Proceedings of the two days workshop on "Documentation of Endangered Languages among the tribes of Central India" on 12th -13th July 2014 at IGNTU, Amarkantak

In pursuance of the decision taken in meeting held at University Grants Commission, New Delhi on 29th June 2014 regarding documentation of Endangered Languages, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh has organized two day consortium workshop on "Documentation of Endangered Languages among the Tribes of Central India" on 12th -13th July 2014 in the conference hall to discuss the broad areas of the project. The following members are present

i.   Prof. Sampada Kumar Swain, Chairman, Registrar, In-Charge & Dean Faculty of Commerce and Management, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, M.P.

ii.   Prof. Uday Narayan Singh, Shantiniketan, Viswa Bharati

iii.   Prof. Dilip Singh, Registrar, Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachara Sabha, Chennai

iv.   Prof I.D. Tiwari, Registrar, In-charge , & professor, English Deptt., Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur

v.   Prof. P.K. Bajpai, Professor & Head, Department of Pure & Applied Physics, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur

vi.   Prof. Tirtheswar Singh, Dean Faculty of Humanities & Philology & Head, Department of Hindi, IGNTU, Amarkantak, M.P.

vii.   Prof. Krishna Singh, Head, Deptt. Of English & Foreign Languages, IGNTU,M.P.

viii. Prof. P.K. Das, Head, Department of Anthropology & Tribal Development, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur

ix.   Dr. Manish Srivastava, Professor & Head, Department of English & Foreign Languages, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur.

x.   Dr. Vinay Kumar Singh, Sr. of Computer Programmes, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur.

xi.   Dr. Ranju Hasini Sahoo, Associate Professor & Head, Deptt. Of Sociology & Anthropology, IGNTU,M.P.

xii.   Mr. Lalsu Soma Nogoti, Adivasiswara, Gadchiroli, Maharastra

xiii.   Dr. D.V. Prasad, Asst. Professor & Coordinator, Endangered Languages Cell, IGNTU.

xiv.   Dr. Harit Kumar Meena, Asst. Professor, Department of History, IGNTU,M.P

xv.   Dr. N. Sreenu, Asst. Professor, Department of Management, IGNTU,M.P

xvi.   Dr. Deepamoni Baruah, Asst. Professor, Department of English & Foreign Languages, IGNTU,M.P

xvii.   Dr. Chakali Bramhayya, Asst. Professor, Department of Political Science & Human Rights, IGNTU,M.P

xviii. Mr. Guru Jagan, Asst. Professor, Department of English & Foreign Languages, IGNTU,M.P

xix.   Dr. Dushmant Das Patel, Asst. Professor (contract), Department of Economics, IGNTU,M.P

While inaugurating the two days national consortium workshop, the chairman Prof. Swain had welcomed all the consortium members who present in the workshop and requested all the members for self-introduction. After the introduction, the coordinator Dr. D.V. Prasad had briefed the theme of the two days workshop and requested the experts to focus on broader areas to be covered under the project including documentation of language structure, standardization of language, ethnography, oral traditions, Multi linguilism, language and culture, language socialization, time plan, etc.

Prof. Udaya Narayan Singh has made power point presentation on documentation of endangered languages. Prior to focussing on the broad areas of research, he clarified the definitional problems of endangerment. He explained the global scenario of endangered languages in Australia, America, and SAARC countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. He had given comparative analysis of endangered languages in sub-continents. For documentation, he insisted for inter-disciplinary approach and engagement of scholars from Anthropology, folklore, Sociology, Political

Science, History, Economics, Management along with Linguists. He pointed out the following issues require immediate attention of preservation of smaller linguistic groups.

- ✓ Grammars for documentation, including Social grammars for registers & contexts

- ✓ Primers & Language games

- ✓ Graded teaching/learning materials to participate in elementary education

- ✓ Writing Systems reflecting their phonetics

- ✓ Literacy books for adult learners

- ✓ Dictionaries (general purpose)

- ✓ Thesauri or Word Net linking up synonymy

- ✓ Specialized Glossary for domains & knowledge translation

- ✓ Cultural & visual documentation

- ✓ Style Manuals

- ✓ Encouragements for literary activities

Further he emphasized on use of technology for preservation of tribal languages and cultures. While mapping endangered languages in multi lingual setting, Prof. Singh focussed on future tasks under this project. They are mainly

- ✓ Creation of school texts, using 'shell-book' method: Papua New Guinea

- ✓ Generation of a computational orthography that does justice to the phonetic/phonological nature of the given language, with UNICODE link.

- ✓ Building up of large and annotated corpora with BIS or LDC-IL tagging tools

- ✓ Appropriate visual and audio documentation.

- ✓ Setting up of techniques of glossary formation based on such data, and automatic up-dation of the Lexical Resource when more data are added.

- ✓ Linking it up parallel lexicon of Hindi/English.

✓ Creation of Pictorial glossaries and addition of Cultural material.

✓ Building a bridge material with Web/CD-based or Radio/TV courses.

✓ Pilot Studies, including digital and photo documentation of a few states could be a way to begin.

