

**Politics of Language:  
A Study of Kudmali in the Context of  
*Jhumur* and *Charyapada***

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I

Language is considered as a contested social practice where power, identity and cultural authority are produced, negotiated and resisted. In multilingual societies like India, in which certain languages are deemed either classical, standard or national, language acts as the site of political negotiation where others are left out as dialect or

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folk speech. These distinctions are seldom made solely on linguistic criteria. Rather, they result from historical processes of colonial administration, nationalist movements, caste order and economic power. The linguistic and cultural marginalization of Kudmali cannot be understood in isolation from the historical positioning of the Kudmi community, which constitutes one of the principal speech communities of the language. Kudmis have traditionally been agrarian cultivators, deeply embedded in land-based labour, seasonal cycles, and ecological knowledge systems. Kudmali emerges precisely from this socio-cultural matrix of Kudmi life—its vocabulary, idioms, metaphors, and affective expressions are shaped by agricultural rhythms, collective work, migration, and village-based social relations. Recognizing Kudmali, therefore, also means recognizing Kudmi cultural knowledge system as a legitimate source of history and meaning.

From the perspective of Academic Social Responsibility (ASR), this article responds to the ethical imperative of restoring visibility to communities whose contributions have been systematically erased from dominant narratives. The relegation of Kudmali to the status of a “mixed sub-dialect” mirrors the socio-economic marginalization of Kudmis within caste and class hierarchies. Academic institutions, by privileging written, elite, and urban languages, have historically failed to acknowledge agrarian communities like the Kudmis as producers of culture and knowledge. By foregrounding Kudmali as a historically continuous language and situating it within traditions such as Jhumur and the Charyapada, the paper attempts to enact ASR through epistemic redress.

Jhumur, in particular, functions as a cultural archive of Kudmi experience. Its songs encode themes of sowing and harvesting, seasonal separation, labour migration, love, and collective endurance, central elements of Kudmi social life. The use of Kudmali in

Jhumur performances affirms language as a lived practice rather than a codified system, reinforcing the idea that Kudmi culture sustains its own modes of historical transmission outside institutional literacy. Treating Jhumur merely as “folk” art thus reproduces caste-inflected hierarchies that devalue agrarian aesthetics.

Furthermore, the re-interpretation of the Charyapada through Kudmali and Jhumur unsettles dominant literary historiography that has largely detached early vernacular traditions from the communities that nurtured them. By tracing continuities between Charya language, Kudmali idiom, and Kudmi cultural spaces of Rarh–Jharkhand, the article reclaims Kudmi participation in the formation of eastern Indian vernacular culture. This reclamation aligns with ASR’s broader goal of democratizing knowledge and resisting upper-caste and metropolitan monopolies over cultural history.

In this academic ethical practice, connecting Kudmali with Kudmi culture is not merely an act of linguistic classification but a form of recognising the strength of Kudmi culture. It asserts that Kudmi agrarian life, oral traditions, and linguistic practices constitute valid knowledge systems.

The present study attempts to explore the politics of language through a focused study of Kudmali from the perspective of its interaction with an early vernacular text namely, Charyapada and the traditional folk performance form of Jhumur. Kudmali is spoken throughout a large area, including Jharkhand, western West Bengal, northern Odisha, and a section of Chhattisgarh. While widely spoken and deeply rooted in the history of the language, Kudmali has fallen conspicuously from the public lexicon. Often identified as a dialect of Bengali or Hindi since the survey of George Abraham Grierson, its independence and unique linguistic qualities suffer a sense of marginalization.

This marginalization can be attributed to the socio-economic status of its speakers, who largely come from agrarian, Adivasi and working-class backgrounds. Thus, the politics of language would intertwine caste, class and regional inequalities. Charyapada is often regarded as the earliest available material that ever emerged from eastern Indo-Aryan literature from the eighth to twelfth centuries, written by the Buddhist Siddhacharyas. Its linguistic identity, however, has been a subject of debate. Modern literary histories generally identify the Charyapada as the original source of the standard Bengali, Assamese, or Odia. It demonstrates the reverse appropriation and the manner by which early vernacular texts are appropriated to justify modern linguistic identities, even if it implies that such modern linguistic identities have an identity of a more plural or heterogeneous origin. Jhumur is the oral-based tradition of the living practices of the Kudmali

speakers. Conducted in agricultural seasons, festivals, and communal celebrations, Jhumur preserves the linguistic forms that few writings have ever attempted to include. But, as Kudmali, Jhumur has been dismissed as nothing more than ‘folk’, maintaining its marginal status. When analysing Kudmali alongside its interactions with Charyapada and Jhumur, it becomes a case study to show how language politics works for mutual recognition, exclusion, and appropriation. The historical and cultural legacy of Kudmali allows for a much more holistic and ethical reckoning with the linguistic history of India.

