Awareness workshop

Odia WiW caught in a lime warp

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Wikimedia Foundation's Indian chapter started Odia Wiki in 2002 but it has just 10 contributors. Odia Wiki, one of the first in regional languages in India, started with a repository of just 200 articles but the number has not changed much in the last nine years.

All the dated articles have been deleted by Wikipedia administrators. Besides the contributors to Wiki have so far been technology professionals and tech-savvy youngsters, most of whom live outside the State.

In order to take the Wikipedia project forward, Odia Wiki activists are now looking for support and explore initiatives in the State. To get more contributors to Odia Wiki, they are holding workshops and meetings in many districts and one such workshop was organised today at Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan here.

Wikipedia, the volunteer driven, web-based multilingual encyclopaedia project, has emerged as an important reference source on the Internet for all kinds of information.

"Though Odia Wiki was one of the first regional languages Wiki to be launched by the Indian chapter of Wikipedia along with four other Indian languages, it is lagging behind the rest three. There is no awareness

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at all," said Subhashish Panigrahi, an engineer and an active member of the Odia Wiki community. Malayalam Wikimedians are leading the movement in India with a repository of more than 20,000 articles.

Even the take-off of Odia Wiki was slow - it took two years to reach the 100-article mark.

However, the silver lining is the formulation of a Unicode standard for Oriya that will help interested contributors to type easily in Oriya while entering data in Wikipedia. It was a luxury till recently.

The workshop is aimed at roping in more active Wiki contributors. Divided into two sessions, the participants were first familiarised with Wikipedia, Odia Wiki and the various Wiki projects.

The second session was meant to prepare them technically to be contributors. A booklet comprising frequently asked questions was also issued to the participants.

Similar workshops have been planned in Cuttack, Balasore and Ganjam this month. People from various walks of life, including students, technology professionals, academics and retired officials attended today's sessions.

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