

# Kuvi, Kui and Manda Languages

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**In news**— A noted linguist B Ramakrishna Reddy (literature) from Telangana has received Padma Shri for protecting languages such as Kuvi, Kui and Manda for decades.

## **Kuvi & Kui languages-**

- Kuvi is a South-Central Dravidian language spoken in the Indian state of Odisha.
- The language is one of two spoken by the Kandhas, with the other being the closely related and more dominant Kui language.
- According to the 2011 Indian census, there are around 155,000 speakers.
- The orthography is the Odia script. The grammatical structure of this language is comparable to other similar languages such as Kui which all fall under the classification of a Dravidian language.
- Kui is a South-Eastern Dravidian language spoken by the Kandhas. It is mostly spoken in Odisha, and written in the Odia script.
- The Kui language was also referred to as the Kuinga language during the historical period. It is closely related to the Gondi and Kuvi languages.
- Ramakrishna Reddy has even drafted a Manda to English and Kuvi-Oriya-English dictionary.

## **Manda Language-**

- Manda is a Dravidian language of Odisha, spoken in the highlands of Thuamul Rampur block of Kalahandi district.
- It only became known to Western academia in 1964.
- Its speakers are generally known as 'Khond Parjas' by outsiders but self-identify as Manda Khonds.

## **Dravidian languages-**

- The Dravidian languages (sometimes called Dravidic) are a family of languages spoken by 250 million people, mainly in southern India, north-east Sri Lanka, and south-west Pakistan.
- The Dravidian languages are first attested in the 2nd century BCE, as Tamil-Brahmi script, inscribed on the cave walls in the Madurai and Tirunelveli districts of Tamil Nadu. The Dravidian languages with the most speakers are (in descending order of number of speakers) Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam, all of which have long literary traditions. Smaller literary languages are Tulu and Kodava. There are also a number of Dravidian-speaking scheduled tribes, such as the Kurukh in Eastern India and Gondi in Central India.
- Outside of India, Brahui is mostly spoken in the Balochistan region of Pakistan, as well as other smaller groups of speakers in Irani Balochistan, Afghanistan and around the Marw oasis in Turkmenistan.
- Dhangar, a dialect of Kurukh, is spoken in parts of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh and Tamil is spoken in north-eastern Sri Lanka, there are also diaspora communities of Dravidians who speak it mostly in the Middle East, Europe, North America and South East Asia.