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Editorial

The elevation of Santali language into one of the national languages has heralded a new era and obvious opportunity not for the Santal community alone but it has also opened a window for every language lover. The development has been in the higher levels of education system as the primary education is yet to take shape in the states of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. Common people are yet to be involved in the information circle. They are reported to be not very much informed and so they have some apprehension on the implementation of Santali language education and results/benefits flowing out of this latest development. Since its recognition as one of the national languages and its inclusion in the VIIIth Schedule of our Constitution, there are positive developments all around. The facilities and programmes associated with all other language groups have been extended to this language also. There are workshops, seminars, conferences held on this language apart from official committee at Sahitya Akademi and representation in various committees dealing with promotion and development of language. Recently, a Seminar on **Santali Language Education** was organized by Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore in collaboration with All India Santali Writers' Association at Gargi Hall, IIT Kharagpur on 25th and 26th August 2008. The important aspect of the Seminar is that a conference on Santali language could also be organized at one of the best knowledge centers of the world. This is the development one should rejoice and the exposure to such institution and the use of facilities thereof among the common people is a new dimension as it is opening up new outlook.

The topics for the seminar were 1. Introduction of Santali Language, 2. Santali Language Learning, 3. Grammatical Analysis of Santali Language, 4. Santali Phonetics and Morphology apart from the usual

Inaugural Session and Closing Session. One of the attractions of the Seminar is the presence of the specialists or the protagonists of the language. At the outset the participants were welcomed by Dr. I.S. Borkar, Head, Materials Production Centre, CIIL. Other resource persons includes Dr. Arun Kumar Ghosh, Burdwan University, Prof. Ajoy Chakraborty, Dean (CE), IIT, Kharagpur, Shri Purna Chandra Hembram, Shri Subodh Hansda, Kolkata, Shri Kali Charan Hansdah, Lecturer in Santali, Belda College, Shri Jadumani Besra, Dr. Damayanti Beshra, Shri Thakur Prasad Murmu, Shri Srikant Hansdah, Lecturer in Santali. Prof. Digambar Hansdah, Shri Kanailal Tudu, Shri Salkhu Murmu, Shri Baghrail Charan Hembram, Dr. Krishna Chandra Tudu, Dr. Nikodimous Tudu, Shri Gangadhar Murmu, Shri Uday Nath Majhi, Shri Kalipada Saren, Shri Ram Chandra Murmu.

During the Seminar speakers narrated difficulties as well as challenges in promoting and pursuing Santali language education. Lack of required resources and infrastructural facilities was cited as the bottleneck in implementing the scheme particularly in the higher i.e. college and university level. Going by the present trend of non availability of books due to lack of official initiative, students as well as teachers are finding it difficult to pursue further education. Moreover, there is always pressure from the peer groups as facilities are available for other subjects in the same college or university. Even students participating the Seminar expressed that they are being asked whether education in Santali language can help them in finding a job. There was also an opinion that enthusiasm among people have declined following the inclusion of Santali language in the VIIIth Schedule of the Constitution of India. A fresh initiative is required to be taken to rekindle in them the enthusiasm and spirit to take Santali language to a new height.

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

Respectfully, I beg to request you to publish my following statement in your monthly journal ASECA CHANNEL and oblige please.

Sub: Apathy of Government in the implementation of formal Education in Santali language through OL CHIKI in West Bengal

It is the long cherished achievement of Santals of West Bengal who cordially love their mother tongue, to see Santali language flourish and progress in education among Santal students in all respects since 1967.

The Primary Education Department, Govt of West Bengal officially announced to start formal education from Class I in selected Primary Schools of some selected Districts of West Bengal from the current academic session 2008-09 vide G.O. No.: 52(15)JS-II(P) /3T-9/2007 dated Kolkata 9th June 2008 (though academic session started in May 2008)

The Education Department, Govt. of West Bengal ordered to start Formal education in Santali language through OL CHIKI in Class I, with effect from 15/6/2008 to 1/7/2008 in the current academic session 2008-09 (though education session in general starts in May 2008) in the following number of Primary Schools in the following districts of West Bengal.

