

Hindukush Cultural Conference

Exploring the Hindukush for Cultural
Diversity, Revitalization and Development

14 - 16 September, 2022

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FLI partnered in organizing of the Mother Language Literature Festival in Islamabad.

FLI appreciated Kataviri language researchers for their cooperation in successful execution of a documentation project which produced five books in their language.



Message from Executive Director

Assalamo Alaikum and Hello,

I am happy to present to you this year's report in a brief structure, letting you know what and how we did throughout the calendar year of 2022. The most challenging, and at the same time inspiring, activity was the organizing of a conference at an international level during this year. FLI partnered with one of its partner organizations from Northern Pakistan, Ajuman Taraqqi Khowar (ATK), to make the 4th International Hindukush Cultural Conference happen in its target area of Chitral. It was not an easy task given the nature of the event, repeatedly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which tested our nerves and patience. I'm thankful to our donors for demonstrating their trust in us to organize this huge event, and to our partners who worked tirelessly and did not give up in the face of hardships and challenges. My team also deserves appreciation for their hard work during the year, particularly in organizing this conference.

Please go through the report to see our other activities that show how my team executed our plans to strengthen indigenous languages and empower language communities during the year. I once again express my gratitude to all those involved with us in doing so.

Thanks.

Fakhruddin

Executive Director of FLI, Islamabad.



4th International Hindukush Cultural Conference Held in Chitral

FLI partnered with Anjuman Taraqqi Khawar (ATK), Chitral, in organizing the 4th International Hindukush Cultural Conference from September 14 to 16, 2022, in Chitral town of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. A total of 75 research papers out of 85 originally submitted, covering the Hindukush region, were presented in the mega event. The presenters came from around the world including those who participated as keynote speakers. Six keynote speeches, two on each day, were delivered. Those who could not participate physically were facilitated to present their papers digitally in the form of a recorded presentation, with the presenters subsequently making themselves available for answering questions at the end of their presentation. The sessions of the three day conference were spread between four rooms, allowing the attendees to choose their topics of interest. More than 200 people registered to participate in the conference. The main hall, filled with 200 chairs, hosted all the keynote speeches that began each day. The participants would then disperse to other rooms to attend sessions of their interest.

The 4th International Hindukush Cultural Conference was an academic and scholarly activity in continuation of the first conference held in Moesgaard, Denmark, in 1970. The 2022 conference commemorated the golden jubilee of that first conference. The 2nd International Hindukush Cultural Conference was hosted by the Anjuman in Chitral in August 1990, with Professor Israruddin (Chairman, Department of Geography, University of Peshawar) as convener and Dr Karl Jettmar (South Asian Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany) as General President. The 3rd conference was hosted by the same organization in Chitral in October 1995, with the same convener and Professor Schuyler Jones (Pitt Rivers Museum, England) as General President. The 4th International Conference was convened by



Professor Israruddin to give an opportunity for high profile scholars in the field of Hindukush studies to meet and exchange ideas about their recent works. The conference brought together national and international scholars. The conference was originally organized to be held in 2020 which ultimately was not possible due to restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. The event again got postponed the following year on the same grounds. Eventually, post-pandemic 2022 returned to a level of normalization that gave organizers the confidence to finally

move forward with planning the conference. Providing an internationally-recognized level of professionalism from planning to execution proved challenging in this part of the world. From identifying sufficient reviewers for the papers to hunting down an adequate venue, the planning process was filled with challenges that the organizers embraced and overcame. Event management software was used for the submission of papers, with the review of them carried out through a peer review system of blind reviewing. The venue ultimately chosen was the peaceful setting of the Chitral Public Library, centrally located in Chitral Town.

There were six keynote speeches given during the conference; Dr. Elena Bashir, Dr. Alberto Cacopardo, Dr. Augusto S. Cacopardois, Dr. Hermann Kreutzmann, Dr. Henrik Liljegren and Professor Israr-ud-Din were the keynote speakers.

This conference was the first of its kind in the region. Arranging online presentations, parallel sessions and a high number of attendees were challenging factors of the event that went well. The conference allowed us to also take up such topics which were new, and in some cases 'sensitive' to the academic circle of the region. The paper presented on the trend of female suicides in the regions, for instance, has opened further doors for future researchers to dig down and bring out additional knowledge about the matter.

