Khortha, a Dying Language and Urgency to Retain its Pure Variety

Swati Priya[1] & Rajni Singh[2]

[1]*Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT(ISM) Dhanbad.*
Email: swati.jha@hotmail.com
[2]*Associate Professor of English, IIT(ISM) Dhanbad, India. Email: rajnisingh18@gmail.com.*

Abstract
Languages are repositories of history, they express identity and contribute to the sum of human knowledge. (David Crystal, 2000). The linguistic diversity is really a benchmark of cultural diversity. Language, knowledge and culture are intricately woven. If a language is lost, the knowledge and cultural aspects of that community becomes extinct. The present study discusses about language death and the factors that leads to the language death in the world and in India. The prime focus of the study is to consider Khortha, a tribal language being spoken in Jharkhand and its neighboring states, as an endangered language. Khortha is fading away and is on the verge of losing its identity, the paper hence discusses some of the preventive measures to revitalize the language and safeguard it from getting extinct. The study has been presented through the data collected from the communities living in the outskirts of Dhanbad and the linguistic variation has been shown based on various parameters.

Keywords: Language death, tribal language, language revitalization, linguistic variation

Language death

Language death is the process by which a language is no longer used by the people who were speaking it previously. Speakers of many smaller, less dominant languages stop using their heritage language and begin using another. Parents may begin to use only that second language with their children and gradually the intergenerational transmission of the heritage language is reduced and may even cease. So such languages may exist perhaps only in the form of audio recordings or written records and transcriptions. Languages which have not been adequately documented disappear altogether. David Crystal mentions that there are around 6000 languages in the world and of these, about half are going to die out in the course of the next century; 3000 languages, in 1200 months. That means, on average there is a language dying out somewhere in the world every two weeks or so. A 1999 survey has shown that 96 percent of the world's languages are spoken by just 4 percent people. According to Crystal, "Language is really alive only as long as there is someone to speak it to. When you are the only one left, your knowledge of your language is like a repository, or archive, of your people's spoken linguistic past. If the language has never been written down, or recorded on a tape-and there are still many which have not-it is all there is. But, unlike the normal idea of an archive, which continues to exist even after the archivist is dead, the moment the last speaker of an unwritten or unrecorded language dies, the

archive disappears forever. When the language dies which has never been recorded in some way, it is as if it has never been." (David Crystal 2000)

There are two broad reasons that lead to language death, the first being the numbers of users and the other being the number and nature of users for which the language is employed. A language can be on the verge of extinction or can lead to death when there are fewer people who claim the language as their own and thus it never passes on to their children. It is a common fact that any language or culture grows or flourishes when it is being moves from one generation to the other. In the case of language death, this passing on is actually ceased which blocks the path of language growth and ultimately leads to death of language.

Moreover, these factors can lead to a downward spiral which eventually results in the complete loss of the language. Since language is closely linked to culture, loss of language is accompanied by social and cultural disruptions. More broadly, the intangible heritage of all of human society is diminished when a language disappears. These can lead to some serious implications of the loss of the linguistic diversity both from the linguistic as well as societal point of view.

Ethnologue reports data that are indicators of the two major dimensions of language – users and functions. When data are available, we report the following factors which may contribute to the assessment of language endangerment:

- The speaker population
- The ethnic population; the number of those who connect their ethnic identity with the language (whether or not they speak the language)
- The stability of and trends in that population size
- Residency and migration patterns of speakers
- The use of second languages
- The use of the language by others as a second language
- Language attitudes within the community
- The age range of the speakers
- The domains of use of the language
- Official recognition of languages within the nation or region
- Means of transmission (whether children are learning the language at home or being taught the language in schools)
- Non-linguistic factors such as economic opportunity or the lack thereof

Such factors interact within a society in dynamic ways that are not entirely predictable, but which do follow recognizable patterns and trends. The general scholarly consensus, however, is that the key factor in gauging the relative safety of an endangered language is the degree to which intergenerational transmission of the language remains intact.

Language Death in Global scenario

Languages usually reach the point of crisis after being displaced by social, political and economic factors, as linguists put it. In this scenario, the majority speaks another language – English, Mandarin, Swahili – so speaking that language is key to accessing jobs, education and opportunities. Sometimes, especially in immigrant communities, parents will decide not to teach their children their heritage language, perceiving it as a potential hindrance to their success in life. Speakers of minority languages have suffered a long history of persecution. For these

