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Prof. Anvita Abbi

Director

First Project Report

Fading Voices of the Great Andamanese

Submitted by the Project Director
Prof. Anvita Abbi

1. The project, *Fading Voices of the Great Andamanese*, presently under the directorship of Prof. Anvita Abbi of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is primarily about documenting the highly endangered Great Andamanese language. The project aims at a detailed descriptive grammar, a socio-linguistic description, a tribal dictionary, in Great Andamanese, Hindi and English, and an archive of audio and video oral texts of the nearly extinct Great Andamanese speakers of the Great Andaman Island and "Pan Blair". We intend to record the language in its entirety. The project will probe into the phonological and morphological systems of the language so as to reconstruct its core grammar. This may reflect the degree of variation that exists in today's speech as preserved by different people in the same community. An archive is to prepare a bilingual pictorial dictionary in Great Andamanese, English and Hindi as a major by-product of the project will be preparation of primers and other literary material in the language. This could be given back to the community and in particular to the young children of the tribe, who sadly have no other means of learning the language, thus retaining the tribal culture as presently there is no transmission of the language from the elders to the young.

2. **Duration:** This is a 12-year project which started on September 1, 2001. A team of three researchers employed in the project at the Centre of Linguistics and English, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 14, Azizul Pan Blair on 16th February 2002 for the fieldwork. The research staff was allowed to work with the tribe till 31st March 2002. The project was funded by the Government of India (Ministry of Culture) under the project number 14-002-2001-03, 1000 dated 14th July, 2004) under the project number 14-002-2001-03, 1000 dated 14th July, 2004) under the project number 14-002-2001-03, 1000 dated 14th July, 2004).