

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1814**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 31/07/2023

**PRESERVE LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND CUSTOMS**

1814. SHRI NARANBHAI KACHHADIYA

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any efforts are being made to preserve the language, culture and customs of the ancient and traditional tribal and forest dwellers, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of the regular platforms and programmes available for conservation through its publicity; and
- (c) whether any separate programmes are organized for the prosperity heritage of forest dwellers, if so, the details thereof and if not the reason therefor?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
(SMT. RENUKA SINGH SARUTA)

**(a) to (c):** Ministry of Tribal Affairs has taken various steps to preserve the language, culture and customs of the ancient and traditional tribals including tribal forest dwellers. Ministry is implementing the schemes of “Support to Tribal Research Institute” and “Tribal Research, Information, Education, Communication and Events” under which various activities are undertaken to conserve and promote language, tribal culture, archives, artifacts, customs and traditions of the ancient and traditional tribals including forest dwellers. There are 27 Tribal Research Institutes in States/UTs. Some of the initiatives worth mentioning are as under:

- (i) To acknowledge the heroic and patriotic deeds of tribal people and to exhibit rich tribal cultural heritage of the region, Ministry has sanctioned 10 Tribal Freedom Fighters Museums under the centrally sponsored scheme “Support to TRIs” Scheme.
- (ii) Ministry has developed searchable digital repository where all research papers, books, reports and documents, folks songs, photos/videos are uploaded. The repository currently has more than 10,000 photographs, videos and publications which are mostly done by Tribal Research Institutes. The repositories can be visited at <https://repository.tribal.gov.in/> (Tribal Digital Document Repository) and <https://tribal.nic.in/repository/> (Tribal Repository).
- (iii) State level festivals like Hornbill festival of Nagaland, Medaram Jatra of Telangana are funded through TRI scheme. State Tribal festival, fair and cultural programmes are funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) to showcase glimpses of rich cultural heritage of tribal people across the country through unique forms of folk dances, songs, cuisine, exhibition and demonstration of traditional skill in painting, art and craft, medicinal practices, etc.

(iv) TRIFED organizes Adi Mahotsav (a national level tribal festival of arts, crafts, cuisine and marketing of tribal products) as well as Tribal Artisan Melas (TAMs) under the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (the PMJVM) scheme. The latter aims at identification of new artisans and new products at the sourcing level in States/Districts/Villages for expanding the tribal producers base.

(v) Ministry provides grants to State Tribal Research Institutes for promotion of Tribal Languages, dialects and scripts, development of primers and dictionaries, documentation of folklores and folktales. Organisation of literary festival, translation works and literature competition, capacity building in aspects of tribal affairs and organisation of cultural programmes based on the proposal received from the Tribal Institutes.

(vi) Under “Tribal Research, Information, Education, Communication and Events (TRI-ECE)”, reputed research institutes/organizations/universities have undertaken various research studies/publication of books/documentation including audio visual documentaries to fill the gap of research studies on tribal issues and Promotion of rich tribal cultural, traditions and customs as well as capacity building of tribal persons/institutions associated with tribal affairs, dissemination of information and creation of awareness. Under the scheme financial assistance is also provided to reputed organization for carrying out research study programmes including documentation of tribal languages.

(vii) Further, there are adequate constitutional and statutory safeguards for protection, preservation, conservation and promotion of tribal culture, traditions and customs. The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution provides for the establishment of Tribal Advisory Councils in States with Scheduled Areas. Further, it provides for Special Powers of the Governor in such States. The Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 similarly provides for extensive authority of the Gram Sabhas/Gram Panchayats to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs and their cultural identity. The Sixth Schedule, applicable in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, empowers the District and Regional Councils in matters of social customs. The schemes of Support to TRI and TRI-ECE mentioned herein before and the activities taken up there under also contribute significantly toward the preservation and promotion of tribal culture, traditions and customs

(viii) The Ministry of Culture, Government of India is the nodal Ministry for promotion of culture including tribal culture. M/o Culture has set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) with headquarters at Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur and Thanjavur. These ZCCs conduct number of activities viz. cultural programmes, seminars, workshops, exhibitions and craft fairs on regular basis in their member States for which annual grant-in-aid is released to them. Craft fairs, Summer festivals in association with TRIFED, Tribal fairs, National Tribal Festivals, Shilpgram Utsav, Lokotsav, Nareli Purnima, Merger Day Program, Banerwar Mela, Rashtriya Shilp Melas and Tribal Music & Dance Festival are organized by these ZCCs

to promote artefacts made by tribal artists. Tribal costumes, musical instruments, daily use utensils and deities of tribal communities have been displayed by Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata which gives an idea to the tourists and visitors about the tribal culture of these States.

(ix) As informed by Ministry of Education, the National Education Policy, 2020 focuses on promotion of all Indian Languages including regional languages. The Government of India has initiated a Scheme known as Scheme for protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India (SPPEL). Under this scheme, the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore works on protection, preservation and documentation of all the mother tongues/languages of India spoken by less than 10,000 people.

Under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, there are provisions to recognize traditional rights customarily enjoyed by forest dwellers and for empowerment of Gram Sabha and village level institutions where there are holders of forest rights, to preserve their cultural and natural heritage.

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