



RESEARCH ARTICLE

**LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHAKMA**

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*(Research Scholar, Department Of Linguistics, Assam University, Silchar)**(Associate Professor, Department Of Linguistics, Assam University, Silchar)*jonalisaikia799@gmail.com , marykimhaokip@gmail.comDoi: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2023.10310>**ABSTRACT**

The objective of the paper is to study the nature and degree of language endangerment with special reference to Chakma spoken in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh. Chakma is spoken mostly in Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya and West Bengal of India and in some parts of Burma. The total population of Chakmas in India according to the 2011 census was 2, 26,860 persons and 42,333 in Arunachal Pradesh. The Chakmas have resemblance with the Tibeto-Burman group but they speak an Indo-Aryan language, which they call Chakma. The present study is based on fieldwork conducted in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh, India. The paper aims to look into the language endangerment of Chakma and the causes leading to language endangerment. The attitudes of the native speakers towards the language will also be assessed. The suggestions will be provided to save the language from further endangerment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As George Van Driem (2007) puts it, "Not only can ideas and memes go extinct, entire conceptualisations of reality are wiped off the map when language go extinct." Due to the technological advancements, globalization or modernization, we all see the changes in our own culture and tradition, which results in the endangerment of the language or the folklore of the community. According to the UNESCO report 2021, 40% of the estimated 7,000 approximate languages around the world are endangered, out of which most of them are indigenous languages. The phenomenon leading towards the extinction or loss of a language is known as language endangerment. The primary drivers of indigenous language loss involve different factors i.e., social, economic, and political subjugation of indigenous peoples, including centuries of social exclusion and poverty, genocide, forced displacement, policies of assimilation etc. This paper aims to look into the language endangerment of Chakma and the causes that leads to language endangerment in the language based on UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment Framework.

2. CHAKMA: AN OVERVIEW

Chakma (ISO 639-3 Code: CCP) is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya and West Bengal of India and in some parts of Burma. They speak an Indo-Aryan language, which they call *Chakma*. The total population of Chakmas in India according to the 2011 census was 2,26,860 persons, with 96,972 persons in Mizoram, 79,813 in Tripura, 2,032 in Assam, 466 in West Bengal, 106 in Meghalaya and 47,471 in Arunachal Pradesh. They are followers of Buddhism. The Chakmas are multilingual primarily with the knowledge of Chakma, (their mother tongue), Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, and English.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the paper is to examine the nature and degree of language endangerment based on

UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment Framework. The paper aims to look into the causes of language endangerment. The paper also aims to look into the attitudes of the native speakers towards the language and also provide the suggestions to save the language from further endangerment.

4. METHODOLOGY

Data was collected from Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh. The interview method was used to collect data. The native speakers were interviewed and data were recorded. The devices used during the fieldwork were a recorder (Sony ICD-PX240 MP3 Digital Voice) and a phone (Vivo Y21L) for data recordings. Data were also collected from secondary sources like, books, journals, and online resources.

5. FACTORS RESPONSIBILITY FOR LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages presented a draft report on 2003 entitled Language Vitality and Endangerment. This draft discusses the six major factors for language endangerment. The six factors are: 1) Intergenerational Language Transmission; 2) Absolute Number of Speakers; 3) Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population; 4) Trends in Existing Language Domains; 5) Response to New Domains and Media; and 6) Materials for Language Education and Literacy.

The most commonly used factor in evaluating the vitality of a language is whether or not it is being transmitted from one generation to the next (Fishman 1991). Endangerment can be ranked on a continuum from stability to extinction. Even "safe" (below), however, does not guarantee language vitality, because at any time speakers may cease to pass on their language to the next generation. Six degrees of endangerment may be distinguished with regards to Intergenerational Language Transmission:

Safe (5): The language is spoken by all generations. There is no sign of linguistic threat from



any other language, and the intergenerational transmission of the language seems uninterrupted.

Stable yet threatened (5-): The language is spoken in most contexts by all generations with unbroken intergenerational transmission, yet multilingualism in the native language and one or more dominant language(s) has usurped certain important communication contexts. Note that multilingualism alone is not necessarily a threat to languages.

Unsafe (4): Most but not all children or families of a particular community speak their language as their first language, but it may be restricted to specific social domains (such as at home where children interact with their parents and grandparents).