Two panel discussions were also part of the conference, and took place on the final day at the main hall. The topics were Culture and Ethnic Tourism in the Hindukush Region and Adaptation to Climate Change in Pakistan's Mountain Region. Highly learned people were part of these discussions.

The conference was organized in partnership with the Ajuman Taraqqi Khowar, Chitral, and the Forum for Language Initiatives, Islamabad. Anjuman Taraqqi Khowar (ATK), founded by the literary people of Chitral in 1956, is one of the oldest literary organizations of northern Pakistan.



Empowering Women in FLI's Target Area

Women empowerment is key to promoting democracy in a developing society. To make this happen, the first step is to discuss those factors which hinder the matter. Discussions about women empowerment usually find the greatest opportunity for engagement on days set aside for the recognition of women. Therefore, to facilitate this discussion, FLI attaches great importance to observing International Women's Day, celebrated every year on March 08. On this day, many organizations such as private schools hold events and make a point to spread the message of the importance of the empowerment of women. FLI supported many events on this day last year. For example, they enabled The Space Era Model School to observe this special day on the school's premises in Booni, Upper Chitral. The main objective of the event held at this school was to give awareness to the participants (men, women, school going children) about the importance of women in our society. The event not only highlighted the rights of women, but also the responsibilities of women in our society. There were approximately 200 participants who attended this event, including the parents of students, politicians, religious scholars, school officials, teachers, and students.

Women's Day was also celebrated with zest and zeal at the Shad Foundation Youth Development Center (YDC), Islamabad, on 12 March 2022 with financial support from FLI. The event theme was Creating Victory through Values, Regions and Voices. The event was chaired by Ms. Asifa Satti who is a Member of Chamber for the organization and an entrepreneur by profession. The event included various sorts of participation by boarders that included speeches, drama performances, poetry recitations, displays of business ideas, and an exhibition of cultural dishes. A total of 80 women and young ladies participated in the performances, and a total of 130 individuals attended the event.



Women Empowered with Information About their Rights

FLI adopts various approaches to contribute to empowering women in its target area. Apart from celebrating International Women's Day, it supports its partners as they seek to enable women to succeed in various roles. As part of this, FLI supported a workshop at Karakorum International University, Gilgit, inviting women to discuss their rights in society. This three day workshop on Women's Rights was organized in Gilgit from 28-30 March 2022 for Karakorum International University students. The objective of the workshop was to help the participants be empowered through a better understanding of their rights. Twenty-five females attended the workshop. These students came from the Khowar, Shina, Burushaski, Wakhi, Balti and Hindko language communities.

Another three day workshop on Women's Rights was organized in collaboration with The University of Baltistan, Skardu, from 28-30 August 2022. Nineteen ladies from the Balti language community benefited from this workshop. A third workshop on Women's Rights was also held this year in Chitral from 24-26 October 2022 for the Palula language community.



Migrant Communities Reconnected with their Languages

A substantial number of indigenous people belonging to various language communities of northern Pakistan are living in the urban areas of Pakistan due to the lack of economic opportunities in their native regions. Many of these people have permanently settled in these cities. This has caused these individuals to become disconnected from their home culture identity, forcing them to accept an identity tied to a more predominant language in the city. Reconnecting these disengaged community people is important for the revitalization of their languages as many of them have developed various kinds of resources which can be utilized to benefit their home cultures and languages. For this purpose, FLI has encouraged some of its target community members to work with their language communities' respective migrant communities in an effort to help them reconnect with their home cultures and languages. The Khowar speaking community living in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. They organized a literary plus entertainment event in Islamabad on New Year's Eve. Around 150 people participated in the event. It was great to observe that representatives of Khowar speakers living on both sides of the Shandur pass were part of the event. As well as launching new Khowar books, the event also featured the signature segment of Khowar gatherings: the poetry session, or Mushaira. This session involved both young and senior poets of the language who had their first ever opportunity to express themselves publicly in this way in the capital city of Islamabad, thanks to the organizational umbrella of ATK. The event concluded on the high note of the Khowar musical show, famously known as Chindoria Bazm. There is much hope that Anjuman will hold on-going events such as this in the future.

Indus Kohistani speakers living in Rawalpindi formed the Kohistani Culture Development Program (KCDP), which functions as a branch of the parent organization of Indus Kohistani speakers, Initiative for People in Need (IPN), located in the Kohistan area of KP. The KCDP opened their new chapter in Rawalpindi.

