

PROTECTING LINGUISTIC HERITAGE

Language is more than a tool of communication; it is the living archive of a community's memory, wisdom, and worldview. Embedded within every mother tongue are centuries of stories, songs, rituals, ecological knowledge, and moral values. When a language fades, humanity does not merely lose words-it loses an irreplaceable way of seeing and understanding the world. Protecting linguistic heritage, therefore, is not a sentimental exercise in nostalgia; it is a cultural, intellectual, and ethical imperative.

In a diverse country like India, linguistic plurality has always been a defining strength. From Kashmiri and Dogri in the north to Tamil and Malayalam in the south, from Marathi and Gujarati in the west to Assamese and Manipuri in the east, each language carries a distinct literary and cultural heritage. The framers of the Indian Constitution recognized this richness by granting constitutional status to multiple languages under the Eighth Schedule. Yet constitutional recognition alone cannot guarantee survival. Languages thrive only when they are spoken at home, taught in schools, used in administration, and celebrated in public life.

The erosion of linguistic heritage often begins subtly. Parents, hoping to secure better futures for their children, may prioritize dominant languages over their mother tongue. Schools may gradually replace local languages with standardized mediums of instruction. Digital platforms, dominated by global languages, may offer little space for regional expression. Over time, the younger generation may understand their ancestral language but hesitate to speak it fluently. This silent shift, repeated across communities, leads to cultural dilution.

Protecting linguistic heritage demands a multi-layered approach. First, families must reclaim pride in their mother tongue. Speaking it at home, sharing folktales, songs, and proverbs, and encouraging children to read and write in it are powerful acts of preservation. Language flourishes where it is lived daily.

Second, educational institutions must integrate regional languages into curricula-not merely as optional subjects, but as vibrant mediums of instruction and creative expression. Bilingual and multilingual education models have proven that learning in one's mother tongue strengthens cognitive development and fosters deeper comprehension. Policymakers should ensure that linguistic diversity is not treated as an obstacle but as an asset.

Third, technology must be harnessed as an ally rather than viewed as a threat. The creation of digital archives, online dictionaries, podcasts, films, and social media content in regional languages can make them relevant to younger audiences. When local languages find a place in coding interfaces, artificial intelligence systems, and digital storytelling platforms, they gain renewed vitality.

Cultural institutions, writers, artists, and community organizations also play a crucial role. Literary festivals, theatre productions, translation projects, and language competitions can rekindle interest and pride. Governments can support such initiatives through grants, research funding, and public broadcasting in regional languages.

DR. BANARSI LAL

A resource can be defined as any natural or artificial substance, energy or organism which is used by the human beings for their welfare. The term 'natural resource' means anything that we use from our environment to achieve our objectives. Natural resources are the parts of the environment and they are considered for the human beings. Air, water, coal, animals, plants, natural gas, sunlight etc. are all natural resources. It is fact that the natural resources are in danger. There is dire need to make rigorous efforts to protect the natural resources so as to secure our present and future generations. Every activity on this earth depends on the nature and every activity affects the mother Earth. Conservation of nature is of paramount importance for all the living organisms on this earth. Earth has given us food, shelter, water, air, animals, soil, minerals etc. so it's our moral responsibility to protect the nature and keep our environment neat and clean. In present era, the nature is threatened by the deforestation, illegal trade of animals, industrial development, plastic pollution, chemicals use etc. Loss of natural resources is responsible for many ailments, natural disasters, global warming etc. There is urgent need to create a healthy environment so that our present and future generations can be saved.

Nature conservation means protecting the natural resources so that they are not overexploited by the human beings. Every day we cut around 27000 trees for the toilet paper. If the paper used in the newspaper is recycled then we can save millions of trees daily. A glass bottle takes around 4000 years to decompose. It is

estimated that around 50,000 species on the earth extinct annually i.e. around 137 species in a day. Throwing of plastics in the sea kills around 1 million sea creatures. The rainforests trees are cut about 100 acres per minute. Wildlife is destroyed around 5,760 acres every day globally. There is dire need to protect the wildlife and promote the biodiversity. It is fact that the natural resources are limited and they take millions of years to form. But the human beings exploit them for their comfort. Human beings have threatened the natural resources and it is increasing day-by-day. Everybody should make efforts to save the natural resources. We can use the alternative energy resources such as wind and solar energy. There is need to plant more and more trees and prevent the soil erosion. Freshwater should be used judiciously and recycling of kitchen water can be encouraged. Water is the precious natural resource. Vegetation should be encouraged in the catchment areas. Use of biodegradable waste can be promoted. Use of vehicles should be minimized and use of cycles can be promoted for a good health and reduction in air pollution. Electricity should be used judiciously. Plastic pollution should be minimized and paper and jute bags should be promoted. Organic farming should be encouraged for the production of safe food. It can help for the better health of human beings and also reduce the soil pollution. Rainwater harvesting should be promoted and water treatment plants need to be installed. We should use less paper as far as possible.

