

The COVID Pandemic: Response of the SEL Society

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The first human cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19, subsequently named SARS-CoV-2 were first reported by officials in Wuhan City, China. Gradually as the year 2020 proceeds, it crossed all types of human-made boundaries and gripped the whole world. According to medical practitioners, it is a fast-spreading disease and until a vaccine has been developed it can be prevented only by breaking the chain of spread and to fulfil this goal spreading minimum awareness about the disease among every citizen of our vast country India is essential.

In initial stages, the major chunk of information about COVID - 19 was disseminated only in English across the world followed by Spanish and French (Singh et al 2020). India is a land of many languages though a major percentage of its population understands English yet a large number of people could not deal with it. We are fortunate that India could disseminate different types and levels of information about COVID-19 in many Indian languages within a short period. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India published COVID-19 awareness materials in 12 Indian languages. Apart from this, various state governments in India circulated different types of information and advisory brochures, multimedia messages through on and offline modes. The Indian constitution mentions 22 scheduled languages but the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare gives COVID-19 awareness materials only in 12 languages. In addition to 22 scheduled languages, there are 99 non-scheduled languages spoken by 3.29 populations in India. Further, there are 270 languages spoken by the population below 10,000. This shows that the most vulnerable people of our country, who represent the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, are not in a position to access the information and advisory of COVID-19 in their native language.

Society for Endangered and Lesser-known Languages (SEL) is an NGO that is working for the preservation and revitalization of endangered languages of India for the last six years. Presently we are working with a tribe named *Banraji / Banrawat/ Raji / Rajbaar* that lives in eleven hamlets of Pithoragarh and Dharchula districts in the state of Uttarakhand. Their language, Raji is on the brink of decay as shrinking domains of use may relegate it soon from the home environment also. It is facing all the problems that any endangered language does: a very low socio-economic status, minuscule number of speakers, code-reduction, diminishing language attitude, etc. By conducting several activities and workshops with the help of the Raji community members we are trying to preserve their language and culture.

Our team visited this community in October 2019 and conducted a few workshops and was supposed to visit the area in January to conduct a wooden bowl making workshop but could not due to bad weather conditions. As a result, they shifted the workshop in March 2019 but the Covid-19 Pandemic compelled them to postpone it also. During the first lockdown period, they were getting news from every corner that how the Pandemic is spreading and catching everyone, the team was devastated by the gravity of the situation. They had a long relationship with the community and were aware of their socio-economic condition, their hygiene level, and the medical facilities available in the area. So, they wanted to convey the Covid-19 related information to the community in their native language and they had to act fast. As Raji is a geographically scattered community, all the Raji hamlets are quite far from the main roads and mostly situated in jungles. Due to lockdown, it was neither possible for the team nor for any local NGO to communicate with them physically. Though the mobile network is available in some hamlets, the ground reality is that only two percent of the Raji population owns a mobile. Keeping all these hurdles in mind we planned to create a written information flyer in their mother tongue and drafted a flyer in Hindi and then translated it in Raji language. Once it was completed, we tried hard to contact some community members. A person was needed who could read and understand it. The person should be a mother tongue speaker and who still uses Raji language in different domains. She/he should have a smartphone or have access to a smartphone. She/he must be capable of doing the corrections and should be responsible enough to send it back to us. And most importantly She/he should take the responsibility to circulate the information flyer. While making the draft of Hindi flyer following points were taken into consideration-

- Brevity
- Inclusion of relevant information
- Authentic sources
- Easily comprehensible

Taking care of these four points we prepared an information flyer in Hindi. It was clear in our mind that the Flyer should be small i.e. of one page only, so that circulation would be easy but it must contain all the relevant information. Its language must be clear and coherent. It is a proven fact that pictures make any information more effective and interesting, so a few pictures were selected to convey the information. Instead of taking some random visuals conveying a similar meaning, a government website was consulted and its name was mentioned in the flyer. After working with the community for 20 years documenting their language and writing grammar for their mother tongue, our team leader Kavita Rastogi was confident that she could translate the flyer in Raji. There are minor variations between the Hindi and Raji flyers due to the structural differences between both languages. Then came the cross-checking stage after several attempts luckily, we could contact *Sri Gagan Singh Rajbaar*, an ex MLA who lives in Pithoragarh helped us in the cross-checking. His daughter, *Jigyasa*, a class 7th student helped in formatting the material and sending it via WhatsApp. *Gagan Singh ji* assured us that he will also print the flyer and will send someone to distribute it.

The Society did not stop there gradually we prepared COVID-19 Flyers in around 100 languages with the help of the native speakers and scholars from different Universities of India. We have covered all twenty-two scheduled languages of India and many endangered and indigenous languages. The preference of the community was our prime concern. Some of them want to make two flyers - one written in a major script like Roman or Devanagari and the second in their local script. We respected their sentiments and did accordingly. As a result, we have flyers in Devanagari, Roman, Persio-Arabic, Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Lisu, Wancho, and many other smaller scripts. Not only this SEL has also produced mask making videos in several indigenous languages. All the flyers are available in the downloadable form on our website - selindia.org. At the time of the present Pandemic, this step has fulfilled the linguistic right of many smaller communities to get information in their native language. These communities have some more written linguistic resources in their native languages. Their future generations will have some Covid-19 related literature. Based on the feedback received from community members we are happy to share that we have successfully achieved our goal to disseminate information about this Pandemic well in time.

A Brief Introduction to a few Languages of the COVID -19 Flyer

Azamgarhi

Maaz Sheikh

Azamgarhi is a unique language spoken exclusively by the Muslim population of the Azamgarh and Mau districts (which was carved out Azamgarh in 1988), in the State of Uttar Pradesh, India. This language is an eclectic mixture of Awadhi and Bhojpuri with Awadhi being the base language and Bhojpuri exerting sub-stratum influence due to it being the prevalent language of Azamgarh. Verbal inflections, vocabulary, intonation, etc. all point to that. Due to Urdu being the literary and the language of official communication for hundreds of years in the region, it has influenced Azamgarhi to such an extent that almost 97-99% of the total native speakers of Azamgarhi are bilingual (at least). Azamgarhi lacks an Ethnologue/ Glotollog code and the number of speakers is uncertain since no census data on this language exists, perhaps there may be around a couple of lakhs speakers. Unfortunately, the vitality of this language is very low as it is not being transmitted to the younger generation which is picking up Urdu (/Hindi) as their mother tongue since Azamgarhi has very low prestige when compared to Urdu, Hindi, and English. Without any revitalization efforts, this language will cease to exist in the gap of a generation or at the most two, and if at all it manages to survive, will be in a rudimentary, Urdu-mixed form.