Sl. No.	Districts	No. of Primary Schools
1	West Midnapur	23
2	Purulia	197
3	Bankura	123
4	Birbhum	123
5	Murshidabad	12

The undersigned is actively associated with the common Santal masses as well as with the philosophers

for implementation of Formal Education in Santali language in OL CHIKI since 1968.

I am very sure, majority of Pioneers of this movement are born and brought up and engaged themselves amid numerous struggles in the District of Midnapur. As a result of these activities, number of resource persons in OL CHIKI, OL CHIKI knowing Primary Teachers, OL CHIKI knowing unemployed educated youths out number the candidates of other Districts of West Bengal. I apprehend some deep rooted conspiracy behind the selection of negligible number of (only 23) Primary Schools in the District of Midnapur.

Discarding all above apprehension from the core of my brain, I welcome and bow down over the decision of the Education Department of West Bengal. In spite of all above facts, earnestly I request the pioneers who really want upliftment of Santali language, to the following points:

We will have to remain alert day and night and continue our struggle and mass movement so that the West Bengal Govt. cannot sprinkle consolative and palliative water over the Santal mass by virtue of the indirect intension of exploitation to crumble down the project of Formal Education in Santali language in OL CHIKI at the middle of its path.

Primary Education Department must appoint well versed in OL CHIKI knowing fresh primary teachers and para teachers wherever and whenever necessary in all those selected Primary Schools to achieve our goal.

Still I apprehend there may be officers and Govt. Education Policy makers of detrimental attitude to prove that formal education in Santali language in OL CHIKI is not possible. We have to face such evil persons with utmost efforts.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. B. B. Hembram

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INSTALLATION OF STATUE OF LATE SUNARAM SOREN – CLARIFICATION

The response to the appeal published in the August 2008 issue has been quite encouraging. However, before finalizing the modus operandi of implementation, we have solicited opinion of the family members, other local associations/individuals on this proposal so as to work collectively on this project.

It is also clarified that there is option of making contribution over a period of one year may be in installments as per convenience and not necessarily in one installment. From the response, it appears that the project can be accomplished as per schedule. Let us transform this concept into reality.

Scheduled Communities: A social Development profile of SC/STs (Bihar, Jharkhand & W.B)

(Source: Planning Commission)

{Continued from August 2008 issue}

Scheduled Castes

Bihar

The overall situation of all Scheduled Castes in our sample in Bihar indicates that 88 percent households possess consumer goods whose total value is less than Rs. 5000/- per household. It can be inferred that it is from amongst 12 percent that a small emerging elite is likely to be in the formation.

Table 4.38: Total valuation of all consumers items (per household) for the Scheduled Castes in Bihar (Not reproduced)

It is the Dusadh with 25.7 percent of their households in the higher consumer category, followed by the Chamar (7.5%), that differentiates the economic status of these two castes. The Musahar and the Chaupal draw a blank.

- The Dhobi caste (which has been introduced as a special case) indicates a substantially large percentage of households (62.5 percent) having consumer goods worth more than Rs. 5000/-.

Jharkhand

When we move to Jharkhand, the situation of the Scheduled Castes shows a marked change, with 50 percent of them in the higher consumer category.

Table 4.39: Total valuation of all consumers items (per household) for the Scheduled Castes in Jharkhand (Not reproduced)

The Chamar and the Dom are almost evenly balanced in this respect. In case of Chamar 62.5 percent households have consumer goods worth more than Rs. 500/-, whereas for the Dom it is marginally less at 57.1 percent households. This is consistent with their common urban location.

West Bengal

Interestingly, in West Bengal, 91.9 percent of all Scheduled Castes are in the lower consumer category.

