

Government of Madras.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

Recd.

Regd.

} 1911.

Enclosures

Spare copies

G.O. No. 691, 29th September 1911.

Moral and religious instruction in schools.

Communicating to the Director of Public Instruction, Government of India, a letter from the Government of India regarding the formation of committees to consider and report upon the question of—

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following papers :—

I

Memorandum No. 1751-1, Educational, dated 19th July 1911.

A copy of the question asked by the Hon'ble Babu Kirtanand Sinha at the meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council on the 1st April 1911 on the subject of religious instruction in schools and of the answer thereto will be forwarded to the Director of Public Instruction, who is requested to state whether in his opinion any, and if so what, action may be taken in this Presidency on the lines followed in the United Provinces.

L. DAVIDSON,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.

ENCLOSURE.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, dated 1st April 1911.
Religious Instruction in Government schools.

The Hon'ble BABU KIRTANAND SINHA asked :—

XIV. (a) Is the Government aware that in the final Education Code, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1910 (paragraph 74), the following provisions have been made for the imparting of religious instruction to the boys in the Government schools?—

“Religious instruction may be imparted in Government English schools subject to the following conditions:—

- “(i) The headmaster should set apart two half hours in the week for the religious instruction by a single instructor to boys whose parents wish them to receive it; provided that the parents can agree to the appointment of such an instructor and there is a class room in the school available for the purpose.
- “(ii) The question of charging fees for religious instruction is left entirely to the community desiring it.
- “(iii) The religious instructor will keep a register of attendance open to inspection by the headmaster and may report for punishment boys who play the truant.
- “(iv) The community will conduct all examinations in religious knowledge. The results may be communicated by the headmaster and may be read out by him at the annual prize-giving when any prize which the community may propose to award for proficiency in religious knowledge will be awarded by a representative of that community. Otherwise the headmaster will have no concern whatever with the progress in the religious knowledge of any scholar.
- “(v) No headmaster on the school establishment may be engaged as a religious instructor.
- “(vi) The community concerned will be responsible for making arrangements which will be agreeable to the general public.
- “(vii) It is optional with the parents to have the religious instruction given to the children. Any parent desirous of having a boy instructed in religion will signify his wish in writing to the headmaster who will then give permission to the boy to attend the classes.”

(b) Will the Government be pleased to state whether there are any arrangements or provisions for imparting religious education to the students in any part of this province?

(c) If not, will the Government be pleased to state whether it intends to consider the desirability of introducing provisions, like those in force in the United Provinces, in the schools and colleges in this province, both Government and private institutions?

The Hon'ble Mr. CUMMING replied :—

“(a) Government are aware of the provisions to which the Honourable Member refers.

“(b) Government have taken no steps to provide that religious instruction shall be imparted to students in any part of the province. Government have not, however, issued any instructions which preclude the authorities of private schools or colleges from providing religious instruction in the institutions which they control. The authorities of unaided institutions are

free to take such action in this regard as they think proper. In aided institutions religious instruction may be provided so long as it is not allowed to interfere with the ordinary school or college courses and attendance is not made compulsory in the case of pupils whose parents or guardians do not desire that they should attend.

“(c) Government are prepared to consider the desirability of introducing provisions like those in force in the United Provinces, in the schools and colleges in this province. There is not at present anything to prevent private institutions from providing for the religious instruction of their pupils.”

II

Letter—from the Hon'ble Mr. J. H. STONE, M.A., F.R.H.S., Acting Director of Public Instruction.

To—the Secretary to Government, Educational Department.

Dated—Madras, the 30th August 1911.

No.—Ref. on Cur. 5051.