Definitively endangered (3): The language is no longer being learned as the mother tongue by children in the home. The youngest speakers are thus of the parental generation. At this stage, parents may still speak their language to their children, but their children do not typically respond in the language.

Severely endangered (2): The language is spoken only by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may still understand the language, they typically do not speak it to their children.

Critically endangered (1): The youngest speakers are in the great-grandparental generation, and the language is not used for everyday interactions. These older people often remember only part of the language but do not use it, since there may not be anyone to speak with.

Extinct (0): There is no one who can speak or remember the language.

Table 1: Degree of Endangerment

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Speaker Population
<i>Safe</i>	5	The language is used by all ages, from children up.
<i>Unsafe</i>	4	The language is used by some children in all domains; it is used by all children in limited domains.
<i>Definitively endangered</i>	3	The language is used mostly by the parental generation and up.
<i>Severely endangered</i>	2	The language is used mostly by the grandparental generation and up.
<i>Critically endangered</i>	1	The language is used mostly by very few speakers, of great-grandparental generation.
Extinct	0	There exists no speaker.

**5.2 ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS**

A small speech community is always at risk. A small population is much more vulnerable to decimation (e.g., by disease, warfare, or natural disaster) than a larger one. A small language group may also merge with a neighbouring group, losing its own language and culture.

5.3 PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS WITHIN THE TOTAL POPULATION

The number of speakers in relation to the total population of a group is a significant indicator of language vitality, where "group" may refer to the ethnic, religious, regional, or national group with which the speaker community identifies. The following scale can be used to appraise degrees of endangerment.

Table 2: Proportion of speakers within the total reference population

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population
<i>Safe</i>	5	All speak the language.
<i>Unsafe</i>	4	Nearly all speak the language.
<i>Definitely endangered</i>	3	A majority speak the language.
<i>Severely endangered</i>	2	A minority speak the language.
<i>Critically endangered</i>	1	Very few speak the language.
Extinct	0	None speak the language.

5.4 TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Where, with whom, and the range of topics for which a language is used directly affects whether or not it will be transmitted to the next generation.

Universal use (5): The language of the ethnolinguistic group is the language of interaction, identity, thinking, creativity, and entertainment, and is actively used in all discourse domains for all purposes.

Multilingual parity (4): One or more dominant languages, rather than the language of the ethnolinguistic group, is/are the primary language(s) in most official domains: government, public offices, and educational institutions. The language in question, however, may well continue to be integral to a number of public domains, especially in traditional religious institutions, local stores, and those places where members of the community socialize. The coexistence of the dominant and non-

dominant languages results in speakers' using each language for a different function (diglossia), whereby the non-dominant language is used in informal and home contexts and the dominant language is used in official and public contexts. Speakers may consider the dominant language to be the language of social and economic opportunity. However, older members of the community may continue to use only their own minority language. Note that multilingualism, common throughout the world, does not necessarily lead to language loss.

Dwindling domains (3): The non-dominant language loses ground and, at home, parents begin to use the dominant language in their everyday interactions with their children, and children become semi-speakers of their own language (receptive bilinguals). Parents and older members of the community tend to be productively bilingual in the dominant and indigenous languages: they understand and speak both. Bilingual children may



exist in families where the indigenous language is actively used.

Limited or formal domains (2): The non-dominant language is used only in highly formal domains, as especially in ritual and administration. The language may also still be used at the community centre, at festivals, and at ceremonial occasions where these older members of the community have a chance to meet. The limited domain may also include homes where grandparents and other older extended family members reside, and other

traditional gathering places of the elderly. Many people can understand the language but cannot speak it.

Highly limited domain (1): The non-dominant language is used in very restricted domains at special occasions, usually by very few individuals in a community, e.g., ritual leaders on ceremonial occasions. Some other individuals may remember at least some of the language (rememberers).

Extinct (0): The language is not spoken at any place at any time.

Table 3: Domains and Functions

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Domains and Functions
<i>Safe</i>	5	The language is used in all domains and for all functions
<i>Unsafe</i>	4	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.
<i>Definitely endangered</i>	3	The language is in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.
<i>Severely endangered</i>	2	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions
<i>Critically endangered</i>	1	The language is used only in a very restricted domains and for a very few functions
Extinct	0	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.

