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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provide dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

DIGITAL PATHWAYS TO LINGUISTIC SURVIVAL: TRIBAL LANGUAGES, IDENTITY POLITICS, AND THE ADIVANI MODEL IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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Introduction

Despite constituting only eight per cent of India's population, tribal communities contribute 700 languages from a total of 122 major languages listed in the 2001 Census of India.¹ India's north-eastern states are home to 271 dialects, predominantly tribal languages. Tribal languages have been respected and safeguarded in the Indian Constitution; however, there exist impediments in implementing the linguistic rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The country has a Single National Policy on Tribals, set forth in 2008; the Government of India created the Tribal Affairs Ministry in 2014 and the Ministry Tribals and Welfare for North East, incorporating policies, schemes, and financial provision to ensure socio-economic development for all tribal communities.² Nevertheless, the literacy rate among tribes is low as compared to non-tribes. The Government of Bhutan innovatively focused on sustaining indigenous languages.³

The evolving social, cultural and political background and growing emphasis on vernacular education have revived interest in the preservation of regional, cultural and tribal brands without interrupting the pace of national modernization and globalization.⁴ The Adivani model

¹ A. Thamminaina, "People's response to development: A case of India's particularly vulnerable tribal groups," *Mainstreaming the Marginalised*, 2021. [\[HTML\]](#)

² N. N. Sarmah, "NISHL: An Ethnographical Study of a Tribal Community in Northeast India," 2022. [\[HTML\]](#)

³ P. Wangdi and P. Boossabong, "Towards an inclusive education policy for sustainability: Advancing the 'Educating for Gross National Happiness' initiative in Bhutan," *Sustainability*, 2024. [mdpi.com](https://www.mdpi.com)

⁴ K. A.B. Chew, V. Anthony-Stevens, A. LeClair-Diaz, S. E. Nicholas et al., "Enacting Hope Through Narratives of Indigenous Language and Culture Reclamation," 2019. [\[PDF\]](#)

proposed here presents a conceptual framework and practical pathway aimed ultimately at mainstreaming and reviving tribal languages, identity, tradition, culture and history through digital platforms. Community-based governance is the central principle of the Adivani model.

Language Survival and Digital Mediation

Digital technology has transformed the ways communities mediate language and culture. Substantial interest surrounds digital mediation and endangered languages; indigenous groups seek pathways to survival by adapting technology to local priorities. Tribal languages in contemporary India associate recovery efforts with regional sovereignty. At the same time, linguistic data have become vehicles for the imposition of colonial power structures, further complicating the landscape. Three language-engaged indigenous groups have deployed mobile applications that foreground community voice. These initiatives map digital mediation onto broader thematic infrastructures, linking language materials to cultural heritage and local governance.⁵ Within mainstream society, urban relocations, shift to hegemonic languages, and the growth of the sessional and casual economy have destabilized socio-urban networks.⁶ Digital interventions are increasingly recognized as attempts to intervene, countering not just dominant identities and practices but dominant levels of scale, ontology, and aspiration.

A central construct in this environment emerges as language survival, defined in terms of long-term intergenerational transmission combined with outward-looking capacity to localize and adapt engendered outside language forms. Three processing capacities—copying, generalizing, and resisting dominance—underlie community agency. Tribal scenario elaborates, emphasizing territoriality, asymmetries of power, and indigenous rights in the post-colonial epoch. Tribal revitalization thus constitutes part of wider indigenous reclamation, yet elaborating on simulation theory, the modelling remains rooted in interaction and availability. Indigenous groups frequently invoke rights discourse to articulate agency in applying legislation and shaping governance, underscoring a community-centered model that harmonizes with the half-open architecture. Regaining indigenous language facility serves as a proxy for broader struggles that remain entwined.

