

GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP CENTRES FOR PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Background

In recent years, the amazing linguistic diversity of India has been facing a serious challenge. Though language endangerment has been a global phenomenon, and to that extent languages in India too seem to face the endangerment and depletion of domains, the level of risk has increased enormously in recent years. Confronted with this scenario, there is an imperative need to arrest this trend both in India as well as globally, which UNESCO estimates, will lead to the death of at least half of the 6000 plus languages spoken by the end of this century. The UNESCO's 2009 *Atlas of Endangered Languages* reports 196 Indian languages as potentially endangered -- while it is true that these figures may be exaggerated and/or partial, the report has served as an important purpose in impelling public debate on the question of language vitality, linguistic human rights, and the role that governments and other institutions in a democracy can play in guaranteeing them. It is in this context that the role of the Universities becomes all the more important to serve as effective agents for preserving and promoting the endangered languages. In order to look into the whole gamut of issues concerning endangered issue, the UGC constituted an Expert Committee on preservation and promotion of endangered languages. The Committee inter-alia recommended providing financial support to Central Universities for setting up specialised Centres for study and research related to endangered languages. The Commission has accepted the recommendations of the Committee and decided to launch a scheme namely Financial Assistance for setting up Centre for preservation and promotion of endangered languages during XII plan period. It has been decided to implement this scheme in the Central Universities initially.

Objectives

1. To undertake inter departmental and inter disciplinary research related to endangered languages.
2. To undertake fieldwork, research, analysis, archiving and documentation of smaller indigenous/endangered languages using state-of-the art speech

However, preference shall be given to those Central Universities which have PG departments and post PG and Post doctoral research facilities in the fields of Linguistics, Anthropology, Archaeology and other allied disciplines.

Duration of Assistance

The Commission shall provide financial assistance initially for 5 years subject to the satisfactory performance of the Centre as verified by its output in terms of achieving the objectives as mentioned above. The Centre may be continued as a Regular Centre of the Central University, subject to the recommendation based on the review of an Expert Committee to be constituted by the UGC.

Procedure for applying for the Scheme

The UGC may circulate the guidelines of the scheme among the Vice-Chancellors/Registrars of all eligible Universities. The Central Universities may forward their proposal to the UGC which shall be placed before a Committee of Experts. The Committee may suggest recasting or modifying the proposal.

The University may submit their proposals as per the guidelines and in the prescribed form given in the guidelines with full information.

The proposals of the Universities eligible as per guidelines should be submitted along with an undertaking that the university will provide space for setting up the Centre for Endangered Languages.

The proposal should be submitted under the following heads but within the limit of the financial grants specified under each head.

Financial Assistance

Non- Recurring

1. Labs, Equipment, Software (a-c) - Rs. 5.00 crores
 - a) One Lab for documentation and archiving
 - b) One Lab for recording, eliciting and transcribing language data. This can have several booths according to the requirements of each university.

