

Memorandum of Concerns submitted to Hon. Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh

Hon. Y S Rajasekhara Reddy
The Chief Minister
Government of Andhra Pradesh
Hyderabad, India

Honorable Y S Rajasekhara Reddy garu:

We the signatories of this memorandum, would like to request you and your Government to treat Hindu religion, Hindu Culture, Hindu Heritage and Hindu way of life with freedom from government control and interference. You are aware that you do not interfere with Muslim religion activities or trying to take control of their properties and similarly with others.

Over the centuries, Hindu Temple builders donated large sums of money, jewelry, thousands of acres of land and movable properties to their Temples, so that the Temples have sufficient resources to provide “dhupa, deepa and naivedyam” to the presiding deities and provide required worship services to the devotees. Day to day, devotees have been contributing donations and gifts for the utilization of Temple services and devotees needs. Hindu Temple lands, monies and movable properties, thus belong to the Temples which are required to be managed by Hindus / Trusts.

Even in the dreams, the donors did not vision and do not vision, that their sacrifices and generosity will be abused, misused, and usurped by the Government with the passage of Hindu religious and Charitable Endowment Act in 1987. Since the passage, thousands of acres of Temple lands have been sold, crores of Hindu Temple monies has been used for non-Hindu Temple and non-Hindu activities. Large number of Temples have been neglected from being renovated. Large percentage of Temple earnings have been forced to be donated to the state treasury. Thousands of Hindu Temple lands were allowed to be encroached upon, although 77,000 endowment officials are employed to protect them. Many archakas were not paid their salaries or have been underpaid.

1. We request you and your Govt. to be fair, impartial, reasonable and sensitive to the needs of Hindu Culture, Hindu Heritage and Hindu in particular to the Hindu Temples. The wishes and desires of the Hindus in protecting the Hindu Temples should be respected, similar to that of Christians and Moslems. We are not asking any special favors from the government. We are requesting your office earnestly, not to discriminate against Hindus and Hindu Temples. We request you, to protect the Hindu institutions with the same zeal and passion, which you have been showing for other major religions.

We the people of Indian origin, especially those hailing from Andhra Pradesh, are delighted that you are with us in the US associating yourself with an important event of the Telugu -speaking people residents in the USA. All of us are wishing that every government in the Union of India works for the rapid economic, cultural and spiritual development of the country so that in the comity of nations, Bharat occupies a place that reflects its civilization, its culture, greater heritage and its prosperity in the past. India has a great record of striving to bring harmony and peace among different nations of the world.

2. To succeed to be a great, prosperous, powerful, intellectual and spiritual power, it is essential that

within the country there is perfect understanding and amity between people speaking different languages, following different faiths and beliefs. All of our people must have sense of one nation-hood and a common purpose and a common goal. We are sure that your government is working towards this objective.

3. We, however, have been hearing from news-paper reports and in the electronic and print media that different treatments are meted out by the avowedly secular governments to people of different faiths, especially it appears that Hindu places of worship are targeted. India's culture, civilization and literature and way of life had, for millennia, revolved around its places of worship, the various temples, Mutts and Ashramas.

4. We notice that while the secular governments are scrupulously keeping off from the affairs regarding the maintenance and management of places of worship of Christians and Muslims, Parsis and others; in certain states, notably in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and recently in Maharashtra the state governments are managing the places of worship belonging only to Hindus through the governments' Hindu Religious Endowment Boards and Revenue Departments. We know that this originated from the Acts of British government in the 1930s. Such Acts have been, it appears, passed down to the successor governments like that in Andhra Pradesh. We believe that the so called secular government managing the finances, places of worship, the properties and their revenues of the Hindu places of worship alone is not a secular function. In fact it constitutes an adverse action and absolute discrimination against Hindus compared to the others like Muslims or Christians. Such a policy is un-constitutional.

5. What we are particularly concerned is what we hear and read about the properties of the temples, agricultural as well as urban being encroached upon, alienated in favor of institutions of other religions as well as government for distribution to all sorts of people for a variety of purposes. This act of alienation of the properties of the places of worship of Hindus, while not similarly treating the properties of places of worships of other religions, is a gross discrimination in regard to Hindus. We believe that it is due to mismanagement on the part of certain government quarters. We urge that your government should put an end to this adverse discrimination.

6. We are in possession of long lists of the properties of different temples encroached upon or alienated or in some manner not yielding any revenue to the temples. We suggest that informed people in your State to supply those lists to you and unto your government for immediate action.