## II

Kudmali is an Indo-Aryan language and is mainly spoken in the east and the very heart of central India at present, especially in Jharkhand, northern Odisha and north-east Chhattisgarh. Because Kudmali is

spoken by a large majority over a vast geographical area, it has not been recognized as an autonomous language in official or academic discussions. Bengali and Hindi are commonly used to describe it and, in some cases, it is referred to by the name of Sadri or Nagpuri. These categorizations are not purely descriptive but political in nature. They represent the prevalence of some languages while isolating others. Kudmali's linguistic phenomenon shows that linguistic identity is as much determined by social power as it is by structural characteristics. Kudmali has its own phonological, morphological, and syntactic features which are different from neighbouring standard languages. Its phonetic system retains features and intonation that are not present in the dominant Bengali and Hindi languages, and its verb forms and sentence forms are a little more closely aligned with regional vernaculars. Kudmali vocabulary reflects high levels of linguistic contact, especially with Austroasiatic

languages, like Mundari and Ho, spoken by the Adivasi communities of the Chotanagpur plateau. Moreover, extended involvement with Magahi, Maithili, and Odia has also enriched its vocabulary. Such multilingual interaction has resulted in a composite linguistic structure without clear boundary between languages or any absolute classification process. Yet, in dominant models of language standardisation, this linguistic hybridity has been seen unfavourably. Language like Kudmali, which does not adhere to one standardised grammar or script, is very often denigrated as being ‘corrupt’ or ‘impure’. Such judgement ignores the traditional context of language development, which happens constantly and collaboratively. For Kudmali, hybridity should be viewed as one of cultural contact, mobility and resilience, not linguistic insufficiency. The marginal status of Kudmali can largely be attributed to its predominantly oral transmission. Historically, the language recognition

in India has been attached to the written tradition and to a standard script. Kudmali has been mainly a spoken language passed on through songs, folktales, proverbs, ritual speech, and everyday communication, and has been historically excluded from processes of language planning as well as that of colonizing powers. Colonial rulers favoured languages that could be easily codified for governance, and nationalist movements would later spread some languages as symbols of cultural homogenisation. However, Kudmali in both instances remained outside institutional systems. The socio-economic status of Kudmali speakers only contributes to further marginalization. The language is mostly spoken by agrarian communities such as Kudmis and other labouring groups. Historically, such communities have always held lower positions in caste and class hierarchies. Language, therefore, serves as a marker of social identity, perpetuating taboo and exclusion. Speaking Kudmali in public or

formal settings is often linked with rural backwardness, driving speakers to take on the language of the majority, Bengali or Hindi, for social mobility. Education is essential in this mechanism of linguistic displacement. Kudmali is not integrated into the curriculum at school; so, children are surrounded by prominent languages and their mother tongue is restricted to the household environment from a young age. This results in language attrition over time and slowly a loss of confidence in languages. Such processes are typical examples of indirect influence of the state policy that leads to the extinction of minority languages. Folk music, Jhumur, Tusu, Karam and seasonal ritual songs, are significant linguistic conservations. These are not just linguistic forms that support vocabulary and grammar but serve as the archives of memory, knowledge and collective environmental experience, and social values. Oral performance in this scenario becomes a potent alternative archive in



the absence of written texts. In recent years, efforts by scholars, writers and cultural activists have been directed to revive Kudmali. Attempts to create scripts, dictionaries, written literature, poetry, short narratives and various other literary types have been operative in the public domain. These attempts, despite being structurally challenged, are in fact, major acts of language assertion. They question and challenge dominant hierarchical attitudes and desire recognition of Kudmali as a language with historical and cultural significance. This means that a new way of thinking is necessary to get to know Kudmali. It can no longer be seen through the lens of inadequacy, but mustered through historical engagement, social adversity and cultural persistence. The language politics surrounding Kudmali demonstrate how power constructs the linguistic value which marginalised classes can maintain in the face of structural neglect of their linguistic heritage.