5.5 RESPONSE TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA

New areas for language use may emerge as community living conditions change. While some language communities do succeed in expanding their own language into the new domain, most do not. Schools, new work environments, new media, including broadcast media and the Internet, usually serve only to expand the scope and power of the dominant language at the expense of endangered

languages. Although no existing domains of the endangered language may be lost, the use of the dominant language in the new domain has mesmerizing power, as with television.

In education, assigning criteria can be based on two dimensions: up to what level, and how broadly across the curriculum, the endangered language is used. An endangered language which is



the medium of instruction for all courses and at all levels will rank much higher than an endangered language that is taught only one hour per week. All new domains, be they in employment, education, or

the media, must be considered together when assessing an endangered language community's response.

Table 4: Response to new domains and media

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language
<i>Safe</i>	5	The language is used in all new domains.
<i>Unsafe</i>	4	The language is used in most new domains.
<i>Definitely endangered</i>	3	The language is used in many domains.
<i>Severely endangered</i>	2	The language is used in some new domains.
<i>Critically endangered</i>	1	The language is used only in a few new domains.
Extinct	0	The language is not used in any new domains.

5.6 Materials for Language Education and Literacy

Education in the language is essential for language vitality. There are language communities that maintain strong oral traditions, and some do not wish their language to be written. In other communities, literacy in their language is a source of pride. In

general, however, literacy is directly linked with social and economic development. Study materials need to cover all the topics and for various age group and for different language levels.

Table 5: Materials for Language Education and Literacy

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials
5	There is an established orthography, literacy tradition with grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.
3	Written materials exist and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community; and for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.
1	A practical orthography is known to the community and some material is being written.
0	No orthography available to the community.

**5.6.1 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES**

The maintenance, promotion, or abandonment of non-dominant languages may be dictated by the dominant linguistic culture, be it regional or national. The linguistic ideology of a state may inspire linguistic minorities to mobilize their populations toward the maintenance of their languages, or may force them to abandon them. These linguistic attitudes can be a powerful force both for promotion and loss of their languages.

When several larger linguistic communities compete for the same political or social space, they may each have their own conflicting linguistic attitudes. This leads to the general perception that multiple languages cause divisiveness and are a threat to national unity. The fostering of a single dominant language is one attempt to deal with this real or merely perceived threat. In doing so, the governing body may legislate the use of language. Accordingly, the policies may discourage or even prohibit the use of other languages. National policy, including the lack of overt policy, has in any case a direct impact on the language attitude of the community itself.

5.6.2 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES: DOMINANT AND NON-DOMINANT LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

A country's government may have an explicit language use policy for its multiple languages. At one extreme, one language may be designated as the sole official language of the country, while all others are condemned. At the other extreme, all languages of a nation may receive equal official status. Equal legal status, however, does not guarantee language maintenance and long-term vitality of a language.

5.7 GOVERNMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES, INCLUDING OFFICIAL STATUS AND USE

Governments and institutions have explicit policies and/or implicit attitudes toward the dominant and subordinate languages.

Equal support (5): All of a country's languages are valued as assets. All languages are protected by law, and the government encourages the maintenance of all languages by implementing explicit policies.

Differentiated support (4): Non-dominant languages are explicitly protected by the government, but there are clear differences in the contexts in which the dominant/official language(s) and non-dominant (protected) language(s) are used. The government encourages ethnolinguistic groups to maintain and use their languages, most often in private domains (as the home language), rather than in public domains (e.g., in schools). Some of the domains of non-dominant language use enjoy high prestige (e.g., at ceremonial occasions).

Passive assimilation (3): The dominant group is indifferent as to whether or not minority languages are spoken, as long as the dominant group's language is the language of interaction. Though this is not an explicit language policy, the dominant group's language is the de facto official language. Most domains of non-dominant language use do not enjoy high prestige.

Active assimilation (2): The government encourages minority groups to abandon their own languages by providing education for the minority group members in the dominant language. Speaking and/or writing in non-dominant languages is not encouraged.

Forced assimilation (1): The government has an explicit language policy declaring the dominant group's language to be the only official national language, while the languages of subordinate groups are neither recognized nor supported.

Prohibition (0): Minority languages are prohibited from use in any domain. Languages may be tolerated in private domains.

**Table 6: Government Attitudes toward Language**

Degree of support	Grade	Official Attitudes toward Language
equal support	5	All languages are protected.
differentiated support	4	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains. The use of the language is prestigious.
passive assimilation	3	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.
active assimilation	2	Government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.
forced assimilation	1	The dominant language is the sole official language, while non-dominant languages are neither recognized nor protected.
prohibition	0	Minority languages are prohibited.

