

Preservation of Tribal Languages of Tripura

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Replying today an un-starred question of Smt. Kriti Devi Debbarman the Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Shri Durgadas Uikey informed Lok Sabha today that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India under the Centrally Sponsored scheme 'Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)' extends financial support to 29 Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) in States/Union Territories (UTs) including Tribal Research and Cultural Institute Tripura. Under the scheme, proposals relating to infrastructural needs, research & documentation activities and training & capacity building programmes, organization of tribal festivals, yatras for promotion of unique cultural heritage and tourism and organisation of exchange visits by tribals are organised so that their cultural practices, languages and ritual are preserved and disseminated. TRIs are primarily institutions under the administrative control of the State Government/UT Administration. Under the scheme, the projects/activities undertaken for the preservation and promotion of indigenous tribal languages and dialects are as below:

- i. Preparing Bilingual Dictionaries and Trilingual Proficiency Modules in tribal languages.
- ii. Preparing Primers for students of Class I, II and III in tribal languages under Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) Intervention in the line of New Education Policy 2020. Publishing Varnamala, local rhymes, and stories in tribal languages.
- iii. Publishing books, journals on different tribal languages to promote tribal literature
- iv. Documenting folklore, and folktales of different tribes for preservation and promotion of tribal folk tradition. Collecting oral literature (songs, riddles, ballads etc.)
- v. Translation and publication of Training module about Sickle cell Anaemia disease awareness Module I and Diagnosis & Treatment Module II in local Tribal Dialects in the States covered under the Mission for Elimination of Sickle Cell Anaemia.
- vi. Conducting conferences, seminars, workshops, and poetic symposiums.

Further, as informed, the Tribal Research and Cultural Institute (TR&CI), Government of Tripura has taken following initiatives for the preservation and protection of indigenous tribal languages and dialects of Tripura:

1. Publishing Books on '*Learning of Tribal languages of Tripura*' and Dictionaries etc.
2. Publishing 1(one) Literary Journal namely '*SAIMA*' in Tribal Languages of Tripura every year.
3. Publishing 1(one) Research Journal namely '*TUI*' biannually.
4. Conducting Seminar/Workshop on '*Indigenous Tribal languages and dialects of Tripura*' in collaboration with Tripura University (A Central University). Papers are documented and published.
5. Producing Audio-Video Documentation on Tribal heritage, life etc. in Tribal Languages of Tripura.
6. Preparing Notation of Tribal Folkssongs of Tripura
7. Primers in Tribal Languages of Tripura has already been introduced in Government run Schools of Tripura. All the books/Primers/Documentation have been preserved in Social Science Library of TR&CI, Tripura and uploaded in the Website Link: <https://trci.tripura.gov.in/e-book-publication> , Ministry of Tribal Affairs repository portal and also in Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@tribalresearchandculturali7184>.

The financial allocation made for the preservation, promotion and development of indigenous tribal languages in Tripura during the last five years are as under:

(Rs. in lakh)

FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	8.00

The allocated funds are being utilised in collecting Article on Tribal Language of Tripura from eminent Tribal Writer, Poet, author of Tripura, printing and publication of books, organizing and conducting Seminar, Workshop on indigenous tribal languages and dialects of Tripura in collaboration with Tripura University (A Central University).

In addition, Ministry of Education, Government of India initiated the “Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL)” under the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru in 2013. The Institute with the help of Core Committee identified 117 languages including Darlong, Ranglong, and Uchai languages of Tripura in its first phase to work upon in step wise manner. SPPEL aims to document the language & culture of the mother tongues/languages of India spoken by less than 10,000 speakers by developing primers, bi/trilingual dictionaries (electronic and print formats), grammatical sketches, pictorial glossaries and ethno-linguistic profile of the community. The details are available on <https://sanchika.ciil.org>. Local community people are integral part of SPPEL language documentation process. Community people are involved as language consultant during the fieldwork. Even community people are involved and invited in workshop, seminar & conferences related to language documentation.

Moreover, Bhasha Sanchika, the digital language repository of the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), where language preservation, dissemination, and technological advancement converge in a pioneering initiative. The primary objectives of the archive portal are to provide Indian linguistic resources in diverse formats - text, image, audio, and video; Aiding in creating language technology resources, language pedagogy materials, and other language-related products and services. The details available in the following link:

<https://sanchika.ciil.org/home>

CIIL has also developed Primers on 117 languages (scheduled, non-scheduled & tribal) in collaboration with NCERT, New Delhi. The details available in the following link: <https://ciil.org/primers> book.

Furthermore, as part of the Government of India's Digital India initiative, CIIL is implementing Bharatavani Project dedicated to making knowledge resources available in and about 121 Indian languages, including 22 Scheduled and 99 Non-Scheduled languages. These resources are accessible through its dynamic and user-friendly web portal (www.bharatavani.in) and mobile app (<http://bit.ly/1XYqodI>). Kokborok, Halam, Mogh and Chakma are Non-Scheduled/Tribal Languages, which are spoken in Tripura, with a rich literary tradition, holds a prominent place in the Bharatavani portal. Bharatavani is committed to digitally preserving and disseminating the knowledge of these languages. The available resources are categorized in various knowledge domains as follows:

S I . No.	DOMAINS	KOKBOROK	HALAM	MOGH	CHAKMA
1	BHASHAKOSHA LANGUAGE LEARNING MATERIALS	02	00	00	00
2	PATHYAPUSTAKAKOSHA TEXTBOOKS	16	03	03	05
3	JNANAKOSHA ENCYCLOPEDIC CONTENTS	04	00	00	00
	TOTAL	22	03	03	05
	PDF DICTIONARIES	02			

The Linguistic Data Consortium for Indian Languages (LDC-IL) is developing high-quality linguistic resources across all Indian languages, including various mother tongues. LDC-IL has released a Mother Tongue Parallel Text Corpus of India Vol.I and it includes English and 147 mother tongues of India. Each language consists of 5,332 sentences, systematically structured based on 152 grammatical categories, reflecting the rich linguistic diversity of the country.

Tribal Languages of Tripura in the parallel Corpus and Word Counts:

- Kokborok (Tripuri) – 27,063 words
- Reang – 36,123 words
- Paite and Kuki are prominent in Manipuri but it is present in Tripura also. Paite – 32,627 words, Kuki – 32,695 words

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