Eventually, they requested FLI's support for a festival featuring cultural activities. They also planned a poetry session during their event, and many poets from the language community attended the event and presented their work. This event has ignited zeal among the Indus Kohistani speakers in the cities and they have committed to hold similar events frequently in the future.



Chairman of PAL Visited FLI's Office

The Chairman of Pakistan's Academy of Letters (PAL), Dr. Yousuf Khushk, paid a visit to the FLI office in Islamabad to witness a language documentation training and spent more than two hours conversing with FLI's team and training participants. He also met with the Gawarbat language researchers who are currently participating in a workshop at the office. Earlier, the Executive Director of FLI and the Chairman of FLI's Board had received him and briefed him about the current projects of the organization. He inquired about the various stages of language documentation and appreciated FLI's efforts to preserve and promote Pakistan's languages. Dr. Khushk showed great interest in collaborating with FLI in the future, and expressed his desire to increase cooperation between the two organizations.



FLI Held Discussion on Policy Implementation in Peshawar

FLI organized a half-day event to debate on implementation of policies regarding languages and cultures of KP in Peshawar on January 26, 2022. The indigenous language communities precisely Dameli, Gujar,



Gawri, Torwali, Indus Kohistani were represented by language researchers as well as people from Pashto, the predominant in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kalasha languages were also part of the event. Fifteen people including the advisor to the chief minister of the province, Mr. Wazirzada and MPA from Kohistan, Mufti Abdul Ghaffar attended the event. A lawyer, Advocate Ajmal Khan, who is pursuing the case of language policy implementation in the province at Peshawar High Court, was also part of the discussion, who came to join the event to enhance his understanding about language work in the province.

Communities in Driver's Seat

FLI has a small-scale initiative which allows its partners to come up with their own ideas for language revitalization and strengthening. Under this initiative, FLI receives a lot of requests from the community-based organizations it works with as the initiative enables them to realize their own plans. This initiative allows FLI to help various target communities to join hands with each other to help their communities in specific, specialized ways without having their plans or actions dictated by any other external organization.

The Sasken Research and Development Foundation (SRDF) approached us about supporting their efforts to organize a poetry event for the Shina community in Gilgit City on 25 April 2022. Many senior Shina researchers like Shakeel Ahmed were among the participants of the event. Around 27 people including poets, writers and students attended the event.

The Yadgha Development Organization (YDO), another CBO from FLI's target area of Chitral, organized a cultural show in Garam Chashma, Chitral, on 15 October 2022. Several poets from the Yadgha language community presented their poems in the Yadgha language and Yadgha singers also performed. A total of forty-two participants attended the event. Earlier, on 1 February, the YDO had also organized Pathak for the community with financial support from FLI in Chitral. Pathak is a traditional spring festival of Chitral. It is mainly celebrated to mark the arrival of spring with cultural and religious reverence. This year the celebrations kicked off even while it was still winter. The Pathak celebrations in Chitral are always filled with immense happiness and festive activities. On the eve of the celebrations, people clean their houses, wear new clothes, and visit each other to share the happiness of the festival and renew their relationships. They prepare a variety of foods, but Shoshpalaki and Ishpiri – the traditional foods of Chitral – are the must-have dishes for the day. Forty-eight people attended the event.



Media Matters for Lesser Known Languages

“The teacher was furious at me when she saw me last time using my mother tongue to converse with my son. Since then, I communicate with my elder son in English and Urdu, and with the younger one in Pashto as he is yet to start going to school”. This was shared by Tariq Ullah while speaking at a group discussion about the lesser known languages of Pakistan. Tariq is working with BBC Pashto, promoting his mother tongue through this international media house, but interestingly, he is not allowed to speak it at his home, especially with his school-going child. The discussion was able to amplify what the lesser known languages were going through. Lehaz Ali, also from Peshawar and who works with AFP, was happy to learn about FLI and its services for lesser known languages.

