

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 1057
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.02.2026

Tribal Status for Jhodia Community and Recognition of Soura Language

1057. Shri Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has examined the long-pending demand for inclusion of the Jhodia community of Odisha, a tribal group from the Koraput–Rayagada–Nabarangpur region, in the Scheduled Tribes list and if so, the present status of the proposal submitted by the State Government and the Registrar General of India;

(b) the details of ethnographic, linguistic and anthropological studies relied upon by the Government in determining the tribal status of the Jhodia community and the reasons for the continued delay in their constitutional recognition;

(c) whether the Government has examined the proposal for inclusion of the Soura (Sora) language, spoken by lakhs of tribal people in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and if so, the present status thereof; and

(d) whether the Government proposes to take a time-bound decision on both, the Jhodia Scheduled Tribe status and Soura language recognition to safeguard the identity, culture and constitutional rights of these tribal communities, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI DURGADAS UIKEY)

(a) to (d): The proposal from State Government of Odisha has been received for inclusion of Jhodia community in the Scheduled Tribes (STs) list of Odisha, as synonym of Paroja at S.No.55 in list of STs. The said proposal was not supported by the ORGI and the matter has been referred back to the State Government.

The proposals for inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes of a State or Union Territory follow certain processes. Proposals received from the State Government should be accompanied by an ethnographic report. The proposals are examined by the Office of the RGI and then by the NCST. In case the proposal is not recommended by the RGI, the State Governments are communicated the points raised by the RGI, so that additional information, if any, maybe furnished by the State Government. Many such proposals may therefore remain under examination at different levels.

Further, in the matter of inclusion of Soura (Sora) language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, as per the information provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs, it is stated that there have been demands from time to time for inclusion of several languages, including Soura, in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. However, there are no fixed criteria for consideration of any language for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. 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 for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. The earlier attempts, through the Pahwa (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) Committees, to evolve such fixed criteria have been inconclusive. The Government 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. Since at present, there are no fixed criteria for any language to be considered for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution, no time-frame can be fixed for consideration of the demands for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution.