reasons and others, languages are dying all over the world. <u>UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger</u> lists 576 languages as critically endangered, with thousands more categorized as endangered or threatened. The highest numbers occur in the Americas. "I would say that virtually all the [minority] languages in the US and Canada are endangered," says Peter Austin, a professor of field linguistics at the University of London. Even a language like Navajo, with thousands of speakers, falls into that category because very few children are learning it. If measured in proportion to population, however, then Australia holds the world record for endangered languages. When Europeans first arrived there, 300 aboriginal languages were spoken around the country. Since then, 100 or so have gone extinct, and linguists regard 95 percent of the remaining ones as being on their last legs. Just a dozen of the original 300 are still being taught to children.
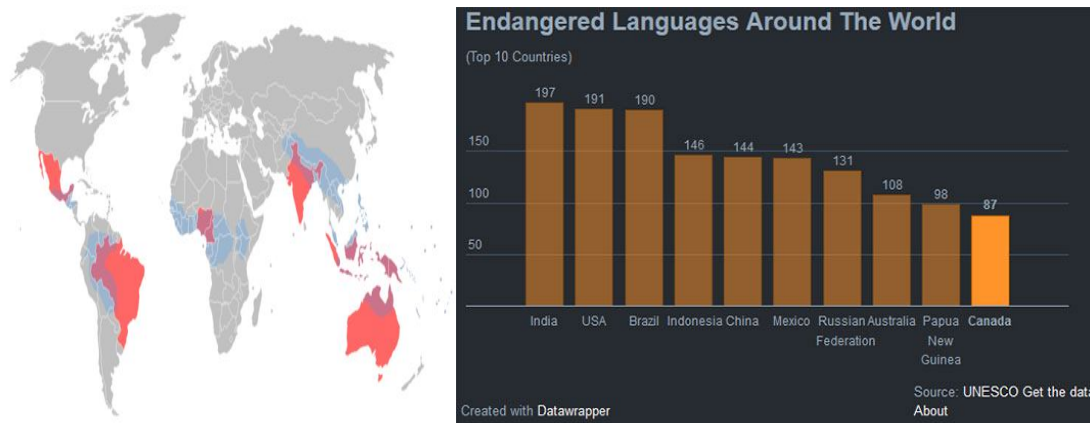

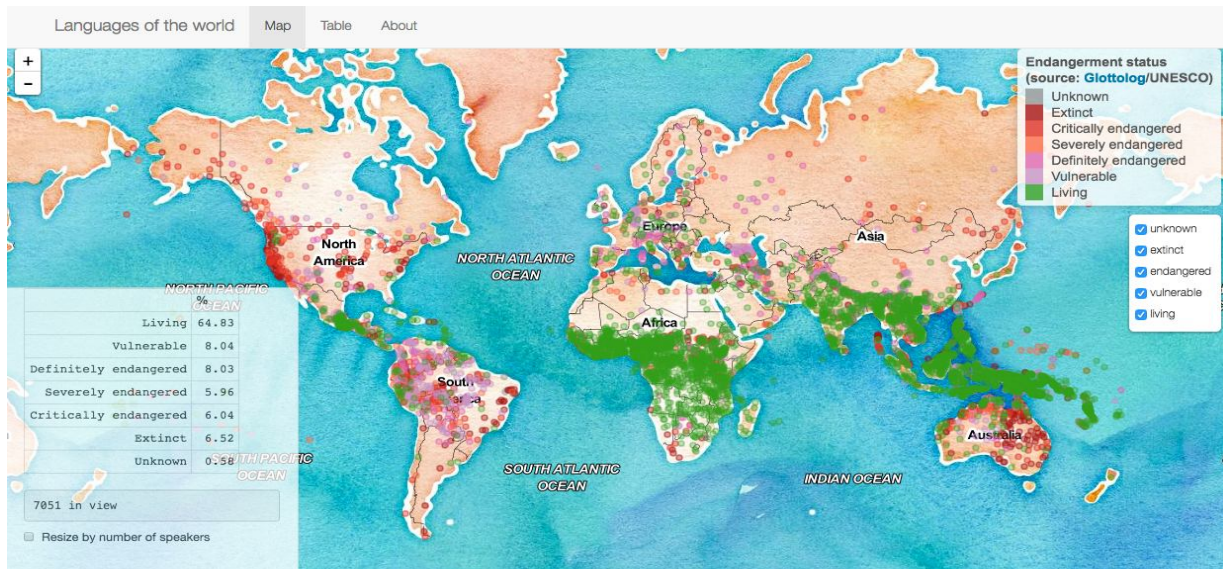**Figure 1: Endangered Languages of the World**

Figure 02: Detailed showcase of World Endangered Language Category

As only about 80 of the 6000+ languages in the world have more than 10 million users, it is clear that the vast majority of languages are used by relatively small numbers of people. It is thought that 95 percent of the world's languages have less than 1 million native speakers/signers, with an average of approximately 6000 users per language. Again, this is only an estimate based on the

pattern found in documented languages, but the number of speakers of major languages is relatively easy to ascertain, and any undiscovered languages are likely to only have a relatively small number of speakers. Following image highlights the languages in the world which are the on the verge of extinction and hence listed in the endangered category:

Linguists are becoming increasingly alarmed at the rate at which languages are going out of use. A special issue of the journal *Language* (Hale et al. 1992), based on a colloquium held at an annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, drew attention to the scale of language endangerment, and called for a concerted effort by linguists to record the remaining speakers and to create linguistic archives for future reference (this is referred to as *language documentation*). In this issue, Krauss (1992) estimated that 90 percent of the world's languages would be severely endangered by 2100. According to more optimistic estimates such as Nettle & Romaine (2000) and Crystal (2000), 'only' 50 percent will be lost.