Fazal Hadi, one of the speakers, focused on the key issue: that the indigenous wisdom, knowledge and roots of people's history will disappear if we lose our indigenous languages. Fakhruddin, the Executive Director of FLI, said that first of all, we need to dispel the misunderstanding that learning a language, be it English or any other, can never be an alternative to “getting an education.” “Let's let our children get educated first and then go on to learn other languages,” he suggested. He shared that the Swedish are the most fluent in English among non-English speaking nations. But in Sweden's schools, he said that English classes are conducted only twice a week and that also is only starting from grade eight. Earlier, the discussion was started by Zaman Sagar, a senior voice in the area of the documentation of indigenous languages, who started working for the documentation and development of his mother tongue, Gawri, in 1993. Gawri is spoken in the Upper Swat Kohistan area, including the tourists' heaven, Kalam. He, in his presentation, showed the current situation of the languages spoken in North Pakistan and how multilingual the region is.

A get-together for media officials to discuss the issues the lesser known languages, especially those spoken in the northern part of the country, are going through, was organized by FLI in Islamabad in July 2022. Ten media personnel working with national and international media houses, all based out of Peshawar, participated in the event. In his remarks, Mr. Sagar responded to the findings of Hywel Coleman, a British author who conducted a survey in Pakistan on why Pakistanis, despite having sixteen years of education in the language are unable to get proficiency in English, pointing out that Pakistanis' lack of success in this area is due to the failure to start a child's schooling in their native language.



Another one of Chitral's Languages Can Now Be Written

Kataviri, also called Kati by the native speakers, which is a Nooristani language in Chitral, has now been developed turned into a written language. This language, which was purely oral just one year ago, now has five books written in it, all of which have been written, produced, and published by native speakers. Beginning with the alphabet book that was produced as a joint effort by the researchers affiliated with Anjuman Tahaffuz e Kataviri (ATK), Kati researchers have been inspired to pen down their cultural heritage, resulting in four more books being written and published in the same one year period. This all happened under a one year project FLI initiated last year, training more than a dozen Kati researchers in language documentation. Nasir Mansoor, one of the Kati language researchers, was motivated to collect folk stories of his language and produced the resulting collection under the title, Pran Jake. He also collected proverbs of his language and published the collection under the title, Kasholan Vari. These publications triggered inspiration in other researchers of the Kati language community, and Fazal Akbar had the idea of producing a conversation book for those researchers who may desire to look into their culture from outside. This conversation book is trilingual in Kati, Urdu and English.

The last but not least of this year's Kati publications is the translation of a famous English novel, Gulliver's Travels, done by Najmul Haq. All the aforementioned writers are working under the umbrella of ATK, and the establishment of this community based organization was encouraged by FLI. FLI congratulates the Kati people not only for having their language developed into written form, but also for uniting themselves under the platform of ATK. Indeed, publishing five books in one year is a great achievement for which we appreciate their efforts and expect them to continue in the years to come.

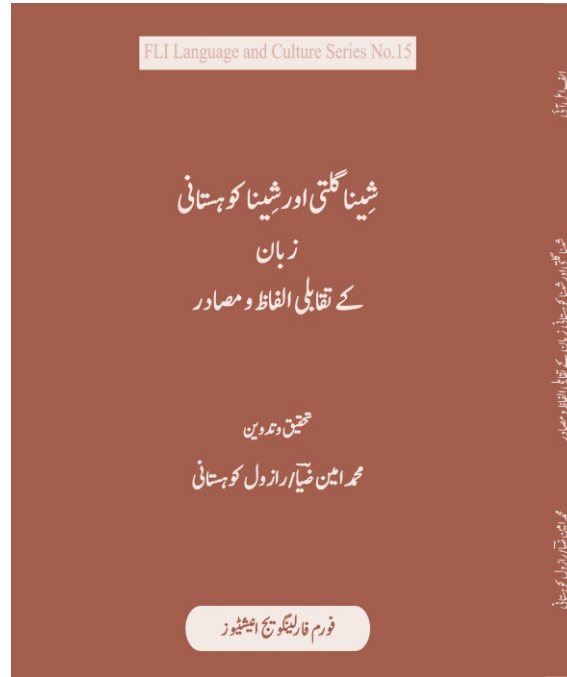
The Kataviri language is spoken in various border villages of Chitral situated some distance from each other. Their villages include Shekhandeh in Bumburet, Konlasht in Rumbur and Gobor in Lotkuh valley of Chitral. The community members claim that there are around 6000 speakers of the Kati language in Chitral. The local Khaw people call the language 'Bashgaliwar' (means the language of those who came from Bashgal in eastern Afghanistan). The Kati people are also called Nooristani. These people migrated to this region in the last quarter of the 19th century from Nooristan in Afghanistan.



