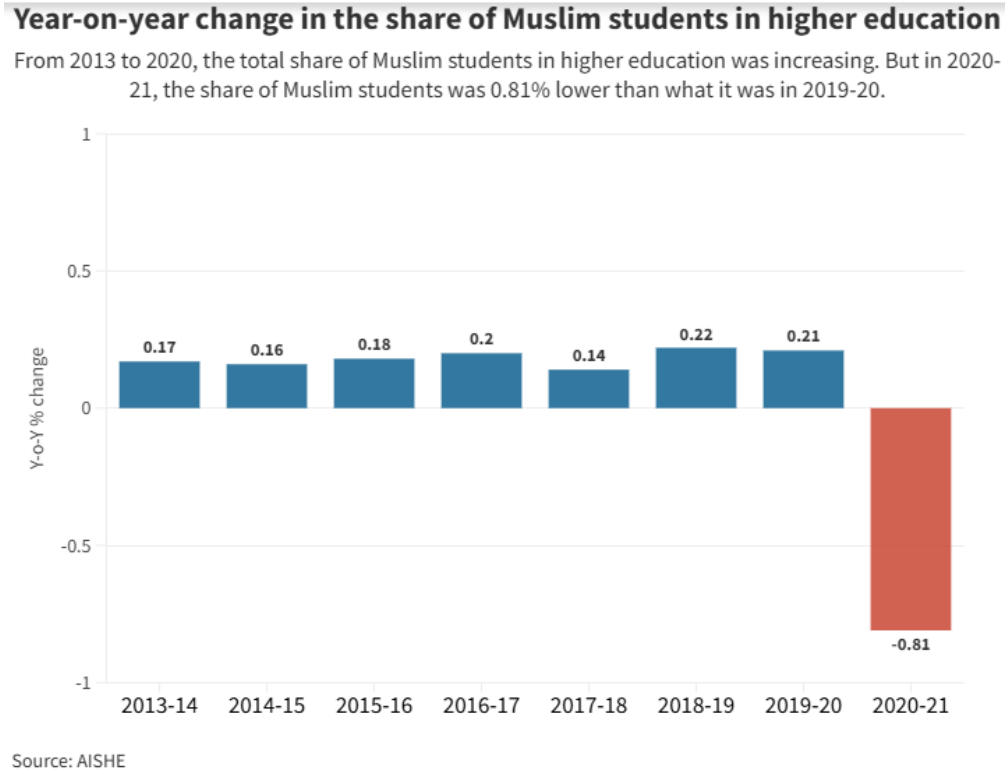
What is the educational status of Muslims?

- **Lower literacy rates of Muslims** – It stands at 79.5% which is *below the national average* 80.9%, as per recent Minority Affairs Ministry report.



Source: Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey

- **Decline in Muslim Higher Education Enrolment** – All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21 reported an ***8% decline*** in Muslim enrolment compared to 2019-20.
- The drop was greater than that of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC).



‘State of Muslim Education in India’ Report
• *Reduction in female enrolment* during 2020-21. • High dropout rates in states like Assam and West Bengal. • On an average 18.64% Muslim students drop out at the secondary level, compared to the national average of 12.6%. • *Enrolment declines from Class 6 onwards*, reaching the lowest in Classes 11 and 12.

What are the waqf educational schemes?

Waqf Board
• It is a *statutory body*. • **Role** - They *manage waqf properties*, which are endowments for religious or charitable purposes in Islam. • They oversee assets like mosques, madrasas, graveyards, and welfare institutions.

- The Ministry of Minority Affairs oversees 2 key waqf schemes.
- **Quami Waqf Board Taraqqiati Scheme (QWBTS)** – It aims to develop and modernize waqf properties.
- **Shahari Waqf Sampatti Vikas Yojana (SWSVY)** – It aims to support urban waqf properties for community welfare and educational purposes.
- **Implementing agency** – Both the above two schemes are implemented by Central Waqf Council (CWC).

Central Waqf Council *is a statutory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs was set up in 1964 to advice the Central Government on matters concerning the working of the Waqf Boards.*

What is the Scheme for Providing Education to Madrassas and Minorities (SPEMM)?

