

**Dear friends,**

**Greetings from PAD/ Adivasi Sahitya Sabha!**

As some of you know that we (**Wilfred Topno: President Adivasi Sahitya Sabha, Stephen Ekka: PAJHRA, Luke Horo: PAJHRA**) were invited for a discussion with Director, Sarva Sikhsa Abhijan (SSA) on 11<sup>th</sup> of June at Kahalipara SSA Office. Accordingly we had gone to meet the Director but unfortunately Director **Ms. L.S. Changsan (IAS)**, has to fly to Delhi for some urgent work. Therefore she arranged for us a discussion with State Coordinator Mr. Kalita and his team (6 members all together I don't remember the names).

Our meeting started at around 3 p.m. at the conference hall at SSA Director Office. We introduced our members and they also introduced themselves.

Mr. Kalita informed us about the SSA promoted bridged languages for primary level. He showed us the book (INJHOR) that is promoted by SSA and designed by the community lead by Mr. Susil Kurmi for Tea Community. INJHOR is Assamese script but language is of Tea community. He also informed us about Santali Group who are developing similar book on Roman Script. He also informed us about Rabha and other tribes working on MTB-MLE Schools.

Then we showed our books and materials which we used for Adivasiya Schools. We also informed them that presently now 9 schools are functioning in collaboration and initiative of the community. 8 are in Adivasiya and one in Mundari. They saw the materials and asked how we started. We informed them the support from SIL (Sumer institute of Linguistics International) who gave us technical support in bringing out the study and teaching materials. We said that the Schools are running properly for last three years but we have not completed systematic transition which was suppose to be designed this year. We also informed them that these children are also attending Assamese medium schools run by the government of Assam. We give our children two hour class as supplementary in Adivasiya language.

The debate came on Roman Script as we hoped. We gave our reasons that in Roman script the pronunciations of our language can be perfect and also it is Child friendly /user friendly we can produce books and other materials more easily then in Devnagri and Bengali script. Several other reasons we put forward and also we informed them about the decisions of several workshop of Adivasi Sahitya Sabha on script.

Finally they said that it is up to community which script they opt for, SSA has already agreed for Roman script for several community including Santali therefore they have nothing to do with script.

They said that they work with Government Schools and not with Private schools therefore they were not sure how to support these schools. We said that these are community run school and children are from Govt. Schools and they are not private school for business purpose. Because the Govt. schools are not in mother-tongue, most of the children don't understand the book as well as what the teacher explains, therefore these Centres are helping children to understand the reading and writing on their own

language. The children will be able to join any other medium once they complete our Adivasiya MTB – MLE School.

**I felt satisfied with the discussion for the following reasons:-**

- 1. The Government came to know our work of MTB- MLE School.**
- 2. The (officers) are positive and did not discourage our work.**
- 3. There is hope that these schools may be taken by government if we can give sufficient evidence that children are developing through Adivasiya education system.**
- 4. The discussion has opened door for further discussion with government.**
- 5. We are able to know the possibility of collaboration with SSA. Etc**

The meeting lasted for about 2 hours with very meaningful discussion. At the end they said that when Madam Director arrives, they will give her the document and inform her the contents of the meeting. They also asked us to come again and discuss with Madam Director Ms. L.S. Changsan (IAS),.

**Wilfred Topno**

**Dated:12.6.2014**