

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3747

TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.03.2026

PROMOTION OF SOUTH INDIAN CULTURE HERITAGE

3747. SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR ALIAS VIJAY VASANTH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any comprehensive policy for the promotion of South Indian cultural heritage including classical arts, literature, language and traditional practices and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether special financial assistance is being provided for promotion of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam cultural festivals at national and international levels and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps to promote classical art forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi and Yakshagana through cultural institutions and academies and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether cultural exchange programmes are being organised to showcase South Indian traditions in other parts of the country and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to establish dedicated South Indian cultural centres or museums in major cities and if so, the details along with timelines thereof; and
- (f) whether financial grants are provided to folk artists and traditional performers facing livelihood challenges and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) The Government of India promotes South Indian cultural heritage through autonomous bodies under the Ministry of Culture, including the Kalakshetra Foundation (Chennai), Sangeet Natak Akademi, and the South Zone Cultural Centre (Thanjavur). These organisations undertake a wide range of programmes and activities such as training, performances, research, documentation, workshops, festivals for the promotion and preservation of cultural traditions in the region. Key initiatives include Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music training, support for folk and tribal art forms, and documentation and promotion of traditional arts such as Koodiyattam, Pulikali, Shadow Puppetry, and Tholpavakoothu etc.

- (b) The Government of India provides financial support to its autonomous bodies under the Ministry of Culture to promote South Indian cultural traditions. The South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur, hosts festivals like Onam, Dasara, Pongal, and Sankranti, supporting folk and tribal artistes with honorarium, travel allowance and accommodation. Similarly, the Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai, organizes events such as Sunadam, the Kathakali Festival, the Annual Art Festival, and “Remembering Rukmini Devi” to promote classical arts, funded through government grants.
- (c) The Government of India, through its autonomous organisations under the Ministry of Culture, actively promotes classical art forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, and Yakshagana. The South Zone Cultural Centre organizes festivals and programmes in its Member States, engaging around 706 classical artistes in the past two years, while the Kalakshetra Foundation and Sangeet Natak Akademi further support these traditions nationwide through performances, workshops, and collaborative cultural initiatives.
- (d) The Government of India, through its autonomous organizations under the Ministry of Culture, promotes cultural exchange and showcases South Indian traditions nationwide. The Sangeet Natak Akademi invites and presents art forms from different parts of the country, including South Indian performing arts, in its festivals, while the South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC), Thanjavur, actively participates in and organizes major cultural programmes beyond its Member States (details at Annexure A).
- (e) The Government of India has already established the South Zone Cultural Centre at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, to cater the cultural needs of its Member States—Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu and Union Territories—Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry. The Sangeet Natak Akademi promotes classical Sanskrit theatre via the Kutiyattam Kendra, Thiruvananthapuram. Ministry of Culture provides financial assistance under the Museum Grant Scheme for establishing new museums and modernising, developing, and digitising existing ones. Details of the scheme are available at the official website of the Ministry <https://culture.gov.in/>
- (f) The Government of India, through the Sangeet Natak Akademi, provides financial assistance to cultural institutions under the scheme “Financial Assistance to Cultural Institutions” to support training in music, dance, and drama, and to encourage new productions such as plays and ballets. The South Zone Cultural Centre also supports participating artists by providing honorarium ₹3,000 for the first day, ₹1,500 for the second, and ₹900 for remaining days. Additionally, the Ministry also provides financial assistance to artists through various schemes. The details of funds disbursed under these schemes for last three years are provided at Annexure B.

Annexure- A**South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC), Thanjavur: Participation in Major Cultural Programmes Beyond Member States**

Sl. No.	Name of the festival	State/U.T
1.	Kashi Tamil Sangamam (1 to 4 Editions)	Uttar Pradesh
2.	Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam	Gujarat
3.	Rashtriya Ekta Diwas	Gujarat
4.	Vividhta Ka Amrit Mahotsav (2nd Chapter)	New Delhi
5.	Pongal Festival	New Delhi
6.	Sankranti Festival	New Delhi
7.	Maha Kumbh Mela	Uttar Pradesh
8.	Island Tourism Festival	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
9.	10 th Chilika Shelduck International Folk Carnival 2024	Odisha
10.	Floral Tributes to Bhagwan Birsa Munda	New Delhi

Annexure- B**Details of funds disbursed and Number of Beneficiaries (Individuals /Organizations) under various schemes administered**

S. No.	Name of the Scheme	Financial Year					
		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-25	
		Number of Beneficiaries	Amount (Rs. In Cr.)	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount (Rs. In Cr.)	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount (Rs. In Cr.)
1.	Financial Assistance for Promotion of Guru Shishya Parampara (Repertory Grant)	1213	86.22	1882	77.95	1041	84.03
2.	Cultural Function and Production Grant	2135	32.75	2242	24.55	1710	32.19
3.	Scheme For the Award of Fellowship to Outstanding Persons in The Field Of Culture	980	13.62	1141	11.19	928	11.89
4.	Scheme for Scholarships to Young Artistes in Different Cultural Fields	395	1.18	1507	4.52	1077	3.25
5.	Financial Assistance for Veteran Artists	3651	18.59	3811	28.96	4636	26.09
