Language for Empowerment of Self and Society (LESS)
A Seminar on International Mother Language Day

February 21, 2019, Department of Humanistic Studies, IIT (BHU) Varanasi

Concept note

This Event to be held on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day (21st February aims to bring scholars stake-holders across domains-disciplines on a common platform to address concerns, issues and challenges related to human language.

UNESCO announced International Mother Language Day in 1999, and since then it is observed worldwide every year on 21st February to promote language awareness, language empowerment and to celebrate linguistic diversity. Concerned native speakers, scholars and other stake-holders organize various events to celebrate linguistic diversity and to appreciate and deliberate the role of language for self and societal empowerment.

Language plays a significant role in intra-linking as well as interlinking societies together. From the seemingly mundane functions of providing us with a unique identity to complex functions such as to facilitate us with an interface to exchange the ideas, languages are of prime importance for all the humans.

However, with the changing time, a number of concerns, issues and challenges related to language do also creep up and that require sincere academic as well as societal attention. For instance, the present day technological advancements are empowering human languages but at the same time certain forces of globalization also threaten even the existence of certain other languages. Native languages are being abandoned for socio-cultural and economic reasons triggered by the forces of globalization; smaller and technologically lesser-empowered languages are being left and are at the risk of being replaced by their dominant counterparts, leaving the native speech communities at the risk of loosing their source of self and societal identity. This throws a number of concerns, issues and challenges to be sincerely addressed and academically attended to for the advancement of human self and society.

Language matters and it matters in every aspect of human living: from self to society and beyond. Technology matters and it also matters in almost every aspect of present-day human living. In this scenario, language and technology need to complement each other, empower each other and most importantly exist in a compatible relation to together empower the users, the people at their self and societal levels. Academician, experts, concerned citizens and government as well as non-government organizations have been deliberating and doing their bit towards achieving this. Industries, too, are coming in a big way to harness these possibilities. Now, people are much more aware of and concerned to their language rights and responsibilities. But we still need much more to be done and achieved in this regard.

The Event aims to provide an occasion, a platform as a step towards meeting this need. The Event will include invited key-concept lectures, rounds of panel discussions and presentations (oral and poster) on key ideas and points touching upon the concerns, issues and challenges related to human language along with research findings on both theoretical and applied aspects of human language including localizable innovations and sustainable design in language, language empowerment and language as an empowering tool for the self and the society. Some of the example topics include (but not restricted) the following:
- Language: Theoretical and applied issues
- Language: Policy, planning and education
- Language: Science, engineering and technology
- Language: Self, society and empowerment
- Language matters: Uses and users
- Language: Across domains and disciplines

Invited Speaker
Professor Pramod Kumar Pandey
Center for Linguistics, JNU, New Delhi

Organizing Committee
Anil Thakur (Convener)
Sanjukta Ghosh (Convener)
Vishwanath Dhital
Satyam Dwivedi (Co-Convener)
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For details and registration
https://languagecustodians.org/events/less/

Call for papers
The Department of Humanistic Studies, IIT BHU is organising a Seminar on International Mother Language Day in collaboration with Language Custodians Trust. In this regard, for our research paper session, we welcome abstracts for oral and poster form presentations from various fields as indicated in the concept note.

Abstracts should be at most 500 words, with 1-inch margins and 12 point Times New Roman font. A second page may be included for references and/or data. Abstracts should be sent directly to '*anil.hss@iitbhu.ac.in*' with a CC to '*admin@languagecustodians.org*'.

The **deadline for submission** is **February 15, 2019**. You will be notified of the **status of your submission** by **February 17**.