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G.O. No. 7/4

DATED 1-7-15

[Despatch Abstract.]

According resolutions passed at the
First Visvarkasana Mahapana Conference
held at Kumbakonam in April 1915.

Memorial to the Government of Madras.



From

THE PRESIDENT,

FIRST VISWAKARMA MAHAJANA CONFERENCE,

KUMBAKONAM, (SOUTH INDIA).

To

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS,

Stonehouse Hill, OOTACAMUND.

SIR,

On behalf of the Central Committee of Viswakarma Mahajana Conference, I have the honour to herewith submit for the consideration of Government some of the resolutions in connection with Education and Industry of the Viswakarma community (Artizans) of South India unanimously adopted at the First Viswakarma Mahajana Conference held at Kumbakonam, on the 3rd and 4th April 1915.

The Conference, I may mention, was organised by the spontaneous exertion of all the leading members of the community who are interested in the well-being and up-lifting of the members of the community, who were once the boast of India's civilisation in matters Religious, Social, Industrial and Architectural. This occasion of an awakening of the community was taken advantage of by way of deliberations on the pressing needs of its Educational and Industrial requirements and by suggestion of such measures as were likely to ameliorate the condition of the community in these respects. Accordingly, a programme of work was laid down and a few resolutions were also passed inviting the attention of the Government to those matters in which Government aid was in the light of long experience considered inevitable as supplementing the efforts of the Committee. It was felt, however, that before soliciting the assistance of Government the Committee should make itself sure that all that could be done by the community itself has been undertaken, notwithstanding its present impoverished condition, and that Government are approached only on subjects in which their help was indispensable. Enquiries were instituted into the educational wants of the community in various communal centres and the causes which retarded the progress of Education of Viswakarma youths and those which led to the Industrial decay of the community were carefully scrutinized. The various resolutions in which Government aid was invoked were duly examined and discussed in the light of the past experience of half a century so that the Committee is now fully satisfied as to the general soundness of its conclusions and to encourage it to approach the Government with a modest number of resolutions passed at the Conference.

One of the most momentous questions in connection with education of Artizans is to ascertain the reasons why such a small number of Viswakarma youths pass out of the University (*Vide* the Addresses of the Chairman of the Reception Committee and of the President herewith attached) and why such a small number receive the benefit of Secondary education. The Conference after giving the matter its best consideration is of opinion that this unsatisfactory state of things is mainly due to the special difficulties and disadvantages with which the poor artizan children are confronted

in Secondary Schools and Colleges. The community as a whole is not, as supposed, prosperous and has rapidly deteriorated. The rapid decay of the indigenous arts and industries which were the hereditary occupation and main stay of the life of the community have declined, such decline being brought about by several adverse causes, the chief among them being the replacement of the old manual labour of the community by mechanical appliances and foreign competition. Hence the Artizans of the South are in too impoverished a condition to afford to give their children the benefit of an ordinary English education. To crown these misfortunes came the present War which has destroyed what remnants were left for the community of its arts and industries.

From the facts placed as above it may be clearly seen that the community with all its adverse circumstances is dying a languishing death and is not in its present condition, able to educate its children, unless some special facilities are provided by Government such as, admission of artizan youths on half fees into High Schools and Colleges, and establishment of Night Schools for day labourers. As regards the income of the various sects of the community under normal conditions, a reference to the Blue Book relating to "Technical Education in India" 1886-1904 will show as follows:—

Page 69.

Para 107. *Goldsmiths*.—In proportion to their skill Goldsmiths earn from 4 annas to Rupee One per day.

Para 108. *Brass Smiths*.—The earnings of Brass Smiths are as follows: those doing Castwork.—Skilled workman from 6 to 7 annas per day; others less in proportion to their ability. Those doing plain beaten work: skilled workman 4 to 5 annas; others in proportion.

Para 109. *Carpenters and Black Smiths*.—Ordinary carpenters earn from 2 to 3 annas per day each man. They also receive once a year remuneration in the shape of grain for repairing agriculturists' implements. Skilled carpenters and black smiths in large towns earn higher wages.

