

EDUCATION POLICY

A Draft education policy of ASECA (W.B.)
for
introduction of education in Santali medium

BY

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FORWARD

The Santal Tribes are one of the aborigines and major tribes of the country. They mostly inhabit in Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura in India and Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan in abroad and preserved their language, literature and culture till date. According to sir Danbar B.T., the Santali language is spread over Eastern Island of South America to Madagascar and from Australia to Punjab.

The Santali language is one of the oldest languages in the world and oldest in India. It has its own peculiarities and cannot be written in Bengali, Devnagari, Oriya and Roman Scripts. In view of these difficulties Pandit Raghunath Murmu of Mayurbhanj, Orissa invented Santali Script known as 'Ol Chiki' and it saw the light in the year 1941 although it had undergone many types of observations and experiments since 1925. The Govt. of West Bengal recognized this script in the year 1979 as the most conducive script for Santali language and accorded a grand welcome to its inventor in the same year in recognition of his great invention by Mr. Jyoti Basu, Hon'ble Chief Minister.

Many of the languages of the world have perished due to non-inclusion of the languages in the educational curriculum and publicity through other media such as Newspaper, Radio and Television. With a view to get the language included in the educational curriculum as per "THE SCHEME OF PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFE- GUARDS FOR LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AGREED TO AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (APPENDIX II) " mentioned in the thirty first report of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities in India (For the period July 1990 to June 1991). A commission was set up by this organisation (Adibasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association, West Bengal) to formulate an education policy in conformity with Govt.'s education policy for Linguistic Minorities. The Commission comprised of following members: Shri Subodh Hansdah, M. A., Chairman, Bharat Soren, B.Sc., Member and Sudhir Soren, M.A., Member. The education policy formulated by them is quite in consonance with that of the Govt.'s education policy and as per recommendation of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities in India.

I hope, all the State Governments, where the Santali speaking people are inhabiting, will adopt this education policy to benefit the Santali speaking students. I express my sincere thank to the Chairman of the Commission and the members who had undertaken an arduous task of formulating the education policy for the benefit of the Santali speaking students and non-santal students as well who desire to pursue studies in Santali, and also to save the language from extinction in such a juncture where there is none.

8th April, 2000
Calcutta

Baidyanath Soren,
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PREFACE

'India is great', 'Mera Bharat Mahan', 'Unity in diversity', 'unity', 'equality' and 'justice' all these words though often uttered, a half century old free-India proved these as hoax. Resulting which more than thirty five crore people are living below the poverty line and around 48 crore people are living in the darkness of illiteracy to whom the taste of freedom is yet to reach. As to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, particularly to the Adibasis the word freedom is absolutely meaningless. The very purpose of fighting against the British ruler of India in 1780-84 by Baba Tilka Majhi and in 1850-56 by Sidu-Kanu is yet to be achieved which is still equally contextual to the Adibasis of the country. But these simple-living Adibasis are so simple that they do not know their constitutional rights as well as rights as a human being. But we know that light of education makes people enlightened and enlightened people are the assets of a country. So to bring the awareness among the Santal Adibasis and to draw the attention of the governments both State and Central, this Santali Language Commission tried its best to draft such an Education Policy, which will be suitable enough for the present education set up.

We are thankful to the Adibasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association (ASECA), West Bengal who formed this commission for drafting this education policy. We express our heartiest gratitude to the Deputy Chairman of Education Board (ASECA) of all the districts of the state and ASECA Branch Office activists and all Santali language lovers who approved this Draft Education Policy after thorough scrutiny for last two and half years. The little effort would be treated as successful if it helps a little to impart Santali in the present education system. We always welcome any suggestions for alteration of additions to this policy.

With 'Parshi Dular johan'

Subodh Hansda, Chairman
Santali Language Commission
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Santali Bhasa Rally Day
8th April, 2000, Calcutta

Recommendation of the Santali Language Commission set up by ASECA, W.B.

