



## Translating Folk Narratives of Haryana: Historicizing Issues and Challenges

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the historical contexts of how the state of Haryana came into existence, the issues and challenges that the new state dealt with in terms of negation or were uninitiated into the role of Language in consolidation of one's culture and identity. There were prevalence of folk culture all over but the realization of its strength in construction of post-independent Haryana was yet to take its deep roots. In my research effort wherein I have collected hundreds of folk narratives and transcribed many, I made observations on my journey as a researcher which have been documented in this paper.

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I have purposely used the term "Haryanvi," not just in my title of thesis but also in my conviction. Although the language had yet to attain a status of language and survives as only a dialect or as some postcolonial affected critics say, it is a warped form of Hindi, not a language in its own right. It is unfortunate that even after a decade of my research and many more; it is still thought that all the dialects spoken by people in various places of Haryana are just distorted forms of Hindi. My intention is to express that this language has been dealing with an identity problem. The people are ignorant of the fact that their language, like other recognised languages has deep cult roots and is a storehouse of treasure.

There are various dialects of Haryanvi Language and it as an absolute thrilling academic exercise to translate folk narratives from these dialects into English. But this problem could be similar to the one encountered by other regional or tribal languages across India when the society and state refuses to grant them that statutory status.

The political state of Haryana came into existence on November 1, 1966. When the situation is considered historically and the different causes that led to the creation of the state of Haryana are taken into consideration, the problem becomes slightly more complex. Let's delve into some specific language facts about the factors that contributed to the creation of the state of Haryana.

1919 was the start of the biggest language shift in the north. In December 1919, the Central League was established. The establishment of Shiromani Akali Dal in 1920 came next. Initially founded as a religious shrine security organisation, it quickly evolved into a religio-political force, defending the rights of the Sikh people. By the end of 1946, a recognisable communal pattern of politics had emerged. Punjab was split along sectarian lines on August 18, 1947, in accordance with the Radcliffe Award. Though they still made up barely 30% of the population in the undivided Punjab, Hindus now accounted for 70% of the total. After Punjab's split, the 15% Sikh population now makes up 30% of the total, making them the only notable minority in the post-partition province.

Sikhs were concentrated in the Central District and Hindus in the South Eastern Districts as a result of migrations from the newly established Pakistan. As a result, tensions among refugees as a whole took on a communal hue, and divisions between Sikh settled and migrant populations surfaced in both rural and urban areas. The local Hindu community believed they were being taken advantage of by inhabitants of Punjab.

Most indigenous Sikhs and migrant Sikhs had deep roots in the land. The Sikh refugee community was the hardest sufferer of division; they were famous landowners and peasants. The majority of the Hindu population, including both the original settlers and the refugees, were traders. They succeeded in re-establishing themselves after exerting considerable effort. Their cultural heritage remained unaltered. They could blend in with the Pan Hindu Culture with ease.

Early on during the division, politics was greatly volatile. The rural aristocracy and Sikhs living in cities sided with Congress. The Akali Dal's attempts to coerce Sikhs into political unanimity were ineffective since, on March 18, 1948, every elected MLA joined the Congress. Outside of the legislature, however, Akali leadership persisted in vocally advocating for the preservation of Sikh identity as India's

constitution was taking shape. Akali Dal called for the recognition of Punjabi languages written in Gurumukhi Script and constitutional protections. It was necessary for people to acquire both languages in order to preserve the bilingual nature of the state. Punjabi, written in Gurumukhi Script, was to become the language of the Punjab zone, and Hindi, written in Devnagari Script, was to become the language of the Hindi zone. There were issues with this recipe. It was rejected by the Arya Samaj Schools as its platform. Sachar eventually lost favour, and Akali's discontent with the government grew. Following this series of events, Master Tara Singh declared on October 8, 1949, that "the Sikhs have a different culture from the Hindu." The language spoken by Sikhs is distinct. There is no reason why they should not claim the right of self-determination for themselves because their customs, history, heroes, and social structures were distinct from one another.

