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DETERMINING THE ACCEPTABILITY OF SANTALI LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Language differs according to locality, and this regional difference of a language is seen from the time immemorial. In ancient Greek language there were so many dialects like– Attic-Ionic, Arcadian-Cyprian, Aeolic, Doric etc. In ancient Ariyan language of India there were regional differences like Northern, Central and Eastern. The mostly used language of the world, English has also two main forms — British English and American English. In German language also too much regional differences are seen. So, it may be said that almost all the languages of the world whether primitive or modern have regional diversity — dialects. The current article highlights the significance of Santali language.

Keywords: Santali, Language, Ancient

INTRODUCTION

The Santals have been living for ages mainly in the five states of India. So, naturally there is an impact of state or regional language on Santali language in West Bengal, impact of Hindi in Bihar, Oriya in Orissa and Asamia in Assam. At the beginning, education did not spread out

among the Santals, so they became habituated to use the regional dialects of their language and there was no independent thinking about this language. Till now the dialect-dependence is equally noticed among the Santals. A language is a medium of expression of a race or community. Through



which language a language community expresses them and communicates with each other, the form of that language is not always the same everywhere. As for example, Bengali is used both in East Bengal (Bangladesh) and West Bengal, but the pronunciation and the syntax of the language is not fully the same. The regional differences in the same language is called dialect.

So, the different of the same language in different regions are called dialect. But the difference between a language and its dialects is not the absolute but relative. Keeping this relativity in mind some critics say "So far as there will be a mutual intelligibility of an area the several forms of those regions will be called dialect." It is generally noticed that a particular language is used in a vast area but dialects are used comparatively in smaller regions.

The Santali of Austric family is not an exception to it. Santali language has two main dialects:

1. Southern dialect
2. Northern dialect

Campbell in his Santali-English dictionary has mentioned that Santali language has two dialects and he has named them as Southern and Northern dialect. Though R. N. Cust has mentioned four dialects of Santali language, but later on he admits that there is no possibility of four dialects in reality. R.N. Cust fails to prove the existence of four dialects of Santali language and it has not yet been proved. Though the Santals are scattered in the several states but most of the Santals live in West Bengal and Jharkhand.

There are differences in the meanings of the words used, the pronunciation of the words and in their traditional meanings in Bankura and Purulia of West Bengal and Mayurvanja in Orissa. There are also differences among the words used in Birbhum, Burdwan (North), Murshidabad, Malda of West Bengal and Pargana district of Jharkhand in respect of their meanings and pronunciation. I have made a field survey on the dialects of Santali language in West Bengal, Pargana district of Jharkhand and Mayurvanja in Orissa.

From this field survey about the accepted dialects of Santali language certainly Campbell mentioned two dialects — Southern and Northern dialects are found.

The Tribals are the real natives or the oldest inhabitants of India; all the others are foreign to them. The legal claims and rights of this race are thousand years old.

Though this is a fact but it is a matter to be regretted that the Indian civilization and Indian history have kept away the Tribals and their history unnoticed and unacknowledged till today. We cannot deny this fact. We must have to admit that it has not yet been possible to evaluate a glorious; primitive constitution-acknowledged language likes Santali in the truest sense.

There are differences of various dialects in any language little or more, in respect of the use of vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation etc. For example, there are wide differences of dialects in Bengali language in the spoken form of language among Kolkata, Nadia and several other districts of East Bengal. Infact, the Santals are scattered in the various parts of the country in search of their livelihood. We know that the climate, environment, geographical and cultural atmosphere exert a profound impact upon the spoken form of language of any race, Santali language also is not an exception to it.



Though there are differences among the various dialects in respect of the use vocabulary, pronunciation etc. of various regions, but there is a standard and accepted dialect, as it is seen in case of Bengali language. But this rule is unnoticed in case of Santali language. There needs to have a unity and integrity in the written literature among the various dialects of any language. But, it is unfortunate that the lack of unity and integrity in the written literature of Santali language acts as a major hindrance on the way of development of this language.