⁵ G. F. Simons, A. L. Thomas, and C. K. White, "Assessing Digital Language Support on a Global Scale," 2022. [\[PDF\]](#)

⁶ A. Kole and M. A. M. Gansinger, "Roots Reloaded. Culture, Identity and Social Development in the Digital Age," 2016. [\[PDF\]](#)

Identity Politics and Indigenous Language Reclamation

Identity politics in India shape indigenous language reclamation in a distinctive manner, rooted in the collective, community-wide nature of the Adivani initiative. Language reclamation initiatives often exhibit multiple patterns simultaneously. Specialized terminology describes this complexity, yet not every theoretical framework recognizes language reclamation as an outcome of identity politics or community governance.⁷ Identity politics among global, urban, and/or sedentary communities center on language as an emblem of culture, often reinforcing the discourse of autonomy, rights, and representation. While a similar linguistic rights discourse prevails among nomadic, rural, tribal, hill, and forest communities, Adivani engages indigenous agency in language reclamation without appropriating the language-identity nexus. Although indigenous languages symbolically represent community identity, reclamation through alternative digital Adivani channels attains visibility by emphasizing stewardship, recognition, and other community-centered outcomes, encouraging wider participation that intimately connects languages with community, culture, practice, and environment.

Existing computing devices, mobile technology, and institutional landscapes largely responsive to urban settings retard the flourishing of autonomy, decoloniality, and indigenous governance in indigenous reclamation of non-urban languages. Reclamation interventions for these languages are, therefore, more rarely initiated even when digital platforms present indigenous communities with opportunities to connect, interact, and collaborate in ways transcending caste, geography, and religious affiliation.

Contextual Landscape: Tribal Languages in India

Tribal languages occupy a central place in the sociolinguistic landscape of contemporary India. With over 700 languages and 1,600 dialects belonging to the Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austroasiatic, Tibetan-Burman, and other language families, the country has been recognised as one of the most linguistically diverse zones in the world. The 2011 Census indicates that 234 dialects spread over 22 languages are spoken among Scheduled Tribes, who account for more than eight percent of the nation's population. Despite this, the tribal language scenario in India is one of increasing endangerment. Among the 47 languages listed in the 1998 edition of the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, 19 are Indian. The major threats to these

⁷ N. H Hornberger, H. De Korne, and M. Weinberg, "Ways of Talking (and Acting) About Language Reclamation: An Ethnographic Perspective on Learning Lenape in Pennsylvania," 2015. [\[PDF\]](#)

languages arise from a variety of social, political, and economic factors that directly affect digital content creation.⁸

India's historical process of language endangerment closely mirrors the trajectory followed at other global levels. Independence in 1947 marked a transition to an official policy affirming the linguistic rights of minority languages and dialects. Nonetheless, the policies adopted have not only been ineffectual but have also swept many regional, minority, and tribal languages into the purview of extinction. Legislative and administrative measures remain largely executed on clamorous political consensus, driven chiefly by a debate over the single-language, multi-language, upper-class, and lower-class interests in regional politics. The absence of a neutral, expert, or scientific approach to policy design has given rise to unprecedented, largely unconstitutional decisions which rapidly restrict the functions of some languages and dialects. For many government-funded development schemes, standardized Hindi is imposed as a first or an additional; the majority of central-language positions continue to attract unreserved appointments in region-country languages. Group-centric administrative provisions have compromised the development of minority, regional, and tribal languages within the language development scenario.⁹

Demography, Diversity, and Policy Environment

Tribal languages encompass a vast, diverse group of languages belonging to Scheduled Tribes recognized by the Indian Constitution. These groups constitute approximately 10% of India's population, with 705 registered Scheduled Tribes, corresponding to the number of census towns of 1,252,660 villages covering more than 780 dialects under about 370 languages, assigned to major 11 language families.¹⁰ Tribal languages play vital roles in identity formation, yet socio-political structures often impede language preservation and revitalization efforts.