Biate

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Biate (ISO 639-3: biu) belongs to the Central Kuki sub-group of the Kuki-Chin languages from the Tibeto-Burman language family. The Biate speakers with a population of nearly 19000 (Ethnologue 2020) are found mainly in Assam (Dima Hasao district), and parts of Meghalaya and Mizoram in Northeast India. They follow Christianity. The speakers are multilingual in several of the Kuki-Chin languages such as, Hrangkhoh, Mizo, Hmar, etc, and English, Hindi. Biate is a vulnerably endangered language as it is spoken in limited domains such as home,

community gatherings. At present, the Biате literature committee is working on the revised orthographic convention for the language in Roman script, especially for translation of the Bible. There has not been any linguistic work on Biате published so far (few scholars have taken research interest in documenting Biате in recent years), although community members have contributed literary writings and history.

Reference:

Eberhard, David M; Simons, Gary F; and Fennig, Charles D. (Eds.) 2020. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World. Twenty-third edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

Dimasa

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Dimasa (ISO 639-3: dis) is a Bodo-Garo language from the Tibeto-Burman language family. The language has four dialects: Hasao (spoken in Dima Hasao district in Assam), Hawar (Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi district in Assam), Dembra (Hojai district in Assam) and Dijuwa (Karbi Anglong district in Assam and Dimapur district in Nagaland). Hasao is adopted as the standard dialect by Dimasa literature committee (Dimasa Sahitya Sabha/Dimasa Lairidim Mel) in April, 2004. It has 142,413 speakers according to 2011 Census. Dimasa is a vulnerably endangered language as it is used only among the Dimasa community and at home domain. The language is yet to be implemented as an optional Dimasa subject in schools as announced by Assam govt. early 2020. Roman is the adopted script since 2004. There have been limited numbers of linguistic works published on Dimasa such as Singha (2007, 2010), and Jacquesson (2007).

References:

Eberhard, David M; Simons, Gary F; and Fennig, Charles D. (Eds.) 2020. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World. Twenty-third edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

Jacquesson, F. 2008. A Dimasa Grammar. Retrieved from http://brahmaputra.vjf.cnrs.fr/bb/IMG/pdf/Dimasa_Grammar-2.pdf on August 18, 2020.

Singha, Kh. Dhiren. 2010. *Dimasa Word Book: A Classified Vocabulary*. Guwahati: DVS Publishers.

Singha, Kh. Dhiren. 2007. *An introduction to Dimasa Phonology*. Guwahati: DVS Publishers.

Census of India. 2011. Retrieved from www.censusindia.gov.in on August 20, 2020.

Dogari

Udita Swahney

Dogari, a western Pahari language, is spoken in Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir, Chamba and Kangra districts of Himachal Pradesh and Gurdaspur district of Punjab. It has 2.6 million speakers according to the 2011 census, though many new generational speakers prefer Hindi to Dogri and it is losing its L1 status among the speech community.

Gaddi

Prof. Aejaaz Muhammad Sheikh

Gaddi speech community is settled in the upper belt and some neighboring areas of Bhaderwah tehsil of district Doda of Jammu and Kashmir. Some speakers of Gaddi language are also settled in Udhampur, Bani and Kathua areas of Jammu Region. It is an Indo-Aryan language. T. Grahame Bailey (1907) has classified Gaddi as a language of Western Pahari group of Indo-Aryan languages in his book *The Languages of Northern Himalaya*. There are as many as ten villages in Bhaderwah where Gaddi speakers are found. As per the census of 2011, the number of speakers of Gaddi Language in Jammu Division are 46,400 approximately. Most of the population works as shepherds, The Gaddi people are locally called by the name *Ghadeshi* which means “the people from the country of shepherds.”

The origin of the speakers of ‘Gaddi’ dates back to the era when the community was inhabited in Himachal Pradesh but some speakers of the language claimed that they belong to the Rajputs of Rajasthan, although no evidence backs their argument. The Gaddi people follows Hinduism. The community has been able to retain and hold on to their cultural beliefs and norms with little or no modification. Being reasonable towards their religious beliefs. Gaddi people respect their religious identity and beliefs. The main concept regarding the substantive belief of the Gaddi people revolves around the faith in Lord Shiva. While worshipping Lord Shiva is almost a common practice in Hinduism, Gaddi people differ from other Hindus in belief towards Lord Shiva. As per the UNESCO classification system of endangered languages, Gaddi has been ranked as “Definitely Endangered Language”, in which the language is no longer being learned as the mother tongue by children in the home. The intergenerational transmission of the language is ceased. The language is used mostly by the parental generation and up.

Hmar

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Hmar (ISO639-3: hmr) belongs to the Mizo sub-group of the Kuki-Chin languages from the Tibeto-Burman language family. With a population of 240,000 speakers, (2011 Census) in northeast India, it is spoken mainly in the states of Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram. In Assam, they are found in Dima Hasao district and the Barak valley. The Hmar language is cognate with Mizo, Biate, Hrangkhoh and Khelma. Roman is the adopted script used in literature by the speakers. The language is vulnerably endangered. However, various local publications have been made by the Hmar literature committee to preserve their language in the literary domain. It is also the language of their Presbyterian church besides the home domain.

Reference:

Census of India. 2011. Retrieved from www.censusindia.gov.in on September 1, 2020.