Causes of language endangerment

The causes of language endangerment can be divided into four main categories:

1. Natural catastrophes, famine, disease, for example, Malol, Papua New Guinea (earthquake); Andaman Islands (tsunami);

2. War and genocide, for example, Tasmania (genocide by colonists); Brazilian indigenous peoples (disputes over land and resource); El Salvador (civil war);

3. Overt repression, for 'national unity' (including forcible resettlement): for example, Kurdish, Welsh, Native American languages, and;

4. Cultural/political/economic dominance, for example, Ainu, Manx, Sorbian, Quechua and many others. (synthesised from Nettle & Romaine 2000; Crystal, 2000)

Factors often overlap or occur together. The dividing lines can be difficult to distinguish, for example, in the Americas disease and suppression of Native cultures spread after colonization, and in Ireland many Irish speakers died or emigrated due to government inaction which compounded the effects of the potato blight famine of the 19th Century.

Some of the dying and dead languages of India

Devy [i] who documented 780 Indian languages while conducting the People's Linguistic Survey of India in 2010, also, shockingly, found that 600 of these languages were dying. He added close to 250 languages in India had already died over the past 60 years.

According to UNESCO, any language that is spoken by less than 10,000 people is potentially endangered. In India, after the 1971 census, the government decided that any language spoken by less than 10,000 people need not be included in the official list of languages. In India, therefore, all the languages that are spoken by less than 10,000 people are treated by the state as not worthy of mention and treated by the UNESCO as potentially endangered.

Figure 03: Country-wise list of the Endangered languages

As per the survey conducted by various linguists in the past ten years, there are close to 780 languages in India, out of which about 600 are potentially endangered. The census of 1991 and 2001 show not more than 122 languages. So, most others have to be called potentially endangered. Examples of such languages would be Wadari, Kolhati, Golla, Gisari. These are the languages of nomadic people in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana.
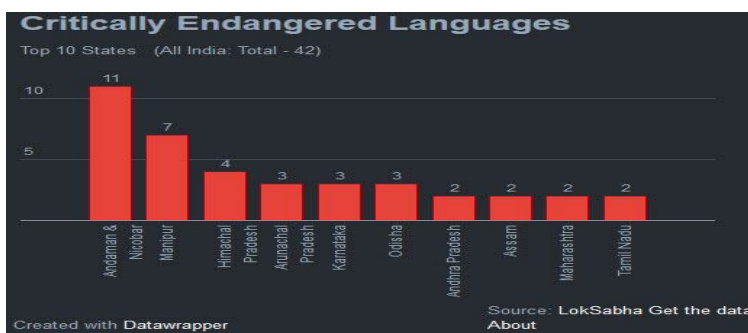

Figure 04: Endangered Languages in India

Of all the Indian languages, the tribal languages spoken in the Eastern and Central India are the most threatened ones. According to Panchanan Mohanty, "Definitely ten to twenty percent of all Indian languages are in bad shape and on their death bed, but the tribal languages are the most vulnerable one" (Basu, "What Happens When a Language Dies?").

There are several tribal languages as well, such as Pauri, Korku, Haldi, Mavchi. In Assam, there are Moran, Tangsa, Aiton. It appears that around 250 languages have disappeared in the last 60 years. There used to be languages called Adhuni, Dichi, Ghallu, Helgo, Katagi. The Bo language in Andaman disappeared in 2010 and the Majhi language in Sikkim disappeared in 2015. But we need to remember that it is impossible to show a language dying in the last moment of its life. A language is not a single life system. It is a very large symbolic system. When the symbols collapse they do not do so in a single moment. The collapse is sprayed over a large time.

Every two weeks, a language dies and with it, a wealth of knowledge forever. In India alone, there exist more than 780 languages. The rate at which languages are dying here is extremely high as over 220 languages have died in the last 50 years. In India, 197 languages are categorized as endangered. These are further divided into four subcategories – vulnerable, definitely endangered, severely endangered, and critically endangered – by the UNESCO. As per the scale implemented by UNESCO to judge the vulnerability of any language, the categories can be divided into the following:

Degree of endangerment		Intergenerational Language Transmission
	Safe	language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted >> not included in the Atlas
	Vulnerable	most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
	definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
	severely endangered	language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
	critically endangered	the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
	Extinct	there are no speakers left >> included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s

Figure 05: Degree of Endangerment Scale as discussed by UNESCO [ii]

Out of the above mentioned 197 languages, only two languages – Boro and Meithei – have official status in India while many others do not even have a writing system. When one takes into account the fact that 7.8 million Indians are visually impaired, there is a drastic need to use digital tools to preserve and grow India's endangered languages. While there has been some effort to do the same for the 22 recognized official languages of India, the remaining languages have not received any focus.

