The Ladakhi language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family of the Tibetan Burmese line. This family is found among the western branches of the Tibetan language family. The present spoken language of Ladakh is popularly referred to as Bodhi, Pot-yik or Ladakhi. With Ladakh’s incorporation into the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947, the language gained constitutional status, and is listed as Ladakhi. It is spoken throughout the whole of Ladakh, stretching from the western border with Kashmir to the northeastern border with China. Written Ladakhi, however, is less prevalent. The institutional teaching of Ladakhi existed as long ago as the Dogra period (1834-1947), and with India’s independence in the year 1947, Ladakhi was taught with full vigor, despite never having been made mandatory by the government. After independence, despite there being a large Buddhist agitation and a government announcement that made the language a compulsory subject, the response from the Ladakhis themselves was largely apathetic. Instead of teaching the language fully, a cry for a modernization and simplification of the Ladakhi language has been gaining momentum.

The speakers of Ladakhi, sandwiched, as they are, between two large populations that speak other languages (Hindi and Urdu), are likely to suffer the effects that plague all speakers of minority languages. Ladakh is considered by many to be the last bastion of Mahayana Buddhist culture, and therefore they feel that it is necessary to teach this language properly (in both its oral and written forms) in the interest of preserving a rich cultural heritage.

In the proposed paper a critical study will be made concerning the preservation of the Ladakhi language (classical Tibetan) for the future generations of Ladakh. If serious efforts are not made towards using Tibetan script, the coming generations will suffer the same fate as the Baltis of Kargil. The Baltis are ethnic Tibetans who are the dominant population of the second district of Ladakh. Baltistan is, at present, occupied by Pakistan, and as a result, although the Baltis speak Ladakhi, they write in Persian instead of their cherished original Tibetan script.