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The History of Panchali (Poguli/Khah) Language and its Areas

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Abstract

This paper is based on the history of Panchali (Khah/Poguli). It demarcates Panchali speaking areas and also gives its number of speakers. It also mentions various alternate names of Panchali language. The different types of Panchali languages are discussed. In this paper the dialects of Panchali language are also mentioned and their areas are also demarcated. The importance of Panchali languages has been discussed with its historical perspectives. There is a little literature available in this language.

Keywords- *Demarcates, Dialects, Panchali, Cultural Background, Khah*

Panchali Language is an Indio-Aryan language which shares many of its linguistic features with Sanskrit (1), Persian (2), Kashmiri (3) and other languages. It is mainly spoken in the Ramban District of Jammu and Kashmir. It is bordered in the East by Kishtwari and Baderwahi, in the West by Pahari and Gojri, in the South by Dogri and in the North by Kashmiri. This is not a new dialect but Panchali is one of the alternate names of Kashmiri regional dialect-Poguli/khah (4). The alternate names are Banhali, Poguli, Khah, Pahari, kohistani, Pogali, Khashali, Puguji, Paristani, Pogli and Makerkoti. But due to absence of history, various native as well as foreign intellectuals have mentioned it by the name 'Poguli' and have restricted its areas to Pogal and Paristan only (5). It has a written tradition (6). Various Books have been written in Khah and various organizations are working for its preservation it is language of both Hindus and Muslims.

Now I will talk about the word Khah and Poguli. In twelfth century history of Kashmir- Raj Trangini.(7) The Khashas are frequently mentioned, which are inhabitants of hill region of south of Kashmir Valley, Khashali around Banihal Pass. Khasas or Khas or Kasiyas are an ancient people believed to be section of the Indo – Aryan who originally belongs to Central Asia, from where they had penetrated in remote antiquity the Himalayas

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through Khashgar and Kashmir and dominate the whole hilly region. They are believed to have given their names to Kashgar, Kashi (Central Asia), Kashkara, Kashmir, Khashali (South East of Kashmir), Kishtwar, Khashdhar (Shimla Hills) And other recognizable colonies had the present day in the Hills from Kashmir down to Nepal and also in various plains.

The country of Khasas is said to have also comprised the Valleys lying to the west of Pir-Panchal Range between the middle course of Vitasta (Jehlum), in the west and Kast – Vata in the East. The Puranic references obviously show that they were more than one settlement of Khashas.(8). The country of Rajouri which was ruled by Kambojas in the epic times (MBH 7.4.5) which was ruled by Khasha in the later times. The name of Village Khah in Rajouri District shows the influence of Khasha Tribe. The presence of Bohra, Khah, Katwal, Khokar etc. are some of the surnames of Khasha Tribe from these references it becomes clear, that khah was a tribe and it is the because of their living in these areas that the language was called Khah or Khashali.

Raj Trangin mentions Banihal a very narrow mountain Valley as vishalta. This region in King Uccala's time was an escape route from Kashmir for unwanted and disgruntled elements of the Valley. In Jaysimha's time (1128 – 49) a small fort is stated to have been existed just below the old Banihal Pass called by the name of Bansalla which literally meant a Jungle or groove of trees. Ghulam Hassan in his Book "Tarikh-e-Hassan" has also mentioned the presence of fort (9). This castle belonged to Khasha lord Bhagika, ruler of the old principality of

Vishalta or Vanshalla-the present Banihal region. He was the son-in-law of Tikka, the lord of Buddhal (Rajouri). As we see that in Khah language there is a Phonetic change from /V/ to /B/ and /Sh/or/s/ to /h/. So Vishalta or Vanshalla becomes Banihal 'Van' becomes 'Ban' and 'Shalla' or 'Salla' becomes 'Halla' – Banhalla. Even today every khah Speaker say Banahalla not Banihal or Bahnall as Marghoob Banihalli has talked of "Bah"- Twelve 'Nala' – Rivers (10). Further it is because of this that Khah language has preserved some of old Sanskritic elements. (11) We see this phonetic change in "Varramulla", vikram, Vijeshwari, vikram and Vatroo which becomes Baramulla, bikram, Bijbehara, bikram and Batroo.