India's policy framework consists of several constitutional provisions, central-level national policies and programmes, and a multitude of state-level initiatives. While certain policies, such as the 1986 National Policy on Education, have promoted language use in ethnolinguistic

⁸ V. Sivanandan, "Assessing Diversity in Higher Education among Scheduled Tribes in Select Indian States: Present and Future Prospects," *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 2025. [\[HTML\]](#)

⁹ P. M. Sarangapani, "Les langues maternelles et la politique des langues d'enseignement en Inde," 2016. [\[PDF\]](#)

¹⁰ S. Jolad and A. Agarwal, "Mapping India's Language and Mother Tongue Diversity and its Exclusion in the Indian Census," 2021. osf.io

communities, the absence of federally enforced provisions for tribal languages has yielded inconsistent policy formulations across different states, resulting in varying degrees of language endangerment. Attention to language-related issues through conflict, revitalization, and maintenance proposals often stems from international and external agencies, not in-country advocacy.

Historical Trajectories of Language Endangerment

Tribal languages in India face intense endangerment, driven chiefly by policy shifts following independence in 1947. The first major classification scheme of Indian languages by the State Government of India, post-independence, identified twenty-two languages for constitutionally mandated support. This decision instituted twelve major languages and two Scheduled Tribes Languages, relegating numerous smaller tribal languages to negligible or no status. Under Indian Federation principles, distribution of language programs and resources increasingly shifted focus from regional minority languages towards official state languages, driving overall decrease in tribal-language support. Growing dominance of six major languages outlined by the Census of India: 63, 18, 09, 25, 04, and 02, henceforth labeled as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, operates through nationwide outreach of media, schools, higher education and administrative services. Regional language policies increasingly extend official status only to languages of existing literature, impeding access to state support for unreported minority languages. Remaining languages furthermore enjoy little assistance.

Following a long interrupted period of native usage regrettably restricted by sporadic religious literateness efforts, community-led revival efforts for tribal-language literacy began during the 1990s, targeted chiefly towards dialects lacking colonial-era code. Practical work towards opening linguistic data archives remains minimal. Most regional policy requests for educational support focused instead upon branches of Scheduled Tribes Languages, core samples still diligently preserved by scattered scholars. Specialized multilingual education avoided entirely, instead directing resources to secretarial systems for incorrect language labels already allocated further upstream.¹¹

¹¹ N. H Hornberger, H. De Korne, and M. Weinberg, "Ways of Talking (and Acting) About Language Reclamation: An Ethnographic Perspective on Learning Lenape in Pennsylvania," 2015. [\[PDF\]](#)

The Adivani Model: Conceptualization and Operationalization

Roughly one in five languages is now nearing extinction, with a default prognosis of linguistic death; the typical language has only 190 years left. The Adivani Model draws upon recent interventions with endangered languages in India, particularly Gondi, a Dravidian tongue spoken by about three million people. Digital Initiatives based on the Adivani Model focus on ensuring the survival and retrieval of indigenous languages and cultural practices with full community participation through transparent governance. The Model has four central tenets. First, the importance of a community-centred design is articulated in frameworks such as Small's A Model for Enabling Community-Centered Design, co-design for empowerment, Lindtner's Design for Co-creation and the Adivani public interest digital framework as an ethical principle.¹² Second, any language revitalisation must take explicit consideration of the type phase-level institutional governance, to enable the right policies to be embedded in the design process and the development of appropriate technology. Within Indian languages, largely four language types can be indentified — Indo-European, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic — and are shaped by different contextual particulars.¹³ Third, the digital provision must therefore deliver systematic pedagogical progression, from learning first concepts such as the script to engaging in the assemblage of free-form texts. Learning must be embedded in culturally relevant practices and any delivery must also cohere with the overall Adivani framework, such as representation at publicly visible social compilation sites. Fourth, the range of cultural practices to be preserved operatively occupies three parallel dimensions; domain-driven provision on policies and governance; pedagogy of first concepts, script and the curriculum, must concurrently engage at the social and digital media side. The overarching objective is the retrieval and co-existence of multi-languages as a means to preserve little-known cultural distinctions and ontological understandings associated with those particular languages.

