

Chapter 3

A Historical View of Punjabi

The Hindi movement in nineteenth-century Punjab was led by Punjabi Hindus, themselves educated in English and Urdu. In its origin, the Hindi movement was purely a religio-political or sectarian movement promoted by the Arya Samaj to displace the official status of Urdu in the Persian script due to its association with Muslim communal identity and Hindi's with Hindu revivalism and religious reform. The push to replace Urdu was also associated with political aspirations. The Hindi-Urdu clash in British India erupted first in 1882, a year after the decision of the government to replace Urdu in Persian script with Hindi in Devanagari script in the province of Bihar. Urban Hindus in Punjab soon made the same demand. Both sides saw this as a manifestation of the Hindu-Muslim communal conflict. The Anjumun-e-Islamiya of Lahore protested against this demand, which it saw as delivering "a death-blow to the prospects of Mohammadans." Lala Lajpat Rai, the famous Arya Samaj leader and Punjab politician who did not even know the Hindi alphabet, entered the political arena through this controversy. He came to believe that Hindi could be the foundation for the edifice of Indian nationalism. Through the Hindi-Urdu controversy, Lajpat Rai learned his first lesson of 'Hindu nationalism' and became convinced that political solidarity demanded the spread of the Hindi language in Devanagari script. **Muslims retained political dominance and Urdu its official status in the Punjab until 1947, when India attained independence.** (Emphasis mine – mam) The Simon Commission (1928-29) had earlier rejected the demand of making Hindi or Punjabi the medium of instruction at primary level in the schools of British Punjab. The promotion of Punjabi and Hindi was, however, overseen by denominational educational institutions run under the aegis of the Chief Khalsa Dewan and Arya Samaj respectively. [1]

[1] Atamjit Singh: The Language Divide in Punjab: <http://www.apnaorg.com/book-chapters/language/>

Urdu is ruling in Punjab with the support of the British and the Hindi movement in nineteenth-century Punjab was led by Punjabi Hindus, themselves educated in English and Urdu. The so-called Hindi-Urdu controversy dominates and therefore leaves no space for Punjabi. This situation in Punjab spans about one hundred years from about 1850 to 1947. Before this period lie Maharaja Ranjit Singh's era of about 50 years. Persian remained the official language under him and he was not ruling the whole

Sarab Punjabi Manifesto

historical Punjab. And before that is the era of 800 years of uninterrupted Muslim rule when Persian prevailed.

The letters of Gurmukhi script and their age

The letters of Gurmukhi script 'no doubt existed before the time of Guru Angad Dev Ji (even of Guru Nanak) as they had their origin in the Brahmi, but the origin of the script is attributed to Guru Angad Dev Ji. He not only modified and rearranged certain letters but also shaped them into a script. He gave new shape and new order to the alphabet and made it precise and accurate. ... It is commonly accepted that Gurmukhi is a member of the Brahmi family. Brahmi is an Aryan script which was developed by the Aryans and adapted to local needs. According to an opinion, the Brahmi script was introduced between the 8th and the 6th. Century BC. ... The Iranians ruled in the Punjab in the 3rd and 4th centuries BC. They brought with them Aramaic script, which helped in the growth of Kharosthi largely used in the Punjab, Gandhar and Sindh between 300 BC and 3rd century AD. But even then Brahmi, which in its development in the Punjab had undergone several changes, was commonly used along with Kharosthi. There are coins of the Bactrian kings and inscriptions of the Kushan rulers having both scripts on them. Brahmi was, of course, more popular on account of its simple curves alternated with straight strokes. Hence, in due course, it replaced Kharosthi and became the single script with composite features brought about by various local and neighbourly influences. With the growth of literary and cultural activity during the Gupta period (4th and 5th century AD), the Brahmi script improved further and became more expansive and common. ... Professor O.P. Kahol in The Tribune June 3, 1966 quotes: *'The fact of the matter is that Gurmukhi characters have been evolved from original Brahmi in the same way as modern Devanagari or Bengali. Fortunately, we have with us the shapes of the various letters of our alphabet, at different times in our history, preserved in rock inscriptions, copper plates and coins. The writings in the Baij Nath Temple in Kangra reveal that the letters prevalent in North West India near about the 9th Century AD were more akin to Gurmukhi than to Devanagari.'* E.P.Newton on Page 1 and 2, in Punjabi Grammar in 1896 mentioned that *'the language which is spoken with some variation throughout Punjab, and hence called Punjabi, is usually written in what is known as Gurmukhi character... .. the alphabet consists of 35 letters.... most of them, ... come down from a very much more remote antiquity. Of the entire number, no less than twenty one can, though they have undergone some change, be distinctly recognized in the ancient inscriptions, six at least being traceable to the 10th Century, three to the 5th Century and twelve to the 3rd Century BC.'* [2]