With reference to your Memorandum No. 1751-1, dated 19th July 1911, regarding religious instruction in schools in this Presidency, I have the honour to state that I greatly doubt the advisability of taking any general action in the matter. The aided schools are not prevented from arranging for religious instruction pretty much on the lines of the United Provinces except that it should be carried on outside the ordinary school hours. If a set of rules regarding religious instruction were printed in the Madras Educational Rules, it would doubtless do something to encourage such instruction. The weight of opinion seems to be that in the case of Muhammadans this would be advantageous, but not in the case of Hindus. This is the conclusion I arrived at as the result of the Allahabad Conference on the subject. Hinduism, as understood by ordinary Hindus, seems to connect very little with morals and its teaching therefore hardly comes within the sphere of the secular school. It is to be remembered that boys are in school only about 25 hours in the week, that consequently there is plenty of time for religious instruction outside the school hours, that there are sectarian differences among Hindus, that religion must present very different aspects to different castes and that consequently the number of Hindu teachers wanted for any school would be considerable and that the danger of exciting the “odium theologicum” within the school walls is by no means negligible. If the parents want religious teaching for their boys, they can easily provide it quite apart from the school and so as to meet the requirements of each sect or sub-sect without danger of rousing sectarian animosities. These considerations apply to all schools; they are especially weighty in the case of Government schools.

2. As regards Muhammadans, religious instruction is already provided in the Madrasa-i-Azam and in aided schools not under mission management. No action therefore seems necessary on their account.

III

Letter—from the Hon'ble Mr. H. SHARP, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education (Education).

To—the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Educational Department.

Dated—Simla, the 4th September 1911.

Nos.—1257—1264.

The Government of India have recently had under consideration the questions of religious and of moral instruction in schools. These questions have been prominent in the press, in the Imperial Legislative Council and in Parliament; they have been discussed in a conference at Bombay and more recently at the Educational Conference at Allahabad.

2. As regards religious instruction the principle laid down in the Despatch of 1854 has been generally maintained, viz., that education in Government schools should be exclusively secular and that in aided schools the grant system should be based on abstinence from interference with religious instruction conveyed in the institutions. The Education Committee of 1882-83 re-affirmed this principle, and rejected suggestions that religious instruction might, at local option, be introduced in board primary schools, and that equal facilities should be given in Government colleges for the teaching of all religions.

3. In the United Provinces, indeed, the Education Code permits religious instruction for one hour a week to the children of parents who desire it, through an instructor agreed upon by the parents, provided that the headmasters have no concern in this matter save the granting of permission, at the parent's wish, to pupils to attend the classes, and their punishment, should they absent themselves therefrom, and provided that no teacher on the regular staff should be religious instructor. In the Punjab, the Code permits religious instruction on the premises of board schools out of school hours, provided that it is imparted in accordance with rules laid down by the local body, that the arrangements are agreeable to all sections of the community, that the instruction is specifically requested by the parent, that no teacher in regular employ be compelled to teach and that no charge for such instruction be paid from public funds. But little or no advantage has been taken of the facilities allowed for religious instruction in these two provinces. In Burma special arrangements are in force; but these need not be described as they are not applicable to India as a whole.

4. It was clear, during the deliberations of the recent Educational Conference held at Allahabad (to the published proceedings of which attention is invited), that grave differences of opinion exist as to the possibility or advantage of introducing religious instruction into schools generally, as well as serious apprehensions of difficulty in the working of any effective system. Doubts not dissimilar were expressed about the efficacy of moral when divorced from religious instruction. In this matter, however, the difficulties are undoubtedly less than in the case of religious teaching, and the papers laid before the Conference indicate that not a little moral instruction is already given in the ordinary text-books and otherwise. It is understood that moral text-books are under preparation in India, and a volume has been specially produced for India by the Moral Education League, London.

5. The Government of India fully appreciate the difficulties which beset these subjects, more especially that of religious instruction in regard to which they must maintain a position of complete neutrality. But many of the most thoughtful minds in India have made it a matter of real concern that the system of education tends to develop the intellectual at the expense of the moral and religious faculties. The questions can best be treated locally and the Governor General in Council would suggest for the consideration of the Government of Madras that local committees, on which Indians would be largely represented, might be appointed in the first instance to consider whether any practical measures can be taken which will remove the defects of the present system and influence the rising generation for good. I am to add that the Government of India will be glad to be placed in possession of the matured views of the Government of Madras upon the whole question.