Natural resource conservation is a priority for various countries across the globe as climate

change becomes increasingly pressing. The modern lifestyle and the advancement in technology cause a bad impact on the natural resources. There is dire need to re-examine our relationship with nature. Although we are having numerous technological advancements but still we are completely dependent on healthy ecosystem for our food, clothes, shelter, health, water, medicines, fuel, energy etc. There is need to work together to build the future of life in harmony with nature. 2020 year can be said as the year of challenges, opportunities and solutions. Covid-19 pandemic has spread across the globe. All the nations need to work together to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and recover from it. It seems from the year 2020 that there is dire need to conserve the nature for the benefits of life on the Earth. It is fact that nature acts as the solution of our many solutions. Nature is closely associated with the climate change, food security and health. Nature has been badly affected due to our short-sighted activities including infrastructure development, chemical farming, deforestation, mining etc. All these activities have degraded the ecosystem and have created the pandemic like situations. All the nations across the globe are endeavouring to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Climate change challenges require the conservation of natural resources. Conservation of natural resources and combating climate change require reforestation. By absorbing the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, trees act as carbon sinks. There is need to work together for the resilient and sustainable global economy. The exploitation of renewable and non-renewable

energy resources and rapid increase in the urbanization are severely affecting the natural resources. Sustainable development is the only way to mitigate the needs of our present and future generations. It also ensures the health of the planet Earth. It has been observed that around 25 per cent of all animals and plants species are threatened with extinction. On this particular day awareness about preserving the endangered habitats is also created among the people. Nature is the foundation for our food and health and plays a key catalyst to transforming food systems and improving human health. A wide range of events are organized globally to increase the understanding of the important role of nature for our present and future generations. On this day various institutions, newspapers, radio, television, internet etc. disseminate the information to the people especially on protection of nature. Exhibitions, seminars and webinars are also arranged for the students, professional and general public, movies on natural are telecasted, trees are planted, literature on biodiversity is distributed, endangered species are preserved, competitive programmes among the children on nature conservation are organised etc. This day is a global observance.

The biodiversity we observe today is the outcome of over 3.5 billion years of evolutionary history, shaped by the natural processes. Nature is the foundation for the life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems. It plays as a key catalyst to transform our food system and thus improves the human health. It underpins peoples' livelihoods and sustainable development in all realms of socio-economical

activity, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism etc. Nature is a global asset. It forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we are fully dependent. Biological diversity is the natural biotic capital of the earth which affects all of us. Human beings derive the supply of food, medicines, energy and many industrial products from biological resources. India is one of the richest nations in the world in terms of biological diversity. Some parts of the country such as Union Territory of J&K and N-E states are very rich due to a variety of natural causes in biological diversity and some are less. Many species of plants and animals are under extinction every day due to disturbance in natural resources. Local food production system is vanishing day-by-day. Loss of natural resources across the globe has increased alarmingly and many wildlife and plant species are on the verge of extinction. Governments and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) need to make extra efforts to conserve the nature. We should understand that nature is the foundation for the life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems. It ensures people's livelihoods and sustainable development in all realms of socio-economic activity, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism. There is need to reuse, recycle and restore the natural sources. We all need to participate to protect, conserve and sustain the natural resources. Policymakers must adopt a holistic approach that integrates sustainable resource management practices and encourages resilient infrastructure.

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Language of the Heart

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Language is not merely a medium of communication, it is the living heartbeat of a civilization. In a rapidly globalising world, where many languages face the threat of extinction, preserving linguistic diversity has become both a cultural responsibility and a moral imperative. Recognising this profound truth, UNESCO declared 21 February as International Mother Language Day on 17 November 1999, commemorating the historic Language Movement of Bangladesh, where people sacrificed their lives to protect their mother tongue. This observance reminds us that linguistic diversity is not just a cultural asset but a shared global heritage that promotes dialogue, understanding, and peace.

There is a language we use to communicate with the world, but our mother tongue is the language that comforts us and makes us feel at home. It is the language of lullabies, family conversations, and childhood stories. Even when we are far away, hearing it can instantly bring warmth and belonging. A mother tongue does not merely convey meaning; it carries emotion, identity, and memory.

