

AMU to help link madrassas to mainstream education

In an attempt to open up mainstream higher education in India to madrassa students, the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) has decided to accredit several Islamic seminaries across the country.

'The move intends to provide better opportunities to madrassa students to pursue higher education,' Rahat Abrar, an AMU spokesperson, told IANS on telephone from Aligarh.

The effort will begin with Uttar Pradesh, where AMU is located and which has over 1,900 madrassas recognised by the state Madrassa Education Board. Around 170,000 students study in these seminaries - the figure being highest among all Indian states.

'For granting accreditation to madrassas, a committee has already been constituted. Our move will help raise the number of madrassa graduates considerably.'

The committee will review the syllabi of madrassas and recommend changes in the education system. It has been directed to expedite its effort in Uttar Pradesh.

At present, there are only about 42 AMU-accredited madrassas in different states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

'Students of accredited madrassas will get lateral entry into bachelor courses offered by AMU. Thereafter, these students can also pursue master's courses offered by the varsity,' said Abrar.

An AMU source said: 'Initially, we will focus on reviewing the syllabi of madrassas in Uttar Pradesh, which have the highest number of madrassa students. Later, the same exercise will be adopted for seminaries in other parts of the country.'

Initially, the committee will review and accredit the madrassas in Mau, Basti, Siddharthnagar and Azamgarh - all in Uttar Pradesh.

The state Madrassa Education Board has welcomed the move by AMU, but said a separate university should be set up to for their students due to their high numbers.

Board registrar Shoib Ahmad told IANS, 'Taking into account the number of students presently enrolled in different madrassas of the state, the government needs to set up a university to ensure higher education for such students.'

He said a proposal to set up an independent university for madrassa education has already been submitted to the state government.

Officials at the madrassa education board said that AMU's move will help madrassa students join mainstream education and many avenues would open up for them.

Asit Srivastava (© IANS / India eNews)