> ***Madrassas*** *have been centers of Islamic education, dating back to the 8th-9th century during the Abbasid Caliphate.*

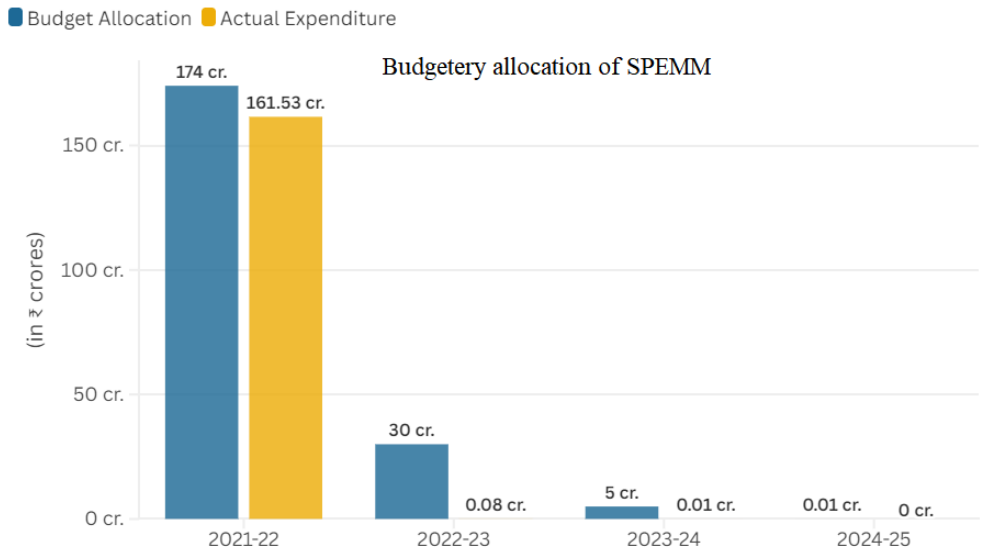
- **Launched in** – 2014-15.
- **Nodal agency** – Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- **Objectives** – To restructure existing education schemes for Muslims and to include more minority communities.
- To provide ***modern education*** in madrassas by
  - Improving teacher training
  - Strengthen madrassa boards
  - Enhance infrastructure in minority institutions
  - Raise awareness about education programs.
- **Funding mechanism**

Regions	Centre	State
North-Eastern states & Himalayan states	90%	10%
Union Territories without legislature	100%	-
Other states	60%	40%

- **Eligibility –** *Madrassas affiliated with recognized school education boards* and mapped on the Geographical Information System (GIS) were eligible for financial assistance.
- **Financial assistance** – For teachers and madrassa boards for administration.

What are the concerns associated with Muslims education?

- **Decline in education funding** – The *allocation and expenditure for QWBTS and SWSVY have steadily decreased* between 2021 and 2025, with little to no spending in recent years.
- **Nil Funding for SPEMM** – While it started at Rs. 194 crore in 2014-15 and dropped to *zero in 2024-25*.



- **Closing of Madrassas** – In 2021, the Assam government repealed 2 madrassa-related Acts (1995, 2018), *closing all government and government-funded private madrassas*.
- They were later converted into general schools in 2023.

- **Issues in Madrassa education –** The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) told the Supreme Court that madrassas are unsuitable for proper education with following concerns
  - Islamic supremacy in textbooks.
  - Violating the right against *forced participation in religious instruction or worship* of non-Muslim students in madrassas.
  - *Lack of curriculum standards* and teacher eligibility issues.
  - *Opaque funding* and land law violations.
  - Failure to provide a holistic educational environment.
- **Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 –** If the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 is passed in present form, it will
  - Increase Central regulation over waqf properties.
  - Allow non-Muslim members in waqf boards.
- Since waqf boards manage most madrassas, this move will reduce the influence of Islamic trusts and *bring madrassas under greater government control.*

What lies ahead?

- Steps can be taken to identify and enrol out-of-school children in age-appropriate classes.
- Coverage of financial aid to Muslim students can be increased.
- Provision of scholarships, grants for the community can be increased.

Reference

The Hindu | Drop in Funding for Waqf Educational Schemes



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