

Education first and last mantra for development of Muslims

Muslims, India's largest minority, will have to take initiative themselves to spread education and create awareness among the community instead of depending on government schemes. This was the dominant view expressed by scholars, intellectuals and politicians at a gathering here Saturday.

Most speakers at the Talimi Bedari Conference, attended by hundreds of Muslims, stressed that education was the first and last 'mantra' for overall socio-economic development of Indian Muslims.

"Spread of education can transform the Muslim community that is lagging behind in all respects. People from the community should come forward to open primary schools, especially for the poorest of the poor Muslim children," said Maulana Syed Nizamuddin, general secretary of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board.

Former chief justice of Supreme Court A.M. Ahmadi said education will play the key role for the community's success. "Without education, development of the community is not possible," he said.

He suggested that Muslims should set up more schools, particularly primary and secondary ones, to educate those who have not been able to attend schools.

"Traditional education is necessary but modern and technical education is essential for their livelihood," Ahmadi said.

"We will have to be a pushing force to implement the Sachar committee report, otherwise it will be delayed," Ahmadi said in reply to the queries from the audience about the recommendations of a panel formed by the government to assess the socio-economic condition of the community.

K. Rahman Khan, deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha, said Muslims have to get rid of over-dependence on government schemes for education.

"Muslim should be self-dependent in the education sector. There should be strong willpower to create small and big educational institutions," he said.

Former central minister Mohsina Kidwai underlined the importance of educating Muslim girls and said there was need to introduce modern education in the madrassas.

Rights activist Teesta Setalvad held the government responsible for educational backwardness among Muslims. 'Now Muslims have to create awareness for education and to take benefit of government schemes,' she said.

Three central ministers including Saifuddin Soze, M.A.A. Fatmi and Akhilesh Singh, said the government was giving special attention to the spread of education among Muslims in view of the Sachar committee report.

They assured that the committee's recommendations will be implemented.

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