Over the last few decades, linguists have analyzed several tribal languages, but the majority are poorly studied and sparsely documented. Many are yet to be rendered into computer typefaces, as they have not been able to cross the digital divide.

Like the other Indian tribal languages, Khortha is also the most vulnerable one, which is prone to changes, shifts and ultimately death. A linking language spoken by the tribals and non-tribals of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal, is slowly fading away its identity. In *Language and Literature,* Shankarlal C. Bhatt (2006) has stated that Khortha is not a pure form, rather it a mixed form of language. In day-to-day affairs, people use this form but in official communication they make use of Hindi.

While the official language of Jharkhand is Hindi many tribal languages are spoken in different parts of the state. Khortha is being spoken by a majority of inhabitants in Dhanbad. Though the language is greatly influenced by the other languages being spoken in the state, still there are some groups residing in the outskirts of Dhanbad, where one can find the untouched, pure variety of Khortha. The language has seen a variety of changes. The reasons can be many

which also include Language in Contact, Language Convergence, literacy rate and the high rate of migration of the people from one place to another.

Studies on Khortha: a mapping

Scanty works have been done on Khortha which to some extent have tried to give language its due credit. Nageshwar Mahto[iii] a renowned linguist and philosopher has worked on Khortha. He worked on the script of Khortha, also called *Kharoshtha lipi* whereby he identified 36 speech sounds. Mahto's study is largely based on the phonological aspects of the language. He has also made a *software*, Anshu software dedicated to Khortha. Due to lack of required exposure and little availability of the resources, various other linguists like Mahto, could not take up the research on Khortha on a vast scale. Though various writers including Anil Jha have contributed in the field by writing Khortha literature and poems, but less or no work has been done on the linguistic aspect of the language. However, the Indian Statistical Institute, took up the task to preserve the words and vocabularies of Khortha. A Linguistic Field Survey at four villages in the district of Ranchi, Hazaribagh, and Ramgarh in the state of Jharkhand among native Khortha speakers was conducted with a purpose of elicitation of samples of spoken data in the form of lexical list, sentence list, and free discourse speech along with some recordings of local songs, lullabies, riddles, death songs, birth songs, marriage songs and other socio-cultural events and narrations thereof. The work focused on the Generation of a Dialect Corpus in Khortha used in Jharkhand. Based on some Empirical Observations and Theoretical Postulations, the work on the language was continued by Atul Aman under the supervision of Niladri Sekhar Dash, a linguist at Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, during August 2012- November 2014. Together they worked to address some empirical and theoretical issues involved in the method used to collect spontaneous speech data in the form of Khortha Dialect corpus (KDC) from native speakers of Khortha.

In order to revive and retain the original variety of any language, an overall linguistic analysis is needed. A groundwork has been laid down by Mahto in terms of explaining the script and grammar of Khortha, Atul Aman has built up a corpus for the native users and linguists to take a ready reference to, but still there are many aspects which are untouched and needs further exploration. Through this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the areas, which demands a serious attention. The language is vulnerable in nature, due to which it is more prone to language shift and variation. During the field survey and data collection, it was observed that the speakers of Khortha are showing shifts in their speech. Code switching and Code Mixing were again common features, which were easily observed in the speech of the respondents, particularly the younger generation.

The present paper can be considered as an exploration of the unexplored areas of Khortha and will try to highlight the linguistic variation that can be readily observed in the language based on the various parameters including gender, age, literacy rate and occupation of the Khortha speakers of Jharkhand, particularly in the outskirts of Dhanbad. For the study and analysis, the data has been collected from the communities[iv] which are in the nearby areas of Dhanbad (Jharkhand). The methods employed were the observation method, documentary method and interview method. The subjects were asked questions based on the sentence list[v] and word list[vi] and their responses were recorded for further analysis.

Linguistic variations in Khortha

Khortha is a tribal language and as stated by Abbi (2001) linguistic heterogeneity is a part of tribal languages. Whenever a tribe comes in contact with other groups, they are bound to develop a common lingua franca or contact language, which consists of the features of various languages in contact, for instance, Sadri and Chhatisgarhi. Khortha is also a linking language that shows the mentioned features.

Figure 06: Communities for Data collection

Khortha speakers come in contact with the speakers of other communities and they show the features of multilingualism. A minute and careful observation of the language will show a number of linguistic influences on Khortha. It can be assumed that the language is highly influenced by Bengali, Magahi, Maithili, Hindi and Gulgulia.