5.8 COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

Members of a speech community are not usually neutral towards their own language. They may see it as essential to their community and identity and promote it; they may use it without promoting it; they may be ashamed of it and, therefore, not

promote it; or they may see it as a nuisance and actively avoid using it.

When members' attitudes towards their language are positive, the language may be seen as a key symbol of group identity. If members view their language as hindrance to economic mobility and integration into mainstream society, they may develop negative attitudes toward their language.

Table 7: Community Members' Attitudes toward Language

Grade	Community Members' Attitudes toward Language
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted.
4	Most members support language maintenance.
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language.

**5.8.1 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES: INTERACTION AND SOCIAL EFFECTS**

Attitudes towards the language, be they positive, indifferent, or negative, interact with governmental policy and societal pressures to result in increased or decreased language use in different domains.

When languages have an unequal power relationship, members of the subordinate group usually speak both their native language and the dominant language. Speakers may gradually come to use only the dominant language. On the other hand, the subordinate group may resist linguistic domination and mobilize its members to revitalize or fortify their language. Strategies for such linguistic activism must be tailored to the particular sociolinguistic situation, which generally is one of three types:

a. **Language Revival:** re-introducing a language that has been in limited use for some time, such as Hebrew after the creation of the state of Israel, or Gaelic in Ireland;

b. **Language Fortification:** increasing the presence of the non-dominant language to counterbalance a perceived linguistic threat of a dominant language, such as Welsh;

c. **Language Maintenance:** supporting the stable use, in speaking and in writing (where orthographies exist), of the non-dominant language in a region or state with both multilingualism and a dominant

language (lingua franca), such as Maori in New Zealand.

For language vitality, speakers ideally not only strongly value their language, but they also know in which social domains their language is to be supported. A positive attitude is critical for the long-term stability of a language.

5.8.2 URGENCY FOR DOCUMENTATION

As guided for assessing the urgency of documenting a language, the types and quality of existing language materials must be identified. This constitutes the factors in the assessment of language endangerment.

5.9 AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

As a guide for assessing the urgency for documenting a language, the type and quality of existing language materials must be identified. Of central importance are written texts, including transcribed, translated, and annotated audiovisual recordings of natural speech. Such information importantly helps members of the language community formulate specific tasks, and enables linguists to design research projects together with members of the language community.

Table 8: Language Documentation

Nature of Documentation	Grade	Language Documentation
superlative	5	There are comprehensive grammars and dictionaries, extensive texts; constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.
good	4	There are one good grammar and a number of adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.



fair	3	There may be an adequate grammar or sufficient amount of grammars, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.
fragmentary	2	There are some grammatical sketches, word-lists, and texts useful for limited linguistic research but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality, with or without any annotation.
inadequate	1	Only a few grammatical sketches, short wordlists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are of unusable quality, or are completely un-annotated.
undocumented	0	No material exists

6. ASSESSMENT OF THE DEGREE OF LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT FOR CHAKMA

Based on the factors discussed above regarding responsibility for Language Endangerment, this section discusses the nature and degree of language endangerment in Chakma.

6.1 INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION

The Chakmas are multilinguals primarily with the knowledge of Bengali, Hindi, English and Assamese. The neighbouring dominating languages like

Assamese and Bengali are influencing their language and as a result of which there is an increase in the number of borrowings. It has been observed that the children are fluent speakers of their mother tongue but they do not read and write in the language. With the Chakma of Papumpare district, the language is transmitted to the younger generation as most of the children are using Chakma language as their first language. However, intergenerational transmission is gradually declining in the present-day context. Following table shows the language used by different age-groups.

Table 9: Language used by different age-groups

Age groups	Language used
60-above	Chakma, Bengali
40-60	Chakma, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali
20-40	Chakma, Hindi, English, Assamese, Bengali
Children	Chakma

At the present scenario, it is considered as a matter of prestige if a child speaks other dominant languages. The older generation encouraged their children to study in English or Hindi medium schools.

Therefore, the language can be said to be unsafe and slowly moving towards definitely endangered.



