

A note on the Jarawa language

It is for the first time that a systematic study of the Jarawa language is being attempted. The objective of this study is not simply to study the Jarawa language but to acquire competence in the Jarawa language so that a 'Handbook' on the Jarawa language could be written which would enable others also to understand the Jarawa's speech and communicate with them. This should help in solving the 'Jarawa problem' and convert the 'hostile Jarawa tribe' into a more friendly and understanding group of people. It is also intended to adopt the 'Nagari script' for the Jarawa language so that the Jarawa texts could be written in 'Nagari script' which would be helpful to the non-English knowing larger public.

This report is divided into three different sections. The first section gives some preliminary observations on the sound system of the Jarawa language. It also presents the 'Alphabet' of the Jarawa language which is evolved by suitably adopting the Parivardhita Nagari (परिवर्धित नागरी) script to represent the Jarawa language sounds based on the sound-system of the language. The second section gives a list of words and sentences and the third section contains some observations on the grammar of the Jarawa language based on the list of words and sentences given in Section 2.

Section 1

THE SOUND SYSTEM OF THE JARAWA LANGUAGE AND ADAPTATION OF THE NAGARI SCRIPT TO WRITE THE JARAWA LANGUAGE

The Jarawa language has no writing system or a script of its own. Until now no serious attempt seems to have been made to record and study the language. This is perhaps the first time when the language data is being recorded on magnetic tapes. This is also, perhaps the first attempt to scientifically adopt the Nagari script for the 'Alphabet' of the Jarawa language.

When a new script is to be adopted for a hitherto unwritten language we have to first identify the significant speech sounds of the language which are technically called as the phonemes of the language. After identifying the sounds, each sound can symbolically be represented by a 'letter' and all the letters together arranged in some order will form the 'Alphabet' of the language. Of course, adapting a script is a technical process the details