

Empowering Tribals

Transforming India

राष्ट्रीय जनजातीय अनुसंधान संस्थान
NATIONAL TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India)

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Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

CALL FOR PAPERS



ADI-VYAKHYAN 06
JanJatiya Bhasha Samvad

(National Conference on Preserving Tribal Languages)

24-25 July 2024

(Tentative)



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IMPORTANT DATES

12 JULY
2024

Abstract
Submission
Deadline

14 JULY
2024

Acceptance
Notification

21 JULY
2024

Paper Submission
Deadline

24-25 JULY
2024

Conference
Date

For queries : rashtriyajanjatiya@outlook.com
011 23315623 (Weekdays & Office Hours 9 am to 6 pm)

More details in following pages



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BACKGROUND

National Tribal Research Institute (NTRI) is organising a seminar under its popular series of “Adi Vyakhyan” with title as Adi-Vyakhyan 06: JanJatiya Bhasha Samvad on 24 and 25 July 2024.

About Tribal Languages

Tribal languages in India majorly belong to Five distinct languages families such as Austroasiatic, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Tibeto Burman and Andamanese.

As per Census 2011 data, there are 121 Scheduled and Non-Scheduled languages falling in the above five language families and 99.85 percent of the total population speak in these languages. There are 71 important Mother Tongues (MTs) which are spoken by different major Scheduled tribes in the country.

The census of India defines “Mother tongue” as: “Mother tongue is the language spoken in childhood by the person’s mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person’s home in childhood will be the mother tongue. In the case of infants and deaf mutes, the language usually spoken by the mother should be recorded. In case of doubt, the language mainly spoken in the household may be recorded.”

NTRI through this program aims to stimulate the academic discourse on preservation, protection and promotion of tribal language as language has paramount significance in context of culture, traditions and heritage of tribal communities

The People of India survey conducted by the Anthropological Survey of India under the guidance of Dr. K S Singh, generated information on languages and dialects spoken by 449 tribes/subtribes communities of India. As per the study, the tribal communities speaking Indo-Aryan Languages were 163, Tibeto-Burman - 143, Dravidian - 107, Austro-Asiatic 30 and those speaking Andamanese are only 4.

200 languages were claimed to be spoken by the tribal communities as their mother tongue in which major or fifty percent belonged to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages, 54 to Indo-Aryan Languages, 29 to Dravidian family, and 20 to Austro-Asiatic Languages.

Out of the 623 tribal communities taken into study by the People of India survey, 123 communities were found to be monolingual.



The study found that the bilingual in regional or state or scheduled languages, trilingual in English or the shared language used by peoples of different languages for inter group communications such as Nafamese, Nagamese, Deshi and Sadri. Thus, it seems that most of tribal communities are linguistically heterogenous. The survey findings also highlighted that tribal bilingualism is more evident in rural areas.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates on the use of home language/ mother tongue/ local language/ regional language as medium of instruction for the children's studying up to grade 5 and preferably till grade 8. The Government of India had launched DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) portal in the Year 2017, this portal provides its services such as course material, textbooks and teaching resources for Grade 1-12 in 32 Indian Languages.

Research have shown that early learning in Mother tongue language increase the child's adaptability, active engagement, confidence in learning and higher retention of wards. The languages are facing erosion with the progress of time and increasing utility of the modern language in day-to-day life. This is bound to impact the socio-cultural profile of the tribal communities.

Some Examples of Innovative Initiatives by Tribal Community for safeguarding their mother tongue or language

Soliga Sounds / Soliga Chart: A Chart developed by the Soliga Community residing in the B.R Hills of the southern Karnataka state as "Soliga Chart or Soliga Sounds". This chart was developed by the youth and uses Kanada script as they don't have script of their own. These community is also famous for being the first community living in tiger reserve to acquire forest rights. (This information was published in the Hindu newspaper on February 23, 2024, by Preeti Zachariah)

Asur Community Radio: This initiative by the Asur community in the hills of Latehar District includes transmitting songs, news and information in their native language has gained attention towards the measure of language preservation and community cohesion as well as active engagement of the youths and elderly members.

Teaching Native Language in Schools: The Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Department has taken up the initiative of appointment of native speakers of Koya language to be taught in the schools of the Chintoor Agency of the Alluri Sitarama Raju District. This initiative has been commenced in wake of the displacement of these communities due to the Polavaram Irrigation Project where the department aims to prevent the vanishing of the Koya language post displacement.



Abbi (1996) in her book “Languages of Tribal and Indigenous Peoples of India” mentions about language contact situation where the minority languages, tribal languages are often in contact with the majority or dominant languages coming into conflict and compromised in later stages. During this contact situation the lesser-known languages or tribal languages often incorporate some of the structures of the dominant languages.

The United Nations Organisation (UNO) has declared the decade of 2022-32 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and its estimates claimed that “at least 50 percent of today’s spoken languages will be extinct or seriously endangered by 2100”. It is important to deliberate and take measures for preservation, promotion and protections of tribal language as Language reflects the social, cultural, and ecological patterns of the communities. It is often considered as a form of a cultural identity of a community.

Objectives

- 1.To discuss experiences and mechanism for ensuring preservation efforts for tribal languages
- 2.To Identify ongoing interventions, research studies and activities dedicated to enhancing the knowledge, preservation, protection and promotion of the tribal languages
- 3.To understand the linkage and implementation of NEP 2020 vis-a-vis Tribal Language in Education System
- 4.To explore measures for identification, codification, scripting of tribal languages
- 5.To Identify effective and innovative use of technology for preserving tribal languages
- 6.To suggest measures for addressing challenges in preservation of tribal languages
- 7.To build a repository of best practices on preservation and conservation of tribal languages and associated practices



Participants:

The seminar shall be consisting of experts, linguists, scholars, policy makers, historians, philologists, ethnologists and field practitioners on a common platform.

Themes:

- Literature, Oral Traditions, and Scripts: Exploring Their Significance in the Preservation of Tribal Languages
- Functional Dynamics of Tribal Languages: Sociocultural, Educational, and Mass Media Perspectives
- Retention Strategies for Ancestral Languages: Navigating Assimilation and Language Shift
- Lexical Expansion and Vocabulary Building in Tribal Languages: Methods and Challenges
- Exploring Linguistic Plurality: Bridging the Gap Between Tribal and Non-Tribal Languages
- Navigating Challenges for Emerging Writers in Tribal Languages
- Linkage and implementation of NEP 2020 vis-à-vis Tribal Language in Education System.
- Community engagement: Strategies to involve tribal communities in language preservation efforts
- Leveraging technology for comprehensive documentation of tribal languages: Digital language documentation

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- The program will be in hybrid mode
- An edited volume# will be published with selected papers.