

## Orientation cum Workshop on Field Survey and Techniques

The Centre for Endangered Languages, Sikkim University (henceforth, CEL-SU) conducted an "Orientation cum Workshop on Field Survey and Techniques" from 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 at Barad Sadan, Gangtok, Sikkim University. Prof. Anvita Abbi, Prof. KV Subbarao, Dr. Rajesh Khatiwada, Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharya and Shri Sujoy Sarkar were invited as the resource persons for the workshop. The objective of the workshop was to provide an academic orientation to fieldworkers generally on how to go about a fieldwork (dos and don'ts) with special focus on linguistic fieldwork. Around thirty-two participants comprising post graduate and PhD scholars from various departments of the University attended the workshop. The inaugural session was chaired by Professor T. B. Subba, Vice-Chancellor, Sikkim University. The program began with the welcome address by Dr. Samar Sinha, Coordinator, Centre for Endangered Languages (CEL).



**The inaugural session chaired by Professor T. B. Subba, Vice-Chancellor, Sikkim University along with the Resource persons.**

The technical session was started by Professor Abbi where she shed light on the current Indian linguistic situation, and enumerated the various internal and external challenges likely to be encountered on and off the field while working on endangered languages particularly in North-east India. She also made frequent reference to her experience of documenting various endangered languages specially Great Andamanese and she continued with *Elicitation Techniques and Preparing Multilingual Dictionaries* and focussed on the details that are to be taken into consideration while eliciting data.

Professor K. V. Subbarao gave an interactive introduction to syntactic analysis of languages. He extensively covered the special typological features that were distinctive to the Tibeto-Burman languages, eliciting data from the languages of the participants of the workshop.

In Dr. Rajesh Khatiwada's lecture, participants were introduced to the ideas for investigating the phonetics and phonology of languages. One of his lectures *Phonetic Transcription* introduced transcription systems along with an interactive hands-on session on transcription of linguistic data using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). He also illustrated the various tools and methods used in eliciting and recording articulatory data.



**Lecture on Phonetic Transcription by Dr. Rajesh Khatiwada**

Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharya illustrated the methods related to the fieldworkers. Situating linguistics as a discipline across the realms of science, social science and humanities, he explored the methods to study human language while critiquing the questionnaire method used in linguistic data collection. Among other things, he spoke about the Chicago School of Sociology, Nel Anderson's work on the hobos; human nature of the linguistic data; and the need for empathy when conducting fieldwork.

Shri Sujoy Sarkar elaborated in detail upon the linguistic scenario of India, with a special focus on North Bengal. He discussed the various parameters used to assess the vitality and endangerment of languages, and illustrated the same in the classroom by using the UNESCO (2003) parameters for assessing the various languages spoken by the participants.

In addition to the experts, Shri. Balaram Pandey from the Department of Nepali, Sikkim University talked on *the People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI - Sikkim Chapter): Knowing the Linguistic Scenario of Sikkim*. He spoke about his experiences during the survey and documentation of the languages of Sikkim that was done for the PLSI.

Dr. Charisma Karthak Lepcha from the Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University gave a talk on *Endangered Languages and Revitalization*. In her talk, she brought some anthropological perspectives into the study of language as a window to the culture. Her talk generated a very lively discussion on issues in anthropological studies, and on the premise/proposal/idea of "giving back to the community."

In the valedictory session, participants shared their valuable feedback with the organizers and resource persons of the event expressing their satisfaction on the outcome of the workshop. The session was followed by distribution of certificates to the participants by Prof. Abbi and concluding remarks by Dr. Samar Sinha, Co-ordinator, CEL. The workshop was fruitful and successful.



**Last day of Workshop with Professor Abbi**