Santali, one of the largest spoken tribal languages of the country spoken by around a crore of people ranking thirteenth as per population and larger than ten states' state population and six Union Territories' state-population is neither included in the VIII th Schedule of the Constitution nor introduced as a medium of instruction. Resulting which the children of this language group are still deprived of getting education in their mother tongue although it is said to be the best medium of instruction. Not only that, Santali is treated as parent language of most of the Indian languages, as more than sixty per cent of indigenous words of these languages are originated from Santali. And it has huge collections of oral traditions of oral traditions and thousands of writers are engaged in advancement of its literature.

But due to absence of appropriate language policy and continuous indifference attitude of Central and Sate governments, since independence not a single tribal language is recognized as state language through its inclusion in the 8th Schedule of the constitution. This situation leads to rapid dilution of most of the tribal languages, resulting, which the tribals are compelled to organize movements to fight back this identity crisis. And most of the times some evil forces mislead these movements by mis-interpreting and misusing the grievances of the tribals, which is one of the causes of weakening our (country's) national integrity and communal harmony. To protect this and to give a redress to the grievances of the tribals, this Santali Language Commission has tried to draft an Education Policy to impart Santali Language in the present education set up as well as introduce Santali as a medium of instruction. Before going into the main policy let us have a glance on some of the facts:

FOCUS ON SOME FACTS

The scholars opine that Santali is one of the oldest languages of the world even older than Greek, Latin, and Hebrew etc. Also they (scholars) are astonished to know that without any assistance and support from Government, and without being included in the educational set up /system. This language is still alive though most of the tribal languages are diluted all over the world.

THE SANTAL POPULATION: INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

In 192 Countries of the world there are around 4000 (four thousand only) languages. The languages spoken by 30 lacs (thirty lacs) or more are treated as major languages of the world and such major languages of the world are altogether 120 (one hundred twenty). Among these major languages of the world Santali is ranking 94th. It means the Santali population is larger than the state population of 98 (Ninety eight) countries of the world. Most of these Santal people are the residents of eastern part of India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

INDIAN CONTEXT

The total number of languages in the Country is around 2,800 (two thousand eight hundred only) of which 120 are treated as major Indian languages in which 10,000 (Ten thousand) and more people speak. As per number of population Santali is ranking 13th (Thirteenth) leaving behind five recognized (which are included in the VIIIth schedule of the Constitution) languages of the country viz. (1) Sanskrit (2) Sindhi (3) Nepali/Gorkhali (4) Manipuri (5) Konkani. Not only that the total Santal population is larger than that of the ten States' population viz. (1) Arunachal Pradesh (2) Goa (3) Himachal Pradesh (4) Manipur (5) Meghalaya (6) Mizoram (7) Nagaland (8) Pondicherry (9) Sikkim (10) Tripura and state population of six Union Territories.

Though these information are highly delightful for the Santals but the following reality may break their hearts.

In the Golden Jubilee year of Independence the children of this language group are neither getting education in their mother tongue nor getting scope to read it as a language subject in the present education system. Moreover it has not yet been included in the VIIIth schedule of the Constitution or recognized by the Central or State Governments. Besides, in comparison to national rate of literacy of 52.11% the Santals are literate only 15%. Similarly in comparison to national rate of poverty, 32% of general category people are living below the poverty line whereas more than 95% Santal people are living below the poverty line. Of course, several Constitutional safeguards like reservation in education, in Government Services are in force since independence, also separate Ministry in the Central and State Government's cabinet are working for more than 50 years but the result is still below expectation. In this very moment the Article 46 as stated – "The state shall promote with special care the economic and educational interest of the weaker section of the people in particular of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and to protect them from Social Injustice" seems to be nothing but a mockery to these people.

