

MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 425
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2026

PROMOTION OF CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

425. SMT. RACHNA BANERJEE:

Will the Minister of Culture be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the estimated number of people in India speaking each classical language, language-wise;
- (b) the detail of the funds utilized on promotion of classical languages during the last eleven years, year and language-wise; and
- (c) the details of the top five most spoken languages in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) & (b) Government of India recognized the following eleven languages as the Classical Language:

Sl. No.	Classical Language	Date of Recognition
i.	Tamil	12.10.2004
ii.	Sanskrit	25.11.2005
iii.	Telugu	31.10.2008
iv.	Kannada	31.10.2008
v.	Malayalam	08.08.2013
vi.	Odia	01.03.2014
vii.	Marathi	04.10.2024
viii.	Assamese	04.10.2024
ix.	Bangla	04.10.2024
x.	Pali	04.10.2024
xi.	Prakrit	04.10.2024

The Ministry of Education works for the Promotion and preservation of the Classical Language. Sanskrit Language is promoted through three Central University, viz Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University, New Delhi and National Sanskrit University, Tirupati. The details of the funds provided to other five classical languages declared prior to 04.10.2024 are at Annexure 'A'.

As per the Census of India 2011, (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India). Estimate number of people in India speaking 9 classical languages are as follows:

Sl. No	Language	Number of People speaking (Approximately in Lakh)
1.	Tamil	690
2.	Kannada	437
3	Telugu	811
4.	Sanskrit	0.24
5.	Malayalam	348
6.	Odia	375
7.	Marathi	830
8.	Assamese	153
9.	Bangla	972

It is estimated that part of 1038 Lakh population of Bihar speak in Pali.

(c) As per the Census of India 2011, (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India), the top five most spoken languages in the country are as follows:

- i. Hindi
- ii. Bengali
- iii. Marathi
- iv. Telugu
- v. Tamil

ANNEXURE- 'A'

Budget Grant Sanctioned to Classical Languages (Rs. In Lakhs)

Year	Kannada	Telugu	Odia	Malayalam	Tamil
2015-16	100.00	100.00	--	--	11.89
2016-17	100.00	100.00	--	--	5.02
2017-18	100.00	100.00	--	--	10.27
2018-19	99.00	100.00	--	--	5.46
2019-20	107.00	107.00	--	--	9.83
2020-21	108.00	147.00	8.00	8.00	1200
2021-22	106.00	103.00	58.38	63.97	1200
2022-23	171.75	171.75	176.75	186.75	1200
2023-24	154.50	154.50	138.50	112.50	1525
2024-25	86.00	86.00	86.00	86.00	1430.00
2025-26	106.50	106.50	106.50	106.50	1697.00