

Gujarati Forum - 4th July 2015 at Sangat Centre

Attendance - approx 35

Kamlbhai Rao – welcomed all and briefly explained the purpose of the meeting as per Agenda.

Navinbhai Shah

- Bring awareness at community schools events about discontinuation of GCSE & A level exams
- Outsource examiners and experts
- Petition in London Assembly – re continuation of Gujarati

Bob Blackman

- Key skill – ability to community in a variety of languages
- Think about all languages being targeted by the exam boards
- Make a case for all minority languages targeted.
- Set out a number of pupils to study GCSE in coming years.
- Business case – there is a need – Gujarati is a live language.
- Education links with India – commerce and trade.
- Keep up pressure politically and community wide.
- Opportunity for students to learn Gujarati in mainstream schools.
- Demonstrate the need – weekend complementary schools.
- Challenge statistics provided by exam boards.

Bob Blackman gave commitment to assist.

Kiritbhai Modi

- OCR's decision to discontinue GCSE and A Level exams in lesser taught languages is not political but commercial
- Number of candidate's sitting for these exams decreasing every year.
- Weekend community / supplementary schools closing due to lack of students and funding.
- Issue with Gujarati communities – not giving much importance to learning of the language.
- Need to identify reasons why students are not learning Gujarati.
- Main problem is that there are two classes of languages – MFL (class 1) and Minority language (class 2).
- How do we stop Exam boards from discontinuing the minority languages exams.
- Ultimately, it is a financial issue.
- Gujarati is very wealthy community, particularly larger communities and temples.
- Meet with OCR and make a business case – reasons why exams are not viable and what is a shortfall.
- If financial issues or deficit can communities meet the shortfall?
- Must fight for continuation of the exams
- Need practical solutions – raise issues with exam boards – ie cost of delivering these exams.

Daxaben Parmar

- Gujarati is offered in mainstream schools and students can enter GCSE exams.
- Complementary schools face financial problems similar to the OCR – exam boards.
- Local Councils/Authorities have raised rental/hire charges – no assistance.
- Financial support for language classes – ie venue rentals and resources.
- Shobhaben Joshi – selected as Chief Examiner for A levels at OCR.
- Market Gujarati language classes and make them accessible and approachable to all.
- Concensus on how we deliver the language – teaching of Gujarati language in classrooms.
- A level is counted towards UCAS.

Navinbhai Shah.

- Proposal / Resolution – we would like to have open and constructive dialogue with exam board concerned.
- Whether we have 10 or 1000 students sitting for exams, the exams should be available to all.
- Liaise with other minority language organisations.
- Have a meeting of all Gujarati organisations – may in City Hall or London assembly.
- Send and email shots to bring awareness of the issues.

Amit (Jogia?) – Councillor - past GCSE student

- Stressed on importance for youngsters and future generations to learn Gujarati.
- OCR is not taking the matter seriously.
- Gujarati Communities should unite to fight this cause.

Alpesh Patel

- Questioned Bob Blackman if other communities (ethnic minority languages being targeted) have approached him.
- Bob Blackman asked Alpeshbhai to send a draft to be presented at the **Early Day Motion** and send to him and London Assembly.

CB Patel

- It's a question of supply and demand.
- We should involve relatives and friends at home and try to speak in Gujarati.
- Gujaratis have money for temples, kathas but do not have money for Gujarati Language.
- Write articles and letters about Gujarati language for publication in Gujarat Samachar and Asian Voice.

General comments from floor

- Promote Gujarati language in social and religious gatherings.
- Make parents aware of the importance of learning Gujarati language.
- Go out and find out what our communities want.
- Relevance of Gujarati learning – why are we learning Gujarati?
- Reference to Kantaben's Shah's email sent to me and forward to CGS about **eback** -
“I have just heard that EBAC GCSE course demands a language as compulsory so OCR might rethink about their proposal. However, we need to encourage our students to take up Gujarati and so we do need to continue to have discourses with parents, teachers and organisations.”

Kokilaben Patel – Gujarat Samachar

- ભાષાનો અવાજ રજૂ કરવા સ્થાનિક MP નો સંપર્ક કરવો.
- ગુજરાતી ભાષા જાળવવા માટે પેટિશન શરૂ કરવું.
- ગુજરાતી ઘરથી શરૂ થાય તેથી ઘરમાં બોલવું જોઈએ.
- કેલેન્ડરની જેમ મૂળાક્ષરોના ચાર્ટ ઘરમાં વસાવવા જોઈએ.
- વર્ષો પહેલાં રજૂ થતો હતો તે રીતે ગુજરાત સમાચાર સામયિકમાં “બાળ વિભાગ” શરૂ કરવો.
- બાળગીતો શીખવવા ‘સંસાર’ જેવા બાળગીતોના સંગ્રહની સીડીનો ઉપયોગ કરવો.
- પ્રવેશ ઉત્સવનું આયોજન કરવું.
- દરેક વિસ્તારમાં બેઠકો યોજી ભાષાલક્ષી ચર્ચા કરવી.
- સંસ્થા આયોજિત પ્રસંગોમાં ગુજરાતી ભાષાનો ઉપયોગ અચૂક કરવો જે હાલ મોટા ભાગે નથી થતું.
- ગુજરાત સમાચાર કોઈ પણ ગુજરાતી શાળાના પ્રસંગોની ટૂંક માહિતી તેના ‘સંસ્થા સમાચાર’ વિભાગમાં રજૂ કરશે.