These Statements acknowledged as above by Government bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the income of the various sects is hardly sufficient to meet the bare necessities of life and that how impossible it would be for the members of the community to educate their children with such a scanty and uncertain income.

As regards Technical education the Committee begs to point out that not a single member of the community was benefitted by the various stipends and scholarships instituted by Government up-to-date, the reason being that such stipends and scholarships are offered by Government to men who have had higher education without due regard to inherent advantages derived by hereditary occupations. The Committee while admitting that a good general education is necessary for all who would rise in their profession, on the other hand considers that an exclusively literary training is of little value to youths who intend to adopt industrial pursuits. The Committee acknowledges with thankfulness, the praiseworthy attempts of Government to encourage the acquisition of Industrial and Technical education from Europe and elsewhere, for which they had endowed decent scholarships. Many students have returned after having had the necessary training but the influence for good which they were expected to exercise for the practical improvement of local industries and manufactures with the co-operation of the local Artizans has, to say the least, been imperceptible. The Committee begs leave to point out that the mistake lay in the first step taken *viz.*, in the election of the students to go to foreign countries for training, from communities other than the industrial and Artizan classes who possess the initial advantage of an aptitude for manual labour, born of an inherited capacity and instinctive professional skill which a University graduate of any other class despised as a derogation from his caste dignity or literary merit. In support of the above the following may be cited from the Census Report, 1911, Vol. XII, Madras, Page 196, Para 57:—

"For the present unsatisfactory state of affairs two reasons may be assigned. (1) The complete disassociation of the intellectual class in the country from its industries. Manual work of any kind was looked upon as degrading and the higher castes treated with contempt the Artizans and Craftsmen who carried on the industrial work of the country. * * * The standard of living began to rise, and the needs of the people could not be fully met by the primitive industrial system of the country. * * * Gradually all over the country the local artizans were made to feel the pressure of an altogether novel competition. * * * Some of the old industries succumbed and are never likely to be revived, but in others the artizan has managed to struggle on, selling his labour for a gradually decreasing wage. He might have met competition by improving his methods of working, but there was no one to help him. The educated classes were not interested in his fate, and went on their way rejoicing at the gradual decrease in the price of their domestic requirements."

The Committee respectfully affirms the accuracy of the above statement and as a remedy, prays for the early establishment of a few Industrial schools in important centres of South India exclusively for training the Artizan youths on modern lines so as to provide for both "Theoretical" and "Practical" training requisite for turning out efficient journeyman or master craftsman. As the poverty-stricken parents or guardians may not, as is generally the case, be willing to forego the additional paltry income of their youngsters through learning the trade as apprentices under their kith and kin, it is respectfully suggested that as an inducement, the children of the community found eligible for admission into these schools be given stipends of sufficient value to meet the boarding charges. The Committee further begs that in the selection of stipendiary students for foreign scholarships to acquire Technological education or special Industrial education pertaining to Arts and Industries peculiar to the caste or allied thereto, preference should, as far as possible, be given to the youths of the Artizan community who had received Secondary education, the rules regarding the possession of higher academic attainments should be dispensed with or relaxed as a special favour in consideration of the past and present services of the community to the Indian public at large, and the advantages accruing from their inherited capacity, instinctive industrial skill and the influence which they could exercise among their own class after such a training.

It is needless to recount the sad plight into which the local Artizans and their industries have fallen. To combat with the overwhelming poverty of the class and revive the industries peculiar to the caste some capital is urgently needed. For want of a small capital, the community for years has fallen into the clutches of unmerciful capitalists and avaricious money-lenders who knowing the helpless condition of its members dictated their own terms and made payments at their leisure, sometimes such transactions ending in mere adjustment of their old accounts. To revive the industries the Committee prays for State loans on the lines of advances made to Agriculturists, as this is considered to be the only way in which Government could come to the help of its members without which any amount of sympathetic advice and official investigation will not go far to bring about any substantial Industrial Revolution for good in South India. Therefore the Committee urges the grant of State loans for reviving their Arts and Industries, for well-organised Co-operative Societies of the community.