Anyway, along with the above, the following facts too deserve the right to be recalled. That only the languages other than Austric group family are included in the VIIIth Schedule of the Constitution. And education in mother tongue is also provided to these language group of people only. Austric or tribal group languages are neither included in the VIIIth schedule nor the people of these language groups are getting education in their mother tongue, although mother tongue is the best medium of instruction. This sort of continuous deprivation to these people not only destroying the tribal language, literature and culture it is also weakening the country's secularism, communal harmony and integrity as these people are kept out of country's mainstream. Taking into account all these facts, the Santali language commission set up by the ASECA, W.B. has drafted an education policy for the Santali speaking people to enable them to get education in their mother tongue at least in the Primary level and to continue it (Santali) as a language subject in higher classes in present education system. In this context it would be very much relevant to go through the West Bengal Government's Education Policy for minority languages.

GOVT.'S EDUCATION POLICY FOR MINORITY LANGUAGES

PRIMARY EDUCATION THROUGH MINORITY LANGUAGES:

Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, Oriya, Gujarati and Gorkhali/Nepali have been recognized as the medium of instruction at the primary stage. Santali is taught as a language subject through OL CHIKI Script. Besides, steps have also been taken to introduce Santali Language as medium of instruction. The state Govt. has issued orders to extend facilities for instruction through mother tongue if there are 10 pupils in a class/section or 40 pupils in a school. Regional language Bengali is not taught to linguistic minority pupils at the primary stage.

SECONDARY EDUCATION THROUGH MINORITY LANGUAGES:

Any of the approved languages may be used as the medium of instruction in schools. Answer in the examination of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education can be written in Bengali, English, Hindi, Nepali or Urdu. Orders have been issued to extend facilities for the instruction through minority languages if there are 15 pupils in a class/section or 60 in a school.

THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA AND LINGUISTIC MINORITY LANGUAGES:

The three language formula being followed in the state is as under:

- (i) Bengali or mother tongue as the first language.
- (ii) English as the second language; and

- (iii) Bengali as the third language for those who do not offer it as first language, and for those who offer it any one out of Sanskrit, Arabic or Hindi

On the basis of this three language formula we chalk out the education policy for the Santali speaking students.

PHASE-I (CLASS I TO CLASS IV)

In Santal concentrated areas fully Santali medium School in CHIKI may be started in primary stage with Bengali as a language subject from class – II (two). The main purpose of inclusion of Bengali in this level is to make familiar the students with various terminologies used in various subjects like Mathematics, Science, Geography, History etc. so that this will enable them to cope with Bengali medium from Secondary stage i.e. from class V onwards. This system will give two fold benefits to the santal students, viz. to understand all the subjects in their mother tongue as well as learn the state language. Simultaneously which solve their language problem in the Secondary stage of education.

Besides, in the thinly santal populated areas santali may be introduced as a vernacular from Class – I (one) to Class – IV (four) in the existing Bengali medium primary schools. Hence the State Government's three language formula for minorities of the state will be suitable one. The formula is as follows:

In Primary stage: In the schools where there are 10 students in a class or section or 40 students of minority language there the students of that particular minority language can opt their mother tongue as one of the vernaculars. For the Santali speaking students the OL CHIKI will be the script of writing. This decision of the State Govt. regarding Santali and OL CHIKI is taken at the end of seventieth decade i.e. immediately after recognition of OL CHIKI as the only script for writing Santali in June 1979.

PHASE-II MADHYAMIK (CLASS V TO CLASS X)

To make better link-up with the primary stage, Santali has to be included as a vernacular in the secondary stage of education i.e. from Class V to Class X. though it is demanded now it already exists in writing with State government's Secondary Education Deptt. that the Santali is the major vernacular in this stage, not only that the syllabus and break up of marks in these classes (Class V-X) is also already existing in black and white but it is not within the reach of those for whom it is meant. The effective steps can be taken by locating the schools, which fulfill the state Government's declared policy of implementing minority languages policy in the Secondary school education. The trilingual formula in the respect is:

In the schools where there are 15 students in a class or section or 60 students of any particular minority language the students of that minority language will be allowed to choose their mother tongue as a vernacular. For Santali the script for writing will be the OL CHIKI. This Commission is also in agreement with this three language formula of the State Government but disappointed with the indifferent attitude regarding its implementation. **Therefore, this commission appeals to the state Government for taking effective steps.**

This Commission has closely observed that this three language formula for linguistic minorities in the state for school education is able to cover most of the Santali speaking students of the state to read their mother tongue in the schools.