Kudmali was never a deformed offspring of one monolithic standard language; instead, it arose naturally from the multilingualism of an Indo-Aryan language interaction with the languages of indigenous communities. This interactive climate, characterized by agrarian and forest-based living, is an essential factor when it comes to the development of Kudmali as a regional vernacular. It is essential to understand that Kudmali originated as a spoken language from real life; from labour and ritual, from communal and cultural expressions. It has developed such as a linguistic formation in and through the activities of cultivating and working communities, particularly those associated with agriculture, seasonal movement and ecological knowledge. This history may elucidate why Kudmali language and idiom still feature so fundamentally in the discussions of land, seasons, agricultural work and social relations. Moreover, the text presents Kudmali as a regional contact language defined by

ongoing interaction rather than historical linguistic acquisition. Interaction with neighbouring vernaculars and indigenous speech forms further enriched Kudmali (rather than erasing), thereby facilitating its ability to operate fluidly in a variety of social contexts. The lack of written sources early in its existence is not cited as proof of a recent origin. Rather, it is suggested that the long history of Kudmali has been recorded through its embeddedness in folk traditions like Jhumur, where songs, orally transmitted narratives and performance practices, served as linguistic memory repositories.

### III

The relationship between the Charya language and the Kudmali language is diverse and deeply spiritual. However, this ancient language of India remains unfamiliar, unknown and rejected by many people even today. Therefore, Kudmali still has no place or mention

in the discussion of Indian languages and literatures. Kudmali is still only a regional language or dialect. Linguists of different languages have divided Kudmali into dialects. Bengali scholars claim Kudmali as a dialect of Bengali, Maghrebi scholars claim it as a dialect of Maghrebi, Odia scholars claim it as Odia, Maithilischolars attribute Kudmali to being a dialect of Maithili.

Kudmali language and Kudmali culture are rich in their own resources. Kudmali is a pre-Aryan or pre-Vedic language. This language is deeply connected with the culture of the Indus or Harappan civilizations. On the surface, Kudmali may seem to be akin to Prakrit, Maithili or Bhojpuri and may also seem to be an independent language. But this is not the only identity of Kudmali. There are some other characteristics in the Kudmali language that are older than Prakrit or Pali; perhaps it is the original Prakrit-the language that scholars have assumed to be the language of Harappan. The language and cultural history of the Charyas

survives, albeit partially, in the Rarh-Jharkhand region. The religion, language and cultural heritage of this region are quite old- many traces of which can be found in the language, script, songs, speeches, stories, memories, rituals, festivals and the lifestyle of this region. In the Indian context, the search for multilingual heritage appears to be not as important as the language politics. Therefore, it has not been possible to resolve the debate whether Sanskrit came first or Prakrit or who is the mother of whom. The observations of Pandit Haraprasad Shastri become very relevant-

The words of Prakrit, Apabhramsha Pali etc. have no specific meaning. Only when they are derived from Sanskrit are they called Prakrit. Ashoka's inscriptions are also Prakrit, Pali is also Prakrit, Jain Prakrit is also Prakrit, the Prakrit of drama is also Prakrit, Bengali is also Prakrit, Marathi is also Prakrit. A language that does not fit into Prakrit grammar is called Apabhramsha. (Mahato 126)

So, it seems that Kudmalican be claimed as the origin of many languages of India, and the Charya is only a manifestation of this linguistic tradition.

#### IV

Jhumur is a unique song and dance of the Chotanagpur region comprising parts of Jharkhand, western West Bengal, northern Odisha, and parts of Assam and Chhattisgarh. Grounded in agrarian lifestyle, forest existence, and seasonal rhythms, Jhumur remains a crucial cultural phenomenon for communities of people who are predominantly Kudmali speakers and other regional dialects spoken collectively. Jhumur is a performative art but more so a socio-cultural practice in which language, memory, labour and identity are articulated collectively. Jhumur has close relationships with agricultural calendars, especially seedings and harvests. It was once a musical tradition that was

most likely observed at fairs and festival time, and in religious activities. It is the essence of traditional rural society. Love, separation, migration, work, nature, social intercourse — constitute the thematic subjects of the lyrics. Kudmali, which is one of the main languages of Jhumur, lends all these emotional and cultural experiences a vocabulary. The prominence of Kudmali in Jhumur demonstrates the strong association between language and reality. In contrast with its standardised literary languages, Jhumur serves to be a type of alternative linguistic archive, to store expressions and idioms long forgotten into written archives. Politically, Jhumur is a space where marginalized communities assert themselves culturally. The performers of Jhumur, who are from agrarian, labouring and Adivasi minorities, occupy socially and economically marginal locations. Their language Kudmali also experiences such marginalization. Jhumur has been increasingly labelled in mainstream cultural