Moreover, 'Khah' in Kashmiri means field and in Khah "Khah" means furrow made by plough in the field. Khah is also a caste of Pandit and Muslims either in Kashmir or in Ramban District.

The word "Pogal" is combination of two words "Poh" and "gyal". "Poh" in Khah means a type of Bush (Pahwari) grown in abundance mostly in pogal area and "gyal" means a wooden handle used in axes and other agricultural tools (12). Thus "Pohgyal" means a wooden handle made up of Pahwari and with the passage of time it has remained Pogal only and the language of this village was called Pogali. By mentioning it by this name, various foreign linguists did their field work in this area only and mentioned it by Pogali. (13)

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Now the question is how can be a language called by the name of a small village when it is spoken not only out of district but state also. Once a linguists mentioned that it is spoken in Pogal and Paristan Valleys only (14)., All the other linguists blindly imitated this without doing research which is thrice removed from reality and thus neglecting all other areas. Further no any local writer was consulted during the workshop or surveys. According to Suddheshwar Verma, Pogli was spoken by five households only (15). As per the census figure of 1911, there were 5,812 speakers of this language and in the census 1961, there were 9,508 speakers shown. There are more than what is shown in census reports. According to census 2011, the total population of Ramban District is 283,713(16). As we know that there are 124 panchayats of Ramban District and the population of one Panchayat will be around 2400(approx.). There will be more than 2400 because in every Panchayat 5/6 villages have been kept. Out of 124 Panchayats 58 Panchayats are totally inhabited by Khah speaking people. Besides this more than twenty Thousand people are living in other villages of Ramban District with other dialects spoken together. There are more than Thirty Thousand who live in other districts of Jammu and Kashmir State, other states of India and abroad. So the total number of Khah speaking will be 1,89,200 (one Lac and eighty nine Thousand). [2400x58+20000+ 30000= 189200 [approx.]

As Ramban District is divided into 7 Tehsils – Banihal, Gool, Ramban, Khari, Rajgarh, Batote and Ukherhal (Pogal Paristan). Ukherhal (Pogal Paristan) and Khari Tehsils are totally inhabited by Khah Speaking people. Although Marghoob Banhali has mentioned some of areas but has not mentioned some of areas (17).

The Khah inhabited Panchayats of Banihal Tehsil are Chacknarwah, Chamalwas Lower-A, Chamalwas Lower-B Chamalwas Upper, Chanjloo, Dooligam Upper A Dooligam Upper B and Gund Adalkoot B. Besides in Rallo, Zenihal, Kaskoot, Nowgam Nai Basti Nagbal Khah speaking people have settled also.

The Ukharhal, Khari tehsils and Ramsoo and chamal was niabats are totally inhabited by Khah speaking people. The Panchayats of which are:

- (1) Alinbass-A (2) Alinbass-B (3) Bajmasta (4) Bhingara (5) Bohardar-A (6) Bohardar- B (7) Dhanmasta-A (8) Dhanmasta-B (9) Dhanmasta-C (10) Phagmulla (11) Hochak (12) Khari Lower (13) Khari Upper-A (14) Khari Upper-B (15) Maligam-A (16) Maligam-B (17) Neel-A Chacknarwah (18) Neel-B (19) Neel-C (20) Neel-D (21) Panchal-A (22) Panchal-B (23) Paristan (24) Pogal Lower (25) Pogal Upper (26) Sarbagni-A (27) Sarbagni-B (28) Senabati-A (29) Senabati-B (30) Shagan (31) Sujmatna-A (32) Sujmatna-B (33) Sumbar Lower (34) Sumbar Upper (35) Trigam Upper (36) Trigam-A (37) Trigam-B (38) Khari Lower-B.

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In Ramban Block, the Khah inhabited Panchayats are: (1) Balawat (2) Balihote (3) Gandhri (4) Kabbi (5) Kangna (6) Maitra Govindpora-A (7) Maitra Govindpora-B (8) Parnote-A (9) Parnote-B (10) Tanger.

