



Community-driven Language Revitalization: Translating Children's Literature in K'man Mishmi

Akhilesh Kakolu Ramarao¹ Satyanarayan Mundayoor² Pamir Gogoi³ **Sakelu Chikro** ⁴

kakolura@hhu.de, lohit.libraries2023@gmail.com, pamirgogoi11@gmail.com,
sakelukrisikro@gmail.com

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¹Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany

²Coordinator of Lohit Youth Libraries

³Asst. Prof at D Y Patil University

⁴Senior Volunteer of Lohit Youth Libraries

Me

- I am a first-generation indigenous graduate student working towards preserving my cultural identity
- Language is intrinsically linked to cultural identity
- My language also carries important knowledge about our environment that is passed down through generations

Our Vision

**Every child must have access to knowledge through their
own mother tongue**

Overview

1. Introduction

2. The Workshop

3. Conclusion

Introduction

K'man Mishmi

- I belong to K'man Mishmi community
- Total population: 14,552 (estimated)
- Majorly in Anjaw and Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh



K'man Mishmi language

- K'man Mishmi language is an endangered language belonging to the Sino-Tibetan language family (Eberhard et al., 2024)
- Kman mishmi is written in both Roman script and the newly developed official script
- There are roughly about 170 schools but our language is not being taught in most of them

Preserving Identity through language

- To introduce education through mother tongue education
- Make children acquire K'man Mishmi from an early age through children books
- Translating childrens books is a key strategy in language revitalization efforts (Cheetham, 2023)
- Our approach: Organizing translation workshops to create K'man Mishmi versions of childrens books, promoting language use among younger generations

The Workshop

Workshop Overview

- Location: Bamboosa Library, Teju, Arunachal Pradesh
- Participants: 15 young K'man Mishmi community members with diverse educational and professional backgrounds
- Language proficiency: All participants were fluent in English and K'man Mishmi (using Roman-transliterated script)



Workshop Overview



Translation Workshop

Translation Process



- Source materials: 6 children's books with varying language complexity, sourced from StoryWeaver (<https://storyweaver.org>) under Creative Commons license
- Initial drafts were reviewed by workshop participants
- Orthography conversion: Translations were converted from Roman transliteration to official K'man Mishmi orthography with the help of linguists and a dictionary

Translation Workshop

Translation Process

- Community validation: Final drafts were reviewed and validated by the K'man Mishmi community's apex body, comprising community elders
- Audiobook creation: Participants recorded translated stories as audiobooks
- E-book distribution: Translated books were converted to e-books (PDF format) under Creative Commons license and circulated within the community, along with audiobooks

Workshop



Audiobook Recording



Reading theatre



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGX90F3mgn4>



Follow-up

Encouraged by the success, we organized another workshop, translating 12 additional books





State News

Workshop on translating children's books to Kaman Mishmi language

December 31, 2023

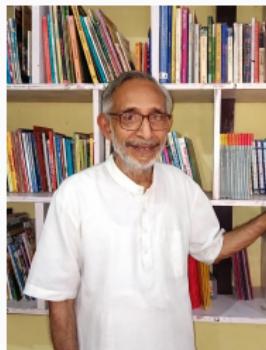


Conclusion

Key Outcomes

- Collective ownership and shared purpose
- 18 children's books translated in just 5 months
- Will lead to potential writers
- Blueprint for community-led language revitalization

Team



Satyanarayan
Mundayoor



Sakelu
Chikro



Pamir
Gogoi



Akhilesh
Kakolu
Ramarao

Testimonials from participants

- “I have improved my reading and writing skills in Kaman Mishmi language”
- “It was a practical approach towards engaging every individual with intense discussions, helping one another and bringing the synergy for translating stories in their own mother language.”
- “This workshop positively makes me incline more towards learning my own tribal literature, language and moreover giving me sense of belongingness to my own culture.”
- “It warms my heart to see books translated into our native language, a privilege we didn’t have in our kindergarten days.”

References

Dominic Cheetham. 2023. The translation of childrens literature into minority languages. *Children's Literature in Education*, 54(4):517–533.

David M. Eberhard, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig. 2024. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, twenty-seventh edition. SIL International, Dallas, Texas. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.