By July 1950, Master Tara Singh was calling for the creation of a distinct language state for those who wrote in Gurumukhi Script and spoke Punjabi. In addition, he desired the province to have internal autonomy, much as Kashmir did. According to historical evidence documented by Harcharan Singh Bajwa, who served on the Akali Dal Working Committee from 1931 to 1960, Dr. Ambedkar's advice led to the demand for a linguistic state. Some Akali leaders claim that Dr. Ambedkar made the following suggestions.

If you had cast lots with Pakistan, you would have been a minority there. In joint Punjab, you were a minority except in two tehsils, which too were not contiguous. In Eastern Punjab too you are a minority. If you clamour for a Sikh State, it will be a cry in the wilderness. Why don't you ask for a Punjabi speaking state? Congress is committed to linguistic basis for reorganization of the states. They can defer satisfaction of this demand but they cannot oppose it for long. You can have a Sikh State in the name of Punjabi Suba.

According to Bajwa, this proposal made it possible to establish a de facto Sikh State. The opposition of Hindus gave the campaign even more impetus. The disastrous 1951 census was the outcome of this. The majority of Hindus who spoke Punjabi claimed Hindi as their mother tongue. In response to the call for "Punjabi Suba," the urban Punjabi Hindus presented their demand for a Maha Punjab, which would include the regions of Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, and certain districts of Uttar Pradesh. But the notion did not go well with the Hindus in the South Eastern region of Punjab, which is now known as Haryana. They desired to be a distinct state.

In order to demarcate Punjab Suba, the Akali Dal provided the state reorganisation panel with an eighteen-page paper. They also organised rural Sikh solidarity. The Sikh faith was cited as a mandate for getting involved in politics. The State Reorganisation Commission turned down Akali Dal's demands. Rather, a plan for the merger of Punjab, the PEPSU, and Himachal Pradesh into a single administrative entity was put out. Nonetheless, the following regional formula was suggested in February 1956 as a result of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru's personal intervention.

- i) The SRC's proposal that Himachal Pradesh remain outside of Punjab should be disregarded, and PEPSU should be combined with Punjab.
- ii) The areas that spoke Hindi and Punjabi were to be separated from the new State of the Punjab. The State was to designate Hindi and Punjabi as its regional languages.
- iii) The Punjab was to continue to be a bilingual state, with Hindi (written in Devnagari Script) and Punjabi (written in Gurmukhi Script) serving as the official tongues.
- iv) The elected members of the Assembly (including the ministers from each region) would form two regional committees for administrative and development purposes, covering the two regions. But the State Cabinet was supposed to make the ultimate decision in this matter. In the event that difference in the views of the Regional Committees, the Governor was to take the final decision.

Nehru-Master Pact followed this arrangement. The working group of the Akali Dal proclaimed on September 30, 1956, that "Dal would concentrate on the protection and promotion of educational, religious, cultural, and economic interest of the Panthi." This agreement was followed when the Akali Dal united with the Congress. But for Urban Punjabi Hindus, this arrangement was insufficient. They sensed a decline in their authority. Punjabi Hindus opposed teaching Punjabi to their fellow Punjabi Hindus in Gurmukhi Script. Even though 'Save Hindi Agitation' had ended by December 1957, its effects were recognised by Pratap Singh Kairon, the Punjabi chief minister at the time. He never used the Regional formula as a result. Master Tara Singh reopened the need for Punjabi Suba on September 15, 1958. The claim was granted legitimacy due to Bombay's division into States of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Punjab was left as the sole multilingual state as a result. The Akali Dal used this newfound support to its advantage by running for the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee (SGPC) on the Punjabi Suba platform. Of the 139 seats up for grabs, 132 were taken by the SGPC. A Punjabi Suba convention took place in Amritsar on May 22, 1960. Swantatra Party leaders also endorsed the proposal in this

convention for a separate state speaking Punjabi. Praja Socialist Party (PSP), Samykat Socialist Party (SSP), and Pandit Sunder Lal and Saifudin Kitchloo, among other independence warriors. In May 1960, a serious campaign for the creation of a distinct Punjabi State was started. Following Master Tara Singh's incarceration, Vice President of Akali Dal at the time, Fateh Singh, assumed control. He was adamant that they wanted only a Punjabi Linguistic State.