discourses as ‘folk’ or ‘primitive’ with the implicit devaluation of the language and its form. Such categorisation represents the larger politics of language in which cultural legitimacy is actively denied to expressions that do not fit the narrow confines of elite or classical structures. The pain of seasonal migration, labour and the emotional struggles of love-relationships can often be expressed in these songs. They are told through Kudmali, in a language that is immediate and can be shared within the community. This highlights Kudmali's function as an affective, solidarity-based language- one of collective identification and comprehension. The performative quality of Jhumur also strengthens its political meaning. Language in Jhumur cannot be detached from gesture, beat, and social dynamism. Kudmali, as it is found in the Jhumur, is a living evolving practice, not an eternal scheme. Placing Kudmali in the context of Jhumur consequently shows up language politics at the level

of everyday cultural existence. Jhumur shows how marginalised language makes life not through recognition via official institutions but as communities of practice. The continued existence of Kudmali in Jhumur confirms that it is a carrier of historical memory, ecological wisdom, and social experience. This study centres Kudmali in Jhumur and challenges hegemonic hierarchies which divide ‘folk’ from ‘classical’, as well as ‘oral’ from ‘literary’. This paper maintains that Jhumur is a legitimate place for linguistic and cultural production, and it maintains that Kudmali shapes the expressive worlds of the speakers but is overlooked as a system.

## V

The period from 8<sup>th</sup> century to 12<sup>th</sup> century was the period of writing of Charya Sahajiya literature. Naturally, the relationship between Jhumur and Charya

Giti deserves special discussion. Many researchers have admitted in one way or another that Jhumur has a very close relationship with the two-thousand-year-old *Gatha Saptashati* and the thousand-year-old Dohapada or song. Not only this, the relationship between Jhumur and Charya is more direct. The language, philosophy, melody and musical tradition of Jhumur and Charya are as close as the two sides of a coin. It can be proved in various ways that the original and main domain of the Charya's writing activities was the Jharkhand region. Personal names, place names and countless village names still carry the undying memory of Siddhacharyas. Even today, the names of Dakini Biswas, Siddhar (Siddha-Charya), Mantra Guru, Yana Guru (Sahajyan) dancers (Vajrayogini?) and dancers (Bhandua) and Jhumur communities (Natgeeti) are directly related to Charya. Surprisingly, what is known to the common people as Dharani, or Jharani Mantra, Bisahari Mantra, are ancient Dohapadas and are also commonly known as

Chariya, Charya or Chanchair, Jharani Geet or Jhumair Padas written by some Siddhacharyas.

Prominent foreign researcher Per Kvaerne observes in his book *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs*,

The songs were originally intended to be sung. This is evident not only from the term Caryya-giti (giti "song") itself, but also from the fact that a raga is indicated for each song in the text of the commentary. Each song has a refrain (dhrubapada) indicating that a chorus alternated with a soloist...like the doha, the pada form seems genuinely popular in origin: it is really a folk song adapted to religious purposes.(Mahato 39)

Pandit Haraprasad Shastri discovered the manuscript of Charyagiti from the National Library of Nepal. It is known that a spiritual song called "Chachagiti" is still popular among the pastoral people or rural people of

Nepal. According to Dr. Shashibhushan Dasgupta, Chachagiti is also known to be very popular among the saints and Buddhist communities of Nepal. Pandit Rahul Sankrityayan has also mentioned Chachagiti in his book *Dohakosh*.

Nevertheless, it can be said with certainty that even in the present day, the importance of Charya is immense on many aspects. Charyagiti is an outstanding archaeological document of the evolution and history of Indian language, literature, society and culture. Naturally, many renowned scholars, researchers and language teachers have conducted insightful and significant research and discussions on Charya language and literature. But it is noteworthy that although the main identity of Charya is a lyric poem, its musical characteristics and identity, i.e., melody, rhythm, and instruments, have remained largely ignored in research. Therefore, it can be said that the relationship between Charyagiti and Jhumur is a thousand- year-old narrative.

However, it would not be inappropriate to say that Charyagiti is one of the earliest and most important examples of the language, literature and music of not only Rarh, that is, Jharkhand, but also Bengal, Bihar, Odisha and a large region of North, East and Central India. Therefore, it can be seen that the influence and contribution of Charya in the literature and culture of this entire region is still direct and active-especially in the language, ethnicity and geography of Rarh and Jharkhand regions.