Foundations of the Adivani Framework

Tribal and indigenous languages are an integral part of the cultural identity of their speakers. Contemporary India is home to a plethora of tribal language groups, corresponding to diverse ethnic communities, historical backgrounds, cultural practices, folklore, arts, crafts, and forms of livelihood. These languages are an important medium for the expansion of cultural heritage,

¹² D. Mehta, S. Santy, R. Kommiya Mothilal, B. Mohan Lal Srivastava et al., "Learnings from Technological Interventions in a Low Resource Language: A Case-Study on Gondi," 2020. [\[PDF\]](#)

¹³ A. de la Garza, "Aboriginal digitalities: indigenous peoples and new media," 2018. [\[PDF\]](#)

customs, and ritual practices. A large number of minority languages, including tribal vernaculars in many parts of India, are endangered.¹⁴

Government policies, as envisioned in the Constitution of India, provide measures for the preservation and promotion of tribal languages using various media. Several organizations, including governmental and non-governmental institutions, are working to conserve and document these languages. Nevertheless, the majority of these initiatives are digitization projects that lack subsequent support for community participation in the continued cultivation of the languages, or are based solely on remote and passive dissemination models. Such limited outreach makes the tribal speakers mere recipients and discourages them from actively participating in the preservation process.

Many remote tribal communities still lack access to basic resources, including content in their own language, even as the world is getting more digitally connected. With a sizable population now acquainted with computers and the internet, tribal languages face rapid extinction. There is no comprehensive methodology to reinstate these tribal languages. Thus, encouraging community involvement throughout the preservation journey is crucial for the rejuvenation of these largely undeserved languages in the country.

Digital Infrastructure and Community Governance

Digital pathways for the revitalization of indigenous minority languages offer hope for linguistic survival. Indigenous communities occupy a unique position of control that recognizes, restores and promotes indigenous languages on a global scale in the face of hegemonic forces that sought to eradicate them. Adhikari, Macdonncha, Khedkar, M and Hote (2020) have therefore proposed the Adivani framework as a community-centric model that enables indigenous communities to initiate and develop digital pathways for the revitalization of languages, and address issues of identity, memory and belonging.¹⁵

The Adivani framework offers a flexible model that community members can adapt to their own priorities, languages and objectives.¹⁶ The three pillars of Adivani in the Indian context—

¹⁴ J. Akta, "Advancement of the Adivasis: The Effect of Development on the Culture of the Adivasis," 2009. [\[PDF\]](#)

¹⁵ Y. A. Ajani, B. D. Oladokun, S. A. Olarongbe, "Revitalizing indigenous knowledge systems via digital media technologies for sustainability of indigenous languages," in *Preservation, digital ...*, 2024. degruyterbrill.com

¹⁶ *ibid*

digital infrastructure, pedagogy and culture—propose pathways for access and governance that establish community control of digital content and online platforms, while also securing the transmission of indigenous culture, stories and traditions through digital media.

Pedagogical and Cultural Dimensions

Educational and pedagogical dimensions comprise a crucial component of the Adivani framework, encompassing two primary areas of focus: (i) the desired learning outcomes for children and adults who wish to acquire an Indigenous language and (ii) the curation of educational content that accurately embodies the linguistic, cultural, and historical characteristics of a language community, as articulated by the community itself. The overarching impetus in the Adivani model is to preserve communities' control over their languages. Consequently, the emergence of a diverse amalgam of new technology-mediated educational practices poses the question of how to ensure that these practices resonate with Indigenous conceptions of cultural continuity and language reclamation.¹⁷

To meet the demands of learners and educators, Adivani curatorial practices ensure that the content remains faithfully aligned with community perspectives and enables those perspectives to evolve over time. Thus, the Adivani framework respects the rich socio-cultural tapestry and linguistic complexity of contemporary multilingual societies, avoiding the imposition of overly simplistic, preordained definitions of a language; for example, an ostensibly single language may actually encompass multiple lects, varieties, or dialects, while a putatively multilingual context could in fact comprise a newly emergent single language or register. Such choices intrude upon questions of agency and territoriality, as speakers assert rights to define and delimit their languages rather than relinquishing those rights to content consultants or curriculum designers.¹⁸

Identity, Representation, and Politics

The status of an indigenous language is closely connected to the structural integrity of a community. The governance of non-hegemonic indigenous languages is a matter that cannot

¹⁷ S. Nag, "TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIALS OF MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION MODELS IN ODISHA, INDIA," 2018. [\[PDF\]](#)