[2] History of the Gurmukhi Script: Source: Rashvinder Kaur and Daljit Singh:
<http://www.panthic.org/articles/2701>

Christopher Shackle on Punjabi language

In the early 21st century there were about 30 million speakers of Punjabi in India. It is the official language of the Indian state of Punjab and is one of the languages recognized by the Indian constitution. In Pakistan Punjabi is spoken by some 70 million speakers, mostly in Punjab province, but official status at both the national and the provincial level is reserved for Urdu. There are also important overseas communities of Punjabi speakers, particularly in Canada and the United Kingdom—where in the early 21st century they respectively constituted the third and fourth largest linguistic groups in the national populations—as well as in several parts of the United States. [3]

[3] The date of writing of this and what follows not known - mam

Scripts: In India, Punjabi is written in the distinctive Gurmukhi script, which is particularly associated with the Sikhs. That script is a member of the Indic family of scripts, written from left to right, but in its organization it differs significantly from the Devanagari used to write Hindi. The Urdu script, written from right to left, is used for writing Punjabi in Pakistan, where it is nowadays often given the imitative name Shahmukhi. Punjabi is thus today one of the very few languages in the world to be written in two quite different and mutually unintelligible scripts.

Standardization: In spite of Punjabi's very large numbers of speakers and rich traditions of popular poetry, the standardization of the language was historically inhibited by lack of official recognition as well as by the different cultural preferences of the three main local religious communities of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. Other languages were cultivated for most kinds of writing, including Persian under the Mughal Empire, then Urdu during the British period and, in Pakistan, continuing to the present day. In most other Indo-Aryan-speaking areas of South Asia, the modern period saw overlapping local dialects being grouped into strictly defined provincial languages, but this process has taken much longer to happen in Punjab.

Punjabi in India: The partition of the subcontinent in 1947 along religious lines was marked by particular violence in Punjab, where ethnic cleansing and exchange of populations resulted in the expulsion of most Punjabi-speaking Muslims from India and of Sikhs and Hindus from Pakistan. Whereas the Muslims had strongly identified

Sarab Punjabi Manifesto

with Urdu and the Hindus with Hindi, it was the Sikhs who had particularly identified with the Punjabi cause. The Gurmukhi script was first used to record the Sikh scriptures, the *Adi Granth*, in 1604. Furthermore, Sikh writers were mainly responsible for developing Punjabi as a modern standard language, and the Sikh political leadership in 1966 finally achieved the goal of an albeit truncated state with Punjabi as its official language. This officially recognized Indian Punjabi is generally taken as standard in descriptions of the language. There is a significant degree of mutual intelligibility with Hindi and Urdu, although the three languages are sharply differentiated by their scripts, and Punjabi is historically distinguished by its retention of Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA) doubled consonants following a short vowel, so that Sanskrit *akshi* ‘eye’ becomes MIA *akkhi* and Punjabi *akkh*, versus Hindi-Urdu *aankh*. Phonetically, the most prominent distinctive feature of standard Punjabi is the realization of historical voiced aspiration as tones, so that, for example, Hindi-Urdu *ghora* ‘horse’ appears in Punjabi as *k’òra* (with glottal constriction and low-rising tone) and Hindi-Urdu *rah* ‘way’ as Punjabi *rá* *(with high-falling tone).