Besides in Nai Basti Ramban, Cafteria, Kohbagh, Maitra, Thamthal Batote, Thakra Bath, Bhatyari, Kantri, Peerah, Sanasar, chandroge, Digdole and Seri Khah speaking people have settled.

In Gool, Gulabgarh (Lar) and Sangaldan Khah Speaking people are living. In Doda District, Desa, Bhatyas, Bhaderwah and City Doda Khah people have settled. In Kishtwar and Reasi District Khah speaking are also living.

On the whole the Khah speaking village of Ramban District are: Chacknarwah, Neel, Dhanmasta, Khari, Ramsoo, Pogal, Magerkote, Paristan, Bohardar, Alinbass, Hochak, Bhingara, Senabati, Panchal, Sujmatna, Chamalwas, Chanjloo, Hinghal, Trigam, Mandakbass, Phagoo, Batroo, Baderkote, Tabella, Wagan, Thachi, Nowkoot, Senigam, Chidoos, Khowrihal, Halla, Sachal, Gangna, Zanchos, Chakka, Gunguna, Sarbagni, Gujjarnag, Ukherhal, Dhak, Kharwan, Runigam, Hewagan, Lablotha, Hingni, Nachanala, Shagan, Maligam, Innyar, Kralchihal, Tulhal, Vglinbass, Bass, Sarachi, Zaradi, Dardahi, Digdole, Batoo, Barmuji, Parhinder, Thana, Kawanbass, Panla, Kunda, Phagmullah, Drupta, Tatnihal, Chapnari, Batnihal, Ladnihal, Buzla, Madnihal, Mandkhal, kanihal, Tranna, Bohrigam, Manjoos, Arpinchalla, Nowkoot, Arra, Neel Top, Ralu, Nagam, Nagbal, Balawat, Maitra, Nai Basti, Nikshihal, Pernote, Kanga, Khowrihal, Battery Chasma, Gandhri, Batli, Bhatni, Balihote, Bagri, Bagna, Sarbagni, Bajmasta, Sumber, Gool, Sangaldan, harog, Digdole, Bali, Nai Basti, Seeri, Koh Bagh, Jamthal Batote, Thaker Basti, Bhatyari, Kantri, Ramban, Ahma, Noora, Dool Pora, Madnipora, Dramman, Panla, Nilhal, Boharnar, halla, Ladnihal, Tamnare, Mughal Chowk, Karahall, Khowra, Tajnihal, Khudmulla, Uglynbass, Butpora, dalpath, Koonchigam, Sohil Pora, Kanihal, Nowgam, Nagdar, Mijdullah, Shabanbass, shalgadi and Sujmatna.

During the 1990's when militancy was in its peak, large number of families either Hindu or Muslim migrated to Riasi, Udampur, Jammu and various other parts of the country. It is because of this that most of families have settled in Bhusht, Payan, Chenani, Udampur, Katra, Seri Talab, Tikri, Gool, Gulabgarh, Lar and Bali of Udampur and Riasi Districts. Various other people migrated to Jammu. In Jammu Khah speaking people have settled in Bhatindi, Channi, Sunjwan, Sidra, Panjirithi, Bajalta, Gujjar Nagar, Khatikan Talab, Bantalab and Janipur.

In Kashmir Khah Speaking people are living in Athwajan, Sanatnagar, Lasjan, Sumerbagh, Pandrethan, Verinag, Islambad, Zewan, Woyan, Khrew, Batmalo, Dalgate, Rajbagh, Mattan, Pampore, Awantipora, Sheri Baramullah and various other places.

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Khah speaking people have also settled in Mumbai, Delhi, Bhopal, Chandigarh and Uttar Pardesh. Besides Khah speaking people have migrated to Soudi Arabia, Pakistan, England and USA also.

Now think is it spoken in Pogal and Paristan valleys only (18). Are Pogli speakers found mainly to the South-East and South-West of Banihal only (19) Were there only five house holds at the time of Siddheshwar Verma. Ramban District has a majority of Khah speakers. They are not found in upper areas only. The main town of Banihal, Ramsoo, Khari, Ukerhal and Ramban are permanently inhabited by Khah speaking families.