A copy of letter from Mr. Alfred Chatterton, C.I.E., indicating the lines on which the metal work industry of the South may be revived is appended hereto for favour of consideration along with the other points.

The Committee begs to bring to the notice of Government the deep interest evinced by the Conference regarding the South Indian Architecture, Town Planning, Sculpture, etc. After comparing the exquisite nature of their ancient productions with the meagre examples of the present day, the Conference was of opinion that this deterioration was partly accelerated by the indiscriminate and injudicious introduction of "Exotic Styles" of

architecture by Government in erecting their public buildings on the Dravidian land, with the result that the "Silpi" or the Architect and master-builder of the community forgot the past glory of his "Shastras" and the greatness of his own art and sank to the level of a common workman, implicitly carrying out the whims and fancies of a foreign engineer. In this connection it may not be out of place to mention that it is an undeniable fact that the indigenous Architecture, Arts and Industries—the common heritage of the community—once flourished under the patronage of Kings and Princes of the land. The Committee therefore prays that as far as is practicable, the Government buildings in the South be not built in altogether foreign and inappropriate styles, but built in adaptation of the Monumental Hindu style thereby giving an educative and aesthetic value to their public buildings and a chance for the "Silpis" to exhibit their native talents and workmanship. In this connection, attention is also invited to the views expressed by Prof. Geddes in a lecture recently delivered at Bombay, the summary of which appeared in "The Times of India" (Illustrated Weekly) dated 31st March 1915. The Committee begs to point out that as "Town planning" also falls within the scope of the "Silpis" or Indian Architects and as some of their ancient and edifying examples drew the unqualified admiration of Prof. Geddes, the members of the community possessing Secondary education be given an opportunity of making a comparative study of European and Eastern Architecture and Town-planning. With this end in view the Committee prays for early establishment of Government Architectural schools or classes for the purpose, while the teaching of the "Silpa shastras" and training of Indian Sculptor and master-builder on traditional lines will be undertaken by the Committee itself. The Committee further prays that in the selection of students for foreign scholarships for "Town-planning and Architecture" recently instituted by Government preference should, as far as possible, be given to members of the community possessing sufficient Educational, Engineering or Architectural qualifications.

The Committee with profound respect begs to convey to Government the emphatic protest of the Conference against the interference of Government in altering the time-honoured caste title "Achari" to "Asari" a meaningless, ungrammatical and unphonetical innovation. The Committee understands that numerous petitions and telegrams of protest from various representative bodies of the community have been submitted to Government and that this was also interpellated by the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai, Avl., in the local Legislative Council. As there is no sign of action being taken by Government on them, the Committee prays for very early restoration of their ancient title "Achari" and thereby to respect the feelings of the Community on this infringement of the birth right of its members.

In concluding, the Committee respectfully trusts that the Government will be pleased to deal with the questions submitted to their consideration in the spirit of justice and sympathy which they have always displayed in the disposal of matters affecting the Education, Industry, and welfare of a community whose achievement for the prosperity and common weal of India was once as great as it was disinterested, as glorious in the past as it is unacknowledged and forgotten at present.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) T. M. Mukkanachariar,

President.

OFFICE:

Kumbeswaran Kovil, South Street,

KUMBakonam,

Dated, 21st May 1915.

EXTRACTS OF THE RESOLUTIONS

PASSED AT

The First Viswakarma Mahajana Conference, Kumbakonam

APRIL 1915.



I. Loyalty.

- (a) This Conference begs to convey to Government the profound loyalty of the community to the British-raj and prays that the war undertaken by His Most Gracious Majesty George the V, for a just cause, be brought to a speedy and successful end.

Proposed by Mr. Namasivayam Sivakolundu Achariar (Jaffna).

Seconded by „ E. S. Arthanari Achariar (Erode).

Supported by „ K. Palanivelu Achariar (Trichy).

- (b) This Conference begs to express its genuine sorrow and deeply sympathises with His Excellency, Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, and well-wisher of India in his grievous domestic breavements.

Proposed by Mr. C. R. Subbaroya Achariar (Coimbatore).