✓ A model National Archive could be created in the following manner.

While emphasising on socio-linguistics, Prof. Dilip Singh has emphasised on liberal democratic approach to study endangered languages in central India. He observed that mixing is seen as language development and suggested for making a new policy to study endangered languages. He emphasized on the following areas

✓ Data should be pedagogical method

✓ Socio-linguistic perspective

✓ Faith of languages

✓ Competence and usage should be there in their domain of language

✓ Geographical maps may be drawn

✓ Shift and maintenance of languages keeping in view of needs of the society

✓ Mother tongue should be emphasised

✓ Study/research may be conducted on speech community wise

Prof. P.K. Bajpai emphasized on scientific way of understanding of the phenomena. To save the endangerment of languages, one should preserve their cultural diversity and bio-diversity too. The developmental model i.e., changing environment, least bothered about culture, language only think about survival. It is evident from the extinction of species.

Further he also stress on the utilization of technology for a meaningful outcome and clarified the role of Guru Ghasidas university team in documentation i.e., computational linguistics, opening course and creation of infrastructure, etc. Reacting to his observation, Prof Swain made it clear that as per UGC and national coordinator direction the consortium operates in future. In the meantime Prof. Udayanarayan Singh made it clear that software will be provided by Viswabharati and training will be given to personnel involved in the project.

- ✓ Preservation of cultural heritage and bio-diversity

- ✓ Ethnicity (order-disorder-choas-order)

- ✓ While documenting endangered languages, emphasis should be given on Culture, Environment, and infrastructure

- ✓ The role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in documentation of endangered languages

- ✓ Filtration of the languages

While analysing the entire discuss, Prof Tiwari made it clear that theory and literature part i.e., linguistic and sociological is ok but the consortium should identify modules we operate and areas of research is very vast. He also pointed out the problem of sharing of human resources. People from various disciplines, experts, technology are required for future course of action.

Dr. Vinay Kumar Singh expressed his doubt that what we are going to do with the results of this exercise. The ways of preserving the language which are under verge of extinction has to be documented after analysing findings, way of preserving, etc. It requires a lot of focus approach and smack of symbiotic material is required for preserving the endangered languages. He also suggested when all parameters fail then you apply for master parameter to proceed further.

Mr. Lalsu Nogoti shared his personnel experience in his Maria village and elaborated on variation in Gondi languages across the Central Gondwana belt i.e., Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha. He emphasized on rich cultural heritage of Maria tribe i.e., community gatherings during marriage ceremonies, worshipping deities, etc. Since the mainstream media is not covering such kind of issues, they have launched a Central Gondwana Network known as CG Network to communicate and broadcast the cultural programmes through mobile. He mentioned the issues that they are taken for preventing endangerment of languages.

- ✓ Gondi Standardization Programme

- ✓ Establishment of Community Radio

- ✓ Standardization of CG Network

Dr. D.V. Prasad made some observations on standardization of one major dialect citing the examples from Nicobarese. The entire Nicobar Islands can be divided into six dialect groups i.e., Car Nicobarese, Chowra, Teressa, Katchal, Great Nicobar, and Shompen. Of which Car Nicobarese are numerically predominant and it is standardized by adopting Roman script. As a result it has become medium of instruction in school curriculum, media and literature. As a result other dialects are pushed out and given less importance. Their children also more conversant with Car Nicobarese and forgetting their mother tongue. Hence lot of care should be taken while standardising a major language since there are many variations among the sub-tribes based on their geographical location.

Prof. T. Singh emphasized on documentation should be based on word, sentence, and folklore, but it could not be realized. Only on word, survey was conducted by students for about six months and results published. At first instance it is decided to work along with anthropologists, folklorists, sociologists, etc. Survey in Narayanpur shows much variation in single language. Now the team can work on variation by preparing action plan on word, sentence, and folklore and how many scholars may be engaged on each area after giving training. Further he also insisted on recording while observation, transcription, and time plan for achieving target result.

Prof. Krishna Singh stressed on list of officially identified endangered languages in India and importance may be given on sound variation, style and other aspects at first instance.

Dr. Sahoo discussed about the importance of Ghotul (Youth Dormitory), tradition, and other socio-cultural institutions in documenting the language. Further she also highlighted for selection of a special group for documenting the endangered language.

The august house had emphasized on identifying the cluster region in central India to facilitate the documentation work with the help of school teachers, post masters and educated persons. Some of the resolutions made during the workshop are mainly

- ✓ Speech community wise study may be undertaken

- ✓ Language attitude should be recorded

- ✓ Geographical mapping may be done

- ✓ What type of methodology should be adopted for the study

- ✓ Standardization of Languages& heterogeneity of languages

- ✓ Preparation of strong road map

- ✓ Computational Linguistics work to be assigned to GGU

- ✓ Allocation of the task be identified among IGNTU & CUJ

Before closing the session, the chairman requested all the participating members to share their experiences on this two days workshop on endangered languages. All the members expressed that they are enlightened with the concept and clear about the future course of action.

After completion of chairman's concluding remarks on two days workshop, Dr. D.V. Prasad proposed vote of thanks to the chair.