

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.11.2021

PRESERVATION OF SAURA TRIBE AND THEIR LANGUAGE

3. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: -

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the Saura (Sabar) tribe from the Gajapati and Koraput districts of Odisha and their script Sora Sompeng;
- (b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to save the Saura language from the threat of extinction which will be detrimental for their distinct ethnic identity;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the children of the above-mentioned community are forced to drop out of school as they are unable to understand Odia and other languages in which being taught, if so the details thereof and the steps being taken by the Government in this regard;
- (e) whether the Government is planning to officially recognise the Saura (Sabar) language by including it in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a): Saura is one of the primitive tribe with sizeable population in Gajapati and Rayagada (which was part of the undivided Koraput district) districts in Odisha. Pandit Mangei Gamango, an eminent person of the Saura community had invented Saurang Sompeng Script.

(b): Government of Odisha has recognized Saura language under its language policy for Multi Lingual Education (MLE) intervention. Primers of Saura language has been developed by Government of Odisha for using in primary education.

Academy of Tribal Languages & Culture (ATLC) organizes training programmes in Saura language from time to time for grass-root level field functionaries and primary teachers in Saura dominated areas for acquiring communication skills in Saura language. Besides, Academy has also published books on Saura language, culture & folklore for propagation of Saura language. ST & SC Development Department, Government of Odisha has also published Bi-lingual Dictionary & Tri-Lingual Proficiency Module in Saura language under MLE intervention which have been distributed among the schools of Gajapati & Rayagada district of Odisha. New Education Policy also stipulates that young children learn and grasp quickly in their home language and mother tongue. Accordingly, Central and State Government are making efforts to encourage multi-lingual policy for imparting education.

(c): Does not arise.

(d): Government of Odisha has taken adequate steps for zero dropouts in schools which also includes Saura community students. Further, a flagship programme under the banner "SAMHATI" has been launched by ST & SC Development Department, Govt of Odisha for promotion of Multi Lingual Education (MLE). Distribution of Saura primers among all children has been planned under SAMHATI initiative.

(e): Ministry of Home Affairs, the nodal Ministry for inclusion of languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution, has stated that there are 22 languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and there have been demands for inclusion of more languages. As the evolution of dialects and languages is a dynamic process, influenced by socio-cultural, economic and political developments, it is difficult to fix any criterion for languages, whether to distinguish them from dialects, or for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. Government of India is conscious of the sentiments and requirements for inclusion of other languages in the Eighth Schedule. Such requests have to be considered keeping in mind these sentiments, and the other relevant considerations.
