



## Mog language in Tripura: A Study of its present status

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### Abstract

Language is an important part of cultural identity and community life. The Mog community of Tripura has maintained its linguistic and cultural traditions through family life, religious practices and community activities. This study examines the present status of Mog language with particular attention to household use, intergenerational transmission, religious and cultural use, perceived language change and attitudes towards its future. The study is based on 26 questionnaire responses and 10 field interviews with members of different age groups. Secondary information was collected from Census records, Government of Tripura sources and relevant literature. The findings indicate that Mog continues to be widely used within households and remains important in religious and cultural activities. At the same time, respondents recognise changes in contemporary language use. The study therefore suggests that Mog shows continuity alongside change. Family transmission, documentation, educational support and community-based language use can contribute to its continued maintenance.

**Keywords:** Mog language, Tripura, language maintenance, intergenerational transmission, language change, cultural identity

### Introduction

Tripura is a multilingual state with diverse communities, languages and cultural traditions. For minority communities, language is closely connected with cultural identity, social relationships and the transmission of traditional knowledge. The Mog community of Tripura has maintained a distinctive cultural tradition, particularly through its religious and community practices.

The 2011 Census of India records Mogh (MOGH) as a distinct mother-tongue category in Tripura. According to the Government of Tripura, the number of Mog language speakers in the state was 37,893, representing 1.03% of the state's total population, according to the 2011 <sup>[3]</sup> Census. The Government of Tripura has also undertaken activities for the development and promotion of Mog language.

Population figures alone, however, cannot fully explain the condition of a language. Language maintenance depends on everyday use, family transmission, younger-generation participation and opportunities to use the language in cultural and educational contexts. The present study therefore examines the use and perception of Mog language among selected members of the community.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the present pattern of Mog language use among the selected respondents.
2. To understand the role of family in the intergenerational transmission of Mog.
3. To examine the use of Mog in religious and cultural activities.
4. To identify perceived changes in contemporary Mog language use.
5. To understand community expectations regarding the future of Mog language.

### Methodology

The study follows a small-scale exploratory and descriptive approach. Primary information was collected through a questionnaire and field interviews.

A total of 26 questionnaire responses were considered for the younger respondent group, while 10 members participated in field interviews as the older interview group. The questionnaire examined language fluency, household use, frequency of use, religious and cultural use, perceived language change and expectations regarding the future of the language.

The responses were analysed using simple frequencies and percentages. The interviews were used to understand participants' experiences and perceptions of language change. Secondary information was collected from the Census of India, Government of Tripura documents and relevant academic literature.

As the study is based on a small selected group, its findings are not intended to represent the entire Mog population of Tripura. They provide a community-level indication of present language use.

### Historical and Linguistic Background

The historical background of the Mog community is associated with the wider Arakan region and historical movements across present-day Myanmar, Bangladesh and North-East India. The history of settlement and migration is complex and has been discussed in historical and ethnographic writings.

The terms Mog and Marma are used in different regional and historical contexts. Mog/Marma has generally been discussed within the wider Tibeto-Burman linguistic context and in relation to the Arakan-Burmese linguistic sphere. The present study does not attempt to establish a detailed linguistic classification, as such classification requires specialised comparative linguistic research.

In Tripura, Mog language continues to have importance in family communication, religious practices and cultural activities. These areas are therefore important for understanding its present condition.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Language Fluency

Among the 26 younger respondents, 21 (80.8%) reported being fluent in Mog. All 10 participants in the older interview group reported familiarity with the language. This indicates that Mog continues to be known across generations among the selected participants.

### 2. Household Use

Household communication is the strongest area of Mog use identified in the study. Among the younger respondents, 25 out of 26 (96.2%) reported that Mog is mainly used at home. All 10 older interview participants also identified Mog as an important household language.

This finding indicates that the family remains an important space for the transmission and everyday use of Mog.

### 3. Frequency of Use

Among the younger respondents, 22 (84.6%) reported very frequent use of Mog. This suggests that the language remains actively used by a large proportion of the surveyed younger participants.