* This needs verification (mam – 05- 08-2017)

Punjabi in Pakistan: In Pakistan the general maintenance of the historical preference for Urdu has stood in the way of those who looked to achieve an increased status for Punjabi, albeit in a form more obviously influenced in its script and vocabulary by Urdu and so itself somewhat different from standard Indian Punjabi. Since Pakistan’s Punjab is much larger and less homogeneous than its Indian counterpart, its internal linguistic variety has also encouraged opposition to the Punjabi activists based in the provincial capital of Lahore by rival groups based in the less prosperous outlying areas of the province, notably by the proponents of Siraiiki in the south-western districts, whose claims to separate linguistic status are vigorously disputed by adherents to the Punjabi cause. There are the usual conflicting claims to the great writers of the past, but all devotees of the Punjabi literary tradition, in both India and Pakistan, find the supreme expression of their shared cultural identity in the rich expression of the Muslim poet Waris (or Varis) Shah’s great romance *Hir* (1766; also spelled *Heer*). [4]

[4] *Christopher Shackle:*

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/483596/Punjabi-language> 18-22014/

[Taken on 15-3-2015]

*

Anyone who has even cursorily gone through what I have brought fourth, interpreted and written in this manifesto so far and is sympathetic to Punjabi will be able to appreciate the irony that as yet we have to cross a mountain of chaos before we arrive at a consolidated and nearest to reality viewpoint of Punjabi language in history which must prevail. Saluting those who made the partial consolidation of Punjabi language possible in Indian Punjab, the present status-quo when viewed on all-Punjabi or sarab Punjabi basis, a long and unpredictable journey lies ahead. Irrespective of our physical or religious location, we all have to tread this journey together. If there is clarity about 'Urdu' and *Shahmukhi*, most probably question of 'Siraiky' will not arise. Narrowness splits. It is only the broader view which can see unity even in divergences. And that is how our life on earth is. Blinded by history to see the larger picture of life, human beings create and then quarrel on petty, frivolous and trivial matters. Not mentioning others here, is there any doubt that Punjabis, at least, have been blinded by history?

Foreign rather Western scholars tell us things about us and so about Punjabi. Appreciating their efforts, it must be kept in mind that there is an in-built tilt in our minds in their favour. We must come forward with genuine scholarship. Therefore our need is that Sikh, Hindu and Muslim Punjabi scholars should be able to see the larger picture and integrate things which have been scattered and split by the historical process. Keeping in mind the 'Indian-ness' of Punjabi language, a deep and enlightened understanding which is 'secular' in spite of religions is required. The spirit of Punjabi protagonists whether Sikh, Hindu or Muslim should become indistinguishable from each other. If something bad has happened with Punjabi, something very good is required to erase it.

Doctor Christopher Shackle is (03-09-2017) a retired Professor of Modern Languages of South Asia of the University of London. It should be understood that even such established institutions of knowledge and their professors and scholars normally remain within the lines of argument they inherited from the past. Therefore some observations of the professor do not reflect reality after 'the discovery that Urdu is not a language, it is in fact Hindi written in Persian script' which is part of the sub-title of this manifesto.

His using the term 'Urdu script' is casual and absolutely wrong. It is Arabic-Persian or simply Persian script. And Baba Farid (1173-1265) wrote Punjabi in this script long before even the name 'Urdu' (about 1780) was first used. So, in that sense, should it not be called Punjabi script? But the professor is right in saying 'imitative name Shahmukhi'. And he is very right in pointing out the ironical situation of Punjabi as

Sarab Punjabi Manifesto

being ‘one of the very few languages in the world to be written in two quite different and mutually unintelligible scripts.’