FLI Publishes Another Book on Shina Language

FLI has published another book on the Shina language. The book is co-authored by two famous writers of the language, Amin Zia and Razwal Kohistani. The book compares 4000 nouns and verbs of the two famous dialects, Shina-Gilgiti and Shina-Kohistani, with definitions in Urdu. Some of the words have also been translated into some other languages of the region. Senior writers Amin Zia and Razwal Kohistani, who have long been working on documenting their respective dialects, have combined their energies and expertise to produce this book. They have previously each published dictionaries in their respective dialects, providing a treasure of knowledge about the Shina language.

Apart from other activities for the preservation and promotion of the indigenous languages, FLI, since its establishment in 2002, has been publishing books in and about the indigenous languages and cultures of the region. Categorized in its two main series, Academic and Vernacular a number of books so far have been published by FLI. Additionally, many other books, most dealing with school curriculum and used by our partner organizations in their MTB-MLE schools, are also part of FLI's publications.



More People Qualified to Write the Indus Kohistani Language

The Indus Kohistani language, having a functional writing system, being used on Social Media and for literature development, and also having a Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education program, is one of the few literate languages of Northern Pakistan. Spoken by more than 400,000 people, this Dardic language has also been included in the primary school system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the provincial government, like it already did for four languages in the past, is very likely to initiate textbook development in the language in the near future. This prospect has encouraged the researchers of the Indus Kohistani language (IK) to move forward with the idea of providing training to some of the government schools' teachers from the IK community so that once commenced, the initiative to include Indus Kohistani in the government school system could run smoothly and fittingly.

The workshop benefitted 17 people from the community including six schools' teachers who IPN hopes will be part of the curriculum development process as reviewers of the books in their native language. Other participants included people interested in increasing their ability to use their language for writing. The participants appreciated the opportunity provided by this workshop and showed their desire to attend more engagements such as this so as to enhance their abilities to serve their language community. The activity is expected to boost the writing culture of the language as it provided more equipped resource people to the language community. Since the language is on its way to becoming part of the government schools' curriculum, these trained people, especially the teachers, are going to play a key role in standardizing the use of the IK language for writing through the reviewing abilities they gained in the workshop. FLI reiterates its commitment to continue its support to see the dream of the IK language entering government schools become reality.



FLI Reconnects Palula Speakers of Chitral and Dir Kohistan

A delegation of Palula language speakers in Chitral visited Gomandan, a splintered village of the Palula language community in Dir Kohistan, to meet with those who share their language and culture. The delegation consisted of key members of one of FLI's partner organizations in northern Pakistan working for the Palula language in Chitral. Mr. Qazi Israr, Muneer Ahmad (the first poet of the Palula language) and Naseem Haider, who have all long been working for the preservation and promotion of their language under the banner of the Palula Community Welfare Organization (PCWO), also took books that have been published in their language along with them to present as gifts to those in Gomandan. The purpose of the visit was to enlighten the host Palula community members about the language development work being carried out in Chitral, and also to inform them of their rights and position regarding their identity, language and history and encourage them to work towards the revitalization of their language.

The Palula speakers from Chitral migrated to Gomandan long ago and now have grown to more than 300 in number. The older age categories in this community, including grandparents, parents and young adults, have so far maintained and continue speaking their mother tongue. However, children are now being more influenced by Pashto, the second language of the community, and are shifting away from the mother tongue of the adults in their community. The PCWO officials, taking notice of the looming language shift and at the insistence of the community members, have started contemplating language revitalization activities for the younger generation of the community.

FLI has assured its partner CBO of full cooperation in this struggle for their language's revival as the executive director of FLI, Mr. Fakhruddin, was leading this visit. Fakhruddin encouraged both sides of the community to stay connected through social media and work together in the future. The people from both sides have already begun taking action together, initially by creating a WhatsApp chat group to remain interconnected and start deliberations for a future course of actions. We hope they continue these conversations in the months to come and will strive to revive their language in this splintered area through a consistent approach of language revitalization.



