

Communities should work for preserving endangered languages

Zeenews (23 October 2009)

New Delhi - Concerned over findings that around 196 languages stood endangered in India, experts here today said efforts should be made to preserve them and communities should take a lead in reviving their languages.

A number of experts and specialists from various parts of the world gathered in the capital for a two-day seminar to analyse UNESCO's findings on endangered languages in India, and to discuss ways to revive them.

According to the UNESCO Atlas of the world's languages in danger 2009, the country has around 196 endangered languages, including about 120 in Northeast, which are among the highest in the world.

"Efforts should be made to preserve languages and communities whose mother tongues are under threat of extinction should actively work for reviving them," said Jean Robert Opgenort, a UNESCO researcher for endangered languages.

The seminar was organised by heritage conservation body INTACH to press for the "need to value and preserve" the rich heritage of India's composite culture.

"The finding by the UNESCO is a matter of concern. So the emphasis needs to be given on ways to preserve the country's heritage," INTACH chairman S K Misra said earlier.

According to UNESCO findings, there are around 44 endangered languages in Himalayan states of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand while there are about 42 endangered languages in Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.