

Snapshot: Religious Seminaries in Pakistan in Pakistan

As of the mid-March 2009.

Under the special instructions of the Ministry of Interior, all the law enforcement and allied agencies will start surveying the religious seminaries in Pakistan from the month of May 2009. The Ministry has also issued special instructions to collect the details of the female teachers in these seminaries.

According to the seminaries' surveys held during President General Musharraf's era, there are nearly 20,000 religious schools in Pakistan that are teaching an approximate number of 2 million youth.

Deobandi sect has the largest number of seminaries with the figure at 12,000 while Brelvies operate 3,500, Shiites 390, Ahle Hadith 380 and Jamaat Islami 405 seminaries in Pakistan. It is worth noting that Deobandi is the smaller sect against the Brelvies.

Punjab has the biggest number of the seminaries (8,000) followed by Sindh (5,500) then NWFP (5,000) and nearly 1,500 are in Balochistan, FATA and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Only in the Islamabad region, there are approximately 150 and 90% of these are operated by the Deobandi sect.

According to security officials, most of the terrorists arrested in the recent months belonged to the Deobandi sect.

The Interior Ministry is going to cooperate with the Madrassa Education Board to conduct the new survey in 2009.

Will the soul of Pakistan prevail against the terror in the name of religion?