

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 93
ANSWERED ON 10.02.2025

PROMOTION OF LOCAL CULTURE

†*93. SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to formulate any scheme to conserve and promote the local culture particularly for the educational and social development of the tribals/forest dwellers and if so, the details thereof; and
- (b) whether the Government proposes to develop networking infrastructure in tribal areas of the country and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) to (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (b) IN RESPECT OF
LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 93 FOR REPLY ON 10.02.2025
REGARDING PROMOTION OF LOCAL CULTURE ASKED BY SHRI VIRENDRA
SINGH**

(a) To protect, promote & preserve various forms of folk/ tribal/ local art & culture, the Government of India has set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) with headquarters at Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur and Thanjavur. These ZCCs organize various cultural activities and programmes on regular basis throughout the country for which they engage local folk/ tribal artists who showcase their talent during these programmes for which they are paid honorarium, TA/DA, boarding & lodging and local transportation to enable them to earn their livelihood. Besides, all the seven ZCCs organize regional festivals and National level festivals like Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsavs (RSMs) where local culture is promoted through participation of local artists/ artisans. Similarly, "Octave-festival of the North East" is organized by ZCCs to promote local folk/ tribal culture of the North Eastern States, by way of providing an exclusive platform to the local artists and artisans of North Eastern Region.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Government of India has taken various steps to conserve and protect the tribal culture, heritage, tradition and customs. MoTA implements two schemes namely "Support to Tribal Research Institutes" and "Tribal Research, Information, Education, Communication and Events (TRI-ECE)" under which various activities are undertaken to conserve and promote tribal culture, heritage, archives, artefacts, customs and traditions of the tribal communities. There are 29 Tribal Research Institutes in States/UTs and 01 National Tribal Research Institute in Delhi. Some of the initiatives taken are as under:

- i. To acknowledge the heroic and patriotic deeds of tribal people and to exhibit the rich cultural heritage of the region, the MoTA has sanctioned 11 Tribal Freedom Fighters Museums in 10 states.
- ii. Ministry has developed searchable digital repository where all research papers, books, reports & documents, folk songs and photos/videos are uploaded. The repository currently has more than 10,000 photographs, videos and publications which are mostly done by Tribal Research Institutes.
- iii. State Tribal festivals, fairs and cultural programs are funded by the MoTA to showcase glimpses of the rich cultural heritage of tribal people across the country through unique forms of folk dances, songs, cuisine, exhibition and demonstration of traditional skills in painting, art & craft, medicinal practices etc.
- iv. Tribal Co-Operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) organizes Tribal Artisan Melas (TAMs) to identify new artisans and products at the sourcing level in States/Districts/Villages for expanding the tribal producers base.
- v. The Ethnographic Museums of the States preserve and showcase rare artefacts related to life and culture of various tribes.
- vi. Under "Tribal Research, Information, Education, Communication and Events (TRI-ECE)", reputed research institutes/ organizations/ universities have

undertaken various research studies/ publication of books/ documentations including audio-visual documentaries to fill the gap of research studies on tribal issues and promotion of rich tribal culture, traditions and customs as well as capacity building of tribal persons/ institutions associated with tribal affairs, dissemination of information and creation of awareness.

(b) Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Govt. of India has taken a number of steps & projects with funding from Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN - erstwhile Universal Service Obligation Fund) for providing high bandwidth capacity, mobile services and broadband connectivity to remote & rural villages and islands in the country including tribal areas that currently lack coverage. Details of the major projects are as follows:

- i. BharatNet project is implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages. The infrastructure created under BharatNet project is a national asset, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to the Service Providers, and the same can be utilized to provide broadband services such as Wi-Fi Hotspots, Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections, leased lines, dark fibre, backhaul to mobile towers etc. The Union Cabinet has approved the Amended Bharat Net Program (ABP) under Design, Built, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) model on 04.08.2023 for up-gradation of existing network of BharatNet Phase-I&II and creation of network in balance 42,000 GPs (approx.), its operation and maintenance for 10 years. The connectivity to remaining non-GP villages (about 3.8 lakhs) is to be provided on demand basis from their respective GPs. BSNL has been nominated as the Project Management Agency for FTTH connections to the households. 2,14,323 GPs have been made service ready under BharatNet project in the country as on 13.01.2025.
- ii. For provision of high-speed internet/data and Mobile Services (including 4G) in remote & rural areas of the country, various targeted schemes/projects like Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region, Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands (Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands), Scheme for providing mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas, Schemes for providing mobile services in Aspirational Districts, Scheme for providing mobile services in the border villages and other priority areas, 4G Saturation scheme to provide mobile coverage in all uncovered villages etc. have been implemented.
- iii. Submarine optical fibre cable has been laid in August, 2020 between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2312 Km) for providing high speed internet/data connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Submarine optical fibre cable connectivity has also been laid in January, 2024 between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands covering a distance of 1869 km (total 11 Islands i.e. Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Agatti, Amini, Androth, Minicoy, Bangaram, Bitra, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kadmath). 225Km optical fibre cable network has been created in Lakshadweep Islands for provision of FTTH & other services. These optical fibre cable projects have facilitated faster roll out of mobile services (4G/5G) and other high-speed data services in the Islands.