Kalkoti Language Gains a Writing System

The Kalkoti language speakers have started celebrating a writing system they developed after attending a series of training workshops under the banner of FLI. Community members including teachers, students and other educated groups of the language community, gathered at night and, as per tradition to mark the achievement of any milestone, slaughtered a goat and congratulated each other. Earlier, they had concluded the fifth day of the Basic Orthography Development workshop that FLI had organized for them, and which was attended by more than a dozen community members. During the workshop, they reached an agreement in the selection of a script and specific symbols to represent the unique sounds of their language in writing. FLI's training team guided them through the process and congratulated them on their accomplishment.

So far, FLI has conducted two training workshops for Kalkoti researchers after they requested training from the organization and formed a group of the community members to be trained. The selected people were then engaged in various types of training where they identified the key issues of their language and identified its specific vowels and consonants before formally deliberating on the development of its writing system. The last piece was the orthography development workshop, which officially established the language's written form. From now on, educated people in the Kalkoti community will be able to develop their own literature in their own language.



FLI and IIUI Strengthen Fieldwork in Language Documentation

FLI, in collaboration with the International Islamic University, Islamabad, arranged a two-day workshop for the faculty members and research scholars of the Linguistic Department of the university for enhancing their skills in advanced linguistics research and language documentation. The participants were introduced to new tools, techniques, and technology used in field linguistics and language documentation.

The participants appreciated the workshop, content, and FLI's efforts to work on the lesser-known languages of Pakistan. The faculty has resolved to assign each language to a group of students to work on during their final year project. The HoD of the English Department, Dr. Akhtar Aziz, pledged to introduce the course of field linguistics in the curriculum and expose the students to the practical field and related tools. The Rector of the International Islamic University, Dr. Masoom Yasinzaï, while addressing the final session of the event, said that Pakistan was linguistically diverse and it was like a bouquet of flowers with each language having its own color and beauty. "We must preserve this identity of Pakistan," he added. He also appreciated FLI's contribution towards preserving and promoting the lesser known languages of the country.

The purpose of this workshop was to collaborate with academia for working on languages. It is inspiring to observe that relevant departments of the universities in Pakistan are increasingly focusing on Pakistan's languages and guiding their faculties and students to look into them. This is a great change, towards which FLI has been



collaborating with the universities for a long time, and it does hope to accelerate its cooperation with them in the future by providing needed resources that will allow universities to further build their capacities in this field.

The First Ever Poetry Event in the Shina Language

A maiden poetry session that took place during the first quarter of the year, specifically in the Shina language, held in Gilgit city in Gilgit-Baltistan, has motivated poets of the language to exercise their mother tongue in the lyrical genre. The participants left the venue with the hope and excitement of having laid the foundation of a new era: the beginning of a tradition of poetry sessions specific to their mother tongue. Abdul Saboor, an official of the Sasken Research and Development Foundation (SRDF), a community based organization which works for the Shina language, said that the activity opened doors to strengthen the orality of the language on one hand and motivate the poets to produce poetry in their own language on the other.

“Poetry sessions are not new to the region, in fact they are among the activities which take place most frequently in the city,” stated Mr. Amir Haider, an author and the Shina language researcher who is currently working with the Forum for Language Initiatives (FLI). He added that the unique part of the activity was its medium, the language. Mr. Haider said that poets of Gilgit used to express themselves in Urdu and English and hardly ever attempted to create poems in their own language, Shina. He hopes that these events will help draw the attention of local poets to the attraction of using their own language for poetry creation.

The momentous literary gathering was attended by language enthusiasts including poets, writers, students and civil society members, as well as academics. FLI contributed to the organizing of the historic event in collaboration with SRDF. The well-known linguist, Mr. Shakeel Ahmad, and Engineer Arif were among the dignitaries who attended the event.



The First Gojri Cultural Event in GB

FLI partnered with the Gojri Language & Culture Society (GLCS) to organize a literary event in the Ghizer district of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) in March 2022. This was the first event of its kind in which Gojri speakers joined together to hold a poetry session in this part of the country. More than a dozen poets of the Gojri language who came from various parts of GB participated in the event and presented their verses in their mother tongue. People from various organizations of the Gojri community attended the event. The poetry program was also followed by a musical session where singers sang Gojri songs. The event was much enjoyed and appreciated by the participants. The main purpose of organizing this event in GB was to unite Gojri speakers and encourage them to work for the development of their language. On the other hand, they also aimed to show that Gojri language speakers are also living in GB, and these speakers should be included in the literary activities taking place in the region.

