

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 1953

TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.12.2024

PRESERVATION OF SHAHMUKHI SCRIPT

1953. SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU:

Will the Minister of Culture be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken steps to preserve Shahmukhi script;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to protect and preserve ancient text written in Punjabi/Gurumukhi during the last five years?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

(GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) to (c) In accordance with "One Language, One Script" policy, Sahitya Akademi, under Ministry of Culture, uses Gurmukhi script for all activities related to Punjabi.

The Government of India has taken steps to preserve ancient texts in Punjabi/Gurmukhi which includes Sahitya Akademi's annual recognition of literary works. Sahitya Akademi awards 24 prizes for literary works and translations in recognized languages, including Punjabi. It also grants 24 Bal Sahitya Puraskar and Yuva Puraskar. Award winning books are translated into 23 other languages, including Punjabi (in Gurmukhi script), and original Punjabi works are published through the Makers of Indian Literature Series, the Navodaya scheme, and seminar papers.

The Sahitya Akademi Library, one of India's largest multilingual libraries, houses an extensive collection of literature in 24 languages, including a significant number of Punjabi books in Gurmukhi script. Sahitya Akademi also offers Travel Grants to writers under 40 to encourage cross-cultural engagement, benefiting young Punjabi writers.

Over the past two decades, the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) has documented over 5.2 million manuscripts in more than 50 scripts. Out of these, 7,104 manuscripts are in Punjabi, with 6,617 written in Gurmukhi. Furthermore, 24 Gurmukhi manuscripts and 27 Punjabi manuscripts have been digitized and made freely available on the NMM website.