His saying about Punjabi that ‘there is a significant degree of mutual intelligibility with Hindi and Urdu, although the three languages are sharply differentiated by their scripts ...’ is normally just normal. That there are three languages - Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu - has been the normality. It is not the fault of the professor. This is how our past is! We must come out of this absurdity. Instead of saying ‘Hindi-Urdu’, simply saying ‘Hindi’ should suffice. So there are two languages – Hindi and Punjabi. The time has come that the artificially created ‘reality’ of ‘Urdu’ must not only be allowed to but also deliberately made to vanish. The turning point in history has arrived.

*

Punjabi family of scripts

And the names of the Punjabi family of scripts are stated to be: Brahmi, Gupta, Sarada, Landa, and Gurmukhi. For comparison, the families of scripts of Punjabi, Hindi and Bengali languages are:

Brahmi Gupta Sarada Landa Gurmukhi

Brahmi Gupta Nagari Devanagari

Brahmi Gupta Nagari Bengali [5]

[5] http://www.ancientscripts.com/sa_ws_cmp.html

And this is how Wikipedia categorizes Language Families of Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Sindhi, Bengali, Pashto, Balochi, and Farsi:

Punjabi: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Indo-Aryan→Punjabi

Hindi: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Indo-Aryan→Sanskrit→Khariboli→Hindi

Urdu*: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Indo-Aryan→Khariboli→Urdu

Sindhi: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Indo-Aryan→Sindhi

Bengali: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Indo-Aryan→Bengali

Pashto: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Iranian→Pashto

Balochi: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Iranian→Balochi

Farsi: Indo-European→Indo-Iranian→Iranian→Farsi

With even this approximately correct and brief view of our language, any Punjabi who himself is the living embodiment of Punjabi today and carries within him, normally unaware, the past and present of our 'great' language which no doubt has yet to emerge as really great on the world stage is well equipped to act if he wishes to. For any lover of Punjabi language, any Punjabi anywhere belongs to the Punjabi Commonwealth of which he himself is a part. Therefore, a new, intensified and conscious sense of togetherness must prevail across our entire Commonwealth. Having got the minimum necessary of our past, let us try what more can be gleaned from the available works on Punjabi within the available time and space which should be beneficial for our future endeavours for Punjabi.

*Eventually, mentioning of Urdu will not be needed. It is only question of time.

Darbar of Guru Nanak Sahib

Geographically, the present-day area of Punjab is divided between the nation-states of Pakistan and India, after the Partition of the sub-continent in 1947. Large-scale migration of Punjabis has meant that today there are two main areas of the world in which Punjabi is spoken: West Punjab (Pakistan), and East Punjab (India). Outside the two i.e. East and West Punjab, Punjabis are all over India and Pakistan in other states/provinces, in capitals of the two countries etc. And then we have Punjabi diaspora, particularly the UK, the USA and Canada, East Africa and Australia. [6] Panjabi (often spelled 'Punjabi') is statistically one of the most important languages of South Asia, with a number of speakers quite possibly in excess of 100 million. In Pakistan, where the majority of speakers are located, the language has no official status and is only an oral medium. In India, Punjabi has the status of official language and has its own distinctive script known as *Gurmukhi*, meaning 'from the mouth of the Guru'. Whilst it is by no means the only language of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, it is unquestionably the case that Punjabi has become associated with Sikh identity – a fact reflected outside South Asia as well as within it. The Punjab was severely affected by Partition, a brutal political separation that was not without linguistic consequences. [7]

[6] Edited and from: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/southasia/languages/panjabi/>

[7] Edited and from: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/languagecentre/languages/panjabi/>

Sarab Punjabi Manifesto

This is the introduction of Punjabi by the ‘School of African and Asian Studies’ (SOAS) of London University, a very old institution which was founded in 1916. With this introduction and having gone through substantially what has been written about Punjabi and keeping all aspects of the matter in view, I tend to state/restate the following:

1. Punjabi has become associated with Sikh identity. Should we add ‘only’ to this? The word ‘Sikh’ itself is a Punjabi word which means a ‘disciple’ and Sikhism is ‘Sikhi’ in Punjabi. It is the fifth largest religion in the world, with approximately 30 million adherents, after Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.
2. Punjabi is the language of *Guru Granth Sahib*. The majority of the language of the *Guru Granth Sahib* is the Punjabi dialect prevalent at that time, some hymns are also found in Persian, medieval Prakrit Hindi and Marathi, Sanskrit as well as Arabic. All of these hymns are written in the standard Punjabi script known as *Gurmukhi*.
3. In India, Punjabi has the status of official language and has its own distinctive script known as *Gurmukhi*.
4. In West Punjab (Pakistan) Punjabi has no official status and is only an oral medium.
5. There is no mention of Punjabi Hindus in this introduction, as if they don’t exist.
6. Punjabi is statistically one of the most important languages of South Asia, with a number of speakers quite possibly in excess of 100 million. A statement of Punjab Digital Library on its website saying “PDL strives to serve 120 million Punjabis worldwide” should be considered authentic unless contradicted.
7. Punjab was severely affected by Partition, a brutal political separation that was not without linguistic consequences. The already partitioned Punjabi on religious grounds which could have un-partitioned with the passage of time, was further territorially partitioned. Punjabi language earned a double partition.
8. Not only Punjabi, Partition of India partitioned Hindi and Sindhi languages as well.
9. The Punjabis in India are literate in their mother-tongue Punjabi.
10. The Punjabis in Pakistan are illiterate in their mother-tongue Punjabi.
11. The majority of Punjabis live in Pakistan.
12. In pre-1947 India, the sub-continent, Punjabi is the 3rd largest language, after Hindi and Bengali.

13. Punjabi is the 9th or 10th largest language of about 7000 languages of the world. I have yet to make calculations to arrive at my own conclusion in this regard. Until then, I will continue to consider and declare Punjabi as the ninth largest language of the world.
14. Collectively, there is no claimant of Punjabi language presently. Each community, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims has in its own way abandoned the other two along with their language. By doing this was not the one who abandoned, abandoned others along with his own language?
15. An accident of History in 1947 which should have been taken perhaps as quarter-final or something similar has been taken as final. Perhaps as yet the centre-stages of all three communities are occupied by these small-minded 'finalists'.
16. The region of Punjab is too large and the humanity too numerous that it is inconceivable that they will not succeed ultimately to dismantle what was built to enslave multitudes of humanity. The wise in all the three communities have to come forward to look into the matter afresh. The *wahdat*, oneness, integrity, unity, *aikta*, indivisibility, and *akhandta* of Punjabi language and its script must be repeatedly and constantly emphasized.
17. We are too much accustomed to the sovereignty and territorial integrities of nations. But a need has arisen to establish the sovereignty of Punjabi language. As States are not expected to do this job, their not impeding the process will be a positive contribution. The equivalent of Pope's relationship with the Catholics of the world can be visualized for Punjabi's Centre (*Kendar* or *Markaz*) and Punjabis around the globe.
18. I request those who do not feel inclined or find themselves stuck up to go into the issues afresh. All over there are fundamental flaws in our thinking. This is not working. A transformation is required. A new way of thinking is required. Let us come out of the stereotype and understand that the two great setbacks for Punjabi language have been the imposition of Urdu in Punjab around 1850 and the Partition of India, Punjab, and therefore of Punjabi language in 1947. And in both cases, the British were the lead arbiters of our fate.