Table 4.40: Total valuation of all consumers items (per household) for the Scheduled Castes in West Bengal (Not reproduced)

- The Dhobi with 47.1 percent of their households having consumer goods valued at more than Rupees 5000, is the best endowed among the Scheduled Castes.
- The Kami and Sarki, with 17.1 percent and 10.0 percent respectively, come a distant next to the Dhobi.
- The Patni (6.7%), Chamar (6.2%) and Bagdi (6.2%) have more or less an equivalent consumer status.
- Among the Bauri, Bhuiyan and Dom none have any household in the higher consumer category, while the Konai and Mal have an insignificant presence.
- The consumer status of the Scheduled Castes in Bihar is somewhat better than in West Bengal.

Scheduled Tribes

Jharkhand

The overall situation of the tribal households in our survey, indicate that 86.0 percent of these fall within the lower consumer category.

Table 4.41: Total valuation of all consumers items (per household) for the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand (Not reproduced)

When we look at individual tribal communities, the Oraon and Munda emerge as conspicuously high in the upper consumer category. As many as, 60.3 percent Oraon households and 51.4 percent Munda are among the higher consumers. Munda and the Oraon are all concentrated in Ranchi town, reflecting once again the urban factor.

- As we move from the urban to the rural, tribal communities show a drastic decline in consumer status. The Santhal with only 7.3 percent and Mahali with 6.3 percent of their households are in the higher consumer category.

- Surprisingly, out of 184 households of Ho, only one household is in the higher consumer category.
- Paradoxically, the Lohara with an urban predominance of 86.2 households in Ranchi, still have a meagre 6.9 percent households in the higher consumer category.

• *The question arises, as against the urban-based Oraon, Munda, Chamar and Dom in Jharkhand, how is it that the largely urban based Lohara becomes an exception with such a low consumer status?*

In spite of a large presence of tribal households in Ranchi urban area, the overall tribal consumer status is very low. The sharp rural urban differentiation is conspicuous.

West Bengal

In West Bengal the tribal consumer goods valuation in comparison to the Scheduled Castes is even lower, with 95.5 percent households below the consumer status of Rs. 5000/- per household.

Table 4.42: Total valuation of all consumers items (per household) for the Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal (Not Reproduced)

- Only the Oraon, and the Munda households with 12.8 percent and 9.1 percent respectively, fall in the upper consumer category.
- The Santhal, with the largest number of households, still have only 4 percent in the upper category.
- The Bhumij and Mahali have none, whilst the Lodha have only one household in the upper category.
- The Santhal and the Mahali are entirely rural based both in Jharkhand and West Bengal, but their consumer status is somewhat better in Jharkhand.

Indebtedness

Debt or loan is important in understanding the nature and extent of involvement of households in the credit market. Usually the term debt connotes a commitment

on the part of a borrower to return to the debtor the amount borrowed under certain terms and conditions. Till the debt is cleared, there can be an element of obligation to the debtor.

Often, the terms and conditions of such borrowing is marked by some kind of 'attachment', and in extreme situations even with 'bondedness' for long periods of time.

These kinds of borrowings are often referred to as non-institutional loans from the money lender or other informal sources. Borrowings from banks/credit societies are, in contrast, institutional loans and follow formal bureaucratic rules and procedures of loantaking and repayment.

As we are all aware, traditional non-institutional loans from the money lender and or the landlord, have resulted in the large scale phenomenon of bonded labour running through generations of indebtedness, occasionally approximating conditions of slavery with a beck-and-call relationship imposed on the debtor. Our country has witnessed large scale agrarian movements against bonded labour or other forms of 'attachment' relationships associated with landlordism.

In our present study we have attempted to get some data on this aspect of agrarian relationship that may prevail among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the three States. Given the large number of items on which data has been collected during the survey, the data on quantum of loans is not entirely satisfactory. We have therefore limited our analysis to data pertaining to borrowings from the credit market and other sources, in terms of the number of households involved in borrowing and the purposes for which such loans have been taken.

(To be continued...)

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