Language Contact occurs when two or more languages or varieties interact. Multilingualism has likely been common throughout much of human history, and today most people in the world are multilingual. Due to various reasons, people of different languages come in contact with each other and it is typical for their language to influence each other. Language Contact occurs in a variety of phenomena including Language Convergence, borrowing, and relexification. The most common products are pidgins, creoles, code switching, and mixed languages. Due to the above discussed factors, there are lots of linguistic variation that can be observed in Khortha. In order to mark the difference in the speeches, a quick analysis is done based on the above discussed parameters including Age, Gender, Occupation and Literacy Rate.

a. Difference in speech/ words based on Gender

Sentences	Males	Females
Jis ladke ne kaanch toda usko bulao ***(Call that boy who has broken the glass)***	/je/ /gIdʒrta:/ /ka:nch/ /pho:d^lkau/ /se/ /gIdʒta:/ /ke/ /bula:/	/ je/ /gIdʒrta:/ /ka:nch/ /pho:rhʒu/ /sei/ /gIdʒta:/ /ke/ /daik/
Kaanch toot gayi ***(The glass has been broken)***	/ka:nch/ /tu:t/ /gelʒi/	/ka:nchta:/ /tu:it/ /gelʒi/
Bachha ye khana nahi kahyega ***(The boy will not eat this food)***	/i:/ /kha:na:/ /gidʒrta:/ /nʒhi:/ /khaeto/	/i:/ /kha:yek/ /gidʒrta:/ /nʒye/ /khaeto:/

Kal main chor se bahut maar khaya *(Yesterday I was beaten brutally by the thief)*	/ka:l/ /hum/ /chor/ /se/ /bɜhUt/ /ma:r/ /kha:ye/	/ka:ilh/ /hɜme//chor/ /se/ /bɜdi://ma:r/ /khaelho:/
Ye topi safed rang ki hai *(This cap is white in colour)*	/i:/ /topi:/ /sɜfed/ /helɜi	/i:/ /topi:/ /sa:da:/ /hɜlɜi

Table 01: Response sheet of Males and Females

b. Difference in speech based on Age

Words	*Old*	*Young*
Jhanda(flag)	/jhaanda/	./jh^nda/
Barish (rain)	/b^rsa	/pa:ni
Rasta (path)	/dʒhɜr/	rasta:/
Ghar (house)	/kh^nd	/ru:m/
Turant (immediately)	/ekhɜni:/	/tUrɜte/
Mitaana / saaf karna (to clean)	/mita:e/	/sa:f/
Kapda(cloth)	/ pi:dhɜna:/	/k^pɜda:/
Chehra (face)	/thothɜna/	/sɜkɜl/
Ungali(fingers)	/a:ngUr/	/Ungri:/
Chabhi(keys)	/ka:thi:/	/cha:bhi:/
Sach(truth)	/nIshto/	/s^cche/
Gilas(glass)	/gIlsa:/	/gila:s/-
Lamba(tall)	/da:nga:/	/l^mba:/
Chipchipa (sticky)	/la:tha:/-	/ch^tɜk/
Ek jaisa(same to same)	/ohɜte/	/eke r^kɜm

Table 02: Response sheet of a young boy and an adult

c. Difference in speech based on Literacy Rate

Words/ Sentences	Educated	Semi-educated/ no education
Sari(traditional wear for females in India)	/sa:ri/	/lUgga:/
Dhul (dust)	/dhu:l/ dust	/dhu:ra:/
Dhoop	/dhu:p/	/rʒuda:/
Kanghi(comb)	/kʒnghi:/	/kʒkʒba:/
Anda(egg)	/ʒnda:/	/di:m/
Bael(ox)	/bael/	/bʒrʒd/
Wah baithe baithe thak gaya(he is tired of sitting)	/u://bʒithʒle/- /bʒithʒle/ /thʒk/ /gele/	/u:/ /bʒisʒle/ /bʒisʒle// thai:k/ /gelʒi/-
Wah kabhi na kabhi jarur aayega(He will definitely come back some day)	/u://kʒkhʒno/ /nʒ/ /kʒkhʒno/ /zʒru:r/ /aeto/	/u:/ /kʒkhʒno/ /nae/ /kʒkhʒno/ /ghu:r/ /ke/ /aeto/

Table 03: Response sheet of a literate and illiterate person

The above data showcases the difference in the language, selection of words among the speakers of the community. Influence of Hindi and English or mixing up Khortha with other languages, including Bengali, Maithili and Bhojpuri have affected the language a lot. Stephen Wurn (1998) has given different perspectives about Language Endangerment. An analysis on Khortha has been done based on the levels suggested by Wurn. The five level classification of language endangerment are:

1) Potentially endangered languages: In this case the language is socially and economically disadvantaged, under heavy pressure from a larger language, and as a result begins to lose child speakers;

2) Endangered language: It has few or no children learning the language, and the youngest good speakers are young adults;

3) Seriously endangered languages: It has the youngest good speakers at age 50 or older;

4) Moribund languages: It has only a handful of good speakers left, mostly old;

5) Extinct/Dead languages: This category has no speakers at all.