Seconded by „ E. K. Ranganatha Achariar (Madras).

Supported by „ G. Krishnaswamy Achariar (Kumbakonam).

III. General Education.

- (a) This Conference prays Government, that out of special regard to the poverty of the community owing to the languishing of their Arts and Industries brought about by the powerful competition of the West, and the present industrial dislocation on account of the War and consequent dead-lock of trade and poor income of the community, would be pleased to order the admission of youths of the Artizan community into Secondary Schools and Colleges on half fees.

Proposed by Mr. T. M. Mukkanachariar (Madras).

Seconded by „ Namasivayam Sivakolundu Achariar (Jaffna).

Supported by „ E. S. Arthanari Achariar (Erode).

„ „ V. Vythinatha Swamy Sthapathy (Trivallur).

„ „ P. S. Ramaswamy Achariar (Tanjore).

„ „ Athyabaka Lingachariar (N. Arcot).

„ „ T. M. Chockalinga Achariar (Kumbakonam).

IV. Industry and Industrial Education.

This Conference begs of Government that they would be pleased to take the necessary steps for:

- (a) The preservation of indigenous Arts and Industries peculiar to the community from deterioration and extinction.
- (b) The early establishment of Industrial schools in some important centres of South India where necessary Industrial education on modern lines be given to the youths of the community with necessary scholarships.



- (c) The extension of scholarship for obtaining foreign training in Industrial education to youths of the community who had received Secondary education, the rules regarding the possession of higher education as a condition precedent for selection be relaxed in their case.
- (d) The establishment of Government Architectural schools or classes and thereby to give facility to youths of the community who had received Secondary education to make a comparative study of Eastern and Western Architecture, Town-planning, etc.
- (e) The grant of State loans by way of capital for improving methods of the indigenous industries peculiar to the caste for well-organised Co-operative Societies as is the case with the Agriculturists.

Proposed by Mr. G. Krishnaswamy Achariar (Kumbakonam).

Seconded by „ Namasivayam Sivakolundu Achariar (Jaffna).

Supported by „ T. A. Muthukrishna Achariar (Trichy).

„ „ K. Dharmalinga Achariar (Kumbakonam).

„ „ K. Kanniappa Achariar (Madras).

„ „ M. R. Rangaswamy Achariar (Coimbatore).

V. 'Achari' v. 'Asari.'

This Conference prays that Government will be pleased to cancel at a very early date the order altering their time-honoured caste title 'Achari' to 'Asari'—a meaningless, ungrammatical, and unphonetical innovation, thus violating the policy of non-interference with matters religious.

Proposed by Mr. T. A. Muthukrishna Achariar (Trichy).

Seconded by „ C. R. Subbaroya Achariar (Coimbatore).

Supported by „ K. Palanivelu Achariar (Trichy).

„ „ K. Kanniappa Achariar (Madras).

„ „ Athyabaka Lingachariar (N. Arcot).

„ „ T. A. Subramanya Achariar (Tranquebar).

Copy of Letter No. 2853, dated 24th March 1915, from Alfred Chatterton, Esq., F.C.G.I., C.I.E., to the Secretaries, Viswakarma Mahajana Conference, Kumbakonam :

I am in receipt of your letter No. 95-B, of the 23rd March 1915. The metal work industry in Kumbakonam is a very important one and it is certainly time you took steps to put it on a modern footing. This means the introduction of modern metal working machinery such as is largely used in the workshops of the Indian Aluminium Company in connection with the manufacture of Aluminium wares.

I am afraid it will be difficult for me to outline a practical scheme whereby you can establish in Kumbakonam a modern metal working factory. It is certain that you will require the services of expert metal workers from Europe to teach you how to apply these modern processes to the class of goods you are manufacturing. This can only be done either by establishing a Factory with a large out-put and run on purely business lines or by starting with Government assistance an Industrial School and dealing with the metal working industry of the town much in the same way as years ago I dealt with the Aluminium industry in Madras.

(Sd.) T. M. Mukkanachariar,

President.

NOTES.