¹⁸ D. A Wagner, C. J Daswani, and R. Karnati, "Technology and Mother-Tongue Literacy in Southern India: Impact Studies among Young Children and Out-of-School Youth," 2010. [\[PDF\]](#)

be pursued in isolation from the governance of the community itself.¹⁹ It is crucial to address the manner of representation of the community and the kind of investments that ought to be made to enhance agency. Efforts to get the language process under control can even lead to renewed consideration of and investment in the community itself. Co-designing governance in the language domain can thus contribute to re-establishing the community and, in this way, bolster a sense of belonging and ownership. Once community self-critique and self-governance are brought back into the picture, lively debate frequently ensues regarding a community's core identity and option for meta-representation. Community organisation can proceed further through collaborative action and temporary coalitions, which might be initiated on language grounds alone. Such partnerships can support the building of the full set of community capabilities, thus attenuating the need for other forms of identity, recognition, and protection.

Language Rights and Policy Implications

Constitutional protections guarantee multilingualism and collective rights for the "Scheduled Tribes" (STs) of Adivasi, Adivasi and Vanvasi origins.²⁰ Statutory protections of linguistic rights feature in the Official Languages Act, the Law Commission's 267th Report, the Linguistic Minorities Report and the Language Policy for Education (see Section 3). At the local level, tribal languages hold supplementary status in tribal areas, as specified in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Measurable indicators include Administrative Use, Public Signage, Official Transactions Training and Employment (see Section 7).²¹ Stereotypical representations of tribal communities on the mainland—largely confined to unimaginative visual depictions—contribute to mass disenfranchisement of indigenous languages and regional dialects. The hegemony of dominant Indian languages continues to deteriorate access to education in indigenous languages for the oral and non-literate sections of society; ownership of indigenous languages thus remains random, conditional and subject to rapid change within even a single generation. Windows of opportunity created through justice-based, collective-historical and cultural efforts to revive tribal languages in cyberspace open the way to corruption, displacement and alienation. Governance struggles, political machinations, pseudo-activism, self-mockery and nationwide delegitimization endemic to the tribal milieu

¹⁹ K. A.B. Chew, V. Anthony-Stevens, A. LeClair-Diaz, S. E. Nicholas et al., "Enacting Hope Through Narratives of Indigenous Language and Culture Reclamation," 2019. [PDF](#)

²⁰ S. Jolad and A. Agarwal, "Mapping India's Language and Mother Tongue Diversity and its Exclusion in the Indian Census," 2021. [osf.io](#)

²¹ C. Das and S. Sanskar, "Adequacy of Indian Constitution in protection of tribal rights," Available at SSRN 3911449, 2021. [ssrn.com](#)

subsequently pose hurdles to sound digital surfacing and knowledge transfer. Major academic—especially sociolinguistic—research on the subject remains conspicuously absent from public discourse.²²

Activism, Collaboration, and Community Agency

Tribal communities in India increasingly use digital technologies to reclaim, nurture, and promote their languages. Many initiatives bring together diverse organizations and individuals who collaborate in coalition-like arrangements. Co-design practices engage stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of projects, from conceptualization to implementation, ensuring that their contributions and aspirations shape the outcome. Community members remain actively involved after new digital resources are launched, participating in governance arrangements that allow them to continue advising on usage, sustainability, and expansion. Such forms of collaboration foster ownership, build trust, and cultivate long-term agency.

Challenges, Limitations, and Ethical Considerations

In the digital age of the twenty-first century, certain tensions persist between linguistic and cultural groups and state and corporate language regimes. Historically, state policies have systematically under-documented and undermined India's tribal languages, leading large sections of society to believe that tribal languages are not useful for education or development. Consequently, many tribal communities postpone or prohibit the teaching and learning of their mother tongues at home, in the community, and in the school, causing these endangered languages to be transmitted only between elders and children, if at all.²³ A linguistically digitalised future for the survival and revitalisation of most tribal languages is challenged by the proliferation of regional languages like Hindi and Assamese that compete for digital spaces, lack of access to technology at the community level, unequal distribution of information on how to use digital technology among the general population and multiple orthographic variations for many of the under-documented tribal languages (Patra et al., 2021).²⁴ Further, the widely held belief in many regions that a language can survive only if it is taught in school or has a fully functional official script has led to a slowdown in tribal digital content creation;

