

Government of Madras

HOME DEPARTMENT (MISCELLANEOUS)

G.O. No. 1091, 1st October 1917

Examinations

Recording letter from the Government of India, Department of Education, No. 83, dated the 23rd August 1917, regarding the institution of a special examination in vernaculars for the wives and near relatives of European British subjects.

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ORIGINAL 2

HOME DEPARTMENT (MISCELLANEOUS)

Examinations

READ—the following papers :—

I

ABSTRACT.—Furnishing the Government of India with the views of this Government in regard to the institution of an examination in Urdu for the wives of European officers of Government.

II

No.—83.

2. The proposal has met with a somewhat varied reception in the different provinces. The object in view is in most cases approved and the means suggested have with some modifications received the hearty approval of several local Governments. Considerable doubt has, however, been expressed in some quarters regarding the details of the scheme and certain of the authorities consulted have expressed themselves as entirely opposed to it. In the circumstances, the Government of India do not desire to lay down any general scheme for the whole of India, but they consider that local Governments to whom a scheme of this kind commends itself should be in a position to give it a reasonable trial.

3. I am accordingly to say that, if a scheme of this kind commends itself to any local Government or administration it will be open for them, after consultation with the Board of Examiners, to institute an examination under Government Agency to which European ladies would be admitted. No money reward would be given, but it would be open to the local Governments to give to successful candidates a certificate or diploma showing the result of the examination. The examination might be conducted in any of the vernaculars for which examinations are now provided and it would, at the discretion of the local Government, be either entirely or partially colloquial; but it is recommended that a portion of the examination should, if possible, be written (if necessary in Roman script) in order to ensure proper control and a certain amount of uniformity between different centres in the province. The local Government would define the class of persons to whom the examination would be open, but it is suggested that such an examination would not be appropriate in the case of ladies of European parentage who had spent the whole of their lives in India. It would be for the local Government in each case to decide whether a fee should be charged or not and in deciding this question they will doubtless bear in mind the consideration that the imposition of a fee would tend to ensure a certain amount of preparation for the examination and would prevent any undue excess in the number of candidates.

Order—No. 1091, Home (Miscellaneous), dated 1st October 1917.

Recorded.

(True extract)

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
Secretary to Government.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. No. 1091, HOME (MISCELLANEOUS)
DATED 1st OCTOBER 1917

[SUBJECT.—*Examinations in vernacular languages for European ladies.*]

From the Government of India, Department of Education, No. 83, dated the 23rd August 1917.

The views of this Government on the suggestion made by the Government of India in March 1916, that a special examination in Urdu might be instituted at which the wives and near relatives of European British subjects in the service of Government might appear, will be found in letter No. 973, Public, dated the 19th May 1916. This Government doubted the need for instituting any such examination as was contemplated by India even in the case of the recognized South Indian vernaculars, as increasing knowledge of English among Indian ladies was making the study of the vernaculars by wives of English officials less essential. This was the view expressed by the Hon'ble Sir Alexander Cardew in his note dated the 12th May 1916, at page 9 of Notes to letter No. 973, Public, dated the 19th May 1916. India now leave it to local Governments to institute an examination in any vernacular under Government agency to which European ladies would be admitted. Submitted for consideration whether in view of the opinion expressed in 1916, the need for instituting an examination of the kind suggested will be accepted. If considered necessary the opinions of select Collectors may perhaps be invited as to the necessity or otherwise for instituting such an examination. If the need for an examination be accepted the question of details as to the scope of the examination, the class of persons to whom it would be open, the fee if any to be charged suggested for consideration by India may be settled in consultation with the President, Board of Examiners.

T.C.N.—17-9-17.

P.D.R.—20-9-17.

E. A. HARVEY—21-9-17.

The main question is whether a colloquial examination in South Indian vernaculars intended to enable European ladies to converse is desirable. If it be decided to have such an examination, the details will be considered later on.

Honourable Member (1) remarked on a previous occasion that such an examination appeared unnecessary on account of the increasing knowledge of English amongst Indian ladies. This is true only of Madras City.

In the mufassal it is different, and there is no doubt that the want of knowledge of vernaculars amongst the European ladies makes social intercourse difficult; and what is worse, makes the pursuit of common aims impracticable. For example at the weekly workparties of ladies in connection with the Ladies depot in Nellore, only two or three Indian ladies attended. I am sure that if there were a common language more would have attended.

With due deference I beg to doubt whether an examination of this nature will be more useful to missionary ladies than to others. Even without an examination missionary ladies talk the vernacular fluently.

[G.O. No. 1091, Home (Miscellaneous), dated 1st October 1917.]

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G.O. No. 1091, 1st October 1917

Examinations

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READ—the following papers :—

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Letter No. 973, Home (Miscellaneous), dated 19th May 1916.

ABSTRACT.—Furnishing the Government of India with the views of this Government in regard to the institution of an examination in Urdu for the wives of European officers of Government.

