



Technical Report  
June 2020 - July 2021  
June 2021 - July 2022

North East Council Project  
Shillong, Meghalaya, India

Documentation and  
Revitalization of Three  
Endangered Languages of  
Northeast, India: Nthenyi,  
Khongdei and Zyphe



CENTRE FOR  
ENDANGERED  
LANGUAGES (CFEL)  
Tezpur University  
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Assam – 784028, India

**TECHNICAL REPORT**  
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**DOCUMENTATION AND REVITALIZATION OF THREE ENDANGERED LANGUAGES OF  
NORTHEAST, INDIA: NTHENYI, KHONGDEI AND ZYPHE**

The NEC Project titled ‘**Documentation and Revitalization of three endangered languages of Northeast, India: Nthenyi, Khongdei and Zyphe**’ was awarded to the Centre for Endangered Languages, Tezpur University vide letter no **NEC/HRD&E/Language/228/2020 dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020** with a financial support of **79. 10 lakhs (Rupees seventy nine lakh ten thousand) only**. An amount of **40 lakhs (Forty lakhs) only** was released as the first instalment that is 50% of the approved allocation vide letter No. **NEC/HRD&E / Language /Assam /228/2020 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2020**.

Advertisement for three Field Assistant (FA) posts was issued vide advertisement No. **DoRD/CFEL/MB/20-476/1760-A dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar 2021, CFEL, Tezpur University**.

Interview for the three FA posts was held on **16<sup>th</sup> March 2021**. The appointment letters for the three selected three Field Assistants were issued respectively to: Parag Kumar Deka vide letter No. DoDR/CFEL/MB/20-476/1920-A dated 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2021, D. Helen on 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2021, vide letter No. DoRD/CFEL/MB/20-476/1918-A and Bijayanti Devi Haobam on 28<sup>th</sup> Apr 2021, vide letter No. DoRD/CFEL/MB/20-476/1968-A.

**Table 1: Names and qualifications of selected candidates**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Language Assigned</b>
Dr.Bijayanti Devi Haobam	MA, Manipur University, PhD Assam University	Ntenyi, Nagaland
Ms. D. Helen	M.A, Manipur University	Khongdei, Manipur
Mr. Parag Kumar Deka	M.A, Tezpur University	Zyphe, Mizoram



Dr.Bijayanti Devi Haobam



Ms. D. Helen



Mr. Parag Kumar Deka

**Date of Joining:**

- i. Sri Parag Kumar Deka :12<sup>th</sup> April 2021
- ii. Ms. D. Helen :19<sup>th</sup> April 2021
- iii. Dr. Bijayanti Devi :6<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Preparation for Field Trip from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

The FAs had to be trained on the scientific methods of data collection and documentation for which they had to read the following books mainly:

**Books consulted**

- 1. Dixon, R.M.W. *Basic Linguistics Theory*. Vol.I. Oxford University Press. 2010.
- 2. Dixon, R.M.W. *Basic Linguistics Theory*. Vol.II. Oxford University Press. 2010
- 3. Dixon, R.M.W. *Basic Linguistics Theory*. Vol.III. Oxford University Press. 2012
- 4. Payne, Thomas E. *Describing Morphosyntax: A guide for field linguistics*. CUP. 1997.
- 5. Shopen, Timothy. *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Vol.I. CUP. 2007
- 6. Van Driem, George. *Languages of The Himalayas*. Vol.I. Brill. 2001.

Besides, the FAs consulted a number of sources to prepare word and sentence lists consisting of 1547 words and 1081 sentences for the preliminary data collection.

**Sources**

- i. Swadesh List (<http://people.umass.edu/ellenw/Swadesh%20List.pdf>)
- ii. Saha, Atanu. Lahiri, Bornini, Arup Mazumdar. *A questionnaire Development for Conducting Fieldwork on Endangered and Indigenous Languages in India*. School of Language and Linguistics. Jadavpur University. Kolkata.2018.
- iii. Centre for Endangered languages' basic word and sentence list. Tezpur University.
- iv. Mother Tongue Survey of India (MTSI) Project word and sentence list (2012-2020). Project under Ministry of Home Affairs, Office of Registrar General (ORGI), Language Division Kolkata.

