

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Modernise the madarsas

Recently the Centre has decided to give financial aid to those madarsas which sought to be modernised. This decision should be hailed by everyone but before opting for such a measure the concerned authorities running the madarsas have to consider its positive as well as negative implications.

Before 1857, the madarsas were meant for Arabic education so as to produce the so-called clergymen but after the introduction of English education in India, the Muslim intelligentsia went against it. Thus, Sir Syed Ahmed was criticised for the establishment of Aligarh Muslim University, where he attempted imparting education along modern lines. On the other hand, many madarsas

were established solely for the study of Arabic to facilitate reading of the Quran and Hadith. Unfortunately, the Muslim League leadership was less concerned with education, and more with the creation of Pakistan.

After 1945, the influential Muslims of north India migrated to Pakistan and the illiterate and lower class Muslims (with a few exceptions) who remained behind were more concerned about their survival than other matters. This situation largely persisted till the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

In the '70s, some consciousness was aroused among Muslims but they were exploited and victimised by politicians. The major cause of this was the lack of genuine Muslim leadership, and this situation prevails even today.

In Bihar, Dr Jagannath Mishra championed the cause of Muslims by recognising the madarsas and financially aiding them but nothing was done for the revival of their traditional syllabus. Prior to this, under private ownership, these madarsas were concerned

about their social, educational and religious commitments but now they are more concerned about financial aid than about education. As a result, there is no prominent Muslim in Bihar with a madarsa



background. In the changed scenario, when the importance of science and technical education has been realised, these madarsas have to be modernised with the education of Quran and Hadith as the essential component, while adding to the syllabus science and other modern subjects as studied in the universities. I think, it is the right time for the governments as well as the Muslim intelligentsia to think over such a scheme and come up with concrete proposals.

Naushad Anjum  
New Delhi