7. We welcome your Government's recent Bill to amend the Hindu Religious Endowments and Charities Act (1930, 1987). We understand, from news papers that this Bill was to be passed in the session of the Assembly ending on 9th April 2007. But, unexpectedly, this was decided to be referred to a Select Committee. It is regrettably learnt that no Select Committee has been constituted before the Assembly was prorogued.

8. We have gone through the gazette notification of the Bill to amend the Endowments Act, and also read the contents. Though we are not in a position to completely scrutinize and comprehensively comment on them, we have received some comments from other concerned people. One such comment is attached to this Memorandum.

9. Generally the amendment suggested in the Bill would mitigate some if not all the omissions and commissions in the government's management of the places of worship of Hindus. There appears to be a sinister motive behind the postponement of the passage of the Bill. The Bill has for example a very

salutary provision, which prohibits the alienation of Temple lands in both Urban and Rural areas. Some people seem to be having their eyes on the urban properties so that these could be acquired by government and distributed as sites for housing or for other purposes. This is highly reprehensible and unacceptable.

10. As the passage of the Bill might take quite some time, we urge that an Ordinance be passed in this regard. It should be done because the Legislature is not in session. When the Legislature meets, the Select Committee to be constituted can do its action and the Ordinance be replaced by a properly and duly passed Bill.

11. One thing of utmost concern to every right-thinking and true Indian is the aggressive propagation of a non-Hindu Christian faith, in and around Hindu places of worship. We also refer to hospitals where Nurses belonging to Christian faith are having a free run in brain-washing Hindu patients to change their faith with the promise that if they do so, Jesus Christ will heal them. We urge that this type of practice on the part of a section of Nurses in government hospitals should be made a criminal offence and must be stopped immediately.

12. Another urgent matter of concern is the diversion of funds of the temples especially, of the quite rich and famous Tirumala Thirupathi Devasthanam for purposes not connected with Hindu dharma such as Jala Yagnam, sports events and various Government schemes. We hope that this news was untrue but we request you to kindly ensure that your government does not spend any money from the tax revenues in favor of some religion(s) and not others.

13. We also learn from news paper reports that assured the Christian clergy in your State that just as the Hajj pilgrimage of Muslims is being subsidized by the Central government, your government would subsidize the pilgrimage of Christians of your state to Bethlehem / Jerusalem. This is a singularly unsecular act and discriminatory to Hindus. We hope that the news is wrong but would like you to affirm that the news is wrong and that the Government of Andhra Pradesh would not spend either the tax monies or the monies of Hindu temples for the benefit of people of other faiths like Christianity and Islam.

14. The Seven Hills, famously known through centuries as Saptagiri belong to Lord Balaji /Venkateshwara by government notifications in the past, documented in government records and in the belief, trust and conviction of hundreds of millions of Hindus through-out India and abroad, belong to Lord Balaji. In your own State, very common name of people is Edukondal Rao/ Kondal Rao, testifying to the popularly accepted ownership of the seven Hills by Balaji. Just as in the Vatican (Rome), where no other faith is allowed to be propagated and no other places of worship are allowed to be built, government should ensure that there is no propaganda or propagation and much less conversion activities in the area of the Seven Hills. This also applies to the other famous temples of Andhra Pradesh. To cite a few - Narisimha Swami in Simhachalam, Rama & Sita in Bhadrachalam, Kanakadurga in Vijayawada, Bhimeswaram in Vemulavada, Satyanarayanswami in Annavaram, Shiva in Kalahasti & Srisailam, Nrusimha in Mangalagiri and so on. The sanctity of all these places as well the properties of these temples must be secured against alienation and those which are already encroached upon or illegally taken possession must be restored to the temples.

15. Finally, we would submit that it is a significant responsibility on you because you are not only the Chief Minister but a very active Christian Chief Minister and the party you belong is led by Madame Sonia Gandhi who is a practicing Catholic Christian. The wise say that Caesar's wife must be above suspicion. Therefore, there is onerous responsibility on you as an active Christian under the

patronage of a very Christian leader of the UPA and the Congress Party that you do not do anything which adversely affecting affects Hindus, and their places of worship. We are sure that you would like to be successful CM and that the monies raised through taxes and borrowings by the government are not in any way utilized/spent for promotion, protection and propagation of Christianity. Please note that your largest constituents are Hindus.

16. There are reports about the Padmavathi Mahila University in Tirupathi largely funded by the TTD is facilitating the conversion of students to Christianity, the fact which was confirmed by state CID report. The Vice Chancellor (VC) of this University is a practicing Christian lady. She is reported to have removed the pictures of Hindu gods and goddesses and has been encouraging the display of Biblical sayings and quotes in various places in the university. Some of the Christian lecturers and staff prevailed upon students to change faith and such converts are reported to have been traumatized. The suicide of a girl, Umamaheswari who converted to Christianity but whose conversion was resented and denounced by her parents and relatives, is a telling point in this regard. Those responsible for Uma's death should be brought to justice.