Santali is the second largest language in West Bengal spoken by more than 28 lakh people but Bengali speaking people are completely ignorant of this language and literature. None of the educated Bengali even Master Degree holders or Doctorate Degree holders knows about the great Santali poet late Sadhu Ram Chand Murmu whose birth centenary was observed by the State Government in 1996-97. Late Pandit Raghu Nath Murmu the inventor of OL CHIKI, the Santali Script, poet Sarada Prasad Kisku, poet Paul Jujhar Saren, P. O. Boddling, Majhi Ramdas Reska Tudu etc. whose literary contribution to the Indian literature can no longer be neglected.

So to know each other and for communal harmony and to strengthen the National integrity third language is needed to be introduced again. This will help the students to know the neighbouring languages from their school life, which teach them to honour the each other's mother tongue. Therefore, from Class II to Class X Bengali students will also learn Santali as third language simultaneously with Bengali as first and English as Second language and vice versa for Santal students i.e. they will learn Santali as first language, English as second language and Bengali as third language.

It is to note that the students with Santali combination in the Madyamik Examination will be benefited to opt it (Santali) in Higher Secondary level i.e. in Class XI and XII which is declared as a major vernacular in this (H.S.) stage too. It is to note that in class IX & X Santali can immediately be started teaching in those selected schools where the three language formula is applicable.

In this stage as English is taught as link language from Class III onward and as the third language is dropped from Madhyamik Examination there is the problem of extra burden on the Santali speaking students if this trilingual formula is implemented. To solve this problem this commission suggests to the State Government to reconsider

the introduction of third language from the primary level under the following grounds:

PHASE-III HIGHER SECONDARY CLASS XI-XII

In this stage also the same three language formula for minority languages is appropriate. The State Government should find out the schools/colleges in which there are 15 students in a class/section or 60 Santali students in whole school/colleges there they (Santali students) may be allowed to choose their mother tongue as a major vernacular. So the combination of subjects will be as follows:

Santali – First Language

English – 2nd Language

Bengali – 3rd Language/Additional subject

And rest of the elective subjects remain same or as the case may be. If 3rd language is not possible to be introduced then it can be treated as additional subject also, so that Santali speaking students will choose Bengali as an additional language subject and Bengali speaking students will choose Santali as an additional language subject. And by this process the students of both the languages can learn each other's language in this (H.S.) level too.

PHASE-IV (DEGREE COURSE LEVEL)

In this stage also Santali can be introduced as a language subject. The combination of subjects for different stream will be same as in the case of Bengali or English, i.e. Santali can be opted as one of the pass subjects or honours subjects in the Arts stream. And for Science or Commerce stream it can be opted as an additional compulsory subject with English as in the case of prevailing system i.e. 50 marks Santali, 50 marks English. To introduce this policy in this stage, the state Government should find out the colleges where there are 15 Santali students in the College. Of course nine/ten colleges are easily available where this criteria will fulfill say for instance Jhargram Raj College, Kargari Seva Bharati College, Silda Chandra Sekhar College, (All are in Midnapur Dist.) Pandit Raghunath Murmu Memorial College, Saldiha College, Khatra Adibasi College, Bengal College (All in Bankura Dist.)