Gojri speakers claim there are thousands of their fellow speakers living in Gilgit Baltistan. Shahidur Rehman, a Gojri language activist who was one of the organizers of the event, is of the view that due to their scattered population, the exact number of Gojri speakers is hard to estimate, but still they number in the thousands.

Two folk singers who were invited to the event sang Gojri songs and received applause for their performance. Shahidur Rehman said that the musical program rejuvenated the audience. He said that around 100 people gathered on short notice of the event when it was announced on social media.

The spectators included notable members of the community, educated community members and politicians. The event gathered people belonging to all walks of life, but largely young people, who then took to social media, appreciating the event and desiring more events like this.

Gojri belongs to the central group of the Indo-Aryan language family and is closely related to Mewati, a language spoken in north eastern Rajasthan. Gojri is spoken in northern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, and the former state of Jammu and Kashmir (Azad Kashmir and Indian Administered Kashmir).



Poetry Session in the Gawarbat Language

FLI joined hands with one of its partner organizations in organizing a literary event in the Gawarbat language. Organized by Al-Qalam, a community based organization, the poetry session took place in April 2022 in the Arandu Valley of Chitral. The purpose of holding the event in the community was to promote Gawarbat poetry and contribute to peace building by arranging a literary get-together in this border region. More than a dozen poets from the Gawarbat language community presented their poems in the event. Around 80 people including young people, teachers, community elders, literary people and political activists attended the event.

Belonging to the Indo-Aryan group, the Gawarbat language has been declared 'severely endangered' by UNESCO, and the major cause of its endangerment is a prolonged Afghan war in its vicinity which has caused widespread migration in the community. This language is spoken by 4000 people living alongside the Kunar River, adjacent to the Pak-Afghan border area near the village of Arandu in the Chitral District of Pakistan. The literary activities are being used to involve the community in peace building activities and encourage the youth to come out of the harsh past they endured and get involved in activities related to their interests. Such activities are also important for strengthening the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country.

The event drew the attention of many Gawarbat youth who showed great curiosity in learning how to work for their culture and language, alongside motivating other people to use their own language for expressing their feelings and try to craft poetry in their own language. A senior Gawarbat writer, Mullah Adina Shah, who has published a Gawarbat Dictionary, was honored in the event for his literary work in the language. Adina Shah has been producing literature in Gawarbat since long ago and works hard to motivate others from within his language community to join him in this work.



Dameli Speakers Make History by Celebrating their Culture in Peshawar

In a historic event, Dameli language community members living in Peshawar started a tradition of celebrating their culture outside of their native valley, Damel, in Chitral. In February, Ajuma-e-Taraqqi Damyan (ATD), one of FLI's partner organizations working for the preservation and promotion of the Dameli language, held Jashan-e-Daman, a first ever Dameli cultural event in Peshawar. There are hundreds of migrant Dameli speakers living in Peshawar who needed to come together and to celebrate their culture. FLI helped to facilitate this event for them. More than 200 people, most of whom were young adults, attended this event. They also invited Khowar speakers, especially for the Dameli poetry session. Migrant Dameli speakers from Swat, Nowshera, Charsada and Mardan also traveled to attend the event.

At the start of this event, the participants were briefed about the language development work of ATD, which was appreciated by the Dameli speakers. The poetry session was the most important portion of the event and was attended by all the participants as it was the first of its kind in the city. This poetry session motivated many of the community's youth to work for the further development of their language. A dozen Dameli poets presented their poems and received the proper accolades for their art. The historic moment attracted many people towards working for their culture and language, and especially the youth appreciated FLI's efforts and contribution to the event.



The poetry session was followed by a musical night, for which some of the senior and young musicians had come from Damel valley of Chitral, the place of origin for the language. The folk musical program rejuvenated the Dameli youth and gave them a chance to also perform Dameli dances. The leadership of ATD estimate that there are around 600 Dameli speakers living in Peshawar. Some of them have permanently settled in the city while most of them are working and/or going to school.

