

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 984

TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.02.2025

PRESERVATION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

984 SHRI E T MOHAMMED BASHEER:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the initiatives to promote and preserve indigenous languages and cultural heritage; and
- (b) whether the Government has any collaborative projects with State Governments to document and celebrate tribal history, folklore and art and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

(GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) The Government of India, through its autonomous institutions under the Ministry of Culture is actively engaged in promoting and preserving India's indigenous languages and cultural heritage. Sahitya Akademi recognizes contributions to unrecognized and tribal languages through the Bhasha Samman and supports them via writer exchanges, publications, book exhibitions, and the Annual All India Tribal Writers' Meet. It also operates centers for folk and tribal literature and conducts outreach programs like *Loka: The Many Voices* and *Gramalok*. The details of programs from 2021-2024 are at Annexure.

Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) imparts training to individuals in 100 dying art forms through the Kala Deeksha program and the Guru-Shishya Parampara. It maintains a National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), and 15 elements from India are inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of ICH of Humanity under the 2003 Convention.

IGNCA undertakes documentation, digitization, research, and awareness programs to safeguard India's linguistic and cultural heritage. Key initiatives include Bharat Vidya Pariyojana (BVP) for Indigenous knowledge systems, the Vedic Heritage Archive for Vedic texts, and Loka Parampara for oral traditions and folklore. The Adi Drishya Programmestudies Indigenous languages and rock art, while the Kala Nidhi Digital Library preserves rare manuscripts and ethnographic records. The North-East India Documentation Project records oral histories and linguistic structures of communities like the Nagas, Bodos, Mizos, and Khasis. Additionally, the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) is documenting regional languages, art forms, and customs while mapping 6 lakh villages nationwide.

To promote cultural heritage, the Government has established seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) in Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur, and Thanjavur. These ZCCs organize Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav, Shilpgram Utsav, Orange City Craft Mela, Octave – Festival of North East, Salangai Naadam, National Crafts Fair, Rashtriya Shilp Mela, and Purbanchal Lok Mahotsav. These initiatives highlight the Government of India's commitment to preserving and promoting the nation's cultural and linguistic heritage.

- (b) The Sahitya Akademi (SA) collaborates with State-level institutions to organize local and regional programs, including seminars and workshops to promote indigenous languages and literature.

The Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA) focuses on tribal visual arts through exhibitions, art camps, and workshops, providing a platform for tribal artists to showcase their talents at national and international levels. It also offers gallery spaces to connect artists with buyers and collectors. Recently, under its Public Art of India (PARI) Project, LKA featured folk and tribal artists from across the country during the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) conference in Delhi.

The Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) actively collaborate with State Governments to conduct cultural programs.

During the Republic Day Parade 2025, Ministry of Culture, through Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA), presented one of the largest dance choreographies featuring 5,000 folk and tribal artists selected from across the country.

Other major initiatives include the National Manuscripts Mission (NMM) for preserving ancient manuscripts focusing on the unique linguistic and cultural heritage. Additionally, the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) is systematically documenting regional languages, art forms, rituals, and customs across India's villages, reinforcing the government's dedication to cultural preservation.

ANNEXURE

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 984 to be answered on 10.02.2025

Details of programs conducted by Sahitya Akademi between 2021 and 2024

S.No.	Name of Event	Date of Event	Place of Event
1	All India Bodo Women Writers' Meet	30 June 2021	Online
2	Symposium on the Present Status of Tiwa Poetry	19 July 2021	Online
3	Symposium on Tribal Language and Literature	29 July 2021	Online
4	Conference on Exploring Indigenous Poetry	9-11 August 2021	Online
5	Symposium on Story Telling Tradition in Tribal Odisha	31 October 2021	Koraput, Odisha
6	Symposium on Tribal Consciousness in the Odia Short Stories	28 November 2021	Balasore, Odisha
7	Symposium on Tribal Language and Culture (Gothra Languages)	11 March 2022	Wayanad, Kerala
8	Seminar on Tribal Literature in Western region	27 March 2022	Mumbai, Maharashtra
9	Symposium on Darrangi Folk Culture and Folk Literature	8 January 2022	Guwahati, Assam
10	Gramalok: Folk Literature-Culture-Lecture	3 February 2022	Kalaburgi, Karnataka
11	Literary Forum: "Folk Languages of North Odisha"	15 August 2022	Balasore, Odisha
12	National Seminar in Maithili: "Contribution of Folk Songs and Folk Epics to the Enrichment of Maithili Literature"	20-21 November 2022	Jamshedpur, Jharkhand
13	Symposium: Present Scenario of Rajasthani Folk Literature	18 January 2023	Udaipur, Rajasthan
14	Marathi Seminar: Tribal Folk Literature of Maharashtra	16-17 February 2023	Palghar, Maharashtra
15	Literary Forum on "Folk Elements in Bengali Literature"	23 February 2023	Kolkata, West Bengal
16	Gramalok: Folklore in Creative Literature	27 June 2023	Puducherry
17	Loka: The Many Voices (Konkani Siddi Folk Dances)	6 August 2023	Mangalore, Karnataka
18	Saora Language Convention	22-23 April 2023	Odisha
19	Kurmali Language Convention	6-7 December 2023	Ranchi, Jharkhand
20	Kharia Language Convention	5-6 July 2024	Ranchi, Jharkhand
21	Korku Language Convention	15-16 July 2024	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
22	Baigani Language Convention	23-24 August 2024	Raipur, Chhattisgarh
23	Nyishi Language Convention	27-28 September 2024	Doimukhi, Arunachal Pradesh