As per the levels discussed by Stephen Wurn, Khortha surely comes under the category of Endangered Language, because the small children, though exposed to Khortha as their Mother Tongue, are more prone to English and Hindi. At schools they interact with the speakers of other languages. Prabhat K Singh in his article 'Nurturing Linguistic Diversity in Jharkhand' (2014)

throws light on the education system prevailing in India; he says "that it is a well-known fact children understand concepts in their MT or in their first language; but the education system in India has largely failed to provide education to children in their own language". He further adds that the tribal children are made to study in the dominant regional languages like Hindi or English. Undoubtedly, the Indian education system promotes learning in dominant languages, therefore the children's first language often faces a setback. The youngsters are more exposed to the technical advancements and to the speakers of other languages. During conversation in Khortha, the sheer inability to make use of the words in his/her language and substituting it with Hindi or English is the most common problem. The situation is bad with the people going out for their job and business but it is worst with the young speakers who cannot even read and write in Khortha and rely on the English/Hindi translations of the words they make use of in their conversation. With just two generations of this dilution and one may witness a large pool of the speakers who cannot even speak, read or write in Khortha. With it, this successive march of incremental cultural deaths takes one step closer to total extinction.

Lyle Campbell, project Director of ELCat and linguistics professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, has developed a unique language Endangerment Scale called EGIDS, which can allow the researchers and also language experts to determine which of the world's living languages are at the risk of dying out and to what extent each individual language is endangered. ELCat's scale is different as it has got smaller set of criteria, focusing exclusively on endangered languages. On the basis of four criteria, ELCat's Language Endangerment Scale assigns six different levels of endangerment to each language ranging from 0(safe)- 5(critically endangered). The ELCat criteria is stated below:

- **Intergenerational Transmission** (How old are the youngest speakers and is the language passed on to younger generations?)

- **Absolute number of speakers**

- **Speaker number trends** (Is the number of speakers declining, stable or increasing?)

- **Domains of use of the language** (Is the language only used in certain (e.g. informal) contexts or for every domain in life from home to media, education and government?)

After applying the above discussed four criteria on Khortha we can have the following points:

a. **Intergenerational Transmission**: As discussed, a language does transfer from one generation to the other generation, but in a filtered way. After an interaction with the school going boys and girls, it was found that though they speak Khortha at home they are more comfortable with Hindi language, because this is the linking language or the language that they make maximum use of.

b. **Absolute number of speakers:** Indeed Khortha is spoken by a large number of people in and around Jharkhand which is depicted in the table:

	Persons	Males	Females
Khortha/Khotta: **Total**	974,761	506,940	467,821

Urban	851,406	440,418	410,988
Rural	123,355	66, 522	56,833

Table 04: Absolute number of speakers

For the present study the data has been collected from 15 villages, each village comprised 80 family members, making it a total of approximately1200 families. Each family has 7 members, thus making it a total of 8400 speakers which can be fairly distributed in the following table. This data has been shared by the Sarpanch (Head of the village) and Block development officer of the villages.

Age	Gender	No. of speakers
Children (4-14 yrs)	Both males and females	2400
Youngsters (15-24 yrs)	Both males and females	1900
Middle aged (25-39 yrs)	Females	1000
Middle aged (25-39 yrs)	Males	1100
Elderly (40-59 yrs	Females	700
Elderly (40-59 yrs Old People (ranging from 60 yrs and above)	Males	900
Old People (ranging from 60 yrs and above):-	Both males and females	400

Table 05: Total number of speakers in terms of age and gender

The above discussed data shows how the original variety of Khortha which is just retained with older people is on the verge of extinction. Out of 8400 speakers, the pure variety is spoken by just 400 speakers. The language is more exposed to other languages including Hindi, English and other contact language through Children (2400 speakers), youngsters (1900 speakers) and Middle aged males (1100). The reason has already been discussed.

If we discuss the third and fourth criteria of ELCat's Language Endangerment Scale, we will find that the 'Speaker number trends' is declining. The speakers of the original and the pure variety of Khortha is perishing slowly. The older people, and to some extent, the females of the families have somehow tried to hold the fading tradition of the dying language.

Measures to safeguard Khortha

Language travels from one generation to other. The saying is perfectly right but it does not apply fully to Khortha. Undoubtedly it does reach to the children but again the fact cannot be ignored that with youngsters it is losing its identity. It is high time now that the Khortha speakers and the government realize the importance and urgency to retain its pure variety. Though some measures have been adopted by the Government[vii] but the efforts have to multiply at a faster pace. Again the people who are putting up their efforts to safeguard the endangered languages believe the success of such expeditions largely depends on the willingness of communities to preserve their own mother tongue. With growing interest in language diversity, it may be possible for fading languages to get a new lease on life. Awareness of language preservation has steadily grown with the emergence of state funded language programs, introducing minor languages at the college level and establishment of new academic centers devoted to the study of endangered languages. Ganesh Murmu, a Linguist in Ranchi University, believes most tribal communities will surely welcome the attention towards the safeguard of their language, but even the selection of a language by a community/individual speaker is a matter of status quo. Though the people of the communities believe that "we too have status, we too have identity"[viii] but slowly it is fading away.

