

Minority education revamp on cards

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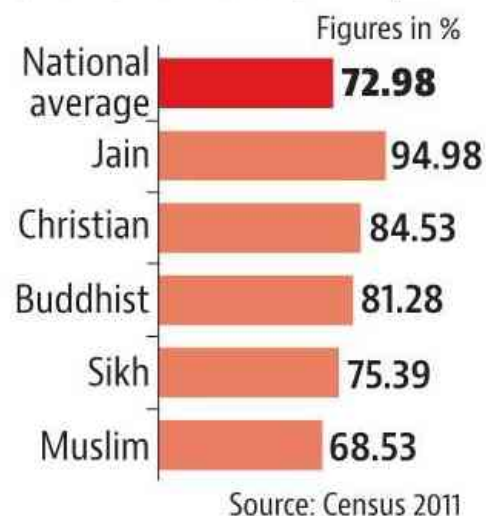
NEW DELHI: A Centre-appointed panel has suggested more than 200 new schools and 25 colleges as a part of an exercise to overhaul the education system for minorities.

The panel's report, submitted on Thursday to the minority affairs ministry, has suggested that the new schools should follow the CBSE syllabus even as students may be allowed to attend Madrasas for religious teachings.

As per 2011 Census, literacy rate of Muslims stand at 68.53, the lowest among all minority communities and less than the national average of 72.98%. While the community is grappling with low rate of literacy, there are also concern over the poor quality of education, keeping the largest

Literacy rate

Panel suggests more than 200 new schools and 25 colleges to overhaul the education system



minority community at an "double disadvantage."

The panel, headed by former parliamentary affairs secretary Afzal Amanullah, has also sug-

gested that five national institutes in fields like science and technology, health sciences and architecture to be set up for research and specialised education. All institutes would provide co-education as the government is keen to improve the abysmally low literacy rate among Muslim women, said Amanullah.

"We have not said only minority students will be allowed to study in these institutes. But we want these institutes to come in minority-dominated areas so that the local boys and girls have an advantage," Amanullah told HT.

The panel has identified places like Anantnag, Darbhanga where the new schools can be set up. Altogether, 211 schools have been proposed in which students will be taught free of cost.

With an eye on skill develop-

ment of the minorities, the panel has also proposed that the colleges will have "constant dialogue with offices of Skill Corporation of India so that they remain updated of the requirements of the workforces for the local economy."

Amanullah claimed that while the Muslims are in dire need of modern education, the panel has not just focused on them, but looked at the needs of other minority communities as well. "We have focused on imparting secular education. But if anyone wants to pursue theological studies, we have said that students can go to madrasas before the school hours."

The minority affairs ministry constituted an 11 member committee to recommend modalities to facilitate the educational development of the minorities.