With this information and giving some thought to the issue, one becomes more conscious about the present unenviable state of affairs of our language. Of course there are highs and lows, here and there, but collectively the situation is disheartening. Is this really the reality and therefore the end of the story and the case of Punjabi language should be considered closed? Or is it that the Punjabis have not understood their reality

Sarab Punjabi Manifesto

and therefore have lost, rather, have not been able to find the way? And to me the latter seems to be the case. When religions were the first and dominant '*mantra*' for galvanizing people, Punjabi could not have found place as first love in the hearts of Muslim Punjabis. If it was otherwise for Sikhs, that religion and language got combined, it was the wisdom of Guru Nanak Sahib and his followers that now Punjabis irrespective of their religion and country have to discover and stand with reverence in his '*Darbar*' which they will find in their imaginations now and then if they really attend to the tasks of claiming for the first time or reclaiming their mother tongue Punjabi.

Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script

According to one source: There appears to be a lot of confusion regarding Gurmukhi and Punjabi. The assumption a lot of people seem to make is that there is a language called Punjabi (what we use every day) and there is the language called Gurmukhi - the language used to write the Guru Granth Sahib. So are there two languages? Did the Gurus use different language called Gurmukhi? The answer is No. Before going further, apply some logic yourself, would you (if trying to convey a message to a lot of people) write the message in new language, which everybody would have to learn before deciphering the message, OR would you write in the most commonly used language? Remember this - Punjabi is language (what we speak) and Gurmukhi is a script (how we write Punjabi). ... Punjabi speaking Sikhs write Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script, which was developed by Guru Angad Dev Ji. Guru Ji did not invent Gurmukhi from scratch; he modified the Landa script. The Landa had been around for centuries before the Guru Ji. However we must also remember that Punjabi itself has evolved along with time, as any language does. There will be differences between 16th and 17th century and now. And there were different dialects of Punjabi also. [8]

[8] <http://www.sikhspirit.com/khalsa/punjabi1.htm>

According to another source: Gurmukhi is the name of the script used in writing [Punjabi](#) language. It is an evolute from the old Brahmi script like Devanagari and other scripts of the area like Sharda, Takri, Mahajani etc. Gurmukhi characters are even older than Devanagari. The word Gurmukhi seems to have gained currency from the use of these letters to record the sayings coming from the *mukh* (literally mouth or lips) of the (Sikh) Gurus. The letters no doubt existed before the time of Guru Angad Dev (even of Guru Nanak Dev) but the origin of the script is attributed to Guru Angad Dev. [9]

[9] <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurmukhi>

It should be of interest to know, in whose writings of our great eight literary stalwarts [Baba Farid (1173-1265), Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Shah Hussain (1539-1599), Sultan Bahoo (1629-1690), Bulleh Shah (1680-1758), Waris Shah (1722-1798), Mian Muhammad Bukhsh (1830-1907) and Khawaja Farid (1841-1901)] or of any other poet/writer of this long era, words 'Punjab' or 'Punjabi' or both had appeared? And before that what were 'Punjab' and 'Punjabi' called? And if the term 'Punjab' came into wider use in the second half of the 16th century, does it mean that Guru Nanak did not use, in speaking or writing, the terms 'Punjab' or 'Punjabi'. It is said that Guru Angad Dev (1504-1552, Guruship 1539-1552) spent his lifetime teaching the Gurmukhi script to the common people of Punjab. [10] Did he use the terms 'Punjab' and 'Punjabi' in his writings or speeches? Even if there are no conclusive answers, it cannot affect our work for the future.

[10] <http://www.sikhworld.co.uk/page26.html> 27-4-2014

I seek attention of the concerned Punjabis to the facts that of the great eight, Guru Nanak, Shah Hussain, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah belonged to the 'Punjabi heartland' areas of Lahore and around. And except Guru Nanak Sahib, all others were Muslims who wrote Punjabi in Persian script. And further that, ironically, all the great eight of Punjabi language belong to that part of Punjab where majority of Punjabis live who are even today not only illiterate in Punjabi language but at the same time strangely unaware of it also.