The extinction of each language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique culture, historical and ecological knowledge. Each language is a unique expression of the human experience of the world. Every time a language dies, we have less evidence for understanding patterns in the structure and function of human language, human prehistory and the maintenance of the world's diverse ecosystems. The speakers of the language may experience the loss of their language as a loss of their original ethnic and cultural identity.

Khortha needs to be revitalized and the revitalization process should perhaps consider the following suggestions:

a) Assessment of the language's current situation, number of speakers, context in which the speaker's live;

b) Facts about their attitudes displayed, speaker fluency, accuracy, and age levels, rate of decline;

c) Cost involved in creating dictionary and educational books;

d) Fund raising for the language preservation program should be run in different communities;

e) Publicity campaigns and promotion of fresh public attitude towards languages;

f) Community must sense the need to save the language;

g) Culture should respect the minority languages;

h) Political willingness to provide fund for research and development; and

i) Linguists need to do sufficient research and document/archive the language. There is a need to record, analyze and to script it down.

Conclusion

It is estimated that, in the absence of adequate measures half of 6000 plus languages spoken today will disappear by the end of this century. With the disappearance of unwritten and undocumented languages, humanity would lose not only a cultural wealth but also important ancestral knowledge embedded, in particular, in indigenous languages. However, this

process is neither inevitable nor irreversible: well-planned and implemented language policies can bolster the ongoing efforts of speaker communities to maintain or revitalize their mother tongues and pass them on to younger generations. According to UNESCO, promoting idea of language is an inalienable cultural right. It has already built it into charter of sustainable development goals (SGDs). India is a formal signatory to charter. It is the state's obligation to secure and protect the community's right to its language.

Khortha is showcasing the features which can surely hamper its true nature. Despite being vulnerable, the language is rich in culture and as it has been rightly stated "every language is a living museum, a monument to every culture it has been vehicle to" (Daniel Nettle & Suzanne Romaine, 2000:14) becomes essential to preserve the language and thereby safeguard a fading away culture.

Notes

[i]. Referred site(http://indianexpress.com/article/research/international-mother-language-day-2018-ganesh-devy-indian-languages-5072487/) accessed on : 10th March,2018

[ii] Moseley, Christopher (ed.). 2010. Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, 3rd edn. Paris, UNESCO Publishing.

[iii]   http://www.readwhere.com/publisher/khortha-lipi-aar-vyakaran-by-dr-nageshwar-mahato/37415 accessed on 7th April 2016

[iv] Names of the villages from where the data has been collected: Chaudhary Bandh, Sadhobad, Kharni, Babudih, Manjhladih, Sanwalpur, Murradih, Kalyanpur, Budhwaser, Katanla Ojhadih, Birajpur, Jainagar, Pipratanda, Bogla Basti, and Sawalpur.

[v] Sentence list based on Anvita Abbi's Manual for Field linguistics

[vi] Word list from CK Ogden

[vii] Introducing Khortha in the colleges at the post graduate level and as an optional paper in JPSC(Jharkhand Public Service Commission.) See Shankarlal C Bhatt, *Language and Literature, 2006* .Vo.12

[viii]Singh, K.S. 1994. The Scheduled Tribes, Delhi.

References

Azhar, I. N. "Factors that contribute code shifting in Madurese people's writing: an ethnolinguistic study viewed from sociolinguistics perspective." Journal *BAHASA DAN SENI Tahun* 37, Nomor 2, Agustus 2009.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285962634_FACTORS_THAT_CONTRIBUTE_CODE_SHIFT ING_IN_MADURESE_PEOPLE_WRITING_An_Ethnolinguistics_Study_Viewed_From_Sociolinguistics_ Perspective. (Accessed 11 February 2018).

Bell, R.T. 1976. *Sociolinguistics-Goals approaches and problems*. London: B.T. Batstord Ltd.

Bhatt, Shankarlal C. and Gopal K. Bhargava. 2006. *Language and literature; land and people of Indian states and Union Territories*. Vol.12. Jharkhand.

Campbell, Lyle; Lee, Nala Huiying; Okura, Eve; Simpson, Sean; Ueki, Kaori. 2013. *New Knowledge: Findings from the Catalogue of Endangered Languages ("ELCat").* 3rd International Conference on Language Documentation & Conservation.

Chakrabarti, D. 1999. *India, an archaeological history*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

"Census of India 2001."censusindia.gov.in/2011-common/censusdataonline.html. (Accessed 8 January 2018).

Crystal, David. 2008. "Understanding mixed code and classroom, code-switching: myths and realities." *New Horizon Journal*, Vol. 56.3.,19-27.

Crystal, David. 2000. *Language Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, David. "Language death." Radio talk for *Lingua Franca* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation); reproduced on e-mesh ltd web site, Nov 2000, and adapted for *Quicksilver* (Spring2001), 74-6. file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/Langdeath12.pdf. (Accessed 10 February 2018).

