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## Hindi tilt whiff in CBSE Class IX 3rd language rule

**JHINUK MAZUMDAR**

**Calcutta:** CBSE schools are tweaking their timetables and redrawing lesson plans to make room for the third language in Class IX as directed by the board.

From July 1, the study of three languages shall be compulsory for Class IX students, with at least two languages being native Indian languages, the CBSE said in a circular issued on May 15.

Most schools begin their session in mid-April, and said

that introducing a language paper mid-session "has implementation challenges".

First, schools would have to allocate sufficient class hours within the existing schedule to teach the third language, since the timetable has already been drawn up and implemented.

"We have conducted internal meetings to decide how to proceed. When we ask the heads of other departments for additional periods, they are unwilling to give them up, saying they need those periods

to complete their syllabus. We need periods in the timetable to accommodate the third language," said Jaldev Ghosh, the principal of South Point High School.

Most schools are asking students to continue with the third language that they had up to Class VIII. "Those who had Hindi as a third language till Class VIII will continue with that in Class IX, and those who did Bengali will continue with that," said Madhumita Sengupta, the principal of BDM International.

The Newtown School has a unique problem. There, 50 students in Class IX have French and German as their second language; 35 study French and 15 in German.

"We are promoting global citizenship and talking about liberal arts, but the three-language framework with two compulsory native Indian languages limits the choice for students," said Sunil Agarwal, founder of The Newtown School.

The only option that the students have is that those

who had Hindi as a third language till Class VIII will now have to study Hindi as their second language in Class IX and take up an entirely new Indian language as the third.

They could also take up an entirely new language as a second language, and Hindi continues to be the third language. French or German can be studied as an additional fourth language.

In English medium schools, English is a compulsory first language.

Several schools, however,

offer foreign languages as an additional activity in the curriculum.

Both Lakshmi Pat Singhania Academy and BDM International offer foreign languages like French and German as a special activity class.

"The CBSE is saying that the children's third language skills will not be evaluated by the board, which means they should have elementary knowledge, and hence it should not be a problem," said Meena Kak, the director of

Lakshmi Pat Singhania Academy.

Sushila Birla Girls' School, which had introduced French and German as third languages in Class VI, has sent a fresh circular to their parents that those languages will be offered as "a club activity" right up to Class XII, but not as a third language.

"Students will have to choose between Hindi, Bangla or Sanskrit as a third language," said Koeli Dey, principal, Sushila Birla Girls' School.