The first known mention of the word Punjab is in the writings of *Ibn Batūtā*, who visited the region in the 14th century. The term came into wider use in the second half of the 16th century, and was used in the book *Tarikh-e-Sher Shah Suri* (1580), which mentions the construction of a fort by "Sher Khan of Punjab". [11]

[11] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Punjab 26-4-2014

Punjabi, Hindi are sisters born out of Sanskrit

According to a Hindi scholar and Kabir chair chairman in Guru Nanak Dev University Prof Harmohinder Singh Bedi told on the occasion of United Nations' International Mother Language Day on Monday: "In fact, Hindi and Punjabi are sister languages born from the womb of Sanskrit. Around 60 to 70% Punjabi words have been directly borrowed from Sanskrit." The first Hindi translation of Mahabharata was done by none other than Guru Gobind Singh. The first Hindi novel "Bhagyamati" was written in Punjab by Pandit Shardha Ram Phillauri in 1888. This novel, which supported widow

Sarab Punjabi Manifesto

marriage and opposed child marriage, used to be a certain item of dowry in pre-partition Punjab. Pandit Phillauri also wrote *aarti* (hymn) "Om Jai Jagadish Hare". This *aarti* united all temples of north India as earlier all temples had separate *aartis*.

[12]

[12] Sanjay Sharma, TNN | Feb 22, 2011 TOI

But was it possible that Punjab could have remained the land of one language and one religion? As we know now, it was not possible. Here is the catch. We must understand that what happened with us, as with any other people, was not avoidable. Today, I believe we trace our bad things, including Punjabi language not having the place it deserves, in the Partition of 1947. This approach is not unreasonable. But, perhaps, it is not all-encompassing if not simplistic. Because before that, Punjabi of the time had become victim as its normal growth started getting stunted by the entry of Persian, Arabic, and also perhaps Turkish, languages into and their supremacy over Punjab during the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni which began in 1001 with his attack on Peshawar. After the conquest of Multan and Lahore, Mahmud made Punjab a part of his empire in 1021. [13]

[13] Edited <http://storyofpakistan.com/mahmud-ghaznavi/> 19-4-2014

A devout Muslim, Maḥmūd reshaped the Ghaznavids from their pagan Turkic origins into an Islamic dynasty and expanded the frontiers of Islam. The Persian poet Ferdowsī (d. 1020) completed his epic *Shāh-nāmeḥ* ("Book of Kings") at the court of Maḥmūd about 1010. [14]

[14] <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232579/Ghaznavid-dynasty> 19-4-2014

The rapid expansion of Islam brought Arabic as the sacred language of the Quran to all the vast territories of the Caliphate, but as a spoken language only to the Middle East and North Africa. In the eastern lands of Iran and Central Asia, Persian continued to be spoken and also evolved as a literary language - the classical Persian with many loan-words from Arabic written, after Arab conquest of Iran, in Arabic script. Although most of the invaders and their followers had some form of Turkish as their mother-tongue, it was this Arabicized Persian (in which Turkish elements amount to only a few loan-words) that they brought to India as their principal cultural language.

[15]

[15] Hindi and Urdu since 1800: A common reader, By Christopher Shackle and Rupert Snell, 1990, The School of Oriental and African Studies.

And along with Persian the prestige of Arabic was for granted as the sacred language of the Quran. And this new social process, transformation, conversion and the introduction of Persian in the public domain at the upper level first happened in Punjab. The bifurcation of society along religious lines started. That is why, perhaps, Punjab was finally a Muslim majority province. And today we know or not, it is natural that the Punjabi society of the time must have started creating defensive mechanisms against the offensive of the newcomers. That this ‘Punjab First’ phenomenon had other repercussions also there is no doubt about that, but it is difficult to say exactly what this seniority had in store for Punjab in later days. It seems that the emergence of Guru Nanak Sahib and the establishment of the new Sikh religion and the Punjab State under Ranjit Singh were somehow connected to this seniority of Punjab. And the events of 1947 also seem to be not disconnected with this ‘Punjab First’ scenario as well. Ultimately all these are, at least, if others are unknown, the contributing factors for the present state of our mother-tongue – Punjabi. That seems to be one way of reasonably explaining the phenomenon.