Crystal, David. "Death sentence." The *Guardian G2*, 25 October 1999, 2-3; adaptation of *Prospect* article by *The Guardian*; further adaptation by *Spotlight* (March 2000) 14-20.

Das, Pradeep K. 2013. "Ergativity in Khortha. http://www.academia.edu/23020698/Ergativity_in_Khortha_an_enigmatic_phenomenon. (Accessed 10 January 2018).

"Ethnologue report on Indian Language." https://www.ethnologue.com/.(Accessed 6 January 2018).

Essizewa, K. E. "Language contact phenomena in Togo: A case study of Kabiye- Ewe code-switching."

http://www.lingref.com/cpp/acal/37/paper1593.pdf. (Accessed 10 February 2018).

Feuerstein G, S. Kak and D. Frawley. 1995. *In search of the cradle of civilization*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas.

Gajrani, S. 2004. *History, Religion and Culture of Eastern India, Vol.4,* Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

Gnanasundram, V. 1982. 'Conditions for the code mixing behaviour'. Third International Conference on South Asian Languages and Linguistics.

Gupta, Kulwant Rai and Amit Gupta. 2006. *Concise Encyclopedia of India.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.

Holmes, Janet. 1992. *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. London: Longman.

Hudson, R.A. 1980. *Sociolinguistics*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Kumar, N. 2015. "Urban continuum in Jharkhand: beyond the state formation." *IJRANSS*, Vo.3.1, January.

Lal, Mohan. 1992. *Encyclopedia of Indian Literature: Sasay to Zorgot. Vol. V*, New Delhi: Sahiyta Akademi.

Landweer, M. L. 2001. Indicators of ethnolinguistic vitality.Notes on Sociolinguistics, 5.1:5-22. http://www.sil.org/sociolx/ndg-lg-indicators.html. (Accessed 10 February 2018).

"Language policy of India." shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/11248/10/10_chapter%203.pdf. (Accessed 8 January 2018).

Mallikarjun, B. 2002. "Mother tongues of India according to the 1961 census." *Languages in India*, Vol. 2.5, August.

Minz, Diwakar and Delo Mai Hansda. 2010. *Encyclopedia of schedule tribes of Jharkhand,* Delhi: Kalpaz Publications.

Pati, Jagannath. "Media and Tribal Development."

https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Media_and_Tribal_Development.html?id=SK4Zt-OJ5LkC&redir_esc=y. (Accessed 18 January 2018).

Pattanayak, Binay. "Language diversity in Jharkhand."

http://www.academia.edu/4227936/Language_Diversity_in_Jharkhand. (Accessed 2 January 2018).

Peterson, John. 2010. "Language contact in Jharkhand. Linguistic convergence between Munda and Indo-Aryan in eastern central India." *Himalayan Linguistics,* 9.2: 56-86. (Accessed 8 January 2018).

"Revive India's 196 endangered languages." PTI, The Hindu (Oct 23, 2009).

http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/revive-indias-196-endangered-languages-experts/article37802.ece. (Accessed 20 January 2018).

Singh, K.S. 1994. *The Scheduled Tribes*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Singh, Prabhat. 'Nurturing linguistic diversity in Jharkhand- Role of MT'.

http://www.epw.in/journal/2014/51/commentary/nurturing-linguistic-diversity-jharkhand.html. (Accessed 18 January 2018).

Sivaramkrishnan, K.C. and B. N. Singh. "Urbanisation." *Trends of urbanization: growth pattern, annual urban development plan 2010 and 2011.*

http:// www.planningcommission.nic.in/reports/sereport/ser/vision2025/urban.doc.

(Accessed 12 January 2018).

UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing (2009)

www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/. (Accessed 5 January 2018).

Vidyarthi, L.P. 1976. *Tribal Culture of India*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

"Official Website of Government of Jharkhand." http://www.jharkhand.gov.in/ (Accessed 12 January 2018).

"Kurmis in Jharkhand demand reservation under ST category." http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/kurmis-in-jharkhand-demand-reservation-under-st-category-115091400411_1.html. (Accessed 30 January 2018).

"Kurmi." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurmi. (Accessed 5 January 2018).

"Tribes in Jharkhand." *https://www.mapsofindia.com/jharkhand/people-culture-festivals/tribes.html.* (Accessed 8 January 2018).

Swati Priya is a part time research scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT(ISM) Dhanbad. Her areas of research and interests include, sociolinguistics and neurolinguistics. Email: swati.jha@hotmail.com

Rajni Singh is Associate Professor of English at IIT(ISM) Dhanbad, India. She specializes in Modern Literature, Postcolonial and Feminist Studies. She has published articles in reputed journals like *Archiv Orientalni*, *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, *Time Present*, *IJHCS*, *Folklore Fellows* and authored books on T.S. Eliot. Email: rajnisingh18@gmail.com.