It did not matter to them if the majority was Sikhs or Hindus. Thereafter, there were political realignments. Communists were now in favour of Akalis's request. Among Sikhs living in rural areas, Congress expanded their mass base. Y.B. Chavhan, Indira Gandhi, and Mahavir Tyagi made up the three-person committee that the centre formed. Speaker of the Lok Sabha Hukam Singh chaired 22 parliamentary committees that provided support to the three-member committee. following Shastri's passing in January 1966. On March 9, 1966, Mrs. Gandhi called a meeting of the Congress Party working committee. This committee approved a resolution asking the government to establish a state where Punjabi is the official language. The resolution of the parliamentary committee came next on the same lines on 18th March 1966. Following these events, a Punjab State reorganisation bill and the formation of a Punjab boundary commission, chaired by Justice J.C. Shah, with Subinal Datt and M.M. Philip as the other two members, were made. The state was finally split into Punjab and Haryana on November 1, 1966. Currently, 41% of the former Punjab's land area and 55% of its people live in the state of Punjab. The Sikhs now accounted for the majority of the population. The Bha and Beas Dam Project and Chandigarh remained under the jurisdiction of the central government. Nonetheless, the majority of the Akali leadership's concerns were addressed. In eight of the eleven districts, the Sikh population was the majority. So, there can be few observations from the analysis done. First of all, the political split resulted from the strong demands of Akalis for their separate state of Punjab and for the right to self-determination due to their distinct language.

The people of the south-east of the formerly united Punjab, which later came to be known as Haryana, lacked that urge for an independent identity, language and culture. They have believed that they speak Hindi and not Haryanvi. Whereas the fact is even though Hindi has become the official state language, Haryanvi has always been the language of everyday communication, particularly among the rural populace.

Secondly, the State Reorganising Commission had stated that the Indian states would be formed along linguistic lines with deep cultural roots, which is why the names were chosen as they were. If Punjabi

led to the creation of Punjab, Tamil led to Tamil Nadu, Oriya led to Orissa, and Assamese led to Assam, then there must have been compelling factors behind the designation of Haryana for the southeast region of unpartitioned Punjab. Could it be that the people are aware of their own identity and language? If this is the case, why has there been ongoing discussion about the Haryanvi language's status? Why has the government let itself to be designated as the Hindi-speaking state-region, obscuring the already precarious existence of the Haryanvi language? Can it be termed as a case of state's apathy or is it the indifference of the literati of Haryana?

There is a great deal of literature created in Haryanvi, including theatre, films, folk music, "Ragines," folk tales, folk dramas, or "Sangs," but there is still a great deal of disagreement around its identity and independence! If this region's culture has a unique taste, something native to it, as they stated while expressing their opposition to this state joining other states, then why hasn't this state's literary elite made a sincere effort to explore it up to this point?

Thirdly, because the state's culture has historically been agrarian, the beginning of urbanisation has resulted in the extinction of numerous indigenous Haryanvi words. Recently, Hindi or a more basic form of Haryanvi has become the common language of communication.

I would also go into general terms about its different dialects and their regional distribution. Although Haryana has a well-developed language and culture, I must confess that its literati have not given much attention to the language's grammar.

Generally speaking, the state of Haryana is home to six distinct dialects. The districts of Hissar, Jind, Rohtak, Sonapat, Panipat, Kamal, and Sirsa are home to the Bagrut language. In Kurukshetra, Thanesar, Ambala, and Yamuna Nagar, Kaurvi is spoken. In Rewari, Kosali, Mohindergarh, Namaul, Pataudi, and Jhajjar speak Ahirvati. In Hoddal, Palwal, and Ballabgarh, people speak Braj; in the Mewat region, people speak Mewati.

After translating the folktale in various dialects into English, I had made few observations and registered thoughts regarding this process of translation and other aspects related to it.

