

AXIA IAS ACADEMY
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MoU Signed to Digitally Archive Rare Literature from Endangered Languages of Assam

In a significant step towards the preservation of Assam's linguistic heritage, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the Nanda Talukdar Foundation (NTF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on April 23, 2025, to digitally archive rare literature from endangered indigenous languages under the Digitizing Assam initiative.

The MoU was formally signed by AASU President Utpal Sarma, General Secretary Samiran Phukan, and NTF Secretary Mrinal Talukdar, in the presence of Dr. Samujjal Bhattacharjya, Chief Advisor of AASU, and Dr. Narayan Sarma, Managing Trustee of the Assam Jatiya Bidyalaya Educational and Socio-Economic Trust, at Swahid Nyas, Guwahati.

Pilot Focus: Khamyang, Tai Phake, and Singpho Languages

The initial five-month pilot project will focus on three critically endangered indigenous languages: Khamyang, Tai Phake, and Singpho—each of which is spoken by fewer than 10,000 people. Notably, in the case of Khamyang, only one elderly individual is currently known to be proficient in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding the language.

Citing a ground-level study, AASU President Sarma emphasized, "There is an urgent need to preserve these languages from complete extinction. This realization has driven AASU and NTF to initiate this collaborative effort."

Archival, Indexing, and Open Access

NTF will lead the documentation and digital archiving process, with active support from local community leaders. All content will be indexed and uploaded to the open-source Digitizing Assam platform (accessible at <https://assamarchive.org>), which has already digitized over 2.9 million pages of rare Assamese literature.

The project is being guided by Dr. Palash Kumar Nath, a noted expert in endangered languages, who is serving as the honorary project advisor.

Clause 6 of the Assam Accord and Revitalization Vision

Dr. Samujjal Bhattacharjya, AASU's Chief Advisor, underscored the strategic vision behind the initiative:

“This is part of a broader community-driven platform that not only archives but aims to revitalize endangered languages. We will explore how this initiative can be brought under the ambit of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord in consultation with the Government of Assam.”

AASU General Secretary Samiran Phukan further stated, “This initiative will be scaled up to include other critically endangered languages and communities across Assam. We will engage with student bodies, community groups, and prominent individuals to ensure inclusivity and authenticity in language preservation.”

Collaborative Framework

The Digitizing Assam initiative is a collaborative project jointly undertaken by NTF and the Assam Jatiya Bidyalaya Educational and Socio-Economic Trust, with AASU playing a pivotal role in the conservation of critically endangered linguistic traditions. This initiative is envisioned not just as a digital archive but as a cultural movement that seeks to protect, document, and potentially revive Assam’s endangered linguistic legacies.