Impacts of Madrasa Survey

What is the issue?

The Uttar Pradesh government will survey unrecognised madrassas in the State to gather information about the number of teachers, curriculum, and basic facilities available there, among others.

What has followed this?

- The Uttar Pradesh government's decision to survey madrasas has raised serious concerns over the future of Muslim identity.
- Like Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand has said that it would also survey madrasas.
- The ideology of the recent survey will become clear only after the survey is completed and various political parties respond to its outcomes.

What is the history of Madrasas?

- In the post-Sepoy mutiny period, Madrasas emerged mainly to help save Muslim identity in the face of growing colonial interventions.
- Madrasas, particularly Deoband, did not seek state support because they suspected that the colonial state, among others, would eventually expect them to produce "loyal subjects for the British Crown".
- So, they sought autonomy.

What are some views about madrasas?

- In India, two arguments are often made about madrasas.
    1. The first is that Muslims are economically backward because most of them are educated in madrasas.
    2. The second is that madrasas are nurseries of radical Islam.
- The second view gained momentum globally after the 9/11 attack.
- Even though al-Qaeda failed to attract Indian Muslims, the Indian political class was swayed by this view of madrasas.
- The Sachar Committee Report (2006) demolished both these arguments with robust **empirical evidence**.

What did the Sachar Committee Report do?

> *Maktabs are neighbourhood schools, often attached to mosques. They offer religious education to children who attend other schools to get mainstream education.*

- This Report drew a distinction between madrasas and maktabs.
- According to this report, not more than 6.3% of Muslims attend the madrasas and maktabs at the national level.
- Only 3% of Muslim children of school-going age go to madrasas.
- The Report said that Muslim parents are eager to see their children enrolled in modern education institutions, but often fail to do so owing to their poor financial condition.
- Therefore, the Report **recommended scholarships** be given to Muslim students so that they don't drop out of school.

What would be the impact of this Survey?

- The Sachar Committee report deliberately chose to avoid discussions over party politics or issues of secularism or communalism and the implications of these for the welfare of Muslims.
- The authors pretended as if no causal relationship exists between ideology and development.
- The reactions expected to follow the madrasa survey will highlight this relationship's importance.
- There are issues concerning madrasas and modernity, particularly concerning issues such as patriarchy and child rights, some of which were raised by the Sachar Committee.
- State interference through such surveys will only help deepen majoritarianism.

Reference

1. The Hindu | The politics of the madrasa survey

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