It would be appropriate, if such over zealous evangelicals as the current VC of Sri Padmavathi University are not posted as VCs in any university, especially in the TTD inspired and funded educational institutions.

17. Hundreds of groups of missionaries/canvassers of Christian religion and those converted to that religion are reported to be engaged in the distribution of literatures derogatory to Hinduism. Huge sums of funds seem to be coming to them. While the Hindu temples are languishing, hundreds of new churches are coming up even in purely Hindu localities. The springing up of disproportionate number of non-Hindu institutions in predominately Hindu localities is not acceptable. The militant and continuous propaganda over loud speakers and other means used by the proselytizers and seekers of converts to Christianity could lead civil strife in the community and would ultimately lead to communal clashes. Hindus will protect their people from the being converted and insults to their religion will be countered.

We request that the source of funding for the various missionary activities should be investigated and any activity which is conducted as a mission, to market any religion is unethical, non-spiritual and destructive of the local cultures be prohibited. While one can appreciate a person discarding the religion in which he was born and embracing another after study of both; conversion of the poor, illiterate ill –informed, indigent people by organized groups is certainly unethical and fraudulent. Therefore, there is need for prohibiting systematic conversion activities by organized religions.

18. There is also another fraud. While thousands of churches are coming up, Christian organizations and their leaders such as KP Yohannan and Indian Missions association are asserting that their population in AP is more than 10%, the successive censuses have been showing Christian population as declining. This fact is confirmed by World Christian Database. Please see the table below:

Christian Population in Andhra Pradesh

Christian Population in Andhra Pradesh

	Year			
	1971	1981	1991	2001
Total population mln	43.5	53.6	66.5	76.2
Christians mln	1.8	1.43	1.2	1.1
% of Christian population	4.19	2.68	1.83	1.44

19. It appears that converted dalits are advised not to disclose and provide for any government record, the fact of their conversion/true religion so that they continue to avail of the reservations meant for SC among Hindus. Obviously, converts who became such because of the promise of non-existence of dalitism and cases in Christianity (as propagated by the missionaries) are misled by the converters and are led to be untrue to themselves, first by not declaring the fact of conversion and second to be deceitful by appropriating for themselves the privilege of reservation meant for SCs among Hindus. It is said that 80% of the SCs working in government are in fact, practicing Christians having suppressed the fact of their conversion and true religion for the government records. There must be an inquiry in to this racket.

20. We request you again, to introduce a bill to REPEAL of the Hindu religious and Charitable Act in the legislature at the earliest possible date. It will be a good decision to correct the grave injustice that the Hindus are subjected to for many decades. We strongly believe that you have enough support and strength, to achieve this important task. Authorize all the Peethadhipathis with full responsibilities in Andhra Pradesh to administer the Hindu temples and their resources.

You will be remembered for repealing the Endowment Act and will be a part of Andhra Pradesh History.

Summary:

- With immediate effect ban sale, transfer and gifting of temple property
- With immediate effect start recovering temple lands sold illegally
- Promulgate an ordinance to effectualise the Bill (Introduced in the Legislative Assembly's Session ended on 9.4.2007 but not passed) to amend Hindu religious Endowments & Charitable Institutions Act.
- Preserve and secure the ownership of all the Seven Hills area for Balaji /Venkateshwara in Tirumala Tirupati.
- Stop all propagation & conversion activities in and around Hindu places of worship and pilgrimages and in Government Hospitals (by Christian Nurses).

- Allow no monies and properties of Hindu temples to be funneled for the benefit of Churches, Mosques and religious institutions of non-Hindus.
- Investigate into the source of funds accumulated for building hundreds of Churches even as the Christian population is decreasing in Andhra Pradesh as per successive Census reports.
- Bring to justice the perpetrators of Uma Maheshwari's death.
- Put an end to limitlessness of minority professional colleges (BE, MBBS, MBA, MCA, B.Ed; Dental; Pharma) and the sale of their seats to Hindus – all seats in minority colleges should be filled up only by students of minority community
- Inquire into the mis-appropriation of reserved positions for SCs in Government by Crypto-Christians.
- Ensure that all functionaries - Commissioners, Executive Officers, officials and Trustees - of Hindu Temples and associated institutions including those related to education, are believing and practicing Hindus, affirmed by oath, that they are practicing Hindus.
- Launch vigorous steps to recover encroachments and appropriations of properties of Hindu temples and have them secured.

We would appreciate your response at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,
Global Hindu Heritage Foundation