6.2 ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF SPEAKERS

The total Chakma population is 5,50,000 approximately. The majority, 2,39,417 in 1991 Census¹ reside in Chittagong Hill Tracts, 15,000 in Assam, 64, 293 in Tripura (*Census, 2001*), 71,283 in Mizoram, 42,333 in Arunachal Pradesh (*Census, 2001*) and 20,000 in Arakan. The total population of Chakmas in India according to the 2011 census was 2,26,860 persons, with 96,972 persons in Mizoram, 79,813 in Tripura, 2,032 in Assam, 466 in West Bengal, 106 in Meghalaya and 47,471 in Arunachal Pradesh. The absolute number of the speakers according to the census of 2001 and 2011 of Arunachal Pradesh is given in the following table.

Table 10: Absolute Number of Speakers

Year	2001	2011
Chakma	42,333	47,471

Considering the total number of speakers, Chakma is a definitely endangered language.

6.3 PROPORTION OF SPEAKERS WITHIN THE TOTAL POPULATION

Chakmas are scattered in different geographical regions of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. In Arunachal Pradesh, the Chakmas reside in Papumpare, Lohit and Changlang districts. It is very interesting to notice that the same community is living under different political status in different states of India. The Chakmas in Mizoram, Tripura and Assam are not only Indian citizens but also recognized as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution of India. However, in Arunachal Pradesh, Chakmas are still treated as refugee with no political rights.

¹ Retrieved from http://www.ijpnus.org/jumma_ethnic_group, on 12.03.18

Table 11: Ratio of Chakma within the Total Population in Arunachal Pradesh

Total Population of Arunachal Pradesh	1,383,727
Total Chakma Population of Arunachal Pradesh	47,471
Ratio	3.4%

From the table, this language can be categorized as definitely endangered taking the proportion of speakers within the total population in Arunachal Pradesh.

6.4 TRENDS IN EXISTING LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Where, with whom, and the range of topics for which a language is used directly affects whether or not it will be transmitted to the next generation. Table 12 shows the various domains and age groups and the usage of different languages among the people of Papumpare.²

Table 12: Domains of Language Use

Domains	Language Use
Home	Chakma
Education	Hindi, English, Bengali
Market (local)	Chakma
Market (non-Chakma areas)	Hindi, Assamese, Bengali
Village meetings	Chakma

Most of the Chakmas are multilinguals. Therefore, we can say that the use of language in different domains is decreasing rapidly.

² The information is presented in the tables on the basis of questionnaires which is used to collect data during the fieldwork.

**6.5 RESPONSE TO NEW DOMAINS AND MEDIA**

The impact of globalization gives opportunity for the Chakmas to integrate their culture with the contemporary life style of the advanced parts of the world. Chakma language finds no place in the public domains as it is neither the official language of the state nor it is the language of education in Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the response of the language to new domains and media is minimal and is somehow managing in some digital media like Facebook, YouTube, etc.

6.6 MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Chakma has its own script named *ojhaphath* but, they use the Bengali script for writing. It is interesting to note that in Tripura and Mizoram, Chakma is used for education in the schools (class I to class VIII). However, in Arunachal Pradesh, it has not been implemented till date. There is no available materials for language education and literacy in Arunachal Pradesh.

6.7 GOVERNMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES

Chakma is not an official language in any states where it is spoken. In Arunachal Pradesh, Chakma people are considered as migrant and have no independent identity as a community. Therefore, we can say that with regard to official attitudes towards language, Chakma can be said to be unprotected and

gets passive assimilation. Therefore, this language needs serious attention in this regard.

6.8 COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

The community member's attitude toward Chakma can be considered negative. Although the older generation is still trying to retain the language, the younger generation tend to have less fluency than the older generation. In other words, intergenerational transmission of the language is declining. Moreover, there is a difference between the Chakma used by the older and younger generations. This difference comes in case of pronunciation, use of words, modification of words and this in turn leads to creation of new words. The actual pronunciation of any word can be dependable only from the older generation i.e., between the ages of 50-80 years. The age group between 40-60 years uses the words that are slightly different from the older ones or a modification in the usages.

6.9 AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION

There is a very limited written literature available in Chakma language. There are a few books written about the socio-political condition in Bengali. Therefore, we can say, the type and quality of documentation of Chakma is inadequate and still needs a lot of support.

Based on the above discussion, the degree of language endangerment in Chakma may be summarized in the following table.