Hrusso Aka

Dr. Bipasha Patgiri¹

The Hrusso Aka tribe live in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, geographically the largest state in Northeast India but known to be sparsely populated and remote. The Himalayan state is inhabited by 26 major tribes and has a population of 1.4 million. Census of India 2011 shows that its population density of 17 per square km which is the lowest in the country. Arunachal Pradesh has the distinction of being the most linguistically diverse state in the country. Most of these languages, including Hrusso Aka, are small, undocumented and quickly disappearing. While the recently increased contact with the outside world and access to television have brought in Hindi as the lingua franca, the Government policy of English medium education has made it the prestigious language of the educated elite. Consequently, indigenous languages of the state are being pushed to the edge of extinction. Arunachal Pradesh is dominated by the Tani subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman family, to which the larger languages like Nyishi, Apatani and Galo belong. Non-Tani languages are small, and have a few hundred to a few thousand speakers. Hrusso Aka is a non-Tani language spoken by the members of the tribe that call themselves [ɾusso]. Aka is the exonym recorded since the British rule in India, but perhaps dates earlier than that. The term Hrusso Aka, obviously a concatenation of the autonym and the exonym, is used to distinguish them from the (sub) tribe Koro Aka that is culturally the same as the Hrusso Akas but has a different language. The speakers of Hrusso Aka are estimated to be around 3,000. The language is getting increasingly endangered due to an unprecedented shift towards Hindi. There are two major varieties of Hrusso Aka - /ɾuso/ (Ĝuso) and χʉʃʉɲ/ (Hushin). There are only minor differences between the two in terms of lexicon and grammar. One important phonological difference is that the Hushin uses /s/ and /z/ wherever the

¹ Some information on Hrusso Aka is taken from Vaijay D'Souza's MPhil thesis submitted to Oxford University.

Ġuso has /f/ and /z/. Ġuso is spoken in Buragaon, Jamiri and the surrounding villages and Hushin is spoken in the villages carved out of the old Dijangania village. The only book available on Hrusso Aka language is Simon's *Aka Language Guide*, a part of the series of publications on Arunachali languages written by various government officers and published by the government research directorate. It consists of some elementary grammar, 127 basic sentences and phrases, a 700-word Aka-English and English-Aka glossary.

Karbi

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Karbi (ISO 639-3: mjw) (alternate names: Mikir, Arleng) is a language isolate, which belongs to the Kuki-Naga group of the Tibeto-Burman language family. The Karbi people are mainly found in Karbi Anglong (421,156 speakers) district of Assam, and scattered across the Brahmaputra valley and Dima Hasao district in the state. They are also found in the neighbouring states of Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland. Karbi language has variations as, Hill Karbi, Amri and Dumurali. The Karbis have adopted both the Roman script and the modified Arleng script for their literature. The Karbi language is vulnerably endangered as it has limited number of a) documentations, b) language shift towards the dominant Assamese language is moderately high (considerable number of speakers cannot speak Karbi), and c) the pedagogic materials for mother tongue education is yet to be updated and revised by the Karbi literature committee.

Reference:

Census of India. 2011. Retrieved from www.censusindia.gov.in on August 20, 2020.

Khelma

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Khelma (ISO 639-3: sch), also known as Sakachep, is a Central Kuki-Chin language from the Tibeto-Burman language family. It is a vulnerably endangered language as it has limited number of speakers and the language is used in very limited domains like home and social gatherings. The only available work written in Khelma are the Biblical translations according the native speakers. It is mainly spoken in Dima Hasao district and the Barak valley in Assam, besides the neighbouring states of Nagaland and Manipur in northeast India. The language is known as Khelma in Assam and Nagaland and Sakachep in Manipur. It has a total of 500 speakers in Assam and 418 in Nagaland (Peren district) as Khelma, and 20000 as Sakachep. The language is

cognate with Biате, Hrangkhоl, Vaiphei and Thadou in the Dima Hasao district. Roman is the adopted script of the Khelma language.

Reference:

Census of India. 2011. Retrieved from www.censusindia.gov.in on August 20, 2020.

Mising

Dr. Bipasha Patgiri

Mising is an Eastern Tani language of the Tibeto-Burman language family spoken in Assam (Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Sibsagar, Majuli, Dibrugarh districts) and Arunachal Pradesh (Siang district). The closest relative of Mising is the Adi community both ethnically and linguistically while, Hrusso (Aka), Nyshi (Dafla), Gallongs and Mishimis are regarded as distantly related to Misings. Misings are a close cognate of the Adis (Mijon and Pa:dam dialects), Apatani, Bokar, Nyshi, Bungi, Tagin, Yano, Hills Miri, Galo of the Western Tani group and Damu, Bori and Milang of the Eastern Tani group. Despite being mutually intelligible, the dialects of Mising differ from each other in phonology, morphology, morpho-phonology, morpho-syntax and lexical levels. It has some major social dialects including Pagro, Delu, Oyan, Dambug (or, Dambuk), Mo:ying, Sa:yang, Somua and Samuguria. Pagro is regionally concentrated in Dhemaji district of Upper Assam which also has the highest number of speakers. Delu speakers are largely found in the Sibsagar district and Oyan speakers are found in Sibsagar as well as in North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts. Dambug, on the other, having less number of speakers are mainly the inhabitants of Silapathar Sub-Division of Dhemaji and in East Siang district in Arunachal Pradesh. Majority of Mo:ying dialect speakers are found reside in Tinsukia district and Jonai Sub-Division of Dhemaji district and Sa:yang speakers reside in Majuli and Sonitpur districts. Somua speakers have traditionally been living in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh and Samuguria speakers are found in Golaghat and North Lakhimpur in Assam.

Mizo

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Mizo (ISO 639-2,639-3: lus) (alternate name Lushai) belongs to the Mizo sub-group from the Kuki-Chin languages of the greater Tibeto-Burman language family. The total number of speakers is approximately 12 lakhs according to 2011 census in Mizoram. In Assam they are mainly found in Dima Hasao district and the Barak valley. The Mizo people use Roman script in their literature and in the mother tongue subject. Mizo is vulnerable according to the degree of

endangerment in the UNESCO report. Although Mizo is a dominant language in Mizoram and there have been significant documentations, its status remains to be non-scheduled in the constitution of India.

Reference:

Census of India. 2011. Retrieved from www.censusindia.gov.in on September 1, 2020.