Order—No. 691, Educational, dated 29th September 1911.

The letter from the Government of India read above will be communicated to the Director of Public Instruction, who will be requested, with reference to paragraph 5 thereof, to submit proposals for the formation of a committee or committees to consider and report upon the question of religious and moral instruction in schools.

(True Extract.)

L. DAVIDSON,
Ag. Secretary to Government,

To the Director of Public Instruction.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. No. 691, EDUCATIONAL, DATED 29TH SEPTEMBER 1911.

[SUBJECT.—*Abstract of Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, dated 1st April 1911.*]

Precious papers :

G.O. No. 645, Educational, dated 17th October 1902.	
" " 404 " " 29th July 1904.	
" " 552 " " 7th September "	
" " 358 " " 23th May 1905.	
" " 583 " " 3th August 1908.	
" " 681 " " 30th September "	
" " 51 " " 28th January 1909.	
" " 395 " " 11th July 1910.	
" " 712 " " 5th December "	

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

Circulated to the Hon'ble Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyar.

K. RANGASWAMI AIYANGAR—28-6-11.

M. S. MASCARENHAS—28-6-11.

Will the Secretary (Educational Department) draw the Director of Public Instruction's attention to pages 242 and 243 please and ask him if Madras may move in the same direction?

V. K[RISHNASWAMI AIYAR]—3-7-11.

Educational to extract passage and this note, and treat as a current for disposal.

L. DAVIDSON—4-7-11.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

The draft memorandum is for approval.

K. RANGASWAMI AIYANGAR—5-7-11.

Please say briefly whether there are any, and if so what, corresponding provisions in the standing orders of the Educational Department in this Presidency or any orders conflicting with the procedure obtaining in the United Provinces.

2. It will be necessary to take the Honourable Member's orders before any reference issues.

L. DAVIDSON—6-7-11.

There is no provision in the Educational Codes of this Presidency similar to that contained in the Educational Code of the United Provinces on the subject of religious instruction.

2. The policy of Government in regard to religious instruction in public schools is laid down in paragraph 2 of G.O. No. 558, Educational, dated 25th May 1905.

Please see also the notes connected with this Government Order and with G.O. No. 395, Educational, dated 11th July 1910. In reply to a question asked at the meeting of the Council of the 25th January 1909 by the Hon'ble Raja Vasudeva Raja Valia Nambidi of Kollengode, the Government said—

“Religious instruction cannot be permitted to be given during school hours and owing to the numerous religious sects represented by the pupils attending a school open to all classes, it would generally be impracticable to arrange for the use of the building out of school hours for instruction in diverse religious systems.”

8. At the meeting of the Legislative Council of the 29th November 1910, the Hon'ble the Raja of Vizianagram asked a question on the subject of moral and religious instruction in schools. The question and the answer given to it are extracted below :—

“Question 163. (a) Is the attention of Government now engaged in arriving at a working arrangement for the purpose of imparting religious and moral instruction in the public schools of this Presidency?”

“(b) If not, will they be pleased to consider the desirability of appointing a commission to obtain expert opinion, ascertain the sense of the public and report on the most practicable non-sectarian lines on which that great improvement in Indian education can be effected?”

Answer—

“(a) Special emphasis is laid in the Inspection Code on the duty which lies upon all inspecting officers of seeing that sufficient attention is paid in all schools, which come under Government inspection, to moral training. The special attention of Government is not at present engaged on arriving at a working arrangement for imparting religious instruction.

“(b) The Government do not consider that at the present time any advantage would be derived from the appointment of such a commission as that suggested.”

4. In order to understand the position clearly, it seems to be necessary to give a brief summary of the orders passed by Government from time to time in the matter of giving religious instruction in public schools.

5. In 1902, the Muhammadan Educational Association of Southern India submitted to Government a resolution of the Muhammadan Educational Conference of 1901 on the subject of religious instruction. The resolution ran as follows :—

“That it is necessary that religious instruction should be given to Muhammadan boys side by side with secular education and that with a view to achieve this end, the Government of Madras be requested to grant permission to Muhammadans to make their own arrangement for imparting religious instruction in Government, Municipal and Local Board schools during school hours on the lines sanctioned by the Government of the Punjab and the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.”