Let us go back to the time of Mahmud Ghaznavi and try to know and imagine what Punjabi was like at that time. And that time was around 1020. It should be understood that we can never live in and experience the Past as it really was at any specific time. We can never listen to Punjabi language or any other language as it was actually spoken at any specific time in history. And the quality, quantity and subject matters of historical records leave more voids than filled spaces of any picture of our past. Whatever pictures, therefore, emerge due to the untiring efforts of the dedicated scientists are the only bases on which we can develop our point of view for any of our specific needs. So to know what Punjabi was like around 1000-1020 or so is not easy and at the same time a sensitive task. Therefore there always remains the need of help from some concerned quarter to answer or further enlighten us on these and other related questions. Then there is the question of the name. What, for example, people called their language then in the Punjabi heartland, I assume, of Lahore and around as well as other areas afar? If the name of the region ‘Punjab’ was of later formulation, Punjabi could not be the name, then, of the language we call Punjabi today.

Whatever the name/names of Punjabi and in whatever script or scripts it was written, it is obvious that at the time of Mahmud Ghaznavi, Punjabi of that time was not written in Persian script in which, for example, Waris Shah (1722-1798) later wrote his Heer, because Persian had not yet come to the Punjab. Further, Punjabi of that time was also not written in Gurmukhi script because, the second guru, Guru Angad Dev (1504-

Sarab Punjabi Manifesto

1552) is credited with introducing the new alphabet known as Gurmukhi script that he made by modifying the old Punjabi script's characters.

Who owns Punjabi?

As Christopher Shackle above, “Whereas the Muslims had strongly identified with Urdu and the Hindus with Hindi, it was the Sikhs who had particularly identified with the Punjabi cause.” Therefore, apparently, Punjabi Hindus who are not even mentioned cannot be the claimants of Punjabi. And what claim Punjabi Muslims can have on Punjabi who even don't write their language? We are left only with Sikhs. Are they the claimants of Punjabi? Yes, they are the claimants, but then they are not claimants! It is strange! Historically, they were the vanguard of Punjabi and in the present times they struggled to create a Punjabi Suba in India - Punjab. But then why they got alienated from Punjabi Hindus? And if Punjabi Hindus got alienated from them, why they do not claim them back? And further, if the Sikhs are the claimants of Punjabi, why they do not claim to bring Muslim Punjabis into the fold of Punjabi? If not satisfactory, does this mean that all the three Punjabi communities – Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims – are responsible for the present state of Punjabi language? But in this way of thinking, we equalize all. These are the difficulties in such matters. Borders definitely are hurdles but cannot impede the flow of language, if this is the right way to put it. Anyhow, what has not been done, has not been done. Let us see what we can do now.

All said and discussed, the flag-carriers of Punjabi language the world over are, without any question, the Sikhs of Indian Punjab. That Hindu and Muslim Punjabis conduct their ‘Ghar Wapsi’ drill wherever required and along with Sikhs find ways that a gigantic collective enterprise is created to put Punjabi on the top of the world along with other great languages is the need of the hour. Punjabi must become a symbol of excellence in the world. We must revolt against our lowness as that cannot be the destiny of so enterprising people. I quote Shiv Kumar Batalvi, I believe, very appropriately here:

ਤਕਦੀਰ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੌਂਕਣ ਸੀ
ਤਦਬੀਰਾਂ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਨਾ ਹੋਈਆਂ
ਨਾ ਝੰਗ ਛੁੱਟਿਆ ਨਾ ਕੰਨ ਪਾਟੇ
ਝੁੰਡ ਲੰਘ ਰਿਹਾ ਇੰਜ ਹੀਰਾਂ ਦਾ