**Domains for Word List**

Kinship terms, festivals, religion, traditional dress, ornaments, cosmetics, food habits, culinary items, flora and fauna, agriculture, hunting, fishing administration, judiciary, war, medicinal herbs, disease, ailment, natural objects, body parts, physical activities, music, musical instruments, and different word categories. About 1574 words were included in the word list.

**Types of Sentences**

- i. Declarative sentences: positive and negative sentences
- ii. Interrogative sentences: direct, yes-no and indirect
- iii. Imperative
- iv. Compound sentences
- v. Complex sentences: Finite and Non-finite

- vi. Relative clause and Nominalized clause
- vii. Causative and Passive sentences
- viii. Non-verbal predicate clauses.

Folk tales, songs, lullaby and photos and videos indigenous artefacts, festival song and dances collected by the FAs are listed in detail in the First Field Report of each of these languages.

### **First Field Trip Report from 25<sup>th</sup> October to 9<sup>th</sup> December**

#### **2021 Nthenyi**

The field trip was conducted in Sishunu and Kandinu villages in Kohima district of Nagaland. During the field work, the researcher interacted with the villagers and the informants to elicit the primary data. The researcher applied mainly the interview method and observation method to collect the primary data. The researcher discussed the history of the community and got information about their origin, means of livelihood, their rituals and festivals which they practice till date.

**Table 2: Data and material collection list of Nthenyi**

<b>SL. No.</b>	<b>Collected Items</b>	<b>Number or details of the items</b>
1.	Words	1547 words of different domains are collected in different domains
2.	Sentences	1081 different types of sentences are collected
3.	Folk dance with folk song	2 (both in video and audio)
4.	Folktales	4 (video and audio)
5.	Lullaby	2 (audio and video)
6.	Proverbs	5
7.	Agricultural Products	Photos collected
8.	Churches, community hall, guest house, Primary health care centre and roads.	Photos collected
9.	Medicinal Plants	Photos collected
10.	Domestic animals and birds	Photos collected
11.	Traditional utensils and baskets	Photos collected
12.	Traditional attires for both men and women	Photos collected
13.	Traditional jewellerys for both men and women	Photos collected
14.	Tape water supply	Photos collected
15.	Natural source of water	Photo and video collected
16.	Migration and history of Rengmas.	Collected information
17.	Literacy	Collected information about their literacy rate
18.	Religion	Collected information about their religion that they follow, mainly they

		follow Christianity.
19.	Calendar	Collected information about their calendar system.
20.	Village governance system or village administration	Collected information about village governance system or village administration
21.	Family structure	Collected information about family structure
22. .	Kinship Terms	Collected information about kinship terms.
23.	Clans	Collected information about clans
24.	Right of inheritance	Collected information about right of inheritance
25. .	Marriage system	Collected information about their marriage system .
26.	Divorce	Collected information
27.	Agricultural Products	Collected photos of their agricultural products
28.	Traditional festivals	Collected information about their traditional festivals
29.	Occupation	Collected information about the different types of occupations of their community. Agriculture is their main occupation.
30.	Food habits	Collected information about their food habits
31.	Rituals	Collected information about the rituals which they are practicing like birth ritual, death ritual etc.
32.	Education	Collected information about their educational system.
33.	Beliefs	Collected information about their beliefs
34.	Scripts	Collected information about their orthography system. The Nthenyi speakers use Latin script in their writings.
35.	Medium of communication (both spoken and written)	Collected information about their medium of communication. Within their communities they speak Nthenyi whereas they speak Nagamese to communicate with others within the state Nagaland .
36.	Roads	Collected photos
37.	Means of transportation	Collected information about their means of transportation.
38.	Shops	Collected photos

39.	Conducted awareness Programme on the importance of mother tongue	Collected photos
40.	Traditional tools	Collected photos

### Khongdei

The field trip was conducted in the Khongdei Khuman and Khongdei Shimpung villages in Senapati district of Manipur. During the field work, the researcher interacted with the villagers and the informants to elicit the primary data. The researcher applied mainly the interview and observation method to collect the primary data. The researcher discussed the history of the community and got information about their origin, means of livelihood, their rituals and festivals which they practice till date.