Nalbaria Assamese

Dr. Bipasha Patgiri

The regional varieties of Assamese are abundant in number. These varieties vary not only according to region, but within the same region also they vary according to community, class and even religion. This is true even for the Nalbaria variety. Within an area of little more than 1000 sq km, speeches of the people differ significantly which even trigger unintelligibility. Nalbaria variety has two main sub-varieties which are termed according to their relative location, viz., Eastern and Western. These two sub-varieties are different in terms of morphological markers (including pronominal system, plural markers and classifiers), and pronunciation as well as accent. However, not much difference is found in terms of syntactic features. The differences might well have arisen from education, occupation, social status, religious as well as customary practices. Assamese has three dialectal variations – Eastern (commonly regarded as the Standard Colloquial), **Kamrupi** (spoken in Barpeta, **Nalbari**, Darang, Palashbari and Sonapur), Goalparia. Eastern Nalbaria is spoken in the area comprising *Barbhag*, *Ghograpar* and *Nalbari* revenue circles – an area which has *Bahjani* in the west and *Borigog* in the east through *Banbhag*, *Barkhetri* and *Ghograpar*. Western Nalbaria is spoken in a region comprising of *Banekuchi*, *Tihu* and *Paschim Nalbari* revenue circles through *Madhupur*, *Xolmara*, *Belxor*, *Chamta*, *Jagara* and *Bongaon*. The biggest revenue circle *Barkhetri* is situated in the southern part of the district. The speech here is mostly similar to Western Nalbaria. There are some subtle lexical and phonological differences between these two varieties.

The Nocte Language

Dr. Vineeta Dowerah

The Nocte is one of the major ethnic tribes of the north-east India. They are concentrated in the Tirap district in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. This small district spreads over a land measuring 2362 Sq.kms surrounded by the picturesque hills of the Himalayas. It shares a state border with

Nagaland and Assam, an international border with Myanmar and a district border with Changlang and Longding districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The population of the district is 111, 679 as per 2011 census. However, there are approximately 40,000 Nocte speakers. They speak the Naga-Kuki-Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman language. There are around nine varieties of languages of the Noctes, namely, Khappa, Hakhun, Hawah, Phothung, Domlak, Jope, Sangniak, Dadom and Laju. They don't have a script of their own. Owing to the diversity in their languages, Noctes have made use of Assamese and Hindi as their contact languages. Some of the languages share some similarities, like the Hawa and the Dadom groups. But many of the Nocte languages are mutually unintelligible to each other. Language is commonly called *jaap* or *rah* in Nocte. The Corona flyers were made in three varieties of Nocte language- Hawah, Phothung and Ollo (Laju). Hawah jaap is spoken in Borduria, Paniduria, Namsang, Laptang and Kaimai areas. Phothung jaap/rah is spoken in Soha, Turet, Kenon, Dongrong and Mapoya in the lower areas of Tirap. Ollo is spoken in Laju, Noglo, Sinhan, Chanyu, Raho, Pongkong, Sanliyam, Longbu and Longliyang areas in the upper areas of the district.

Paite

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Paite (ISO 639-3: pck) belongs to the Thadou sub-group of the Kuki-Chin languages from the Tibeto-Burman language family. According to the Census of India 2001, Paite population constitutes 64,100 speakers. The Paite people are found in Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Assam. In Assam, the Paite language is mainly spoken in Karbi Anglong district. The language is cognate with Thadou, Hmar, Mizo etc. Roman is the adopted script. Paite has several dialects such as, Dapzal, Telzang, Dim, Saizang, Lamzang etc out of which, Dapzal and Lamzang have been found to be spoken in Karbi Anglong. The language is vulnerable due to its limited number of speakers and influence of dominant neighbouring languages in the respective states.

Reference:

Census of India. 2001. Retrieved from www.censusindia.gov.in on September 1, 2020.

Pahari Language

Syed Murtuza Hussain

This language is spoken mainly in four districts of Jammu and Kashmir: Baramulla, Kupwara, Poonch and Rajouri. Baramulla and Kupwara comes under Kashmir valley region and district

Poonch and Rajouri comes under Jammu region. My dialect is spoken by Syed community of Village- Gursai, Tehsil- Mendhar, District- Poonch. The other communities speak Pahari with some variations. The other communities of district Poonch are Qureshi, Bhatti, Manhas, Pathan, Zamindar, Sikhs, Hindu community including different castes, etc. Poonch is one of the remotest districts of Jammu and Kashmir. It is bounded by the Line of Control (boundary between Indian and Pakistan administered Kashmir) on three sides (north, west and south). Rajouri is a district of Jammu region in Indian administered state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Line of Control lies to its west and Poonch to its north and Naushera and Chhamb to its south. The district comprises six tehsils. The land is mostly fertile and mountainous. Maize and rice are the main crops of the area and the main source of irrigation is river Tawi that originates from the mountains of Pir Panjal. Though Urdu and English are the main mediums of instruction, the other dialects such as Gojri, Pahari and Dogri are much spoken at the informal level. Gojri is mainly spoken by the Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes who are known for herding goats, sheep and horses. However, the fine line between Gujjar and Bakarwal tribes is that the former are farmers as they own land while the latter are nomads who herd cattle. The population is officially divided along the religious lines – though religiously diverse masses normally live in peace and harmony. The total population therefore, in accordance with the 2001 census, is 60% Muslim, 37% Hindu, 2% Sikhs and others.

Pahari Speaking People (PSP) of J&K are a socio-cultural and linguistic minority in the State known for their patriotism and valour through times immemorial. They are scattered throughout the State with their population dense in areas of Poonch, Rajouri, Kupwara and Baramulla Districts. Apart from their peculiar secular cultural ethos and rites, these people are speaking a distinct language (Pahari or Potohari) as their mother tongue. Recognizing need to preserve their cultural/linguistic characteristics and to take steps for their socio-economic up-liftment, government has already recommended to Government of India that they should be declared as a Scheduled Tribe. The case is pending with Government of India.

