



Draft Proposal

International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019

Conference on

"Indigenous languages of India: Transmission and Preservation in a multi-linguistic society"

French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP), December 20, 2019*

Background:

Attempting to draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages, the UN has proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The richness of the collection of texts and images and the presence of traditional Indian scholars contribute to make the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) a preferential place for preserving, transmitting and studying Indian cultural heritage in its material and intellectual forms. Given the global focus with regard to indigenous languages, the IFP with the support of UNESCO is planning to organize a one-day conference on the indigenous languages of South India. Indigenous groups in the country have a maximum visibility in North-East and Central India; yet the cultural diversity of South India should not be underestimated, as the conference shall show. Thanks to multilingualism, there is no necessary contradiction between the use of official languages and the maintenance of indigenous languages, as proven by the maintenance of the rich cultural heritage of the country.

Proposal

To organize a 1 day conference on the theme titled **"Indigenous languages of India: Transmission and Preservation in a multi-linguistic society"**. The proposed conference will help to highlight as well as delve into the key issues confronting indigenous languages and help improve their present scenario through knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices.

Objective

The objective is to gather national and regional stakeholders in India including researchers, governments, NGOs, civil society and regional organizations, the private sector, the media and others to discuss on the key issues confronting indigenous languages, in order to help improve the present scenarios through knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices.

During the conference, institutions, researchers and other stakeholders will showcase the research carried out for the preservation of indigenous languages, access, support and other related works. They shall explain how regional social development and the diffusion of official languages can support, not hinder, the survival of indigenous languages. At the end of the conference, a cultural programme shall highlight the place of language in regional songs and dances. Yet, an objective is

to protect the indigenous languages not by considering them as folklore, museum-like elements of the past, but as a contemporary and lively basis of the cultural development of South India.

Date and Time of the event

December 20, 2019 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Tentative Programme Outline
Keynote address
<p>Conference sessions to focus on the following indigenous languages of India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badaga language - A southern Dravidian language spoken by approximately 135,000 people in the Nilgiri Hills of Kongu Nadu region of the state of Tamil Nadu. • Toda language - The Toda people are a small tribal community who live far away from Nilgiri plateau in the hill country of Southern India • Irula language - spoken by the minority tribe that lives in the Nilgiris and a few part • Vagriboli - A mixture of Marathi, Telugu and Tamil. It doesn't have a script and is classified as Indo-Aryan. • Prakrits - The Prakrits are any of several Middle Indo-Aryan languages formerly used in India. Some prakrits and their origin are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sauraseni - A regional language spoken in the place called Surasena situated near Mathura ▪ Gaudi - Regional language spoken in the place situated between Kikat (presently known as Jharkhand?) and Bengal. • The history of Indigenous language those were in practice and the reasons for their endangerment
Cultural performance by the indigenous language speaking community

(Key Resource Persons With their specialization and topic of presentation/paper- requested in Application Page: 2)

Potential speakers to be suggested for the above mentioned languages

- Key note speaker from **Ministry of Arts & Culture, Pondicherry***
- Special Address by **representative from UNESCO***
- Researchers working on the Badaga and Toda language
- Representative from Keystone Foundation (Working in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR) with indigenous communities on improving their lives, livelihoods, and maintaining their unique cultures)
- **Prof. Balram Shukla, University of Delhi, New Delhi** (About Prakrits and their transformation)



- **Dr.G.Sankaranarayanan**, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Viswa Mahavidyala, (**SCSVMV**) Kanchipuram (List of Indigenous languages and their transformation to other local/regional languages)
- Speaker from the Pondicherry University*

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* To be Confirmed