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The Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Act, 2020

(ACT NO. 23 OF 2020)

[*As on the* 1*st July*, 2026]

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

G.S.R.	. . .	*for*	General Statutory Rules.
S.O.	. . .	”	Statutory Order.
Notifn.	. . .	”	Notification.

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THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 2020

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

SECTIONS

1. Short title, extent and commencement.
2. Definitions.
3. Official languages of Union territory.
4. Promotion and development of regional languages.

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THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 2020

ACT NO. 23 OF 2020

[26*th September*, 2020.]

An Act to provide for the languages to be used for the official purposes of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-first Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. Short title, extent and commencement.—(*1*) This Act may be called the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Act, 2020.

(*2*) It extends to the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

(*3*) It shall come into force on such date[1] as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint:

Provided that the Administrator may appoint different dates for different areas in the Union territory.

2. Definitions.— In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(*a*) "Administrator" means the Lieutenant Governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir appointed by the President under article 239 of the Constitution;

(*b*) "Union territory" means the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

3. Official languages of Union territory.—With effect from such date as the Administrator may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint in this behalf, the Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu, Hindi and English languages shall be the official languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the Union territory:

Provided that the English language may continue to be used, for those administrative and legislative purposes, in the Union territory for which it was being used before the commencement of this Act:

Provided further that the business in the Legislative Assembly of the Union territory shall be transacted in the official language or languages of the Union territory.

4. Promotion and development of regional languages.— (*1*) The Administrator may, for the promotion and development of regional languages of the Union territory, take necessary steps to strengthen the existing institutional mechanisms such as the Academy of Art, Culture and languages in the Union territory.

(*2*) The institutional mechanisms referred to in sub-section (*1*) shall make special efforts for the promotion and development of Gojri, Pahari and Punjabi languages.

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1. 29th September, 2020, *vide* notification No. S.O. 3394(E), dated 29th September, 2020 *see* Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, sec. 3 (ii).

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Section 47 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 (34 of 2019) provides for official language or languages of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and language or languages to be used in Legislative Assembly of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The said section provides that the Legislative Assembly may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir or Hindi as the official language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

2. Section 73 of the said Act empowers the President to suspend the operation of all or any of the provisions of the Act for such period as he thinks fit and make such incidental and consequential provisions as may appear to him to be necessary or expedient for administering the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the provisions of the said Act. *Vide* the Order S.O. number 3937(E), dated the 31st October, 2019 issued by the Government of India, any reference therein to the Legislature or Legislative Assembly of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir shall, in so far as it relates to the functions and powers thereof, be construed, unless the context otherwise requires, as a reference to Parliament.

3. In the light of above, it has become necessary to enact a law by Parliament, namely the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020. The said Bill provides—

(*a*) that the Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu, Hindi and English languages shall be the official languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the Union territory;

(*b*) for the empowerment of the Administrator to appoint different dates for different official purposes or for different areas in the said Union territory; and

(*c*) that the English language may continue to be used, for those administrative and legislative purposes in the Union territory for which it was being used before the commencement of the proposed legislation.

4. The Bill seeks to achieve the above objectives.

AMIT SHAH.

NEW DELHI;
The 10*th, September*, 2020.

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