Pahari Speaking People are amongst most under privileged linguistic minority caught in a web of backwardness and whatever recorded progress was taking place earlier which was already fragile due to previous tribal attacks in these areas got stunted and retarded during the last 19 years of militancy due to inhabitation in contiguity of borders of Line of Actual Control which forced State Government to constitute the Advisory Board for Pahari Speaking People to counter their economic depression, non-reservation status, distinct inhabitation character living in hilly and inaccessible areas which isolate them from rest of the population in the country. The other languages spoken in Jammu division are: Dogri, Punjabi, Gojri and Kashmiri. There are many similarities in Punjabi, Dogri, Gojri and Pahari. But, A native speaker can identify whether it is Pahari, Dogri, or Punjabi. All these are different languages with different linguistic features. As, punjabi is written in gurmukhi script, dogri is written in devnagri script and Gojri, Kashmiri and Pahari are written in Persio- Arabic script.

Reference:

<http://www.poonch.nic.in/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajouri_district/ (<http://www.rajouri.nic.in/>)

<http://www.jkpahariboard.org/about.php>

Pnar

Dr. Monali Longmailai

Pnar (ISO 639-3: pbv) (community name Jaintia) belongs to the Khasian sub-group of the Northern Mon-Khmer languages from the Austro-Asiatic language family. Pnar is spoken in East and West Jaintia Hills districts in Meghalaya and Dima Hasao district in Assam. Its population in Assam (Dima Hasao) is 15,936 in Assam (its population in Meghalaya is shown as 14, 11,775 out of which the Pnar population is not clear) based on 2011 Census report. It is also spoken in the neighboring country Bangladesh. They are mainly Christians and they have adopted the Roman script. Khasi is no longer considered to be an endangered language although Pnar Khasi in Assam remains vulnerably endangered in the Dima Hasao district (it has limited domain of use only among the Jaintia people).

Reference:

Census of India. 2011. Retrieved from www.censusindia.gov.in on September 1, 2020.

Purik

Maaz Sheikh

Purik is a phonologically archaic variety of Tibetan spoken predominantly in the Kargil district in the Union Territory of Ladakh, India. The tehsils in which Purik is spoken are Kargil and Sankoo in the Kargil district. These two Tehsils are made up of eight Blocks. According to the 2011 Census, 140,802 people live in Kargil District, which comprises the three Tehsils of Kargil (86,461), Sankoo (40,548), and Zaskar (13,793). The Blocks in which Purik is spoken by the vast majority of the population are those of Kargil (with a population of 41,512), Shaker-Chiktan (11,233), Drass (21,988), Sankoo (17,735), Shargole (11,728), Taisuru (10,059), and Gund Mangalpore- Trespone (GMT) (12,754). In the entire district of Kargil, 77 % of the population are Muslim (around 95 % Shia, and 5 % Sunni), 14 % Buddhist, and 7 % Hindu. Extrapolating from these figures, the number of Purik speakers may be assumed to exceed 100,000, and the vast majority of these speakers are Muslim.

Ruanglat / Rongmei Naga

Chunthanlung Kamei

Ruanglat is spoken by the people of Rongmei which is one of the major Naga tribe in North – East India. The Rongmei are mostly concentrated in the three states of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. However, the maximum numbers of speakers can be found in the hills district i.e., Tamenglong District and Noney District of Manipur. According to census 2011, there are about 120,000 approx. speakers of Ruanglat. North – east India being a hotspot to many tribes and culture, there are numbers of different speaker surrounding the Rongmei. The influence of the neighbouring language also results the fact that there are lots of borrowed words in Ruanglat shows a threat to the Ruanglat speaker. Moreover being Meiteilon(Manipuri) somehow consider as a lingua franca in Manipur, likewise follows the same in Assam and Nagaland where each state has accepted a lingua franca other than Ruanglat there is a very high chance of people shifting from their mother tongue to the language which is usually accepted and understand by all due to various reason. Most of the Rongmei people are bilingual. As to protect and preserve the language, a society called Rongmei Literature Society is formed under govt. registration. School texts book have implemented in education of Manipur till the higher secondary standard which is the product of Rongmei Literature society. Recently the Ruanglat script has also been introduced by Rev. Gaikhuanlung Gangmei.

Indigenous Languages of Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Bishakha Sarma

Tirap district lies in the south-eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh; with its neighbouring states Assam in the north-west and Nagaland in the south-west; and shares an international boundary in the south-east with Myanmar. It is divided into two districts, Changlang created on 14th November, 1987 and Longdin formed in 2013. Presently, Tirap is mainly inhabited by Nocte; few villages in the district show occupancy by Nocte-Ollo and Nocte-Khappa. The Wanchos are mainly concentrated in Longdin district and are regarded as Upper Wancho. Linguistically, Wancho shows variation from village to village. Broadly, Wanchos from Tirap and Longdin districts may be divided into three varieties: Upper, Middle and Lower. Khappa variety is regarded as a literary medium of Nocte; hence that variety is used in composing songs and poetry. Ollo seeks to be an independent tribe in near future. Tutasa was regarded as a sub-tribe of Nocte, until 1991 the former got registered as an independent tribe. Tutasa speakers inhabits both Tirap and Changlang districts.

Tai Khamti people are mainly concentrated in Namsai district (the erstwhile Lohit district, Namsai was carved out of it in the year 2014). Few speakers also reside in Changlang, and scattered in parts of Assam. Singphos are mainly settled in Changlang district (Bordumsa, Meyao, Diyun, etc), and also reside in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh. Singphos also inhabit in Sibsagar, Tinsukia, Jorhat and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam.

Shertukpen community or Mey language speakers reside in Rupa and Shergaon (locally named as Seinthuk) circles of West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Lisu or Yobin speakers reside in Vijoyanagar circle of Changlang district.

Sajolang (previously known as Miji) resides in Nafra subdivision of West Kameng district and in Lada circle of East Kameng district.

Mishmis are categorized into Miju/ Kaman Mishmi, Digaro/ Taraon/Tawrã Mishmi and Idu Mishmi.

Miju/ Kaman Mishmi resides in Anjaw and Lohit districts;

Digaro/ Taraon/ Tawrã Mishmi also resides in Anjaw and Lohit districts; and

(Idu Mishmi resides in Lower Dibang Valley and Dibang valley and the district headquarter, Tezu in Lohit district.)

