

Child rights body calls for stopping state funding to madrassas unless they comply with RTE norms

According to the report, the exemption of madrassas from the Right to Education Act has deprived children attending these institutions of quality education

Updated - October 12, 2024 07:25 pm IST - New Delhi

PTI



The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights highlights issues of curriculum, eligibility of teachers, opaque funding, violation of land laws and failure to provide children a holistic environment as problems associated with madrassas. File image for representation | Photo Credit: The Hindu

The apex child rights body has raised serious concerns about the state of functioning in madrassas and called for stopping state funding to them unless they comply with the Right to Education Act.

In its latest report titled 'Guardians of Faith or Oppressors of Rights?', the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) said religious institutions operating outside the purview of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 had a negative impact.

According to the report, the exemption of madrassas from the RTE Act has deprived children attending these institutions of quality education.

While Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution protect the rights of minorities to preserve their culture and establish educational institutions, NCPCR asserts that these provisions have inadvertently led to discrimination against children in madrassas, who miss out on formal education mandated by the RTE Act.

Also read: Record number of Hindu students to sit for school final exam conducted by West Bengal Madrasah Board

The report pointed out that while the primary focus of madrassas is religious education, many do not provide the essential components of formal education such as adequate infrastructure, trained teachers, and proper academic curricula.

This leaves students at a disadvantage compared to their peers in mainstream schools.

The report also noted instances where madrassa students have been denied basic entitlements such as textbooks, uniforms, and access to midday meal scheme.

The NCPCR said a large number of Muslim children out of school, with an estimated 1.2 crore Muslim children not receiving formal education, according to UDISE 2021-22 data.

The report also said there was a lack of accountability in many madrassas, where physical safety concerns, such as poor infrastructure and cases of child rights violations, have been reported.

NCPCR has recommended a series of measures, including stopping state funding to madrassas and madrassa boards unless they comply with the RTE Act.

Additionally, NCPCR has recommended removing non-Muslim children from madrassas, as their inclusion violates **Article 28 of the Constitution**, which prohibits the imposition of

religious instruction without parental consent.

The commission's report called for a balanced approach, where both religious and formal education can coexist but not within the same institution.

"Religious education cannot come at the expense of formal education," the report asserted, emphasising that the state must prioritise the fundamental right of every child to free and compulsory education.

Published - October 12, 2024 01:02 pm IST