6. On this the Government passed the following orders :—

“The Government have not received definite information as to the conditions under which religious instruction is given in Municipal and Board schools in the Punjab and United Provinces and will await a further communication on the subject from the Association in regard to the matter of the instruction, the manner in which it is to be conveyed, and the time to be occupied thereby.”

To this the Association submitted no reply.

7. In 1904, the Association requested the Director of Public Instruction for permission to appoint a moulavi to give religious instruction to the pupils of the Madrasa-i-Azam and prayed that a room in the school building and the necessary furniture might be placed at their disposal for this purpose. The Director sought the orders of Government in the matter; and Government said that a retiring place for prayer would be provided on the premises of the Umdah Bagh and that no further accommodation seemed to be needed for religious purposes—*vide* G.O. No. 552, Educational, dated 7th September 1904.

8. On a separate reference from the Director on the subject of imparting religious instruction in the Board Muhammadan primary school at Arni, the Government said that it was undesirable to allow the school building at Arni to be utilized for the purpose of imparting religious instruction which might be of a sectarian character and might not always be acceptable to the whole of the Muhammadan community and that the mosque seemed to be the more appropriate place for such instruction.

9. The Muhammadan Association then undertook to engage a religious instructor and to hold religious classes out of school hours in the Madrasa-i-Azam and requested that a room in the school building and the necessary furniture might be placed at its disposal.

10. The Government then said—

“While the Government cannot close their eyes to difficulties that may arise if they permit religious instruction to be given in public schools, they recognize a growing desire for such instruction among the enlightened sections of the community and it is far from their intention to place any unnecessary obstacles in the way of their aspirations. The Government will, therefore, gladly afford to the Muhammadan Educational Association, in their endeavour to provide religious instruction to the pupils of the Madrasa, any facilities which are not inconsistent with the maintenance of the accepted policy of religious neutrality. The Association will accordingly be allowed to try their scheme experimentally on the following conditions :—

“(1) That the instruction is given out of school hours and does not interfere in any way with the school curriculum ;

“(2) that no boys are admitted to the religious instruction classes without the written consent of their parents or guardians ;

“(3) that if at any time a room in the school building cannot be spared, the Association will be required to make other arrangements ; and

“(4) that at any time the Government may withdraw the permission to use the room.”

11. In the two schools maintained by Government in Myslapore—one for Muhammadan boys and the other for Muhammadan girls—the Government have permitted a private committee, which is also entrusted with the management of the schools, to provide religious instruction out of school hours, the cost of the religious teachers being met from funds raised by private subscriptions.

Paragraph 1 of Director of Public Instruction's letter on page 2 of G.O. No. 583, Educational, dated 8th August 1908.

Paragraph 1 of Director of Public Instruction's letter on page 2 of G.O. No. 681, Educational, dated 30th September 1908.

12. It will thus be seen that there is no objection to religious teaching being given in schools under public management by private agencies out of school hours. In the case of aided schools, there is no objection whatever to religious instruction being given. As a matter of fact in all the mission schools (aided and unaided) the Bible is taught.

K. RANGASWAMI AYYANGAR—13-7-11.

May a reference be made to the Director of Public Instruction as desired by the Hon'ble Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyar. The United Provinces rules seem safe.

L. DAVIDSON—14-7-11.

The reference may go to the Director of Public Instruction. The United Provinces schools, I presume, contain mostly Muhammadan boys. I fancy they have separate school for each creed. I don't think any master in a school should be permitted to undertake religious instruction—but apart from that condition the United Provinces rules seem unobjectionable. They could probably be worked in a school where the boys are mainly of one class.

M. H[AMMICK]—17-7-11.

The draft memorandum is for approval.

K. RANGASWAMI AIYANGAR—18-7-11.

L. DAVIDSON—19-7-11.

[Memorandum No. 1751-1, dated 19th July 1911.]