Tai Khamti uses the Lik Tai script. Wancho has developed its own script but it is yet to be learned by the community. Hence roman script is also used in parallel with new developed Wancho script. Lisu uses its own script inspired from roman and mathematical symbols. the other languages are using roman script with few IPA symbols.

कुमाउनी

प्रो.चन्द्रकला रावत

उत्तराखंड राज्य के कुमाऊं मंडल की भाषा कुमाउनी कहलाती है। कुमाऊं की भौगोलिक स्थिति 28° 51-30° 49 उत्तरी अक्षांश तथा 77° 43-20° 31 पूर्वी देशांतर के मध्य पड़ती है। कुमाऊं शब्द पर हिंदी तद्भव प्रत्यय -ई जोड़ने से कुमाउनी शब्द निष्पन्न होता है। कुमाउनी शब्द संज्ञा रूप में कुमाऊं क्षेत्र की भाषा-बोली अर्थ में प्रयुक्त होता है और विशेषण रूप में यह कुमाउनी फल, कुमाउनी गीत-संगीत आदि का द्योतक है।

इस भाषा के उद्भव के सम्बन्ध में दो मत प्रचलित हैं: प्रथम मत के अनुसार यह दरद- खस प्राकृत से सम्बद्ध है जबकि दूसरे मत के अनुसार यह शौरसेनी अपभ्रंश से उत्पन्न है। प्रथम मत के पक्षधर डॉ. ग्रियर्सन व डॉ. सुनीति कुमार चटर्जी हैं जबकि डॉ. धीरेन्द्र वर्मा, डॉ. उदय नारायण तिवारी वर्तमान कुमाउनी को शौरसेनी अपभ्रंश से उत्पन्न मानते हैं। डॉ. गोविन्द चातक, डॉ. केशव दत्तरुवाली आदि विद्वान भी इसे शौरसेनी अपभ्रंश उद्भूत मानते हैं। इसमें आग्नेय परिवार की मुंडा भाषा का प्रभाव भी देखने को मिलता है साथ ही अवधी, राजस्थानी, मराठी, गुजराती व बंगाली आदि भाषाओं की विशेषताएं भी समाहित हैं। कुमाउनी भाषा के उद्भव व विकास की यात्रा को 14वीं सदी से आज तक विभिन्न चरणों में देखा जा सकता है। आदिकालीन कुमाउनी जहाँ संस्कृतनिष्ठ थी, वहीं 18वीं सदी तक उसने तद्भव शब्दावली की ओर रुख करके कई अरबी-फारसी शब्दों को आत्मसात कर लिया। मध्यकालीन कुमाउनी में अंग्रेजी का प्रभाव पड़ा, यह नवनिर्मित राज्य उत्तराखंड की राजभाषा तो न बन सकी किन्तु

इसका उत्तरोत्तर विकास होता रहा। बीसवीं सदी में कुमाउनी में तुर्की, पुर्तगाली शब्दावली ने भी प्रवेश किया है तो आज हिंदी ने भी बहुत प्रभावित किया है। आज लिखित साहित्य की दृष्टि से भी यह प्रतिदिन समृद्ध हो रही है।

कुँडुख भाषा

डॉ. आरती पाठक

कुँडुख जनजाति के लोगों की भाषा कुँडुख कहलाती है। इसका एक अन्य नाम 'उराँव या ओराँव' भी है। ओराँव लोग स्वयं को 'कुँडुख' कहना अधिक पसंद करते हैं तथा हॉन (1900) के अनुसार अपनी भाषा को 'कुँडुख कथा' कहते हैं। छत्तीसगढ़ में कुँडुख मातृभाषी सरगुजा, जशपुर जिलों के अलावा रायगढ़ और बिलासपुर जिलों में भी निवास करते हैं। साथ ही वे सीमावर्ती झारखंड तथा ओड़िशा में भी रहते हैं। कुँडुख उत्तरी द्रविड़ वर्ग की भाषा है, जिसके वक्ता मूलतः कुँडुख या ओराँव हैं। ये अन्य भाषा-भाषियों के संपर्क में आ कर इतर भाषाओं/बोलियों का भी व्यवहार करते हैं, जैसे- छत्तीसगढ़ के ओराँव लोग कुँडा के अलावा खड़िया, कोरवा, छत्तीसगढ़ी आदि भी बोलते हैं। शिक्षा के प्रचार-प्रसार के साथ वे हिंदी, अंग्रेज़ी का भी व्यवहार करते हैं। द्रविड़ परिवार की भाषा होने के कारण कुँडुख में मूलतः तमिल और कन्नड़ के कतिपय शब्द भी ध्वनि-परिवर्तन के साथ मिलते हैं।

छत्तीसगढ़ी बोली

डॉ. आरती पाठक

छत्तीसगढ़ में बोली जाने वाली बोली छत्तीसगढ़ी है। छत्तीसगढ़ी एक ओर छत्तीसगढ़ की लगभग डेढ़ करोड़ जनता की मातृभाषा है, तो दूसरी ओर यहाँ रहने वाले लोगों के लिए संपर्क-भाषा का भी काम करती है। छत्तीसगढ़ी का प्रयोग वर्तमान में छत्तीसगढ़ के अतिरिक्त अन्य प्रदेशों- उड़ीसा (संबलपुर, बरगड़), महाराष्ट्र (भंडारा, चाँदा), बिहार (छोटा नागपुर), असम के चाय-बागानों में तथा मध्यप्रदेश के बालाघाट और मंडला जिलों के कुछ भागों में होता है। अब देश के बड़े-बड़े शहरों, नामशः दिल्ली, भोपाल, जमशेदपुर, बोकारो, पटना, नागपुर, मुम्बई, इलाहाबाद, बनारस, भुवनेश्वर, लखनऊ आदि में शासकीय,