Among the older interview participants, 4 out of 10 (40%) reported very frequent use under the specific measure used in the study. Since the two groups were studied through different methods, this difference should be interpreted cautiously rather than as a strict statistical comparison.

### 4. Religious and Cultural Use

Mog remains important in religious and cultural activities. Among younger respondents, 14 (53.8%) reported that Mog is always used during religious or cultural occasions. Among the older interview participants, 8 out of 10 (80%) reported continued use on such occasions. The findings indicate that Mog continues to function as an important medium of cultural and religious expression.

### 5. Perceived Language Change

Language change is recognised by respondents from both groups. Among younger respondents, 19 (73.1%) reported some form of change in Mog language use. All 10 older interview participants reported noticeable or significant changes.

Such changes should not automatically be considered language loss. Contact with other languages, education, employment, media and changing patterns of social interaction can influence minority-language use.

### 6. Attitudes Towards the Future

The respondents showed a generally positive attitude towards the future of Mog. Among younger respondents, 25 (96.2%) expressed a positive expectation regarding its future use. Among the older interview participants, 9 (90%) expressed a similar expectation.

These positive attitudes are significant because language maintenance depends not only on knowledge of a language but also on people's willingness to continue using and transmitting it.

## Summary of Findings

| Indicator                                   | Younger Respondents | Older Interview Participants |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Sample size                                 | 26                  | 10                           |
| Fluent in Mog                               | 21 (80.8%)          | 10 (100%)                    |
| Mog mainly used at home                     | 25 (96.2%)          | 10 (100%)                    |
| Very frequent use                           | 22 (84.6%)          | 4 (40%)                      |
| Always used in religious/cultural occasions | 14 (53.8%)          | 8 (80%)                      |
| Perceived language change                   | 19 (73.1%)          | 10 (100%)                    |
| Positive expectation of future use          | 25 (96.2%)          | 9 (90%)                      |

**Source:** Primary questionnaire survey and field interviews, 2026.

The findings show that Mog remains active in household and cultural contexts. At the same time, respondents recognise changes in contemporary language use. The overall picture is therefore one of continuity alongside change.

### Mog Language and Cultural Identity

Language is closely connected with cultural identity. The continued use of Mog in households and cultural activities allows traditional expressions, cultural knowledge and community practices to be transmitted between generations. The relatively high level of reported use among younger respondents is particularly important. It suggests that Mog remains relevant to younger members of the surveyed community and is not restricted only to older generations.

### Present Challenges and Prospects

Mog speakers live in a multilingual environment where other languages are also used in education, employment and wider social interaction. Such conditions may influence language choice and vocabulary, particularly among younger speakers.

At the same time, there are institutional efforts to support Mog language. Government of Tripura records state that Mog is taught as a subject in 37 schools up to Class V, and Mog-language textbooks for Classes I–V are prepared in Mog script for school use. The Directorate of Kokborok & Other Minority Languages also conducts workshops, seminars and teachers' training for language development. Continued family transmission, educational materials, documentation, cultural activities and opportunities for younger speakers to use Mog can further strengthen its future.

### Limitations of the Study

The study is based on a limited number of participants: 26 questionnaire respondents and 10 interview participants. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire Mog population of Tripura.

The questionnaire and interview groups were also studied through different methods. Therefore, their figures are presented mainly to indicate patterns rather than to establish statistically conclusive generational differences.

A larger study covering more locations, age groups and social backgrounds would provide a broader understanding of the present condition of Mog language.

### **Conclusion**

The study indicates that Mog continues to have an important place in the linguistic and cultural life of the surveyed Mog community in Tripura. Its strong use within households suggests that family-based transmission remains active. The reported fluency and frequent use among younger respondents also provide a positive indication of continuing language use.

At the same time, respondents recognise changes in contemporary Mog language practices. These changes are understandable within a multilingual and changing social environment and should not automatically be interpreted as language decline.

The present condition of Mog can therefore be understood as continuity alongside change. Continued intergenerational transmission, educational support, documentation and community-based use can help maintain the language and strengthen its role as an important part of Mog cultural identity.

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