However, in today's rapidly digitalising and globalising world, many native languages are declining. Technology has transformed communication and often favours dominant global languages. While digital tools can help document endangered languages, preservation cannot survive on documentation alone. A language lives only when it is spoken, written,

read, and celebrated in daily life.

India stands as one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world, with more than 19,500 languages and dialects spoken across the country. This remarkable diversity reflects centuries of cultural evolution and community identity. Yet many tribal and regional languages, such as TakRong, Ruga, Toto, and Kodava, are gradually fading as younger generations shift towards dominant languages. Urbanisation, migration, and changing educational priorities have accelerated this decline.

Despite these challenges, Indian languages have survived for centuries through oral storytelling, folk songs, scriptures, and literature. Tamil, one of the oldest surviving classical

languages, has a literary history spanning thousands of years. Hindi cinema has popularised Urdu poetry, while regional cinema in Malayalam, Manipuri, Assamese, Punjabi, and Marathi continues to preserve local expressions. When children learn in their mother tongue, they understand concepts more clearly and develop greater confidence. Research also shows that early education in the mother tongue improves learning outcomes and cognitive development.

The survival of languages today depends on conscious effort. Preserving a language in its most vibrant form means creating quality literature, encouraging reading and writing, incorporating it into education, translating knowledge, and embracing its rich colloquial

variations. Language preservation is not about resisting global languages like English, it is about maintaining balance. We can learn multiple languages while remaining rooted in our own. Ultimately, preserving a mother tongue means protecting the heartbeat of a culture. Saving a language means safeguarding stories, songs, wisdom, and identity. When a language disappears, a unique way of seeing the world vanishes with it. Our mother tongue is a priceless heritage that must be passed on to future generations. Let us cherish, nurture, and preserve this treasure - for in saving our languages, we save the soul of our civilization.

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Mother Language: A Luminous Tapestry of Linguistic Heritage in the Indian Knowledge System

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On the incandescent dawn of 21st February, the planet pauses to honor International Mother Language Day, a celebration that transcends mere remembrance and blossoms into a symphony of cultural pride, linguistic diversity, and human solidarity. Proclaimed by UNESCO in November, 1999 and first observed in 2000, this day commemorates the Bengali Language Movement martyrs of 1952, whose sacrifice in Dhaka (then East Pakistan) for the right to speak Bangla reverberates as a universal call for language rights and preservation.

2026 theme: Youth Voices On Multilingual Education

On this radiant confluence of tongues, the world's young hearts rise like sunrise over the Himalayas, chanting in unison for a pedagogy that honors every mother tongue while embracing the global chorus. The linguistic landscape has undergone profound change in recent years, shaped by increased migration, rapid technological development, and growing recognition of the cognitive, social, and economic benefits of multilingualism. Today, multilingualism is increasingly understood not only as a social reality but as a fundamental human characteristic and a powerful educational approach. Young people play a vital role in this evolution by defending and revitalising languages, creating digital content, and using technology to make linguistic diversity more visible and valued. These efforts reinforce the deep connection between language, identity, learning, well-being, and participation in society, while highlighting the need for education systems that recognise and support learners' languages.

At the same time, significant challenges remain, as 40% of learners worldwide still lack access to education in a language they understand best, with indigenous, migrant, and minority youth most affected. Addressing this gap requires education policies and practices that embed multilingual education at their core to promote inclusion, equity, and effective learning for all. By advancing concrete actions, sharing promising experiences, and fostering dialogue among young people, educators, and policymakers, global initiatives create spaces to exchange ideas and identify solutions that strengthen linguistic diversity in schools and communities worldwide.

International Mother Language Day, first proclaimed by UNESCO and later adopted by the UN General Assembly, underscores the role of languages in promoting inclusion and achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Multilingual education not only promotes inclusive societies but also aids in preserving non-dominant, minority,

and indigenous languages. It is a cornerstone for achieving equitable access to education and lifelong learning opportunities for all individuals.

Safeguarding Linguistic Diversity

Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and planet. Yet, due to globalization processes, they are increasingly under threat, or disappearing altogether. When languages fade, so does the world's rich tapestry of cultural diversity. Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking and expression - valuable resources for ensuring a better future - are also lost.

Every two weeks a language disappears taking with it an entire cultural and intellectual heritage. UNESCO estimates that there are 8,324 languages, spoken or signed. Out of these, around 7,000 languages are still in use. Only a few hundred languages have genuinely been given a place in education systems and the public domain, and less than a hundred are used in the digital world.

