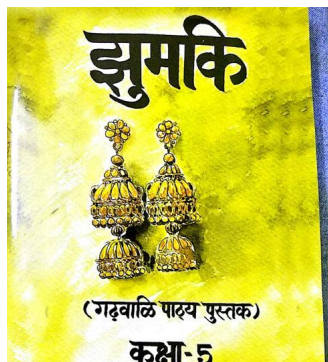


Uttarakhand introduces Garhwali school books in primary classes

Uttarakhand has two major native dialects; Garhwali and Kumaoni. Garhwali is spoken mainly in the areas of Garhwal division while Kumaoni in the Kumaon division.



In an attempt to promote the state's native languages, the Uttarakhand government has decided to introduce Garhwali dialect school books in classes 1 to 5. In the initial stage, it has been implemented as a pilot project in the state's Pauri Garhwal district, administration officials said.

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The idea to introduce the school books in Garhwali dialect was the brainchild of district magistrate (DM) of Pauri Garhwal, Dheeraj Singh Garbyal.

Speaking on the project, Garbyal said, "I had always thought of promoting the native languages of the state wherever I would be posted. So when I was appointed DM of Pauri on Jan 1 this year, I started working on the idea immediately and formed a team for the same by January 15."

He informed, "The team comprised of Garhwali language experts, writers and artists."

"After brainstorming on the content of the books, the team finally got them printed and they were delivered a few days ago. There is a single book comprising Garhwali content written in Devanagari script for classes 1-5," he added.

In the initial phase, Garbyal had thought of introducing the books in the schools of Pauri block only, but a few days ago chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat after learning about it, announced that the "idea would be implemented in the whole district."

"CM Rawat was very impressed with the idea as it is a vital step in promoting the state's culture. The books would be introduced in the schools by the next two days," he added.

Speaking on the content of the books, project coordinator, Ganesh Kukshal who has worked on Garhwali for the last 33 years, said, "Right from the content to covers and names of the books, everything is in Garhwali in an interactive way."

"To make it easier to connect with children, we have even named the books of each of the five classes after the traditional hill jewellery. For class 1 the book's name is Dhaguli, which is a bracelet for children, for class 2, it's Hansuli, a neck ornament for children and for class 3, it's Chubki, a neck ornament. For the remaining class 4 and 5, it's Paijabi, which is an anklet and Jhumki which are earrings, respectively," he said.

To make it easy for the children to learn and connect with the Garhwali language, the books have folktales, folksongs and stories of famous personalities of Garhwal and state.

"Like in the book of class 1, we have included the Hindi alphabets with a twist. Traditionally it is taught A for Aam, but we have changed it to A for Area which is a Garhwali dish. Every alphabet in it has something Garhwali. Similarly in the senior classes like 2 and 4 we have

included pictorial stories of famous Garhwali personalities like Gaura Devi of Chipko Movement and freedom fighter Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali respectively,” he said.