One should remember that Charya is first music and then literature. It was not written with the intention of creating literature. Charya is basically songs and it contains spiritual guidelines or guidelines to be followed by simple yogis or Siddhas. Acharya Sen has admitted that the Jantalika and Charcharika Geet are Jhumur and Chanchar. Both of these are popular and widely used folk songs of the Rarh-Jharkhand region. Another noteworthy thing is that the language of Charcharika was the language of Jhumur and Chanchar is also the

native language of Jharkhand. Charchari or Chanchar Geet is thought to be the basis of Charya Geet. Siddhacharyas adopted Chanchar as a medium or vehicle for the purpose of spreading their views and ideology. The word Charya is spoken in Sanskrit. According to the characteristics of Prakrit, it should be 'Chariya', which is also the pronunciation style or common characteristic of the Kudmali language. Surprisingly, the ancient music of Indian tradition, Chanchar or Chanchar Geet, is still popular in Jharkhand. Like Charya, Chanchar or Chanchar Geet of Jharkhand is also Mystical and symbolic. Its language is Sandhyabhasha i.e. Kudmali. Therefore, if we analyse the etymology of the words 'Chanchar' or 'Chariya' from the perspective of Kudmali language, a simple and logical meaning is found.

In the comparative discussion of Charyagiti with Jhumur, Udhwa, Chanchar, Ghera and Chua songs of Rarh-Jharkhand region, one of the main issues is undoubtedly the language of these songs. Surprisingly, it

is true that Charyagiti has deep similarities with all these ancient folk songs of Rarh-Jharkhand region in terms of tradition, language, composition, poetic style, rhythm and ornamentation. The reason for this is probably the same geographical area of both the songs, religious and cultural similarities as well as some special connection between the people.

It can be said that Charyagiti is a descendant, an imitation of Jhumur and its language is also the language of the original Jhumur, i.e. Kudmali, which is still a widely used and popular folk or rural language of Rarh-Jharkhand. Its linguistic and grammatical characteristics can prove that its linguistic characteristics are much more related to Kudmali than Bengali, Hindi, Odia, Magadhi and Assamese.

While discussing the history of the Charya language, it is a harsh truth that like the political history of India, the real history of the language is also unexplored to a large extent. Perhaps it can be said that

the history of the language that we find today is largely distorted, discriminatory and purposeful. The imperialists have always attempted to establish Aryan civilization and culture everywhere. It has resulted in the cultural invisibility of languages like Kudmali. George Abraham Grierson's book *Linguistic Survey of India* observes, "This dialect is the language of a strange people in a strange land." (Mahato 100)

According to Haraprasad Shastri, the total number of words in the forty-six and a half, Charyagiti is 1660. The words are divided into three categories - Sanskrit, Prakrit and Bengali (old-new). Shastri has divided them into these categories. According to his estimate, the percentage-wise breakup of this vocabulary is - Sanskrit: 15%; Prakrit: 25% and Bengali: 60%. According to the famous researcher Dr. Nilratan Sen, Sanskrit is 10%; Sanskrit-derived: 86% and non-Sanskrit: 4%. It is noteworthy that Dr. Sen did not mention the presence of Prakrit or Abhatath-Apabhramsha words. Various scholars have accepted

the language of the Charya as Shauraseni Prakrit, Apabhramsha or Abhatath. Munidatta has called it 'Prakrit Bhasya'. Charyapada was written entirely in the vernacular of the people or in the vernacular of the country. Dr. Sen has given some list of non-Sanskrit words and it will help to understand the relationship of Kudmali with them (Mahato 101).

চর্যাশব্দ (Words of Charyapada)

কুড়মালিরূপ (Kudmali form)

আলাজালা (Alajala)

আলাঝালা (Alajhala)

আলিকালি (Alikali)

আলিকালি (Alikali)

আলো (Alo)

এলো / এহেলো (Elo/Ehelo)

উঞ্চলপাঞ্চল (Unchol Panchol)

উঝলপাঝল (Ujhal Pajhol)

উভিল (Ubhil)

উভল (Ubhal)

Dr. Nilratan Sen has mentioned some words of Sanskrit origin. It is a matter of debate whether these are Sanskrit or original Prakrit. For example,

সংস্কৃতজ (Sanskrit Origin)

কুড়মালিরূপ (Kudmali Form)

উজু (Uju)

উজু (Uju)

এহু (Ehu)

এহু (Ehu)

গাজই (Gajoi)

গাজই (Gajoi)

চউকোড়ি (Chaukodi)

চউকটি (Chaukodi )