PHASE-V (MASTER DEGREE/UNIVERSITY LEVEL)

In this stage the students with honours in Santali will be eligible for admission in M.A. (Santali) course. Also the Pass graduates with Santali as one of the subjects who

score 50% marks in aggregate be eligible for admission if they complete special honours, as applicable in case of other subjects, the system which is prevailing in the existing set up. Moreover chance to be extended to other graduates without Santali combination. They may be allowed to appear in one subject special B.A. Examination of 300 full marks for admission in M.A. (Santali). For non-collegiate external candidates chance norms to appear in the M.A. (Santali) should be the same as in the case of other languages like Bengali, English etc. The University like Vidyasagar University in Midnapur District and Burdwan University is the most ideal Universities wherein this Master Degree course can be introduced without any infrastructural hazards. Contextually the instance of Ranchi University can be cited where this course has already been introduced in the beginning of 80th decade in our neighbouring State Bihar.

**Santal Concentrated areas:
Full Santali Medium: Script : OL CHIKI**

Class I – IV

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| i) First Language | : | Santali |
| ii) Second Language | : | English (From Class – III) |
| iii) Third Language | : | Bengali (From Class – II) |

Class V – X

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---------|
| i) First Language | : | Santali |
| ii) Second Language | : | English |
| iii) Third Language | : | Bengali |

Class XI – XII

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| i) First Language | : | Santali |
| ii) Second Language | : | English (From Class – III) |
| iii) Elective Subject | : | As per prevailing system |
| iv) Additional Subject | : | Bengali |

Thinly Santal populated areas:
Medium: Bengali with Santali a language – Subject in OL CHIKI
Script

Class I – IV

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| i) First Language | : | Santali |
| ii) Second Language | : | English (From Class – III) |
| iii) Third Language | : | Bengali (From Class – II) |

Class V – X

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---------|
| i) First Language | : | Santali |
| ii) Second Language | : | English |
| iii) Third Language | : | Bengali |

Class XI – XII

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| i) First Language | : | Santali |
| ii) Second Language | : | English (From Class – III) |
| iii) Elective Subject | : | As per prevailing system |
| iv) Additional Subject | : | Bengali/as per option |

Science and Commerce

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| i) First Language | : | Santali |
| ii) Second Language | : | English (From Class – III) |
| iii) Elective Subject | : | As per prevailing system |
| iv) Additional Subject | : | Bengali/as per option |

Degree Course

Arts (Hons. in Santali)

- i) Honours Subject : Santali (OL CHIKI Script)
- ii) Elective Subjects : As per prevailing system
- iii) Additional Compulsory : 50 marks Bengali + 50 marks English

Hons. in other subjects

- i) Honours Subject : As per option
- ii) Elective Subjects : Santali and other subjects (OL CHIKI Script) as per option
- iii) Additional Compulsory : 50 marks Bengali + 50 marks English
or
50 marks Santali where Santali is not opted as any of the elective subjects) + 50 marks English

Pass Course

- i) Santali as one of the elective subjects (OL CHIKI Script)
- ii) Additional Compulsory : 50 marks Bengali + 50 marks English
or
50 marks Santali where Santali is not opted as any of the elective subjects) + 50 marks English

Science and Commerce Stream (Pass & Honours)

- i) Honours and Pass/Elective subjects are as per prevailing systems
- ii) Additional compulsory : 50 marks Santali (OL CHIKI Script)
50 marks English

Master Degree

- i) M. A. in Santali just like M.A. in other languages in the Universities/Colleges in the prevailing system. Script for writing will be OL CHIKI

PHASE-VI (DOCTORAL LEVEL)

The candidates who pass the M.A. (Santali) examination will also be given equal opportunity in doing M.Phil. and Ph.D. Degree as in the case of other Master Degree holders. This opportunity has already been available to the students of Ranchi University who did their M.A. in Santali. They are qualifying National Eligibility Test (NET) getting selected for doing Junior Research Fellowship/Senior Research Fellowship leading to Ph.D. in different Universities. So introduction of Santali language in the education system from class one to University level is not at all impossible and unreasonable rather would be very easy if the intention is favourable to this linguistic group.