II

Letter—from the Hon'ble Mr. H. SHARP, C.S.I., C.I.E., Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education (Examination).

To—the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras.

Dated—Simla, the 23rd August 1917.

No.—83.

Under the provisions laid down in the Government of India Resolution No. 3635-45, dated the 3rd August 1871, and Army Regulations, India, Volume II, Appendix V, Note III, it is open for persons not connected with Government to appear at the Government examinations in vernacular languages with the sanction of the local Government concerned and it has been ascertained that under these provisions European ladies have occasionally appeared at examinations of this kind, but the existence of the rule does not appear to be generally known. The Government of India in their Circular No. 31, dated the 27th of March 1916, suggested that in order to encourage English ladies to obtain a good colloquial knowledge of the vernaculars a further step might be taken and a special examination be instituted at which the wives and near relatives of European British subjects in the service of Government might appear. It was suggested that the examination might for the present be confined to the lower standard in Urdu and that it was for consideration whether it should be colloquial only or not, and whether a small fee should not be paid by candidates. The suggestion was based on the supposition that a certificate granted by the examining bodies, even if unaccompanied by any money reward, would be valued as a testimonial of proficiency by the examinees, and would so far encourage European ladies to make themselves acquainted with the vernacular.

2. The proposal has met with a somewhat varied reception in the different provinces. The object in view is in most cases approved and the means suggested have with some modifications received the hearty approval of several local Governments. Considerable doubt has, however, been expressed in some quarters regarding the details of the scheme and certain of the authorities consulted have expressed themselves as entirely opposed to it. In the circumstances, the Government of India do not desire to lay down any general scheme for the whole of India, but they consider that local Governments to whom a scheme of this kind comes itself should be in a position to give it a reasonable trial.

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HOME (MISCELLANEOUS) DEPARTMENT

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DATED 1st OCTOBER 1917

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P.D.E.R.—20-9-17.

E. A. HARVEY—21-9-17.

The main question is whether a colloquial examination in South Indian vernaculars intended to enable European ladies to converse is desirable. If it be decided to have such an examination, the details will be considered later on.

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18.10.17
18/10/17

to these should be... I am accordingly to say that if a scheme of this kind... any local Government or administration it will be open for them... with the Board of Examiners, to institute an examination... Agency to which European ladies would be admitted... given, but it would be open to the local Government to give... dates a certificate or diploma showing the result of the examination... tion might be conducted in any of the vernaculars for which examinations are now... provided and it would, at the discretion of the local Government, be either... or partly colloquial; but it is recommended that a portion of the examination... should, if possible, be written (if necessary in Roman script) in order to ensure... proper control, and a certain amount of uniformity between different centres in the... provinces. The local Government would determine the class of persons to whom the... examination would be open, and it is suggested that such an examination would be... be appropriate in the case of wives of European officials and of European ladies... of their lives in India. It would be the duty of the local Government to see that... devices which it is suggested should be adopted for and in connection with the... will doubtless bear in mind the consideration that the examination should be... to ensure a certain amount of proportion for the examination and a certain... any undue excess in the number of candidates.

Order No. 1091, Home (Miscellaneous) dated 1st October 1917

Recorded
(The official)

E. A. HARVEY
Secretary to Government

18/10/17
P.M. Rathinam

2 NOTES TO G.O. No. 1091, HOME (MISCELLANEOUS) 1st OCTOBER 1917

The chief question however is whether, even if such an examination be instituted, European ladies will avail themselves of the opportunity to appear at such examinations. The structure of the vernacular is so opposed to that of English that it is not easy to learn enough of a vernacular language to undergo an examination, so whether in the midst of their other activities and in the case of the mufassal frequent journeys to the hills, etc., it is doubtful whether there will be enough time to study. Ladies who take an interest in the National Indian Association may do so but the necessity in their case is less as they live in Madras.

The letter from India is submitted for orders.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO—24-9-17.

These examinations are not likely to attract candidates in this Presidency. Mission ladies are not likely to go in for them, as they have to pass tests prescribed by their mission. Other ladies are very unlikely to face the great difficulties of our local vernaculars.

H. F. W. GILLMAN—25-9-17.

If a Government examination of a public character were instituted, mission societies might accept it in lieu of their own tests, but probably the need for acquaintance for the special religious terminology would prove a difficulty. As regards other ladies, I agree that very few indeed are likely to study the vernacular, and even those few would probably not desire the ordeal of a public examination but would be content to learn a little colloquially from a munshi. There seems, therefore, to be no need for the suggested examination and I certainly have never heard any one express a wish for such an examination. I would therefore wait till a demand springs up and meantime record the Government of India's letter.

A. G. C[ARDEW]—26-9-17.

P[ENTLAND]—26-9-17.

A draft order recording the papers is submitted for approval.

T.C.N.—28-9-17.

P.R.—28-9-17.

D. N. STRATHIE—1-10-17.

[G.O. No. 1091, Home (Miscellaneous), dated 1st October 1917.]

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