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## **Punjabiati and Punjabi Language**

Punjabiati means a spirit of feeling proud to be a Punjabi i.e. all the people in Punjab should nurse a feeling of mutual solidarity. Punjabiati also means that Punjabis should feel themselves one by rising above barriers like religion, colour, ethnicity, caste etc. Their hearts should beat together. They should take interest in the development of Punjab and gird up their loins to take their state ahead of other states. Punjabi language has a great role to play in establishing Punjabiati. Punjabi language did not come into existence all of a sudden. Its development is integrally related with the development of Punjabiati. Here we are discussing this aspect as under:

**Punjabiati and Punjabi Culture:** Punjabiati and Punjabi culture are just like two sides of the same coin. Delineating the mutual link between the two Dr. Dhanwant Kaur has said that the concept of Punjabiati is inalienable from the Punjabi culture and often we take them synonymously also. To my mind there is no difference between the two but it would be proper to distinguish between the meaning and concept of both. Punjabi culture is a vast multi-layer system while Punjabiati is the psyche built on these. When we use the concept of Punjabi culture, it implies Punjabi behaviour, thought pattern, family etc. It also includes those cultural institutions on which Punjabi culture is built. But when we conceptualise Punjabiati we do not tend towards these institutions but mean Punjabi personality, temperament and way of thinking which provides it a unique identity.

By Punjabiati we mean Punjabi physique and the spirit - Physique built up by the tempting climate of Punjab, Physique which has foiled the sinister designs of the invaders.

**Three Aspects of Culture:** According to Dr. Roshan Lai Ahuja, culture is synonymous with 'Sanskriti' in Sanskrit. It has three aspects -Physical, Social and Artistic. Physical aspect pertains to the means of life or matter e.g. eating, drinking, dressing, residing. The cultural aspect belongs to the way of life formed by geographical and climatic conditions. Physical aspect may include the features, stature, bony structure, flesh and the warmth of blood. These elements are physical and natural only having nothing to do with the feelings and beliefs. Nature is absolute and its product is also absolute. In other words, the question of absoluteness and relativity does not arise in the physical aspect of nature. Second aspect of culture is social which is a product of man's struggle for survival against nature. Man is a product of nature no doubt, but is quite fragile in comparison to the forces of nature and is unable to maintain his existence. He has to depend on others. Therefore he has to keep good relations with others. This is called co-existence. The co-existence is absolute. The artistic aspect of culture includes literature, folk arts and language.

Dr. Baldev Raj Gupta while defining the mutual relation of language and culture says that through language man expresses himself and through culture man perpetuates his tradition, The common link between language and culture is 'idea'. Through language man lays bare his heart and shares his grief with others, while through cultural rites and rituals, he propitiates the spirits of his ancestors and marries off his young sons and daughters. So language and culture,

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both are means of communicating human thoughts.

The Elements of Punjabi Culture and Punjabi- There are many elements in Punjabi culture which lend Punjabi to it. Common thinking comes at number one among these. All the people of Punjab make a joint endeavour for the development of Punjab. The folk-music of Punjab also enkindles a felling of Punjabi in the people. According to Dr. Sohinder Singh Bedi, Punjabis have got music by birth. Immediately after birth, sweet notes of music and beats of a Dholak pour into the ears of the child. Folk-music becomes one with the soul of the new born baby and lives with him throughout his life. The folk-art of Punjab also has a role to play in cultivating Punjabi. In this connection the above writer says that the folk art of Punjab is as old as its culture. The oldest specimens of the folk art of Punjab have been found from the excavations of Harappa and Ropar. These include some earthen pitchers and terra cottas which were used to -decorate the houses. In painting, hill-art has reigned supreme. Similar way of life has also created a sense of Punjabi.