**Table 3: Data and material collection list of Khongdei**

SL.No.	Collected items	Number of items
1	Folk song	2 (Audio and video)
2	Folk dance	1 (Video)
3	Proverbs	3
4	Short story	2(recorded audio)
5	Traditional medicine	4(photo)
6	House Structure	House structure and part of the house are collected with photos.
7	Traditional attire	Photos
8	Festival	
9	Religion	The information of religious practice and belief are recorded.
10	Customary law	Community law and order information is collected.
11	Law of inheritance	Inheritance of property in kinship is recorded
12	Family structure	Family structure of the community is recorded
13	Rituals	Birth and war rituals are collected
14	Taboos	Kings/Khulakpa do's and don'ts are recorded
15	Marriage ceremony	Types of marriage, rituals and customs of marriage are collected.
16	Food habit	Food habit, vegetables, fruits and traditional practices of smoking are collected with photos.
17	Agriculture	Tools of agriculture, types of agriculture like water or dry field and jhum cultivation are collected with photos and vedios.
18	Handloom	The process of weaving and tools are collected with photos.
19	Lullaby	1(video and audio recording)
20	Musical piece	2(collected with video and photos)
21	Utensil	Traditional utensils are collected with photos.

## Zyphe

The field trip was conducted in Siata and Iana villages in Siaha district of Mizoram. During the field work, the researcher interacted with the villagers and the informants to elicit the primary data. The researcher applied mainly the interview and observation method to collect the primary data. The researcher discussed the history of the community and got information about their origin, means of livelihood, their rituals and festivals which they practice till date.

**Table 4: Data and material collection list of Zyphe**

SL. No	Collected items	Number of items
1.	Folk Song	14 (recorded both audio and video)
2.	Riddles	5
3.	Proverbs	28
4.	Short Stories	2 (recorded both audio and video)
5.	Traditional Medicine	6 (photos and video recording were done)
6.	House Structure	13 (indigenous items used in house construction. Only photos were taken)
7.	Traditional dress and ornaments	Different types of traditional jewelry, dresses (only photos were taken)
8.	Festival	The history and cultural aspects of the only festival Langneche was collected. How it is celebrated, how songs, dance were performed and traditional games were played were recorded in video and audio form)
9.	Religion	Religious belief, religious ceremony, worshiping deities of the community in ancient times were recorded
10.	Law of inheritance	The process of inheritance and the terminology used in property endowment were collected
11.	Familial structure	Family structure of Zyphe is collected
12.	Weaving	11 (tools of handloom were collected. Photos and video were recorded)
13.	Birth & Death Rituals	Processes of birth and death ceremony, its relevant believes were recorded. Data were collected in interview mood. Both audio and video were done in English and Zyphe language.
14.	Marriage ceremony	Types of marriage, process of the marriage ceremony, rituals and customs were collected.
15.	Food habit	Names foods were recorded. Their cultural significances are also discussed.
16.	Agriculture	Different agricultural implements, name of the vegetables, their seeds, different kinds of crops were recorded.

## List of purchases during 2021-2022

**Table 5: Equipment**

Sl. no	Items	Price	Quantity	Amount
1.	Toshiba Hard Disk, External, 4 TB	7059.32	3	21,177.96
2.	HP Pendrive, 64 GB	1016	3	3050.86
3.	Canon Digital SLR Camera, EOS 90D 18-55MM IS STM	83387.45	3	2,50,162.35
4.	HP laptop	97118.64	3	291355.92
5.	Tascam Voice recorder	24406.78	3	7322034

