

Feb 21, 2017: International Mother Language Day

Language Activists focus on constitutional rights of the 'non-scheduled' languages and criticise Delhi's move to reduce the status of national languages into local languages.

Press Release

Collectively Issued by
Campaign for Language Equality and Rights (CLEAR)
Bhartiya Bhasha Samooh
Maithili Bhojpuri Academy

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We, the representatives of Campaign for Language Equality and Rights (CLEAR), Bhartiya Bhasha Samooh and Maithili-Bhojpuri Academy, collectively uphold the demands of various language communities in India to provide their languages the much-needed constitutional status and strongly oppose to reducing status of national languages to local languages which recent example is shifting of national languages news bulletin to regional centre of AIR.

Language activists from around India today, on International Mother Language Day, demand the Union government to recognize 38 languages recommended by Sitakanta Mohapatra Committee in 2004, by including them in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India with any further delay.

In the past few years the central government has included different Indian languages in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution by the recommendation of various committees. However, it isn't following any yardstick in doing so. It shows prudence on the part of Indian government in being flexible in recognizing the complexity of linguistic diversity in India.

The language activists from CLEAR (Campaign for Language Equality and Rights), Bharatiya Bhasha Samooh and Maithili Bhojpuri Academy and others, today expressed their hope that all the 38 languages recommended by Sitakanta Mohapatra Committee in 2004, pending under active consideration of the Union Government to be included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution. The current list of languages recommended by the Sitakanta Mohapatra committee includes: Angika, Banjara, Bazika, Bhojpuri, Bhoti, Bhotia, Bundelkhandi, Chhattisgarhi, Dhatki, English, Garhwali (Pahari), Gondi, Gujjar or Gujjari, Ho, Kaachachhi, Kamtapuri, Karbi, Khasi, Kodava (Coorg), Kok Barak, Kumaoni (Pahari), Kurak, Kosali, Lepcha, Limbu, Mizo (Lushai), Magahi, Mundari, Nagpuri, Nicobarese, Pahari (Himachali), Pali, Rajasthani, Shaurseni

(Prakrit), Siraiki, Tenyidi and Tulu

The activists also emphasized the need of updating the recommended list for any new demands from any language community since the submitting of the report.

It is said that the right of a mother tongue is a basic cultural right of the people which link them with their economy, socio-cultural system, and political right. UNESCO has recognized that the concept of language equality among all languages is important irrespective of whether the languages have a script or not. Furthermore, the union government claimed that it would promote the mother tongue based multilingual education to reduce the school drop-out rates. In this regard, we appeal it to include all the 38 languages in the 8th schedule of the Constitution of India to make that initiative to succeed uniformly for all language communities.

The language activists under CLEAR, a pan-Indian organization comprising the representatives of more than 40 languages in India, are engaging with various Union and state governments to sensitize them on language issues and express the demands of various language communities.

Bharatiya Bhasah Samooh to fight closing down of language bulletins in national telecast of All India Radio

Bharatiya Bhasha Samooh, announcing its inauguration today, will focus the rights of languages in India. It brings to the notice of the people how the recent decision of Prasar Bharati to move its language news broadcasts ostensibly arguing that they are regional languages and they could very well be managed regionally.

However, calling national languages as regional languages is what language activists won't agree with. BBS points out the speakers of the languages could live across the country and, in fact, languages like Sindhi, Bengali, Punjabi and Tamil are even international languages.

The press meet is attended by **Dr. Joga Singh** (President, CLEAR, 9915709682), **Mr. Deepak Dholakiya** (BBS, 9818848753 (BBS)), **Mr. Anil Chamadia** (BBS, 9868456745), **Mr Kumar Sanjoya Singh** (MBA, 9311135050), **Mr. Anand Guru** (Vice President, CLEAR, 9844611098), **Mr Senthil Nathan** (Secretary, CLEAR, 9884155289), **Dr. Rawail Singh** (Treasurer, CLEAR, 9212021195), **Mr. Saket Shreebhushan Sahu** (Member, CLEAR, 9937822442) and representatives of various languages

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Attached: Statement from BBS and copy of Chennai Declaration of Language Rights.