अर्धशासकीय, अशासकीय प्रतिष्ठानों में काम करने वाले छत्तीसगढ़ी-भाषियों की छोटी-बड़ी बस्तियाँ भी बनने लगी हैं। छत्तीसगढ़ी अर्धमागधी अपभ्रंश से विकसित पूर्वी हिंदी की एक बोली है। “कोस-कोस में पानी बदले, चार कोस में बोली” वाली कहावत छत्तीसगढ़ी पर भी लागू होती है, जिससे उसके व्यवहार क्षेत्र की व्यापकता ही प्रमाणित होती है। समीवर्ती इन भाषाओं अथवा बोलियों से प्रभावित होने के कारण भिन्न-भिन्न क्षेत्रों की छत्तीसगढ़ी में किंचित् भिन्नता आ जाना स्वाभाविक है, जिससे संप्रेषण में बाधा नगण्य है। छत्तीसगढ़ी का पर्यालोचन करने पर ज्ञात होता है कि केंद्रीय छत्तीसगढ़ी के जातीय/स्थानीय दो प्रभेद तो हैं, परंतु यह बाह्य प्रभाव से उतनी आच्छादित नहीं है, जितनी अन्य वर्गों की छत्तीसगढ़ी; यथा- बुंदेली, मराठी से प्रभावित पश्चिम छत्तीसगढ़ी; बघेली, भोजपुरी तथा कुँडुख से प्रभावित उत्तरी छत्तीसगढ़ी; उड़िया से प्रभावित पूर्वी छत्तीसगढ़ी; तथा मराठी गोंडी तथा उड़िया से प्रभावित दक्षिणी छत्तीसगढ़ी।

रवांल्टी

श्री महावीर रवांल्टा

उत्तरकाशी जिले के पश्चिमोत्तर क्षेत्र को रवाई क्षेत्र कहा जाता है जो यमुना व टोंस घाटी क्षेत्र में बंटा हुआ है। यमुना घाटी में नौगांव एवं पुरोला तथा टोंस घाटी में मोरी विकासखण्ड आते हैं। महाभारत काल में यह क्षेत्र कुलिन्द क्षेत्र के नाम से विख्यात था। ग्रीक इतिहासकार टाल्मी ने कुलिन्दों की मूलभूमि यमुना क्षेत्र में बतायी है। रवाई क्षेत्र के उत्तर में बर्फ से ढकी उतुंग श्रेणियां, हिमाचल प्रदेश, दक्षिण पश्चिम में बंगाण व जौनसार बाबर तथा पूर्व में जिले का भटवाड़ी क्षेत्र है। सर्वप्रथम पचास के दशक में गोविन्द चातक ने ' गढ़वाली की रवांल्टी उप बोली: उसके लोकगीत और उनमें अभिव्यक्त लोक संस्कृति ' विषय पर आगरा विश्वविद्यालय से डी. फिल की उपाधि लेकर लोगों का ध्यान इस ओर आकृष्ट किया। अपने विभिन्न क्षेत्रीय रूपों में यह सिराई में सिरौली, ठकराल में ठकराली, बनाल में बनाली, बडियार में बडेड़ी, गीठ में गिठाली, गोडर में गोडरी, खाटल में खाटली, मुंगरसंती में मुंगराली, पर्वत में पर्वती के नाम से जानी जाती हैं। वैदिक संस्कृत के प्रभाव के साथ ही इसमें कोल, किरात, द्रविड़, शक व आर्य भाषाओं का प्रभाव दृष्टिगोचर होता है। रवांल्टी में कई ऐसे द्रविड़ शब्द प्रयुक्त होते हैं जो हिन्दी में भी नहीं मिलते। इसलिए जर्मन पुरावेत्ता सी पी त्सोएलर ने इसे दुनिया की प्राचीनतम भाषाओं में से एक माना है। रवाई क्षेत्र के लगभग 315 गांवों के 1,25,000 लोगों में से अधिसंख्य लोग रवांल्टी बोलते हैं।

रवांली में लिखित साहित्य का अभाव रहा लेकिन मध्य हिमालय की बोली- भाषाओं और लोक साहित्य पर जब भी काम हुआ रवांली का लोक साहित्य उद्धृत हुआ। आर्य भाषा परिवार से संबंध रखने वाली रवांली देवनागरी लिपि में लिखी जाती है। रवांली की पहली कविता 'दरवालु' का प्रकाशन 'जन लहर' (देहरादून) के 7 जनवरी 1995 के अंक में उसके हिन्दी अनुवाद के साथ हुआ था। सन् 1983- 84 में पहली बार के. पी. सक्सेना के नाटक 'लालटेन की वापसी' का 'हिस्सूं छोलकु' के नाम से महावीर रवांली द्वारा मंचन किया गया था। सुप्रसिद्ध चित्रकार बी. मोहन नेगी ने 20 रवांली कविताओं के चित्र बनाए जो इस क्षेत्र में अनूठा प्रयास है। वर्तमान में रवांली कविताएं लिखी जा रही हैं और मंच, आकाशवाणी व दूरदर्शन से प्रसारण भी हो चुका है। लोकगाथा, लोककथा, अखाण, पखाण, बुझान्या व लोकगीत रवांली लोक साहित्य की प्रमुख विधाएं हैं। लोकगीतों में छोड़ा, तान्दी, छोपती, बाजूबंद व लामण आदि प्रचलित हैं।

भाषा शोध एवं प्रकाशन केन्द्र वडोदरा के भारतीय भाषा लोक सर्वेक्षण (People's Linguistic Survey of India) उत्तराखंड भाषा संस्थान के भाषा सर्वेक्षण के साथ ही पहाड़ के बहुभाषी शब्दकोश 'झिक्कल काम्ची उडायली' के लिए उत्तराखण्ड की जिन तेरह भाषाओं पर कार्य हुआ है उनमें रवांली भी शामिल है। सन् 2016 में प्रकशित 'गैणी जण आमार सुईन' रवांली का पहला कविता संग्रह है। हिन्दी विभाग कुमाऊं विश्वविद्यालय नैनीताल तथा 'सोसायटी फॉर इंडेन्जर्ड एण्ड लेसर नोन लेंग्वेजेज' (SEL) द्वारा आयोजित भाषा प्रलेखन एवं शब्दकोश निर्माण कार्यशाला में भी रवांली को लेकर प्रतिभाग हो चुका है।

