

Dec 16, 2002

Dear Dr. Deborah Anderson,

Thank you very much for your prompt reply to our email dated Saturday November 30 on the subject, “The need and practicalities to encode ‘Roman Script Santali’ in the universal character set – a protest against efforts to encode the ‘ol chiki’ in the universal character set”. Though different scripts have been in use for writing Santali language, at present there are mainly two scripts, namely, the ‘Roman Script’ and the ‘ol chiki script’ in the fray of being selected as the common script for writing Santali language. The Roman Script is widely used for writing Santali in the Northern parts of the Santali language speaking area of India and Bengali, Deonagri and the other regional scripts are in use for writing Santali language in the Southern parts of the Santali speaking area of India. The ol chiki has been a new script for the Santali language for only about thirty years. The Roman Script has been in use for writing Santali language for more than a century (130 years) now. Only a negligible number of the total Santal populations have any knowledge of the ‘ol chiki’ script.

With the propagation of ‘ol chiki’ the protagonists of the ‘ol chiki script’ have been distorting the Santali language by following the other so called developed languages of India ignoring the Santali grammar. As a result the Santali language has deviated from the path of rectitude to a very great extent in the southern part and as such it falsifies the existing Santali grammar written by P.O.Bodding and others in Roman Script. The intellectual honesty is not reflected in the writings of the devotees of the ‘ol chiki’. For details, point IV of the ‘General Protest’ of the aforesaid email may please be referred to.

Had the matter been placed in the general meetings of the Santals or Santal intellectuals of India, the resolution for getting the ‘ol chiki’ or the ‘ol cemet’ script for the Santal language encoded in B.M.P. (Basic Multilingual Plan) of universal multiple-octet coded character set – ISO/IEC 10646 (i.e. Unicode Standard) by some fundamentalist Santals, would not have been passed. Hence they made a secret effort to get done so. Heaven forbid but if they are succeeded in getting done so, the ‘ol chiki’ will be gaining ground for being recognized as the common script for writing Santali language by the Government of India and the supporters of the ‘Roman Script’ who are in majority will be deprived of their rightful claim. As such, the ‘ol chiki’ in the universal character set will establish the legal basis or authority for being recognized for writing Santali later.

If your intellectual acumen is not applied in the matter, the Santals of India will be divided into two separate communities, as Northern and Southern Santals and the credit for dividing them will go to the protagonists of ‘ol chiki’ as well as to your institution. Apart from this, the Santali language will go back to hundred years.

Sincerely,  
Divyendu Tudu Raska  
President, T.O.R.C.H., Kalapathar  
P.O.- Kalapathar, via – Chakulia  
Dist. East Singhbhum (Jharkhand), India.  
Founder Member and Ex. General Secretary,  
Santal Sanskritik Society, Ranchi (Jharkhand) India.