

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 257**  
ANSWERED ON 02.02.2026

**PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF  
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF WESTERN ODISHA**

**257.SMT. SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:**

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state: -

- a) whether the Government has identified and documented intangible cultural heritage elements of Western Odisha, including folk dances, musical traditions, oral histories and rituals practiced in districts such as Balangir and Sonepur;
- b) the details of financial assistance released under schemes, such as the Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage during FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25;
- c) whether the Government proposes to include cultural forms of Western Odisha under UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage lists or national heritage inventories; and
- d) the details of the steps taken/being taken to support practitioners, folk artists and traditional performers through institutional grants, training and livelihood-linked cultural promotion?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM  
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) and (b) Yes Sir.

The Ministry of Culture, in the year 2013, formulated a scheme titled "Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India". Under this scheme the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements from various States including the Western Odisha have been identified and documented. The ICH Scheme was operationally implemented during three specific cycle years, namely 2013–14, 2014–15, and 2015–16. During this period, proposals were invited, examined, and supported in accordance with the objectives and guidelines of the Scheme. However, subsequent to the completion of the 2015–16 cycle, no further implementation cycles have been initiated. As a result, from the financial year 2016–2017 onwards, no new proposals have been invited, received, or considered under the ICH Scheme.

(c) Proposal to include intangible cultural forms in the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists and national heritage inventories is a continuous process. All the State Governments including Odisha are encouraged to submit their proposal to the Sangeet Natak Akademi(SNA), being nodal agency of maintaining of National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

(d) The Government has taken several steps to support practitioners, folk artists, and traditional performers. These include implementation of various scheme and programmes through the Ministry of Culture and its organizations, such as Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs), to promote, preserve and disseminate traditional art forms. Support is provided in the form of

financial assistance, honorarium, travel allowance, boarding and lodging, and performance opportunities through organization of cultural festivals, fairs, workshops, exhibitions and cultural exchanges across the country. These initiatives also aim to providing sustained livelihood opportunities to traditional artists while ensuring inter-generational transmission of cultural heritage.

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