The Kuma-
Kuma com-
munity shall
take the initiative
in starting a
school & then
apply for Govt.
aid.

To 366 this not comd 652
10-3-15

Public department.

5

Resolutions of the Viswakarma Mahajana Conference.

From the President, Viswakarma Conference, Kumbakonam
d. 21-5-15.

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For the U.S.

The receipt of ^{the} resolutions may be acknowledged.
Draft letter put up. Submitted that with reference to G.O.No.
366, Public, dated 10th March 1915 no action is called for in re-
gard to Resolution No. V on the question of the caste title
Achari v Asari.

2. A copy of the Resolutions may be forwarded to the Fdl. Dept
U.O.

M.D.R.
28-5-15.

P.deR.
31-5-15.

E.A.H.
1-6-15.



Eol CN 2079

15.6.15

P.R. 882

Educational Department

Resolution III.

The artisan community can secure the privilege of paying ~~only~~ fees at half the standard rates by being recognized as a backward class and included in the list appended to art. 15 of the Grant-in-aid Code. The Director is now engaged in considering the question of adequacy or otherwise of the list of backward classes. It may not be possible to recognize the whole of the undefined artisan class as backward. When ~~any of the subcastes that comprise it are really need as others~~ ~~they are and will be granted the concession.~~ The request is too vague & general.

Resolution IV (c).

The principle advocated in this resolution is one which has already been adopted by Govt. in making their selection of candidates for the State Technical Scholarships - vide the recom-

② - mendation rolls with letters no. 499 Ed. dt. 4-6-13
399 Ed. dt. 9-4-14 and 406 Ed. dt. 17-4-15. No
⑤ ⑥ action is called for on the resolution.

PA
17-6-15

Resolution No. IV (a) - Preservation of indigenous Arts & Industries.

No specific action is called for on this resolution.

Resolution No. IV (b) - Establishment of Industrial Schools in South India

The Govt. have decided to develop the Technical Institute at Madras. They also

C.P. Rule 102 of the Madras Rules.

para. 1 of his letter at slip. (T)

page 5 of cf.

— do —

Ly. No. 647 Ed. dt. 18-7-12 (N)

(Separate file)

(page 6 of c.f.)

f. n. 763.85
1.7.14

(page 6 of c.f.)

also propose to develop the St. Francis Xavier's Industrial School at Tanjong with special help from Provincial funds. It may not be possible to do anything more for the present.

Resolution No. IV (d) - Establishment of Govt architectural classes.

Architecture is ~~not one of the subjects~~ taught in the Engineering College. It is doubtful if there is demand for a separate ~~architectural~~ architectural school in the Presidency. ~~copy of the resolution may perhaps be forwarded to that Dept.~~

Resolution No. IV (e) - Grant of State loans for improving industries.

The Conference apparently desires that loans should be granted ~~to~~ under the ~~land improvement~~ Agriculturists' Loans Act for the improvement of indigenous industries. This is a question for consideration in the Revenue Dept.

A copy of the Resolution with extract of this note may, ~~per~~ it is submitted, be sent to that Dept.

No action seems to be called for on any of the resolutions of the Conference & they may, it is submitted, be recorded. A draft order is placed below.

Sh. CA
18.6.15
28/6/15

Exhaust
sent to Res
11/7/15

b 8

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

" " " " 191 .

READ ALSO:-

C. No. 2079, From the President, No. - , dated 21. 5- 1915

First Kiwakame
Makajue Anga

" " " " 191 .

" " " " 191 .

ORDER.

Mis

No. 714, dated 1. 7. 1915

Records.

SK
a. b. 15
CA
28/6/15

SK
Sundachant
New Place
Exhaich
Sent
SK

When given for copying _____
 When copied _____
 When examined _____
 When signed _____

191 .

READ AGAIN G.O. No. _____, DATED
 191 .

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO C. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

A A A A A A A

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

PAPERS NOT FILED UP, BEING MEANT FOR DESPATCH
 IN ORIGINAL.

N.B.—

- A = Copy in full.
- B = Not to be copied.
- P = Copy abstract only.
- Q = Copy heading only.