

Government of Madras.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

Recd.

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1915.

Enclosures

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G.O. No. 7, 5th January 1915.

Muhammadian education.

Forwarded from the Government of India forwarding for the information
Madras, a copy of the letter from the Government of Burma on the

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

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G.O. No. 7, 5th January 1915.

Muhammadian education.

Recording an endorsement from the Government of India forwarding for the information of the Government of Madras, a copy of the letter from the Government of Burma on the subject of —.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following papers:—

I

G.O. No. 1422, Educational, dated 14th December 1914.

II

Endorsement of the Government of India, Department of Education (Education), No. 1900, dated Delhi, the 14th December 1914.

A copy of the undermentioned paper is forwarded to the Government of Madras for information in continuation of this department endorsement No. 1783-1793, dated the 2nd December 1914.

(By Order.)

P. SHARP,
Joint Secretary to the Government of India.

ENCLOSURE.

Letter—from C. M. WEBB, Esq., I.C.S., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Burma.

To—the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education.

Dated—the 9th November 1914.

No.—217-14 E.-5.

In reply to your letter No. 585-595, dated the 3rd April 1913, I am directed to bring to the notice of the Government of India the fact that the Muhammadan community in Burma has attained a high standard of education, compared with that attained by the Muhammadan community in India. A reference to the reports of the recent census in 1911 will show that the proportion of literates among Muhammadans in Burma is 178 per thousand, as against 38 per thousand for the Muhammadan community in India generally. With regard to female education, the discrepancy is even greater. The proportion of literate Muhammadan females in Burma reaches the abnormally high figure of 77 per thousand against 4 for the whole of India.

2. The principal reason for the relatively high standard of education among Muhammadans in Burma, is the absence of the language difficulty which is mentioned in the second paragraph of your letter. A very large number of Muhammadans speak Burmese, the vernacular of the country, and attend the Burmese lay schools which are devoted to the normal educational requirements of the Province. There is little or no prejudice against the use of these schools by Muhammadans, and consequently the members of the Muhammadan community have participated equally with the adherents of the indigenous religion of the Province in the educational facilities provided.

3. Although a large number of Muhammadans attend the ordinary vernacular Burmese lay schools, there is an unascertained number of purely Muhammadan schools which may be classified as follows:—

(i) those in which Urdu is the medium for teaching,

(ii) those in which Urdu is taught, but is not the sole medium of teaching,

(iii) those in which the medium of teaching is Burmese and Urdu is not taught.

Although it is impossible at present to give the numbers of these three classes of schools respectively, the Director of Public Instruction is causing an enquiry to be made, with a view to ascertaining their actual numbers and their distribution throughout the Province. Meantime, it is not necessary to delay proposals for applying methods to encourage Muhammadan education until the actual numbers of schools of each class have been ascertained.

4. Coming to the six specific proposals for the improvement of primary education among Muhammadans detailed in the second paragraph of your letter, I am to say that the Lieutenant-Governor is willing to accept them in their entirety and to apply them wherever necessary throughout the Province.

5. As to the first of these proposals, "the encouragement of *maktabs* to adopt a secular course which will appeal to Muhammadans and will not prevent the teaching of simple Urdu, where necessary, and of the Koran", it will be possible to apply the existing provisions of the Education Code with respect to Buddhist monastic schools, with but slight variation to the Muhammadan *maktabs*, and His Honour is willing to accord the same standard of treatment to both these classes of religious schools. The Director of Public Instruction is being asked to take steps to place the Muhammadan *maktabs* on the same footing as that occupied by the Buddhist monastic schools.

6. With reference to the second proposal to grant facilities for the teaching of Urdu, where Urdu is still a vernacular for practical purposes, I am to say that this will be done in the case of all schools coming under class (i) as described in paragraph 3 above. As regards the schools in the second of the classes there described, while retaining Burmese as the vernacular medium of teaching Urdu will be given a privileged place as a second language, and adequate facilities for its teaching will be provided.

7. His Honour approves of suggestions (iii) and (iv), concerning the provision of text-books suitable for Muhammadan education, and the Director of Public Instruction is taking steps to provide text-books as suggested in consultation with the leading members of the Muhammadan community.

8. Suggestions (v) and (vi), concerning the provision of Muhammadan teachers, where practicable, and for a separate inspecting agency for Muhammadan schools, meet with the warm approval of the Lieutenant-Governor. So far as is known the Muhammadan teaching and inspecting staffs are adequate for all requirements, but as soon as the number of each class of Muhammadan schools in the Province is ascertained the Muhammadan teaching and inspecting staffs will be augmented if necessary.

9. As regards secondary and collegiate education, the four reasons (mentioned in paragraph 3 of your letter) which have retarded the spread of secondary education among Muhammadans, *viz.*, the poverty of the community, the linguistic difficulty, the demand for religious instruction and the want of Muhammadan representation on governing bodies of educational institutions, can hardly be said to be in operation in Burma. The Muhammadan community in Burma is not a poor community. Indeed, the Muhammadan Committee which considered these proposals claimed that Muhammadans in Rangoon pay one-third of the taxes levied by the Rangoon Municipality. This is a demonstration of their wealth rather than of their poverty. However, as Muhammadan pupils do not appear in practice to get an appreciable proportion of the scholarships that are allotted to the various grades of education, it is intended to allot a certain number of scholarships to Vernacular, Anglo-Vernacular and Middle-English Muhammadan pupils. The number of scholarships so allotted will be proportionate to the number of Muhammadan pupils attending the schools.

10. Nor is the linguistic difficulty found to be a great handicap to Muhammadan secondary education in Burma. A large number of Muhammadans are able to take advantage of secondary and collegiate education in the various Anglo-Burmese educational institutions. But where any desire is shown by Muhammadans for their children to obtain higher education through the medium of Urdu, the Local Government is prepared to meet the demand by means of either of the three methods:—

(i) the improvement of existing institutions for Muhammadans;

(ii) the establishment of separate Muhammadan institutions, where necessary;

(iii) the addition of special teachers to give instruction in Urdu and to help Muhammadan boys wherever such a necessity is shown to exist;

as suggested in paragraph 3 of your letter. Where a legitimate demand exists, Urdu and Anglo-Urdu schools will be treated with exactly the consideration that is extended to Burmese and Anglo-Burmese schools. Where the number of Muhammadan boys unable to benefit by the instruction in Burmese is not sufficient to justify the creation of a special Anglo-Urdu school, additions to the staff of teachers able to teach in Urdu and to give special help to Muhammadan boys will be appointed. This method is actually in force at present in schools at Akyab and Mamyo, and the Lieutenant-Governor is prepared to extend the system wherever an extension is justified by the number of non-Burmese speaking Muhammadan pupils in any school.

11. The fourth suggestion of paragraph 3 of your letter, concerning the maintenance of hostels for Muhammadans, has been considered by the Local Government on several occasions, when the matter has previously been brought to notice. So far, the need for this provision has not been demonstrated, but if a legitimate demand should arise, it would receive the sympathetic consideration of the Local Government.

15. I am to express regret for the late submission of this reply. It has been delayed in order to obtain the views of Mr. Covernton, Director of Public Instruction, who has had a lengthy experience of Muhammadan education in India, and who has but recently returned from leave in England.

P. RAJAGOPALA ACHARIYAR,
Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction.

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