Khah language is of three types. And it has three dialects Sirazi, Zundhari and Neeravi. It's types are as.

(i) Dashni Khah (ii) Khawri Khah (iii) Pure Khah

Dashni Khah is spoken in those areas where it is mostly influenced by Marazi type of Kashmiri rather I would like to call it Kashmirized Khah e.g. Phagow, Chanjloo, Nowkot, Trigam, Hinjhal etc. Khawri type of Khah is spoken in those areas where it is influenced by Dogri, Bhaderwahi, Kishtwari and other languages and to this type I can call it Dogrized Khah such as Bhusht, Chenani, Sangaldan, Batote, Udampur and Riasi etc. it is true that the language spoken in Tehsil Banihal, Ramsoo, Khari, Ramban and Ukerhall is regarded as of standard variety.

Finally, we come to know that what is right and what is wrong, despite holding discussions, seminars by keeping Banhali, Magerkote, Koshistani, Khashli, Poguli, Khah, Pogali, Poguj and Pahari etc. as its name (20). We cannot give it a name Banhali as its speaker are out of Banihal Tehsil also. Pahari and Kohistani are already a name of language. I want to make it clear that there is no difference between Khah/Khashali and Poguli as some narrow minded people are thinking and are following the divide and rule policy. Some people do not like to call Khah/Khashali because this tribe was a warrior type (21). All these are alternate names of one language. Some words are different language may be used or may be influenced by any language much as I told above about Dashni Khah and Khawri Khah. According to its history it was proper to call it Khah or Khashali but I suggest 'Panchali' its name. As our state is divided in to three regions- Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. In jammu Dogri, in Kashmir Kashmiri, and in Ladakh Ladakhi is spoken. In Rajouri and Punch Pahari and Gojri is spoken. In Bhaderwah, Bhaderwahi, in Kishtwar Kishtwari, in Padder Paddri, in Bhallesa Bhalessvior Bhalessi and in Siraz Sirazi is spoken. All these languages, dialects are spoken in their particular Tehsil, village or in particular caste only. So for as Khah in concerned, The whole of Pir-Panchal range from Tunnel Top to Patni Top and even beyond this is inhabited by Khah speaking people. So in a Broader Sense, it would be better to give it such a good name as "Panchali". It has three dialects as; Siraji or Sirazi, Zundhari (Rambani) and Neeravi. Some of these are still unexplored despite having so many surveys and field studies. The Siraji has been classified as dialect of Kashmiri but as per my survey it is more

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closely related to Panchali than Kashmiri. It shares lot of lexical, phonological and morphological characteristics with Panchali and is mutually intelligible. It is spoken in siraz belt of Ramban and Doda District so it is called Sirazi. The Siraz belt covers these villages/Tehsils; Rajgarh, Dhundrath, Kumet, Ghari, Jhatgali, Draman, Topneel, Kastigarh, Kundi, Sildhar, Dhar, Tanger etc of Ramban and Doda districts. It is spoken in by 50000 (fifty thousand) number of speakers in both Ramban and Doda districts. It has written tradition. Many poets are trying to preserve this dialect through their writings. Another dialect of Panchali is Zundhari. As Grierson has mentioned in Linguistic survey of India it by its actual name but other linguists called it Rambani which is not true. It is spoken in the belt of Ramban district called zundhar so it is called Zundhari. It is spoken in these villages of ramban District only as; Ahadwah, Balihote, Demote, Gaam, Sanna, Marog, Ganote, Sencha and Telimajra. It has 20000 (twenty thousand) number of speakers. It has no written tradition except the song sung in forests. It is too sharing many of its features with Panchali .The third dialect of Panchali is Neeravi. It is spoken in Neera, Seri, Kanthi and Krol area of Ramban district. It is spoken by 15000 (fifteen thousand) number of speakers. It has no written tradition except songs. All these dialects are more akin to Panchali than any other language. It has not been mentioned by any writer in his writings.

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