

Investigating the Language Shift among the Kuṇha Speakers of Odisha

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine the relationship between the choice of language in different domains of language use and the change from Dravidian to Indo-Aryan among the Kisan tribe of Odisha. It seeks to vividly depict a connection between language use and ideology among speakers, which finally results in linguistic shift. Access to the language ideologies of Kuṇha, a Dravidian language spoken by the Kisan tribe of Odisha, offers crucial insight into how Kuṇha speakers gradually accepted the main Indo-Aryan languages of the region, such as Odia and Hindi, as their native tongue. This study explores the many areas of language usage in two villages in the Sundergarh region of Odisha using a questionnaire and a tape-recorded sociolinguistic interview. Results indicate that language usage varies between domains. Second, the bulk of the younger generation picks either Hindi or Odia, based on their exposure to the teaching language in schools. The ideological superiority of Hindi and Odia has been the motivating force behind the ongoing linguistic shift among the Kuṇha speakers of Odisha.

Keywords: Language ideology, language use, linguistic domain, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan

1. INTRODUCTION

The geographic setting of the Kisan tribe in Odisha presents an intriguing snapshot of the linguistic diversity in the region. The Kisan tribe is in direct interaction with both Indo-Aryan and