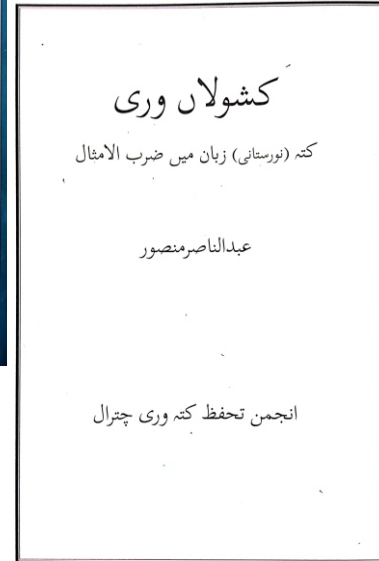
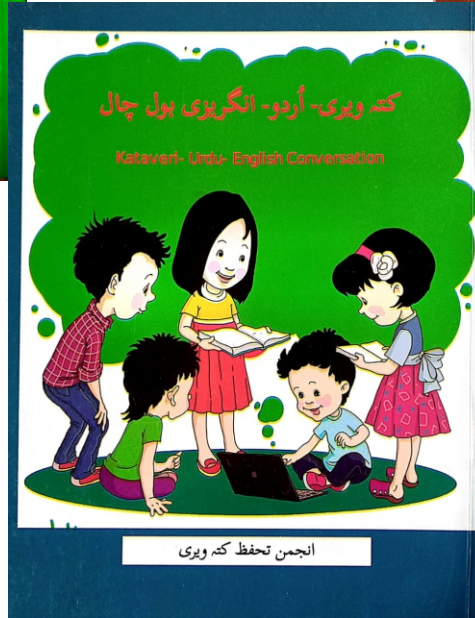
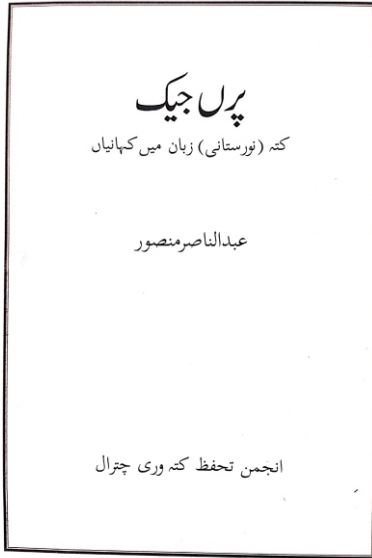
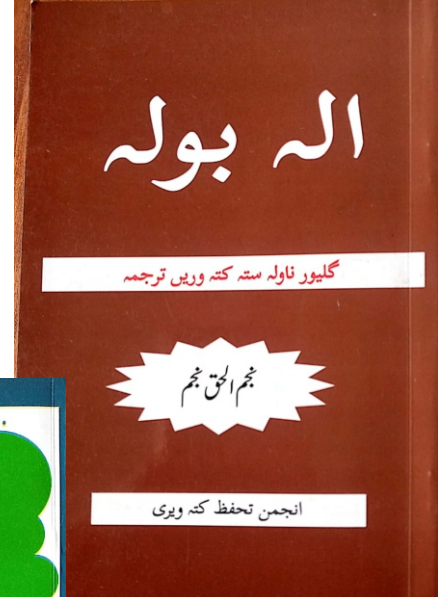
Three More Books Published in Indigenous Languages

FLI recently published three more books in different indigenous languages of northern Pakistan: Ormuri, Gawarabati and Dameli. Rozi Khan Burki, a pioneer Ormuri researcher, has compiled a dictionary in his mother tongue, Ormuri. This is the third book FLI has published in the language and the second book authored by this writer. Earlier, the organization published a poetry book in the language which was written by Rozi Khan. The book in the Gawarabati language has been authored by a senior researcher of this language, Mullah Adina Shah. It is hoped that this grammar book will facilitate new writers from the community. Mullah Shah had authored a hand-written dictionary in his language even before the onset of computer writing, now reportedly being reproduced under the auspices of a Peshawar University project. So far, FLI has published half a dozen books in this language.

The third book has been compiled by Hayat Muhammad in his native language, Dameli. He has collected folktales of his language and produced them with their Urdu translations. The book is among many other literary materials FLI has been publishing in this language since 2016. The author, Hayat Muhammad, one of FLI's trainees, has been tirelessly working to strengthen his language by producing literature. The Dameli language is also a particular focus of FLI, especially regarding literature development.



First Ever Publications in Kataviri Language (Details on page 12)





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