Charyapada emerges as something less like an isolated literary relic, and more like a larger vernacular tradition that favoured ease of access and sharing of common cultural materials. Jhumur is an extension of this vernacular philosophy that exists as performance. Based on agricultural cycles, seasonal festivals and communal occasions, Jhumur serves as a shared language of expression for Kudmali-speaking communities. Its songs express feelings and experiences — love, separation, migration, hardships and joy — that flow from the experiences of daily life. Like the Charyapada, Jhumur employs symbolic language and metaphor, but through music, rhythm, and dance in a more immediate and embodied way. The connection between early vernacular textual communication and modern oral culture is emphasized by these two traditions being placed together in a context. Both contest the hegemony of standardised, elite languages by declaring the legitimacy of regional and community-

oriented speech forms. The marginalisation of Kudmali, reflected in the lack of recognition of Jhumur as a genuine cultural form, resembles later appropriations of the Charyapada into dominant linguistic histories. In doing so, language politics functions through certain selective processes of recognition and exclusion. The Jhumur songs remind that folk tradition, rather than being permanent vestiges of the past, is the product of cultural activities in response to social conditions. This helps us read the Charyapada not as a historical work simply but rather as part of one continuous line of vernacular creativity. Both traditions embody modes of knowledge transmission that rely on memory, performance, and collective participation rather than institutional validation. By situating the Charyapada alongside Jhumur, this work highlights the role of marginal languages, such as Kudmali, in preserving alternative literary and cultural histories. It also insists for a shift on breaking down the divisions

between written and oral, classical and folk, past and present. Contextualization reveals how vernacular traditions have historically negotiated power, identity and expression.

## VI

In conclusion, it may be stated that this study has attempted to explore language politics with a focus on Kudmali through the Charyapada and the folk tradition of Jhumur. Building on the linguistic and cultural understanding as embodied in the reference material, for example, in Jhumur's documentary, this paper has suggested that language is a key location for the confluence of power, identity, and cultural memory. Kudmali's marginal position in dominant linguistic hierarchies is not because of linguistic limitations, but the consequence of historical conditions that favour standardised, written, and elite languages as opposed to oral and

community-based forms of discourse. The paper has tried to dislodge, through locating Kudmali within the history of the Charyapada, a linear and exclusionist narrative of language development. The Charyapada does not appear as the sole child of any one of modern-day languages, but as the result of a plural vernacular, in which regional speech practices (like Kudmali, for instance) were dominant. Acknowledging this plurality makes apparent the politics of literary historiography itself, where early texts are retrospectively invoked as constitutions of contemporary linguistic identities with a tendency to efface subaltern linguistic continuities. The discussion of Jhumur also lends support to the claim that Kudmali endures as an ever-present language through performance, orality, and collective praxis. Jhumur serves as a cultural archive that preserves language forms, social interactions and emotional expressions that are not found in writing. Labour, migration, love, separation and seasonal life, as

portrayed in Jhumur songs, show how Kudmali serves as the language of daily life belonging to a community. In the marginalization of Jhumur as a 'folk' type, we have also experienced the marginalisation of Kudmali which demonstrates how cultural and linguistic hierarchies reinforce each other. The study also reflects on the tensions resulting from the rise of Jhumur's prominence in popular and commercial realms. This phenomenon mirrors general trends of cultural appropriation, which includes aesthetic appropriation of linguistic and social contexts that are overlooked. Given this reality, modern attempts to maintain Jhumur in its linguistic identity reflect acts of resistance (i.e. linguistic resilience) and cultural self-assertion. In the scope of this paper, the politics of language is discussed, calling for redefinitions of forms like 'dialect', 'folk' and 'standard'. Kudmali, against a background of historical depth, cultural richness, and linguistic endurance, complicates the binaries.

Recognising Kudmali as a language, and Jhumur as a major site of literary and cultural production, leads to a richer reflection on India's linguistic history. Restoring Kudmali's right to speak and write is not a linguistic goal alone but an ethical or political choice. It reflects the cultural pride of communities which have been historically sidelined in hegemonic accounts. By foregrounding Kudmali in historical texts such as the Charyapada and continuing processes in Jhumur, this article points to linguistic diversity as central to cultural history, rather than peripheral to it. The marginalization of Kudmali reflects a broader politics of language in which dominant regional languages assert authority by absorbing or erasing agrarian speech communities. Reclaiming Kudmali within Kurmi culture thus becomes an act of Academic Social Responsibility, challenging linguistic hierarchies and affirming plural vernacular histories.



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