

India's lost 220 languages in last 50 yrs, finds survey

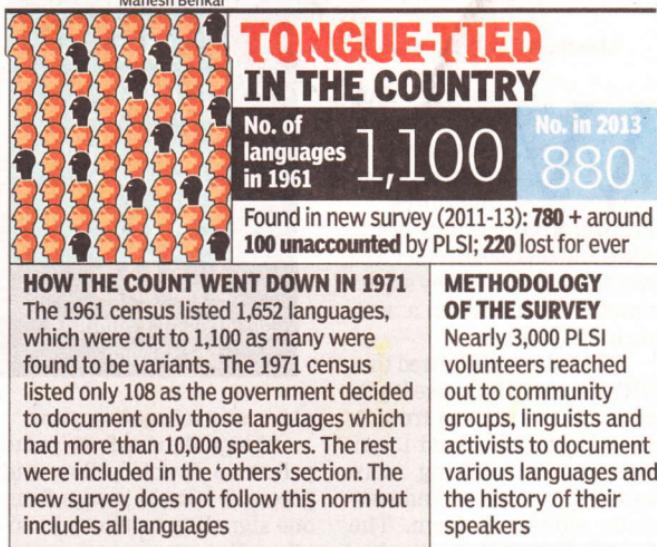
Most Were Spoken By Nomads

Sandhya Soman | TNN

Mumbai: India has lost around 20% of its languages in the past five decades, a survey by the Vadodara-based Bhasha Research and Publication Centre has revealed.

The country had 1,100 languages in 1961, but nearly 220 of them have vanished, said Ganesh Devy, writer and lead co-ordinator of the People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) project. The survey was carried out over a period of two years starting 2011.

"We have found 780 languages and must have missed about 100 or about 880 languages. The rest have disappeared. It's a sad loss," said Devy.



Most of the lost languages belong to nomadic communities scattered across the country. "Were they alive, they would have been spoken by 3% to 4% of Indians, that is around five crore people," Devy said.

The main reasons for the

disappearance are lack of recognition, displacement of communities, absence of livelihood options for speakers and stigma against 'under-developed' mother tongues, he said.