सरगुजिहा

डॉ. आरती पाठक

छत्तीसगढ़ के सरगुजा अंचल में बोली जाने वाली छत्तीसगढ़ी को सरगुजिहा या सरगुजिया के नाम से जाना जाता है। 'सरगुजा', 'सिरगुजा' और 'सुरगुजा' नामों का उल्लेख प्राचीन ग्रंथों में भी मिलता है, जिसकी व्युत्पत्ति के संबंध में अनेक मत प्रचलित हैं। 'सुरगुजा' नामकरण के विषय में कुछ विद्वान मानते हैं कि 'सुर' अर्थात् देवता और 'गुजा/गुंजा' का अर्थ है गुंजित होना। तदनुसार, वह भूमि जहाँ देवताओं का आमोद-प्रमोद गुंजित होता था, सुरगुजा कहलाइ। एक और मत यह है कि 'सरगुजा' की व्युत्पत्ति 'स्वर्ग+जा' (स्वर्ग की पुत्री) से हुई है। प्रकृति के स्वर्गिक विलास की अभिन्न सहचरी यह भूमि देवताओं की लीला-भूमि रही है। वैदिक युग के वशिष्ठ, शरभंग, वाल्मीकि, अगस्त्य, जमदग्नि,

परशुराम आदि ऋषियों ने तपस्या एवं संस्कृति के प्रचार- प्रसार हेतु सरगुजा में आश्रमों की स्थापना की थी। एक अन्य मत के अनुसार, दसवीं शताब्दी में सरगुजा को 'दांडोर' कहा जाता था की यहाँ हाथी की बहुतायत होने के कारण पंद्रहवीं शताब्दी में इसे 'एरावत मंडल' भी कहा जाने लगा। दुर्गम अरण्य-प्रांतर तथा प्रतिकूल जलवायु वाले इस क्षेत्र के संबंध में यह लोकोक्ति भी प्रसिद्ध थी कि "ज़हर खाय न महुर् खाय, मरे के होय त सरगुजा जाय"। सरगुजा के एक साहित्यकार कमल किशोर पांडेय ने यहाँ की प्राचीन नरबलि-प्रथा का उल्लेख करते हुए यह मत व्यक्त किया है कि 'सिर' अर्थात् 'मुंड' और 'गुजा' अर्थात् 'फैला हुआ'। एक मत यह भी कि ऐसा क्षेत्र जहाँ 'गुंजा' अर्थात् जटंगी नामक तिलहन का उत्पादन अधिक होता है। सरगुजांचल में इसकी खेती बड़े पैमाने पर की जाती है। झारखंड में 'जटंगी' को 'गुंजा' कहते हैं। सरगुजािहा बोली-क्षेत्र के अंतर्गत छत्तीसगढ़ में सरगुजा, रायगढ़, कोरिया, जशपुर जिलों के अलावा धरमजयगढ़ तहसील तथा झारखंड के गुमला जिले का भी समावेश है। सरगुजािहा छत्तीसगढ़ी की उत्तर-पूर्वी शाखा की प्रमुख उपबोली है, जिस पर नागपुरिया या सादरी तथा उड़िया का किंचित् प्रभाव स्पष्ट झलकता है।

हल्बी बोली

डॉ. आरती पाठक

हल्बी बस्तर की हल्बा जनजाति की बोली है। 'हल्बा' या 'हलबा' शब्द की व्युत्पत्ति के संबंध में अनेक मत हैं। एक मत के अनुसार शिव-पार्वती ने किसी उड़िया राजा के खेत में हिलते हुए बिजूकाओं को देखा और उसकी सुंदरता से मोहित होकर उसमें प्राण-संचार कर दिए। उड़िया में 'हिलना' को 'हलिबा' कहते हैं, जिससे 'हल्बा' या 'हलबा' की व्युत्पत्ति हुई। एक दूसरे मत के अनुसार खेत से उत्पन्न होने के कारण इसकी व्युत्पत्ति 'हलवाहक' शब्द से हुई, जो विकसित होकर 'हलबा/हल्बा' हो गया। लाला जगदलपुरी ने एक व्युत्पत्ति और भी दी है, जिसके अनुसार 'हल-बाहना' (मूसल) से 'हलबा' बना। बस्तर में हल्बी बोलने वालों की संख्या अन्य बोलियाँ बोलने वालों की तुलना में सर्वाधिक है। बस्तर में जगदलपुर, कौंडागाँव, दंतेवाड़ा, काँकेर, नारायणपुर, कौंटा, बीजापुर तथा भानुप्रतापपुर जिलों के अलावा समीपवर्ती महाराष्ट्र तथा उड़ीसा के विभिन्न स्थानों में भी यह बोली जाती है।

हल्बी बस्तर की संपर्क-भाषा है, अर्थात् हल्बा जनजाति के अलावा अन्य भाषा-भाषी (गोंडी, मुरिया, मारिया) भी इसका व्यवहार इतर भाषा-भाषियों से करते हैं। इसमें उड़िया, मराठी और छत्तीसगढ़ी का

सम्मिश्रण होने के कारण यह एक मिश्र बोली है, जो बस्तर की चारों दिशाओं से सांस्कृतिक और भाषिक धाराओं को आत्मसात् किया है- "पूर्व से उड़िया, पश्चिम से मराठी तथा तेलंगी, उत्तर से हिंदी तथा छत्तीसगढ़ी, दक्षिण से तेलंगी और मध्यक्षेत्र से गदबा तथा केंद्रीय द्रविड़ परिवार की बोलियाँ। इन सबसे हल्बी ने बस्तर के अंतर्गत एक समन्वयात्मक भूमिका प्रस्तुत की है।"हल्बी, भतरी और छत्तीसगढ़ी का अवमिश्रण 'बस्तरी' नाम से जाना जाता है, जिसे ब्राह्मण, कायस्थ, देवांगन, राजघराना, जमींदार वर्ग आज भी व्यवहार में लाते हैं। बस्ती में 'याला' (इसे), 'यान्ना' (इनको), 'प्याला' (उसे) तथा 'त्यान्ना' (उन्हें) जैसे प्रयोगों को छोड़कर शेष रूपों का चलन हल्बी के ही समान है, अतः इसे हल्बी की एक उपबोली मानना युक्ति-संगत प्रतीत होता है।