REPORT ON THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON "NEW TRENDS IN TRIBAL LANGUAGE STUDIES"

A three-day National Workshop on *"New Trends in Tribal Language Studies"* was organized from 17 to 19 March 2026 at the Seminar Hall, Rabindra Bhavan, V. I. Subramoniam Memorial ISDL Complex, Thiruvananthapuram. The workshop was jointly organized by the International School of Dravidian Linguistics (ISDL) in collaboration with KIRTADS, the Department of Linguistics, University of Kerala, and SCERT, Kerala. The programme aimed to explore the contemporary relevance, preservation, and development of tribal languages in Kerala. It also sought to address the inadequacies in the existing corpus of tribal language data, to update and refine tribal language data collection in accordance with contemporary needs, and to facilitate the development of digital language resources that can be effectively utilized for educational purposes.

The workshop commenced on 17 March 2026 at 11:00 AM with the inaugural function. Dr. Pradeep Kumar K. S., Deputy Director, KIRTADS, delivered the welcome address. The session was presided over by Prof. G. K. Panikkar, Honorary Director, ISDL. The workshop was formally inaugurated by Dr. Mithun Premraj, IAS, Director, Directorate of Scheduled Tribes Development Department, Government of Kerala. Dr. A. T. Lijisha of KIRTADS presented the theme of the workshop.

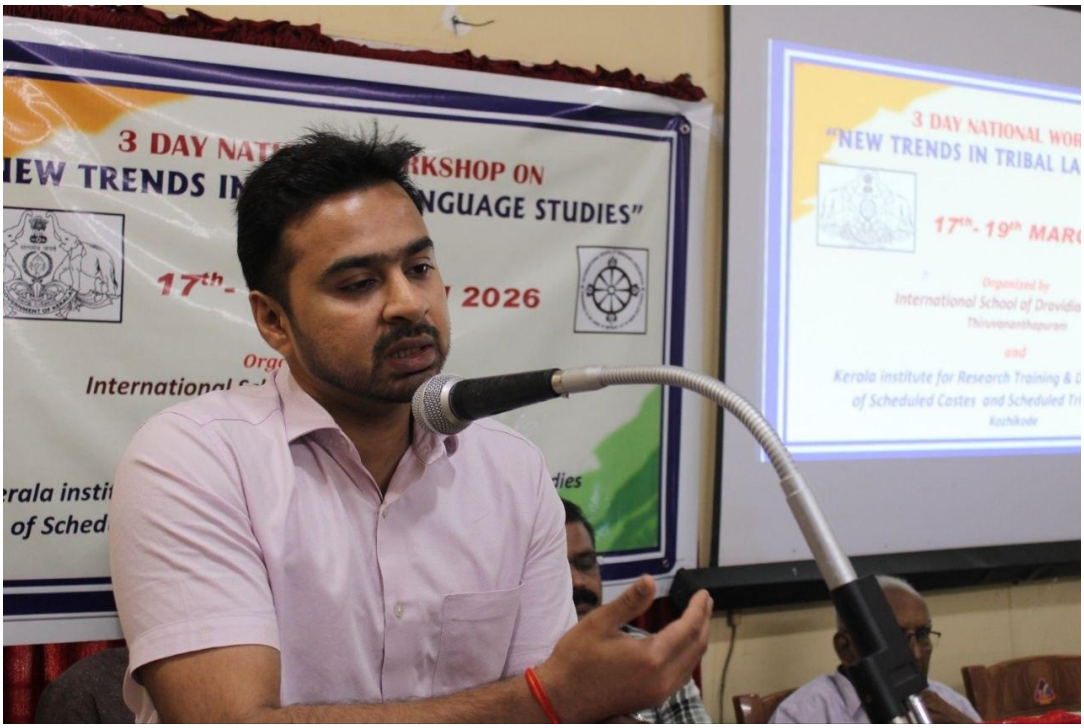
The workshop featured a series of insightful sessions led by eminent scholars and experts in linguistics, focusing on documentation, preservation strategies, and emerging research trends in tribal language studies. The event witnessed the participation of more than 30 experts from various institutions, representatives from eight tribal communities including Kani, Paniya, and Irula, and around 20 research fellows from different linguistic and tribal research institutions, along

with a few observers. Notably, several tribal language experts actively contributed to the discussions, including Ravikumar Eshwaran, Mallan, and Jayakumar Kattur from the Kani community; Rashmi S., Vasudevan Cheekkallur, and Amritha K. M. from the Paniya community; and Rasi C., and Sakthivel K. from the Irula community. Among them, Jayakumar Kattur and Vasudevan Cheekkallur are widely recognized as eminent writers who have made significant contributions to tribal literature and language preservation.

The valedictory function was held on 19 March 2026 from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Dr. N. Muraleedharan Nair, ISDL, delivered the welcome address. The session was presided over by Prof. R. B. Sreekala, Director, School of Languages and Professor, ORI & Manuscripts Library, University of Kerala. The valedictory address was delivered by Prof. Ravisankar S. Nair, Retired Professor, Department of Linguistics, Central University of Kerala. Special addresses were delivered by Dr. Indu Menon, KIRTADS, and Dr. S. K. Syam, Department of Linguistics, University of Kerala. Participants shared their feedback and suggestions, reflecting the success and impact of the workshop. The report was presented by Dr. A. T. Lijisha, KIRTADS. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr. L. B. Remya, Senior Research Fellow, ISDL, expressing gratitude to all dignitaries, organizers, participants, ISDL and DLA staff, and technical personnel.

The workshop proved to be highly informative and productive, contributing significantly to academic discourse on tribal languages. It provided a valuable platform for scholars, researchers, and students to exchange ideas and promote the preservation of linguistic heritage. Additionally, the workshop succeeded in outlining a feasible course of action for the vetting of tribal language data available in various repositories and in developing suitable methodologies for future data elicitation.

Glimpses from the workshop- first day



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Second day









Third Day




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