**Language Aspect-** Language aspect has also contributed a lot in creating Punjabi. Language by itself is a part of culture. Punjabi language did not come into existence all of a sudden. It has emerged from already existent language in this region. A general view is that it owes its origin to Shaurseni but some linguists find its origin in Kaikaye which was spoken in Multan region. Whichever view may be right but one thing is clear that Punjabi language had its origin in Apbhransh which was already spoken here. Punjabi language is the language of common man. It does not belong to any particular community, caste or religion, it belongs to all punjabis. Its role in

creating Punjabi has always been relevant and substantial. The Punjabi language found its maiden expression in the poetry of Naths and Jogis in protest against Brahminism. The language of the Brahmins was Sanskrit but its opposition required a folk language now. Therefore, Naths and Jogis made Punjabi a medium of their expression. Written through the medium of language, this literature is complete in itself and is symbolic of Punjabi. Gorakhbani says:

*Jo Ghar Tyag Kahave Jogi*

*Ghar vasi ko kahe jo Bhogi*

*Param Tatt Ke Hoi Na Marmi*

*Kahe Gorakh so Maha Adharmi,*

(He who calls himself a recluse by renouncing his house and calls householder an enjoyer, is ignorant of the ultimate Truth. Nobody can be a bigger infidel than him). Thereafter, Punjabi language absorbed many words of Arabic and Persian due to the impact of Muslims.

**Baba Farid's Language:** A study of Baba Farid's Shalokas reveals that he expressed Sufi feelings through Punjabi language with an admixture of Lehndi. His Shalokas inspired people to remember the name of God and stressed righteousness. These shalokas were meant not for a single caste or creed but for all Punjabis. He urged the people to rise above petty considerations and live together peacefully. Although he has used Punjabi language in his shalokas, but the reflection of Lehndi dialect can be vividly seen on his Punjabi.

**Gurbani has a mass appeal:** The Bani (Divine Poetry) of all the Gurus creates a spirit of oneness in the hearts of people. Gurbani prohibits casteism and untouchability. It exhorts people to partake langar (Common Kitchen) in a queue. Thus, Gurbani brings

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people together with a spiritual string of unity. About Guru Granth Sahib, Dr. Jeet Singh Sital writes that Guru Granth Sahib is the only great religious scripture which spreads message for all and makes no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion, colour, ethnicity, nationality etc. He adds that 'Guru Granth Sahib' is a multilingual scripture which enshrines the contours of the dialects spoken by the masses at that time.

**Later Writers:** After this period, there were some poets and writers during Ranjit Singh's period also who expressed their passion for Punjabi language by writing literature in Punjabi language. Punjabi is reflected well in 'Jangnama' of Shah Mohammed. The way Prof. Puran Singh has expressed Punjabi in his poetry, is unparalleled. Even now many new writers and poets have expressed Punjabi in their writings.

**The Tragedy of Punjabi:** In modern age, the tragedy of Punjabi is that it is being discussed in a negative way. Punjabis do not have a feeling of being Punjabi because of a common nationality; they have been given this feeling by others as a minority outside Punjab. The Punjabi's in the western Punjab in Pakistan also suffer from this minority syndrome. Dr. Attar Singh attributes this situation to the narrow thinking of Hindus and Sikhs of East Punjab cannot transcend their contradictions despite their common traditions, how can the Punjabis of West Punjab foster a sense of Punjabi in the face of religious differences.

**The Role of Punjabi Language-** Punjabi language can play a vital role in establishing and strengthening Punjabi. Hindus and Sikhs of East Punjab and Muslims of West Punjab may be having their own mutual religious differences, yet Punjabi is the only link between them. Punjabi is spoken and taught in both the Punjabs. Literature is

also written in it; but the needs of day is to liberate it from the political boundaries. In this connection Dr. Attar Singh offers some suggestions:

- (a) Making Punjabi language the basis of Punjabi is not sufficient in itself. It should be transformed in such a way as become a symbol of Punjabi in totality.
- (b) To cultivate love for Punjabi language in all the castes, creeds, communities and classes of Punjab, Punjabi language should reflect the culture of all of them. Their scriptures, history and biographies should be translated into Punjabi.
- (c) Entire cultural heritage of Punjab should be acknowledged as Punjabi. Irrespective of its origin in any other language, it should be translated into Punjabi Part A- Punjab 193 so that the accumulated intellectual and spiritual experience of Punjabis should expand its boundaries.
- (d) The self-esteem of Punjabis should be promoted by preparing history of the various aspects of Punjabi culture, folklore, literature and ideas. Conclusion- To sum up we can say that Punjabi language and Punjabi are closely related to each other. Punjabi does not mean today what it should mean necessarily. Religious bigotry and politics are coming in its way. In this context, Punjabi language can play a constructive role. The suggestions given by Dr. Attar Singh in this connection are very valuable.

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