Table 13: Estimated Degree of Endangerment in Chakma

Intergenerational Language Transmission	3 Definitely Endangered
Absolute Number of Speakers	47,471
Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population	3 Definitely Endangered
Trends in Existing Language Domain	3 Dwindling domain
Response to New Domains and Media	1 Minimal
Materials for Language Education and Literacy	1 A practical orthography is known to the community



	and some material is being written.
Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies	3 Passive assimilation
Community Members' Attitudes toward Their own Language	3 Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
Amount and Quality of Documentation	1 Only a few grammatical sketches, short wordlists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are of unusable quality, or are completely un-annotated.

7. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENDANGERMENT OF CHAKMA

The following factors are responsible for the endangerment of Chakma.

1. The increasing migration, intermarriage, and rapid urbanization often bring along the loss of traditional ways of life and a strong pressure to speak a more prestigious language, which is perceived to be necessary for full civic participation and economic advancement.
2. It is very interesting to notice that the same community is living under different political status in different states in India. The Chakmas in Mizoram, Tripura and Assam are not only Indian citizens but also recognized as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution of India. However, in Arunachal Pradesh, Chakmas are still treated as refugee with no political rights.
3. The rich indigenous culture of Chakma is gradually disappearing due to globalization, modernization, westernization and urbanization. Only the older people are preserving the tradition and culture.
4. The older people use all the lexical items related to culture, food habits, flora-fauna including medical plants, games, house hold materials etc. However, the younger generation use Hindi, English, Bengali and

Assamese language, leading to further language endangerment.

5. There is no Chakma medium educational institution for learning or imparting mother tongue education in Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, students go to English, Hindi and Assamese medium schools further leading to language shift and language endangerment.
6. Chakma has its own script or writing system but they mostly use Bengali script to write their mother tongue leading to lack of written literature in Chakma language.

8. OBSERVATIONS

The present study shows that the Chakma in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh is an endangered language and intergenerational transmission is declining under the pressure of globalization, modernization and urbanization. Chakma has other socio-linguistic influences such as language contact with other neighbouring languages (Bengali, Assamese and Hindi). If we see the total population of Chakmas, they are approximately five lakhs, which is not a minority group. However, because of the nature of their distribution in different states in India and the neighbouring countries, (Bangladesh and Myanmar) they can be considered as definitely endangered.

Chakmas are mostly multilinguals. In the home domain, they use Chakma to communicate within their own community, regional languages such as



Assamese and Bengali to communicate with the neighbouring communities and English for wider communication.

According to Census 2011, the literacy rate of the Chakmas in Papumpare district is 43.85%. The male members of the community are literate and their basic education is till matriculation. It is very rare to find literate women in the community. There is no mother tongue education and there is no scope for learning the language. Therefore, it is very important to implement mother tongue education in the formal educational institutions in Chakma spoken areas.

There is an urgent need to improve and develop the Chakma language and this needs proper planning and documentation. With rapid globalization and modernization process, there is an urgent need to preserve the rich and vibrant folklore and culture of the Chakmas.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the research findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. Traditional cultures of the tribe should be legally protected.
2. Government should take initiatives relating to traditional culture and folk life of the tribal community.
3. Community awareness programmes such as seminars, workshops etc. should be organized among the people.
4. Government should take measures for the preservation of culture and traditions of the tribal community.
5. Government should take initiatives to implement the language in the schools in Chakma in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh.
6. The younger generation should be encouraged to learn their language.
7. Government should take initiatives to protect and promote the traditional norms and values of the Chakmas.

8. Community club should be established to preserve the art, history, tradition and culture of the Chakmas.

10. CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the study that language endangerment is increasing due to globalization, modernisation and other factors. This is particularly true of languages with no socio-political rights, like Chakma, where shifting to the dominant neighbouring language is a very common phenomenon. A large number of people, due to absence of sufficient facilities for survival are migrating from one place to another. In the process, the community people are leaving their aboriginal way of living and adopting new lifestyles for adjustments. In the process of migration, these people not only come under pressure trying to adjust with the modern value system but also feel threatened with their loss of cultural identity including their traditional tribal values. A language is in danger when the native speakers no longer pass their language to the future generation. Proper steps should be taken and awareness programs must be conducted regarding all these issues. Keeping this in mind, the present paper attempted to discuss various issues regarding to language endangerment and suggested measures for safeguarding the language of the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh.

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