Presenting a text in a language different than the one in which it was originally written in order to communicate the original text's meaning is called translation. Translation is a very goal-oriented activity where the translator adjusts both the final output and technique to suit the demands of the user. Different types of translation, such as literal translation, conceptual translation, and shortened translation, result

from this change based on the demands. When someone wants to know anything written in a language they do not understand, translation becomes necessary. This is what a reader needs. On the other hand, a writer may wish to convey something to people who do not speak his or her native tongue. This is the need of the writer

To create a third language, Walter Benjamin writes in "The Task of the Translator" that the "Source Language and the Target Language need to change." The process of translating anything living into something dynamic and organic is called translation. "No translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original," the author continues. Similar to how fictional representation can never be a perfect duplicate of reality and must always stay in the domain of imaginative reconstruction, translation too shouldn't be a perfect duplicate of the source. If anything new isn't introduced, the translation will never be fair."(Walter Benjamin)

This made the issue of whether the Haryanvi folktales could be translated or not much more pressing. Since translation necessitates some degree of cultural sensitivity between the two language groups, not all materials translate well. For example, I would be able to translate from my mother tongue into English and vice versa, but I would not be able to do that with Chinese since I am not familiar with their language and culture. In order to determine syntactic equivalency, I had to consider the idiomatic idioms, subtle subtleties, and tonal changes of the Haryanvi language.

In this regard, critic of culture studies, Homi K. Bhabha offers a pertinent observation: Cultural translation is a process that requires cultures to modify their own systems and values by deviating from their customary or "inbred" patterns of transformation. It is not just an appropriation or adaptation.(Homi Bhabha)

Most people agree that a perfect translation should convey the entire meaning of the source material without any additions or deletions. Any departure from this norm is interpreted differently, not as translation. This translation method is somewhat purist in that it places a strong focus on maintaining the original wording and precise equivalency.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that a translation will not disregard the original's style. Translation is a difficult test since it requires the translator to convey the original text's meaning in a style that is similar to the original. For instance, the structures of these two languages are very different. So how can we convey the meaning while maintaining a style that is close to the original? However, some translations

do a fantastic job of meeting this requirement. These translations are actually very good reads on their own as well. It's also thought that an excellent translation ought to read more like the source material than like it was translated at all.

A translator needs to be incredibly proficient in the source language in order to carry out this demanding task. He or she needs to comprehend all of its subtleties and finer points. A translator should be as proficient in the language that they are translating into. He or she ought to be able to translate the original author's thoughts into every other language. With the aid of two technical terminology, it is necessary to distinguish between the language being translated into and the language being translated from. The language being translated is referred to as the source language (SL), in this case Haryanvi, and the language into which the translation is being made is called target language or receptor language(TL), English in this case.

It is assumed that a translation will leave an impression on readers that is comparable to the original's impression if it effectively conveys the original's content and is presented in a manner that is true to the original.

Ultimately, in order to accurately represent the meaning, a translator may frequently need to make changes to the original text's structure, content, and style. In addition, he or she might need to make other modifications in light of the readers' needs, abilities, and nature.

There is always risk when two languages and so cultures collide. Interestingly, in a letter to his friend E.B. Cowell in 1857, Edward Fitzgerald expressed his enjoyment in taking liberties with the Persians when he translated the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. He believed that the Persians were not poets sufficiently to scare someone away from such adventures, and they truly desired some artistic influence to mould them. However, Fitzgerald's interpretation was immensely successful and vastly popular, and has been translated in all major languages.

The skill of translating Haryanvi folk tale was a two-step process for me: first, to recognise and evaluate the original text in Haryanvi dialect, and second, to produce a new text in English using a distinct language.

Every reading of the Haryanvi text was an interpretation, and every interpretation became a textual deciphering. Thus translation was both an encoding and a decoding process for me, occurring at the same



time. In the course of my work, it both deciphered the message that was implicit in the Haryanvi text and translated it into a coded form in English. As a result, each translation enhanced the target language while also served as an extension of the source material, offering new insights. I made it abundantly evident that this process should be seen as an interaction between two languages and two cultures rather than as a simple mechanical transference from one linguistic register to another.

I attempted to maintain an open mind and recognise the need to take into account the unique context in which the original text occurs. In addition to the technical expertise required, translating tales involved transferring the meaning from Haryanvi into English while taking into account the cultural origins of both languages. In addition to making grammatical changes between the English and my own language, I as the translator also tried to convey the semantic importance buried in the text.

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