

'3-LANGUAGE POLICY IS NOT APPLICABLE TO CENTRAL GOVT. OFFICES'

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

Board of contention: The plaque unveiled by Home Minister Amit Shah in Bhadravati on January 16. special arrangement

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has said that the three-language policy is not applicable to offices of the Union government. The ministry gave this response to a question filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act on the recent CRPF event at Bhadravati in Shivamogga district, where the plaques unveiled to mark the foundation stone-laying ceremony were only in English and Hindi.

Goutham Ganesh M.H., a B. Tech student in Bengaluru, had filed an application before the Union Home Ministry under RTI, asking if the ministry had noticed that the three-language policy not being followed at the programme. The reply furnished by the ministry on January 29 stated that "as per the provision of the Official Language Act, 1963, and the Official Language Rules, 1976, the provision of bilingual policy is applicable in the offices of the Central government".

Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone for the 97th battalion of the Rapid Action Force in Bhadravati on January 16. The content of the programme engraved on the plaques unveiled on the occasion was only in English and Hindi. The banner on the dais was also in Hindi. Kannada activists and leaders from the Opposition parties, including former Chief Ministers H.D. Kumaraswamy and Siddaramaiah, said that Kannada was ignored at the programme. Hundreds of people took to social media to criticise the Centre on this issue, while Karnataka Rakshana Vedike conducted a Twitter campaign on the issue.

'Need amendments'

Mr. Ganesh told *The Hindu* that he had observed the developments following the event at Bhadravati and sent the questions to the Home Ministry on January 24. "As the programme was held in Karnataka, Kannada should have got prominence. But the Union Home Ministry has defended its stand citing the rules. I think the only solution could be amendments to the Articles from 343 to 351 of the Constitution which declare Hindi as the official language," he said.

He added that the elected representatives of the State should raise the issue and demand suitable amendments so that all languages are treated equally.

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