²² P. Phyak and P. I. De Costa, "Decolonial struggles in indigenous language education in neoliberal times: Identities, ideologies, and activism," *Journal of Language*, . academia.edu

²³ C. Willis Oko, "Orthography development for Darma (The case that wasn't)," 2018. [\[PDF\]](#)

²⁴ P. J. Meighan, "Decolonizing the digital landscape: The role of technology in Indigenous language revitalization," **An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples**, 2021. sagepub.com

in certain tribal areas, learning how to read and write in one's own language is increasingly perceived as unnecessary and the domain of less educated people. Language shift is hastened because the family, home, community and first language do not retain their status as gate-keeping mechanisms. Language shift promoted when the participation of the trained community, artists, separate organisations and non-community members based in distant areas becomes critical in the documentation process of these minority languages. In such areas where the involvement of the speakers in documenting their own language hampers documentation activities, documentation and preservation efforts are found to have little or no impact on the vitality of these endangered languages. In certain regions where external researchers, educators and NGO representatives are perceived as taking initiative, supporting local awareness-raising campaigns becomes less effective. A certain scepticism emerges toward the participation of external agents. Despite all the progress made within community linguistics, the restriction of the activities of exterior actors at local level remains nevertheless periodically advocated. Such restrictions do not automatically signify the absence of willingness to receive support. Outside initiatives focusing on increasingly flexible and context-sensitive redressing strategies could also be of help. In the decade or so until the advent of the Adivani Model, languages spoken by primarily lower-middle-caste tribal groups, many of which lack a standardised orthography, had similarly continued their rapid decline without any packaging towards written form. Ordinary citizens, families and civil-society organisations engaged in a variety of language- and culture-related initiatives with little or no link to the specific demand articulated by the political-science research community or the state and local governance framework. Outside support with direct community co-creation involvement ranked as decisive during the years preceding the Adivani Model

Digital Divide and Sustainability

Realizing the digitally mediated potential of tribal language survival initiatives requires consideration of both the digital divide and long-term sustainability. First, many communities lack the infrastructure to pursue these pathways. Low internet penetration, limited access to hardware or software, and inadequate digital skills can thwart uptake of even the most promising initiatives.²⁵ Such constraints are especially pertinent to Indian tribal regions, where resources are scarce, and per capita consumption remains low.²⁶

²⁵ A. Ronchi, "Sustainable development inclusivity and multilingualism: the challenge," 2017. [\[PDF\]](#)

²⁶ S. Boruah, "Permaeduculture; Towards sustainable learning environments," 2019. [\[PDF\]](#)

Second, many programs struggle to maintain activity after initial investment, compromising sustained vitality. Fully functioning initiatives have developed diverse content, targeted specific user groups, and acquired recurrent funding to support ongoing operations and expansion. Without substantial funding to maintain momentum, new developments that could broaden outreach, attract additional users, or facilitate technology upgrades may not transpire. Such cycles of boom and bust nonetheless menace enduring community engagement.

Intellectual Property and Community Consent

Across India, digital pathways to language survival encounter diverse challenges, particularly concerning intellectual property and community consent. Fair-use principles are often unclear, and platform-hosted materials may be appropriated or circulated without consent, undermining Adivani objectives. Community governance is thus critical to steer initiatives in ways that are equitable and community-driven, consonant with Adivani values, context, and collective knowledge systems.

