

## Breaching Barriers of Language

27 June 2014

The infinities of language makes way for possibilities, we seldom realize the impact language has on our lives. **Jain University, Center for Indian Psychology** felt the need to initiate an in-depth review of the world of languages embodying us and organized a special session on Language and Cultural Diversity', on **26 June 2014, at School of Graduate Studies, J.C Road. Prof. S Sridhar, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor of Linguistics & India Studies, Director - Center for India Studies, Stony Brook University, New York** was the chief guest at the session. Dr. Sandeep Shastri, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Jain University was also present during the event.

Prof. S Sridhar said **"All the experiences that I gathered as a student feels just like Wordsworth looking at daffodils thinking of it as pure bliss"** addressing the students crowd. He spoke about the unusual connectivity between language and thinking and the influence cultural diversities has on language. The **relativity of language to the thought process, the relationship between the two and its impact on cognition and perception** were discussed during the special session. Prof. Sridhar pointed out how language effects personality elucidating the difference in the way a North Indian who speaks Hindi thinks and in the way a South Indian who speaks Kannada thinks. **"If language limits our thinking then we all are prisoners of our language"**, he said.

The talk also highlighted **what sets language apart from a dialect**. Prof. S Sridhar said, "Simply put language is a dialect with an army and a navy". He discussed how even until recently Konkani was considered to be only a dialect of Marathi. It was only after Goa became an independent state and declared Konkani as its state language that Konkani earned the stature of an independent language. He concluded that there is no such essential difference between language and dialect apart from that of the perception of the masses.

Prof. S Sridhar said that around the globe in the field of linguistics the great Sanskrit grammarian Panini's works is considered to be one of the greatest monuments of linguistics. Among almost 6000 languages found in the world, Sanskrit has one the richest grammatical cultures. He explained that Sanskrit is believed to be the best language for computer science because of the explicitly it exhibits in description. Sanskrit explores many magnificent questions that haven't been explored even by great Latin and Greek literatures. He said that, **"the distinguished grammatical culture of Sanskrit is what makes India one of the most important places for language research"**.