



## Assam's Bill on Madrasa Conversion

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### Why in News

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The Assam Assembly has recently **passed a Bill** to convert **state-run madrasas** into **regular schools** - removing them from the **status of centres for religious education**.

The Cabinet has also decided that the existing provincialised **Sanskrit tols will be converted to “study centres, research centres and institutions to study the Certificate/ Diploma/ Degree courses”** to be started by **Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Nalbari** with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

### Key Points

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- The **Assam Repealing Bill, 2020** was brought to repeal **two existing Acts**:
  - The Assam Madrassa Education (Provincialisation) Act, 1995.
  - The Assam Madrassa Education (Provincialisation of Services of Employees and Re-Organisation of Madrassa Educational Institutions) Act, 2018.
- The new legislation also covers **private-run madrasas** that are run under the state boards although **private-run madrasas which are not under any state board will remain outside its purview**.
  - In English, the term madrasah or "madrasa" usually refers **more narrowly to Islamic institutions of learning**.
  - Historians and other scholars also employ the term to refer to **historical madrasah institutions throughout the Muslim world**, which is to say a **college/school where Islamic law was taught along with other secondary subjects**.
- The Madrasas run by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA) will have **‘madrasa’** dropped from their names and function as **regular schools**.

The staff of the madrasas, especially those teachers teaching religious subjects, **will be retained**. They will be either trained to teach other subjects or in some other capacity.
- It is said to be a move to **empower the Muslim community**.

- The bill is being said to follow the ideals of **B R Ambedkar**. He had said that **religious instruction should have no place in curriculum.**
  - The Quran should not be taught on government expenditure because the Bible or the Bhagavad Gita or texts of other religions are not taught on it.
  - The government **spends Rs. 260 crore** on madrasas and the Sanskrit “tols” (sanskrit learning centres) **annually.**
- Further, **secularism is one of the ‘basic features’ of the Constitution.**
- The government **aspires** that in the future a law is made to **make private madrasas teach science, maths and other subjects along with religious subjects.**

**Source:IE**