GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1546
ANSWERED ON:06.03.2013
EXTINCTION OF LANGUAGES
Singh Shri Radha Mohan

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

(a) whether several ancient languages have become extinct due to lack of proper attention;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of ancient languages in use at present and the step taken by the Government to protect these languages?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR.SHASHI THAROOR)

(a) to (c) : No ancient language has become extinct since the Government of India began maintaining records. A language is generally determined as an 'ancient language' on the basis of written materials (including inscriptions) available in it dating prior to the 5th century Christian Era (CE). Accordingly, Sanskrit and Tamil can be called 'ancient languages'. These two 'ancient languages' are in use at present and are also included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India. The Government of India has established the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (RSKS), New Delhi, the Shri Lal Bhahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi, the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati and the Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan (MSRVVP), Ujjain for the development and promotion of the Sanskrit language. Further, there are 1057 Sanskrit Colleges/Centres affiliated to different Sanskrit Universities funded by the Universities Grants Commission (UGC). In addition, the Government of India provides assistance to schools, colleges and Universities located in different States through the UGC and the RSKS for promoting Sanskrit and Tamil. The Government of India has also established the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT), Chennai for the promotion and preservation of Classical Tamil.