

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1067  
ANSWERED ON:13.07.2009  
ENDANGERED LANGUAGES  
Gandhi Smt. Maneka Sanjay

**Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether some Indian languages have been listed as endangered by the latest UNESCO Atlas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to preserve these languages?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT(SMT. D. PURANDESWARI)

(a) & (b) The 'UNESCO Atlas of World's Languages in Danger' lists 196 languages for India, whose degree of endangerment varies from 'Vulnerable' to 'Extinct' as follows:

Vulnerable Languages: 84

Definitely Endangered Languages: 62

Severely Endangered Languages: 06

Critically Endangered Languages: 35

Extinct Languages (since the 1950s) 09

TOTAL: 196

The list of Indian languages along with the degree of endangerment; estimated number of speakers; accuracy of estimate; and sources of data are available in the UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (2009), an online database of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section of UNESCO (available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas>). The said data base is a living database being corrected constantly, due to user feedback, and after the screening of specialists of UNESCO.

While the total of the estimated number of speakers of the 196 languages listed in the Atlas amounts to approximately 2.7 crore, not all the 196 languages have reached the stage of 'severely endangered' or 'critically endangered'.

(c) This Ministry has reviewed the progress made in the Preservation and Development of Minor Indian Languages which are not covered under the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India with States/UTs. It was noticed that States/UTs have taken concrete action

to develop these minor languages.