Multilingual and multicultural societies exist through their languages, which transmit and preserve traditional knowledge and cultures in a sustainable way. International Mother Language Day is observed every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

Historical Tapestry

The genesis of this observance lies in the Bengali Language Movement, a political and cultural campaign demanding recognition of Bangla as a state language of Pakistan. On 21st February, 1952, students and activists at Dhaka University were shot by police while protesting, becoming martyrs for linguistic identity. Their sacrifice inspired Bangladesh's creation and, decades later, UNESCO's recognition of the day as a global observance.

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999. The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. The UN General Assembly welcomed the proclamation of the day in its resolution of 2002.

On 16 May 2007 the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/61/266 called upon Member States "to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world". By the same resolution, the General Assembly proclaimed 2008 as the International Year of Languages, to promote unity in

diversity and international understanding, through multilingualism and multiculturalism and named the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to serve as the lead agency for the Year.

Today there is growing awareness that languages play a vital role in development, in ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, but also in strengthening cooperation and attaining quality education for all, in building inclusive knowledge societies and preserving cultural heritage, and in mobilizing political will for applying the benefits of science and technology to sustainable development.

On 'International Mother Language Day', the world's youth rise like the first rays of Usas (dawn), chanting in chorus for a 'multilingual education' that honors their mother tongues while embracing global horizons. Their voices echo the ancient maxim (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- The whole World is One Family) and demand that every child be taught in the language of their heart, a right enshrined in 'Article 350A of the Indian Constitution and reinforced by 'NEP 2020'.

Why Youth Speak Up - The Core Rationale

- Cognitive brilliance: Learning in multiple languages sharpens memory, problem solving, and creative thinking.

- Cultural continuity: Mother tongue instruction preserves folklore, oral histories, and indigenous knowledge.

- Social equity: It bridges the rural urban divide, reducing dropout rates among linguistic minorities.

Vivid Youth Narratives - From TikTok to Tribal Classrooms

1. Digital storytellers: Across South Africa, creators on TikTok document their children's isiZulu and isiXhosa journeys, turning everyday speech into viral, humor laden lessons. Their example inspires Indian youth to craft short videos in Kannada, Tamil, or Bodo, making language "cool" and relatable? 2.

2. Classroom champions: In Odisha's Multilingual Education (MLE) program, tribal students learn first in Santali, Saora, or Kui before transitioning to Hindi and English. Youth volunteers act as peer tutors, echoing the principle do not neglect self study.

By promoting 'mother tongue based education', societies nurture self esteem, critical thinking, and intergenerational transmission of wisdom, echoing the ancient Indian reverence for "(Shabd-Brahma: the divine word- 'Sound as God,' 'Word-Brahma,' or 'Sound Absolute')." Rituals of Celebration

Across the globe, schools, universities, and cultural organizations host language festivals, poetry readings, storytelling sessions, and exhibitions on endangered languages. In Bangladesh, millions gather at the Shaheed Minar (Martyr's Monument) in Dhaka, laying flowers and singing songs of remembrance. UNESCO encourages member states to promote multilingual education and to document and revitalize threatened languages.

Exemplary Anecdotes

- Bangladesh's Shaheed Minar: Every year, millions visit this monument, reciting poetry and singing "Amar Bhaier Rokte Rangano" (My Brother's Blood Spattered), a song of sacrifice and pride.

- India's Linguistic Diversity: On this day, schools in Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and other states celebrate with Odia, Tamil, and other regional language programs, highlighting India's 22 scheduled languages and hundreds of dialects.

- UNESCO's Atlas of Endangered Languages: The day spotlights efforts to protect languages like Ainu (Japan), Irish (Ireland), and many tribal tongues of India and Africa.

Policy and Practice - Youth as Catalysts

- NEP 2020 recommends mother tongue instruction up to Grade 5, a policy youth activists are now monitoring through social audits.

- Article 350A guarantees primary education in the mother tongue for linguistic minorities; youth groups file petitions when schools default.

- Digital platforms (YouTube, Instagram Reels) are used by students to create open source, bilingual learning modules, a modern gurukula that transcends geography.

Such actions exemplify "(svarajyan mam janmasiddh - self rule is my birthright) - youth claim agency over their educational destiny.

Legacy and Contemporary Resonance

International Mother Language Day reminds us that 'language rights are human rights'. It calls for policies that support 'mother tongue instruction, translation, and digital inclusion', ensuring no child is left behind in education.

Epilogue - A Vision for Tomorrow

Imagine a classroom where a child from Nagaland recites a Sanskrit shloka in her native "Naga" tongue, then explains its meaning in English, while a peer from Gujarat mirrors the same in Gujarati. This harmonious chorus, nurtured by youth voices, will turn 'International Mother Language Day' into a daily celebration of 'linguistic diversity, cognitive growth, and cultural pride'.