From the Director of Public Instruction, No. 5051, dated 30th August 1911.

From the Government of India, No. 1257-64, dated 4th September 1911.

Advance copy of the Government of India's letter No. 1257-1264, dated 4th September 1911, circulated to the Hon'ble Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyar.

Please circulate draft to me before issue.

V. K[RISHNASWAMI AIYAR].

The Director of Public Instruction doubts the advisability of taking any general action in the matter of religious instruction in schools. The reasons for this conclusion are given at full length in his letter No. 5051, dated 30th August 1911. Attention is solicited to the proceedings of the Allahabad Conference on pages 14 to 19.

2. In their letter, dated 4th September 1911, the Government of India observe that during the deliberations of the recent Educational Conference at Allahabad it was clear that grave differences of opinion exist as to the possibility or advantage of introducing religious instruction into schools generally, as well as serious apprehensions of difficulty in the working of any effective system. While appreciating the difficulties which beset the subject of religious instruction, in regard to which the Government must maintain a position of complete neutrality, the Government of India suggest that local committees on which Indians would be largely represented might be appointed in the first instance to consider whether any practical measures can be taken to remove the defects of the present system and influence the rising generation for good; and they ask for the matured views of this Government on the whole question.

3. It is for consideration whether a committee may be appointed as suggested by India and what should be its composition.

4. The Hon'ble Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyar has asked that the file should be circulated to him.

K. RANGASWAMI AIYANGAR—16-9-11.

The letter from the Government of India deals with the same subject as that mooted by the Hon'ble Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyar but raises the broader issue of moral (as well as religious) instruction. There is one significant statement in the letter, namely, that "little or no advantage has been taken of the facilities allowed for religious instruction" in the United Provinces and the Punjab. The creation of similar facilities in Madras is unlikely to be attended by any larger degree of success, and as the Director of Public Instruction points out there are objections to the procedure.

2. This issue may however be considered by the appointment of a local committee together with the general topic of moral instruction, the letter being referred to the Director of Public Instruction in the first instance for remarks and proposals as to the constitution of such a committee.

L. DAVIDSON—12-9-11.

Yes. We may first ask the Director of Public Instruction to suggest names for a committee to report on the subject.

M. H[AMMICK]—20-9-11.

India speaks of local committees on which Indians would be largely represented. Evidently they have more than one committee in mind. I agree to the reference.

The difficulty is not so great as the Director of Public Instruction supposes. Opinion is undergoing rapid change. If local committees are formed in half a dozen important centres a real impetus can be given. There are good text-books for moral education coming into existence, and in my opinion the broad principles of each of the great religions can be taught without exciting sectarian animosities. I don't think any trial should be prevented by a *priori* judgments. The worst that can happen is failure.

V. K[RISHNASWAMI AIYAR]—21-9-11.

Draft for "one or more committees" and mark for Honourable Member.

L. DAVIDSON—23-9-11.

A draft is submitted for approval.

T.K.—24-9-11.

K. RANGASWAMI AIYANGAR—25-9-11.

L. DAVIDSON—26-9-11.

Approved.

M. H[AMMICK]—28-9-11.

[G.O. No. 691, Educational, dated 29th September 1911.]

Educational DEPARTMENT

READ AGAIN G.O., No., dated 191

" " " , "

191

READ ALSO:—

C. No. 2145, From the DPA, No. 5051, dated 30-9-1911

33 33 2368 33 33 *Sub of 9.* 33 1257-1264 33 4-9- 1911

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ORDER.

29.

No. 091, dated 29. 9. 1911

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The D.P.I.

The letter from the Govt
of India read above will be
communicated to the D.P.I.
who will be requested, ~~and~~
with reference to para 5
thereof, he will be requested
to ^{submit proposals} ~~suggest~~ for the forma-
tion of a Committee or Committee
to consider and report upon
the question of religious and
moral instruction in schools.

7-H.
24-9-11

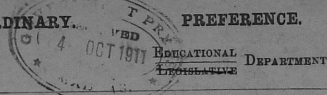
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