To materialize this policy the commission suggests the following:

- i. Teachers to be appointed as per requirement
- ii. Adequate training should be provided to these teachers of different classes
- iii. In the syllabus of Junior Basic Training for Primary teachers Santali has to be included as a language subject. Similarly in the syllabus of B.T, P.G.B.T., B.Ed., M. Ed., M.Phil., it has to be included as a language subject
- iv. In the competitive examinations like Public Service Commission, Miscellaneous Services, Staff Selection Commission, Union Public Service Commission etc., West Bengal Civil Service and Indian Administrative Service Santali has to be included as a language subject.
- v. Representatives from Santali language must be included as members in the primary Education Board West Bengal, West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal Council for Higher Secondary Education, School Service Commission, College Service Commission and in the Senate, Syndicate in the Universities
- vi. Similarly in the University Grants Commission (UGC), representative from Santali language is needed to be included.

Moreover, in the Universities, Diploma/Certificate course in Santali may be introduced for the non-Santali Students as a number of foreign languages as well as Indian languages are taught in this level in out Calcutta University.

Besides this suggestion for formal education in the educational Institutions a large part of education is left which cannot be covered by academic education only. This part of education can be covered through establishment

of Santal Academy. This is also a long cherished dream of the Santal people of the State. Beside Bangla Academy, Hindi Academy and Urdu Academy let Santali Academy be established in the state preferably in Calcutta to redress the part of grievances of the Santal in the Golden Jubilee year of Independence. Urdu being a minority language of the state comprising only 2.21 % of total state population got their Academy **then why the Santals will not get their Santali Academy although they are 2.92 % of total state population numbering more than 28 lakh?** So we expect Government's favourable consideration and effective steps in this regard without further delay.

PHASE-VII (VIEW POINTS OF THE COMMISSION)

- i. Commission tries utmost to cover maximum number of Santali speaking students with a view to provide the opportunity to get education in their mother tongue in primary level as well as learn it in higher classes.
- ii. One single education policy is not sufficient to cover all the Santali speaking students, as santal population is scattered all over the state.
- iii. Full Santali medium school can cover only the students of Santal concentrated areas and most of the students will be out of these full Santali medium schools.
- iv. Along with English, Bengali is proposed as one of the language subjects to link up the stages (Primary, Secondary, College etc.) as education in Bengali medium is inevitable to complete the academic education particularly for them who do not opt Santali up to post graduate level.
- v. To bring backward classes into mainstream of the society implementation of the Education Policy is treated to be one of the appropriate steps.
- vi. This policy is framed in such a way that it can be implemented in the existing educational institutions without any infrastructural change.
- vii. Beside the fulfillment of demand of Santal community the Bengali people will also get opportunity to learn this most ancient parent language of the country.
- viii. Introduction of Santali language in education system up to doctoral level will open new horizon to the scholars who are really interested to learn origin and development of languages of the world.

CONCLUSION

We conclude with words from some articles of the Constitution viz. Article 29 wherein protection of interests of minorities in terms of languages, script and culture is spoken. Article 30 wherein right of minorities to establish and administer educational institution is stated. And in Article 46 wherein clearly stated under the heading of **Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections** – that “The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.” All the above articles though meant for protection of interest of the minorities and tribals as well, these constitutional provisions and safeguards are not yet followed or carried out although the country is going to celebrate its 54th Independence. This is nothing but a violation of constitutional order, this is disregard to the constitution. This act of insulting the constitution can no longer be tolerated.

Therefore, we appeal to both the central and concerning State Governments to take necessary steps to impart Santali in the present educational system and to introduce Santali medium education without further delay. And Bihar and Orissa state governments should recognize OL CHIKI, the Santali Script immediately as the West Bengal government has recognized it 20 years back. Along with recognition of OL CHIKI, relevant education policy also needed to be chalked out at the government level. We are optimistic that the all three state governments and the Central government will do the needful in this new millennium and thereby the Santals will get opportunity to read in their mother tongue.