

# **Beyond Transmission: Digital Vitality and the Future of Brajhasha and Kumaoni in India's Online Landscape**

## **Abstract**

Traditional approaches for assessing language vitality have long emphasized on factors such as intergenerational transmission, speaker population, and domains of use. However, in an era marked by rapid digital transformation across India, a language's ability to establish and sustain presence in online spaces is emerging as an important indicator of its ongoing survival and relevance. This study explores the digital trajectories of Brajhasha and Kumaoni – two less-resourced Indo-Aryan languages with deep oral and literary traditions but facing contemporary challenges in passing on to younger generations. Employing the Digital Language Vitality Scale (DLVS) developed by the Digital Language Diversity Project (DLDP) (Ceberio et al., 2018), the research offers a structured evaluation of how these languages are represented, used, and supported across the internet and digital devices. The DLVS framework, increasingly recognized as a vital tool for digital language planning (Soria, 2017), enables a nuanced analysis of social media activity, the availability and development of language technology tools, and the impact of community-driven online initiatives.

Recent developments – such as the integration of Kumaoni into digital keyboards (Jha, 2020) and the growing proliferation of Brajhasha content on social media platforms – are examined alongside the digital attitudes and practices of younger speakers. By integrating traditional measures of language vitality with a systematic assessment of digital presence and innovation, this research highlights both the opportunities and challenges that Brajhasha and Kumaoni face in the digital age. The findings offer actionable insights for language planners, educators, and community activists, shedding light on strategies to ensure the continued relevance and resilience of local languages. Findings indicate that while both languages are gaining digital visibility through the efforts of individual native speakers – particularly by activists, writers, and journalists – Kumaoni demonstrates a stronger collective linguistic identity and greater community awareness toward preservation than Brajhasha. This has resulted in more proactive digital engagement by Kumaoni speakers, whereas Brajhasha's digital revitalization remains comparatively fragmented. Persistent gaps in institutional support and digital tools, however, challenge the sustained growth of both languages online. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that digital vitality is no longer a peripheral concern but is increasingly central to linguistic survival and the broader process of language revitalization in contemporary India.

*Keywords: digital vitality, Brajhasha, Kumaoni, language documentation, language revitalisation.*