

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 298
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.11.2024

DECLINING USAGE OF TRIBAL LANGUAGE

298 MS. DOLA SEN:

Will the Minister of Tribal Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the declining usage of several tribal languages like Majhi in Sikkim, Koro in Arunachal Pradesh, if so, the steps taken to address this problem; and

(b) whether Government has taken any initiative to promote tribal languages as a medium of instruction for academics in the case of tribal students if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI DURGADAS UIKEY)

(a) & (b): Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, under the Centrally Sponsored scheme 'Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)' provides financial support to the Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) in States/UTs including Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh for the projects/activities undertaken for the preserving and promoting tribal languages and dialects as mentioned below:

- i. Preparing Bilingual Dictionaries and Trilingual Proficiency Modules in tribal languages.
- ii. Preparing Primers for students of Class I, II and III in tribal languages under Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) Intervention in the line of New Education Policy 2020. Publishing Varnamala, local rhymes, and stories in tribal languages.
- iii. Publishing books, journals on different tribal languages to promote tribal literature
- iv. Documenting folklore, and folktales of different tribes for preservation and promotion of tribal folk tradition. Collecting oral literature (songs, riddles, ballads etc.)

- v. Translation and publication of Training module about Sickle cell Anaemia disease awareness Module I and Diagnosis & Treatment Module II in local Tribal Dialects in the States covered under the Mission for Elimination of Sickle Cell Anaemia.
 - vi. Conducting conferences, seminars, workshops, and poetic symposiums.
2. Through these projects and activities, tribal communities are encouraged to participate in conferences, seminars, workshops, and exchange programs. Teachers from Government Ashram Schools along with language experts from respective communities are associated in developing the dictionaries and primers in tribal dialects and language, which not only preserves and conserve the tribal languages but help tribal students in basic learning from class I to III and help in smooth transition when they go to higher classes. TRIs also organise Tribal Language Training Programme for field functionaries (front-line workers).
3. Further, the New Education Policy also stipulates that young children learn and grasp quickly in their home language and mother tongue. Accordingly, Central and State Governments are encouraging multi-lingual policy for imparting education and preservation of language. As informed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry initiated the “Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL)” under the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru in 2013. This project documents the language & culture of the mother tongues/languages of India spoken by less than 10,000 speakers in the form of primers, bi/trilingual dictionaries (electronic and print formats), grammatical sketches, pictorial glossaries and ethno-linguistic profile of the community. In the first phase, 117 tribal languages are identified by them to work on languages which are roughly spoken by less than 10,000 speakers. The seven Regional Language Centres (RLCs) of CIIL offer ten-month diploma in language education for in-service and prospective school teachers. Of these, Eastern Regional Language Centre (ERLC) and North-Eastern Regional Language Centre (NERLC) offer ten-month diploma in Santali and Bodo respectively. The Institute in collaboration with NCERT has brought out primers for numerous tribal languages. These primers are expected to help the speakers of tribal languages as well as education givers in these languages.