To protect community-controlled content, various elements may be considered. Seeking copyright registration for community-generated digital content can clarify ownership and strengthen claims against unauthorized appropriation. Bylaws articulating principles of use and access can make explicit expectations around ownership, attribution, and circulation. An explicit rights-expressing markup language can signal communal authorship and custodianship of the underlying knowledge, enabling the incorporation of customary law concepts and specifications for additional, purpose-specific identifiers.²⁷ Such elements can help designate content intended for sharing as distinct from knowledge that remains subject to community protocols.²⁸

Benefit-sharing models promote mutual respect and reciprocity with outside institutions, media practitioners, and researchers.²⁹ Such principles recognize the time, labour, and resources contributed to coproduction; honour collective authorship; and create avenues for reparative redress when such commitments are breached. Processual models govern consent protocols. Language authorities establish customary laws, operational guidelines, and permissions for

²⁷ C. Oguamanam, "Patents and Traditional Medicine: Digital Capture, Creative Legal Interventions and the Dialectics of Knowledge Transformation," 2008. [\[PDF\]](#)

²⁸ J. Hunter, "Rights Markup Extensions for the Protection of Indigenous Knowledge," 2002. [\[PDF\]](#)

²⁹ W. Fisher, "The Puzzle of Traditional Knowledge," 2018. [\[PDF\]](#)

appropriate use, and consent processes co-create an imprimatur that indicates sources yet respects community-agreed forms. Through these approaches, framing languages become enablers rather than inhibitors within a broader ecology of digital self-determination.

Language Ideologies and Power Dynamics

Two sometimes opposing narratives often arise regarding how technology influences minority, indigenous, or low-density language endangerment and survival. The pessimistic view holds that technology aids larger or more economically dominant languages at the expense of smaller ones, thereby contributing to endangerment as smaller language communities become disconnected from the information ecosystem. Technology is also seen as a factor that can reduce language-use pressures, enabling non-dominant languages to survive in otherwise irretrievable circumstances.

In the optimistic view, technology supports language preservation, and digital materials existing in mainstream or widely used languages help sustain languages not otherwise supported. The view that technologies are neutral for the maintenance of languages is prevalent, but technologies and support structures have their own power dynamics, creating contexts for established languages to dominate. The advocates of digital pathways for Adivasi languages are generally on the optimistic side and adopt positions two levels up from claiming digital solutions are neutral, instead holding that the digital pathway model can enhance the sustainability of Adivasi languages in India when technology systems and support structures are designed appropriately.³⁰

Conclusion

Digital pathways to linguistic survival remain fragile in contemporary India. India's languages are the population's lifelines, yet tribal tongues risk extinction. Global and national policies promote English and Hindi over regional diversity. Print media generate perspectives on tribal matters, yet digital media deliver community self-representation. Similarly, the Adivani model—community-centered governance, digital mediation, local ownership—facilitates local language survival in a digital context. The model raises three research questions of contemporary relevance. What indicators and pathways denote risks of language

³⁰ M. Farris, "Decolonizing the Indigenous Language Classroom: A Heteroglossia of Ideological Shift in Indigenous Language Revitalization," 2017. [\[PDF\]](#)

endangerment? How do these dimensions drive and constrain digital biograpification? Which local safeguards empower India's languages in the global political economy of content? Addressing these questions establishes a theoretical framework of four concepts—language survival, digital mediation, identity politics, community governance—that link political economy to agency. Connecting identity politics and indigenous language reclamation unveils grassroots drivers of contemporary linguistic vitality.

Through the Adivani model, tribal communities reclaim agency within the digital landscape that metaphorically liquefies. Adivani's objectives, infrastructure, governance, pedagogy, content, and pathways characterize the model. The wider context encompasses India's linguistic diversity, a tribal population of over 100 million, historical trajectories of language endangerment, and digital developments around literacy, culture, politics. Tribal communities experiment with diverse strategies in both print and digital domains.

Intervention in twenty-three contexts demonstrates that languages, scripts, and textual formats shape the digital landscape in India. A survey identifies cooperative content creation, oral transmission, and data archiving—already recognized as ways to slow language erosion—as pathways among minority languages. Adivani complements these routes by integrating holistic linguistic planning with digital mediation. Pathways remain indispensable, yet cooperation on content creation and strategically aligned editing are ad hoc. While educational policies prioritize English and Hindi, establishment, scaling, and sustainability of community-led interventions contrastingly depend on local agency, identity, and cohesion.

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