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SUB-DOMAIN: 2. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

PANEL TITLE:

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) & INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES:
LANGUAGES WILL NOT VANISH ANYMORE!**

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ABSTRACT

Language is a tool used by people in their daily life, as a means of expression and communication. The native language of a person reflects their cultural and ethnic identity. Today's world is an era of technology. However, merely 1000 out of an overall 7000 languages worldwide are supported online. As per UNESCO, by the end of the century, around half of the languages spoken today could disappear. The internet, which is now the primary way of sharing information, has a key role to play in promoting multilingualism. However, we have also witnessed that the internet is dominated by English and some other widely spoken languages such as Spanish and Chinese. This indicates that nearly 88% of the world's languages have either insignificant or no presence on the internet. Absence of digital representation of indigenous dialects/non-written languages may result in the loss of precious heritage that has immense value for the future generations. About 1.2 billion people, or 20% of the world's population, can't use their own language to navigate the digital world. Within a multilingual country like India, out a total of 121 languages and 270 mother tongues/dialects, only 22 languages are considered as 'scheduled languages' (2011 census). For the other languages, a scarcity of resources, tools, and technologies is causing the respective communities to lag in accessing technologies and services, resulting in their speakers failing to connect to the digital world. This creates a lack of opportunities which not only divides people but also limits inclusiveness. It is also one of the biggest hurdles in developing tools and techniques to preserve these indigenous languages. This panel invites papers that would discuss how digital technologies can make language revitalization accessible to future generations.

Keywords: Indigenous Languages, Language Revitalization, Digital Technology, AI

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