

PRESENDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE 44<sup>TH</sup> LSN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,  
KATHMANDU

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Honorable Chief Guest, Minister for Culture,  
Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr. Sudan Kirati,  
Chairman of Indigenous Nationalities  
Commission,  
Vice-president of Linguistic Society of Nepal,  
Former presidents of Linguistic Society of Nepal,  
Keynote Speaker, Prof. Tomasz S. Wicherkiewicz,  
Distinguished linguists from home and abroad,  
Media persons,  
Ladies and gentlemen

Namaskar and very good morning!

In fact, it is a matter of great pleasure for me to address this august gathering of both linguists and non-linguists from home and abroad. This date, November 26-27, is an auspicious moment for those who love language and linguistics from all around the world. It is a great opportunity to share the knowledge obtained from our researches on languages and linguistics, and feel the part of the knowledge generation mission of the scientific community.

#### Contribution of LSN

From its inception in 1979 to till date, LSN has contributed a lot in the field of language and linguistics, particularly in Nepal and around. It has published 37 volumes of Journal 'Nepalese Linguistics', with around 530 articles, 'Contemporary issues in Nepalese Linguistics' (2005) with 41 articles, and 'Recent Studies in Nepalese Linguistics' (2007) with 29 articles; altogether around 600 articles. LSN is serving the nation with its fullest capacity for the preservation, promotion and development of the languages and dialects of Nepal.

The report of the CBS has just been published, however, the issues regarding the languages and dialects still prevails. Even though, we have no other alternative resource for relying about the number of languages and dialects in Nepal, we are

bound to follow it. This problem can only be sorted out with a scientific linguistic survey of Nepal.

Language Commission has recommended 12 languages, viz., Maithili, Limbu, Bajjika, Bhojpuri, Tamang, Nepalbhasa, Magar Dhut, Gurung, Tharu, Awadhi, Khas and Dotyali to be used as official language in the seven provinces, however, only Bagmati Province has taken the initiative towards realizing this recommendation. We are confident that in near future, all the provinces will attain this goal of using recommended languages in their respective official usages. However, to make a language capable rendering linguistic function in the wider range requires huge number of researches and literature generation, in this path, LSN can definitely contribute in substantial amount.

Mother Tongue Education is very important for the preservation, promotion and development of a language. However, no serious effort has been made from the concerned sectors. Now, many municipalities (viz., local governments) have started teaching local languages at the basic level, however, effectiveness is within the question mark. It has to be realized that this is one of the best ways to transfer the language to new generation. It ultimately saves the language from dying.

UN has declared the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) with the aim of revitalizing the Indigenous languages. The main objective of UN is to draw global attention on the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion. In this regard, the necessary arrangements will be made soon to achieve the aims of UN.

In 2023 (October 6-8)) Madan Bhandari Memorial College successfully concluded the groundbreaking international Hackathon program, “MBM Idea X Hackathon,” dedicated to the “Preservation and Promotion of Indigenous Languages” through Information and Technology. The initiative received support from UNESCO and collaboration from Prabhu Bank. More than 48 national and international teams, comprising a total of 450 participants, demonstrated a keen interest in this unique endeavor. This type of endeavor definitely pushes up to integrate the linguistic research outputs into the language technology which ultimately help under resourced languages for their preservation and development.

Indigenous Nationalities Commission has, this time, joined hands with us to initiate to celebrate the International Decade of Indigenous Language (2022-2032).

#### Language database

In this age of computer, any kind of research is not possible without storage of information. This is equally applicable to language and linguistics. Particularly, in case of Nepal, we are in urgent need of searchable language database. We hope that the concerned authorities will take necessary steps for setting up a language database center.

It is well known fact that a language is a means of human communication. However, it is the oxygen to the culture. Just as oxygen is the essence of life, language is the essence of culture. We all know that during the COVID-19, COVID patients were in dire want of oxygen. It is a fact that without language, culture cannot survive.

We would like to thank from our bottom of the heart to Central Department of Linguistics, TU, Nepal Academy, Indigenous Nationalities Commission, SIL International Nepal, University Grants Commission, Madan Bhandari Memorial College, and many other organizations. Without their support, this gathering would not have been possible.

At the end, we would like to thank everybody here for joining us. Enjoy the conference and have a nice stay in Kathmandu. I would like to invite

all of you to participate in the next LSN conference at the same date in 2024.

Thanks.