

Report

“Bhasha Mein Loktantra – A Language Festival 2026”

Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi, in collaboration with Punjabi Sahit Sabha, New Delhi, organised a two-day Language Festival, “Bhasha Mein Loktantra – A Language Festival 2026,” on 24 and 25 March 2026 at the Mata Sahib Kaur Auditorium. The festival sought to foreground the importance of linguistic diversity and examine the evolving relationship between language, democracy, education, knowledge and society. It brought together eminent scholars, writers, intellectuals, journalists and academicians for an engaging exchange of ideas on the contemporary challenges and possibilities surrounding Indian languages.

The festival was organised under the guidance of Prof. Harpreet Kaur, Principal, Mata Sundri College for Women, with Prof. Lokesh K. Gupta, Director, IQAC, and Dr. Harwinder Singh, Coordinator. The programme was structured around a series of academic sessions addressing five broad themes: the role of regional languages in nation-building; democracy of language and language in democracy; language in the era of the global market; linguistic dominance over knowledge; and the National Education Policy and Indian languages.

The inaugural session on 24 March commenced with the welcome address by Prof. Harpreet Kaur, Principal, Mata Sundri College for Women. The session featured Sh. Madhav Kaushak, President, Sahitya Akademi, as the Keynote Speaker and Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Padma Vibhushan, as the Chief Guest. Prof. Renuka Singh, Chairperson, Punjabi Sahit Sabha, New Delhi, was the Guest of Honour, while Sh. Rajshekhar Vyas, Additional Director General, Doordarshan, chaired the session. The concluding remarks were delivered by Prof. Rawail Singh, Convenor, Punjabi Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, followed by the vote of thanks by Prof. Lokesh Gupta, Director, IQAC. The session was anchored by Dr. Amrita Singh, Department of English.

The first technical session, held on the afternoon of 24 March, focused on “Role of Regional Languages in Nation Building.” The session brought together scholars from diverse academic backgrounds, including Prof. Girishwar Mishra, Prof. Manoj Dixit, Prof. Pankaj Kumar Mishra, Prof. Ravinder Singh, Ms. Rumi Malik and Dr. Rajesh Kumar Mishra. The discussion examined the contribution of regional languages to cultural identity, social cohesion and nation-building, while highlighting the need to protect linguistic plurality in an increasingly globalised environment. Dr. Jasmeet Kaur moderated the session, with concluding remarks by Dr. Harinder M. Sandhu.

The second day of the festival featured a series of discussions addressing the contemporary dimensions of language and knowledge. Technical Session II explored “Democracy of Language and Language in Democracy.” Eminent writer and thinker Sh. Ashok Vajpayee, writer and thinker Prof. Purushottam Agrawal, and senior journalist Sh. Priyadarshan contributed to the discussion. The session examined the role of language in enabling democratic participation and questioned linguistic hierarchies that may influence access to public discourse and representation. Dr. Sanchita Khurana served as the moderator, with concluding remarks by Dr. Manisha Mathur.

This was followed by Technical Session III on “Language in the Era of Global Market.” The session featured Prof. Manindra Nath Thakur, Prof. Surinder S. Jodhka and Prof. Peggy Mohan. The deliberations focused on the pressures exerted by globalisation and market forces on languages, particularly the position of regional and Indian languages in contemporary economic and cultural spaces. Dr. Ruchika Sharma, Department of History, moderated the session.

The fourth technical session, titled “Linguistic Dominance over Knowledge,” brought together Prof. Salil Mishra, Dr. Swarajbir and Prof. Sarabjit Singh. The session critically examined the relationship between language and the production, circulation and accessibility of knowledge. It drew attention to

the importance of recognising diverse linguistic traditions and knowledge systems. Prof. Gurjit Kaur moderated the session, while Prof. Daljit Kaur delivered the concluding remarks.

The festival concluded with a Valedictory Session centred on “National Education Policy and Indian Languages.” The session featured Prof. Niranjana Kumar, Dean Planning and Chairman, VAC Committee, University of Delhi; Dr. Amita Dev, Former Vice Chancellor, IGDTUW and Distinguished Academician; and Dr. Priyaranjan Trivedi, President, IAEWP. The discussions brought together the concerns raised throughout the festival and reflected upon the place of Indian languages within contemporary educational policy and institutions. Prof. Pooja Wadhawan moderated the session. The concluding remarks were delivered by Prof. Harpreet Kaur, Principal and Convener, followed by the vote of thanks by Prof. Lokesh Kumar Gupta, Director, IQAC.

The two-day festival successfully created an interdisciplinary platform for reflecting upon the cultural, educational, democratic and intellectual significance of language. By bringing together diverse voices from academia, literature, journalism and public life, *Bhasha Mein Loktantra* highlighted the need to preserve linguistic diversity while ensuring that Indian languages remain vibrant mediums of education, knowledge creation and democratic participation. The festival thus served as a significant academic initiative towards encouraging dialogue on the future of Indian and regional languages in a rapidly changing world.