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DISCUSSION

The two principal dialects and their position which I collected from the field survey are given below:

Dialects & Position

1. Southern dialect or the Southern form of Santali language. West

Bengal (Bankura, Medinipur,
Purulia) Orissa (Mayurvanja)

2. Northern dialect or the Northern form of Santali language. West Bengal (Burdwan- North, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Malda) Jharkhand (Santal Pargana)

As the people of the Santal community have been living scattered in the various states, so there are differences among syntax, semantics, and vocabulary of Santali language. Besides, the state or provincial language interference has made a change in the vocabulary of Santali language.

For example, the impact of Asomia language in Assam has made a change in pronunciation and meaning and some Santali words have gone thorough fully changed. Similar in the case in Nepal. The impact of Nepali language in Nepal has changed the meanings of some traditional Santali words. In this way, the dialectical problem in Santali language is becoming more problematic and complex. It has not yet been possible to decide which is the accepted dialect of Santali language.



It might be clarified with pronunciation of few words:

/sare/ (N) /sari/ (S)	Tree
/seren/ (N) /sirin/ (S)	Song
/bele/ (N) /bili/ (S)	Egg

There are innumerable examples of these kinds. Now, the question is that what is worthy to be an accepted Santali language? On the other hand in Bengali /tumi/ in Santali — /am/, in Bengali /apni/, in Santali both /abin/ and /aben/ are used. Again /abin/ or /aben/ is used for some special relatives. In this way it has become very difficult to determine which is the standard. The Santals of the Northern region are reluctant to the features of the Southern region and the Santals of the Southern regions are always in favour of own features and characteristics. So, this is a very urgent and relevant context to determine the acceptance forms of Santali language.

If the books and magazines published from the various regions of several states are taken into account, it is noticed that the vocabulary and pronunciation used in them are not all the same, as a consequence of it. So, the literary personalities of Santali

language are in great uncertainty about the integrity, unity and quality of this language. Judging from this perspective it is easily understood how important and relevant determining the acceptability of Santali language is, because, for literature syntax and semantics should be the same.

It is also worthy to be mentioned that one of the burning problems of Santali language is the problem of alphabets. To evaluate any language it should be noted whether it has accepted alphabets. This is a tragedy of Santali language that this language community is separated by five forms of alphabets. In Bihar and Jharkhand, Santali language is studied and written with 'Roman' and `Debnagarr alphabets, in West Bengal with Bengali and Olchiki alphabets, in Orissa with Oria and Olchiki alphabets. The State Governments support these multi-type forms of alphabets for political purpose. As a result of it, the problem which emerges out is that the communication among the Santal communities IS several, their emotions and feelings are not exchanged properly.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Presently, Santali language is taught in many colleges in graduation level and PG



level curriculum under the Burdwan and Vidyasagar University. Except that Sidho-Kanho-Birsha university and Bankura University have also included Santali in their PG level syllabus. But the students of Santali language cannot understand which form of alphabets and words they will use. The learners are in great confusion about the accepted words and accepted forms of alphabets. Hence a practical chaotic situation pervades the written literature of Santali language. The assimilation of Santali languages has not become possible due to their differences in vocabulary and pronunciation; and hence the language of literature remains unformed and confused.

This problem needs to be solved immediately- especially the written literature requires an accepted form of alphabets and accepted language. If there is no unity and integrity in language, the quality of written literature becomes uncertain and confused.

CONCLUSION

The whole Santal community will be benefitted if the acceptability of Santali dialects or language is determined. It is not only for the sake of the learners but it is for the sake of the writers, editors of magazines

and journals of Santali language; and even it is very much necessary to determine the acceptability of Santali language for making a government decision. Besides, the accepted, written form of Santali language will exert an impact on the — spoken form of this language, as it has been in case of Bengali language. That which is more important is, if the acceptability of Santali language is determined, the dispute of dialects among the Santal communities of various regions will be solved; they all will get an opportunity to be united and it will open a new horizon in the realm of Santali language.

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