**Table 6: Books**

Sl. No.	Name of the book	Author	Book Details	Qty	Amount
1.	Voices from the Lost Horizon: Stories and songs of the Great Andamanese	Anvita Abbi	<b>Publisher:</b> Niyogi Books Pvt. Ltd.; Block D, Building No. 77, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase – I, New Delhi- 110020, Ph.011-26816301 <b>Language:</b> English <b>Hardcover:</b> 176 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 9391125069 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-9391125066	1	795.00
2.	Keeping Languages Alive: Documentation, Pedagogy and Revitalization	Mari C. Jones and Sarah Ogilvie	<b>Publisher:</b> Cambridge University Press (12 December 2019) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 283 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 1108790402 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-1108790406	1	1827.00
3.	Attitudes to Endangered Languages: Identities and Policies	Julia Sallabank	<b>Publisher:</b> Cambridge University Press (12 December 2019)	1	1827.00



			<b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 285 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 1108790410 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-1108790413		
4.	Multilingual Education and Sustainable Diversity Work: From Periphery to Center	ToveSkutnabbKangas (Editor), Kathleen Heugh (Editor)	<b>Publisher:</b> Routledge; 1 edition (16 December 2011) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 318 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 0415893674 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0415893671	1	1802.00
5.	Multilingual Education for Social Justice	MohantyMinati Panda	<b>Publisher:</b> Orient Blackswan; First edition (1 January 2009) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 408 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 8125036989 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-8125036982	1	963.00
6.	A Practical Guide to Lexicography	Piet van Sterkenburg	<b>Publisher:</b> John Benjamins Publishing Co (17 July 2003) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 471 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 9027223300 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-9027223302	1	6240.00
7.	Alignment and Ergativity in New Indo-Aryan Languages	SaartjeVerbeke	<b>Publisher:</b> De Gruyter Mouton (15 March 2013) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Hardcover:</b> 331 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 31102925X <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-	1	15570.00

			3110292534		
8.	The Oxford Guide to Practical Lexicography	B. T. Sue Atkins (Author), Michael Rundell (Author)	<b>Publisher:</b> OUP Oxford; Illustrated edition (19 June 2008) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 554 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 0199277710 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0199277711	1	4324.97
9.	Dialectology	J. K. Chambers (Author), Peter Trudgill (Author)	<b>Publisher:</b> Cambridge University Press (16 October 1980) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 232 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 0521294738 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-0521294737	1	3233.00
10	Research Methods in Linguistics	Robert J. Podesva (Editor), Devyani Sharma (Editor)	<b>Publisher:</b> Cambridge University Press (23 January 2014) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 540 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 1107696356 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-1107696358	1	3143.00
11	Handbook of Descriptive Linguistic Fieldwork	Shobhana L. Chelliah (Author), Willem J. de Reuse (Author)	<b>Publisher:</b> Springer ; 2011 <sup>th</sup> edition (28 September 2014) <b>Language:</b> English <b>Paperback:</b> 492 pages <b>ISBN-10:</b> 9400792182 <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-9400792180	1	11075.00
			<b>TOTAL</b>		50799.97

## **Forthcoming Activities**

1. Publication of the Ethnolinguistics Book on Nthenyi, Khongdie and Zyphe First draft of the book is ready, editing is in process.
2. Learner's Book of the three endangered languages: Nthenyi, Khongdie and Zyphe is in progress. The books would be bilingual written in English and in the three indigenous languages using Roman Script.

## **Tentative Content of the Learner's Book:**

- i. Phonetics and Phonology: Sound system of the languages
  - ii. Morphology : Word formation, derivation and inflectional markers
  - iii. Syntax : Sentence formation
  - iv. Word list
  - v. Sentence list
  - vi. Folk tales, folk songs, riddles and lullaby
3. Data Verification and Validation workshop of the 3 languages at CFEL, Tezpur University. Tentative date from 18<sup>th</sup> to 27 August 2022.  
Three informants from each language will attend the workshop. TA and DA will be borne from the NEC project fund.
  4. Second Field Trip for 45 days, tentatively in January – February 2023
  5. A Three Day National Seminar on Language Documentation, Revitalization and Maintenance.
  6. Grammar of Nthenyi, Khondei and Zyphe.

## **Problems faced during the project period**

1. The pace of the project has slowed down due to Covid restrictions. As such the field trips of the FAs had to be decided when the environment was conducive for travel and the members of the Nthenyi, Khongdie and Zyphe communities agreed to their visit.
2. Purchase of equipment and books were also delayed due to Covid restriction



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