

# PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

## SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECT OF ANGIKA

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**Khushbu Kumari<sup>1</sup>, Ramanjaney Kumar Upadhyay<sup>2</sup> -- Socio-cultural Aspect of Angika -  
- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(6). ISSN 1567-214x**

### Abstract

This paper aims at exploring the socio-cultural aspect of Angika, a language spoken in Bihar, which is also known by different other names such as- 'Aangi', 'Angbhasha', 'Chikaa-chikii' (*a la* Grierson). Although there are studies that have provided the historical and grammatical descriptions of Angika, there is none from the sociocultural perspective. This paper proposes to fill up this gap. This socio-cultural description will help us understand the inner dynamics of social relationship and social structure of Angikan society.

The first section of the paper provides a brief historical account of Angika language, its origin, and geographical distribution. The second section deals with the socio-cultural aspects of Angika by taking into account the kinship terms, the terms of address, pronominals and use of vocatives. In the third section of this paper attempt is made to provide comparison with Hindi. In addition, some reference of comparison is also be made with Urdu, wherever required, to show the dynamics of religion and caste in the use of language and the formation of identity based on language.

### A Brief Introduction of Angika Language

#### History

Kushwaha (1999) describing the region of *Ang* cites the reference of Ramayana (1/13/14) and says that scared of God Shankar, Madan (kaam) ran away and the place where he left his '*ang*' part of body and became '*anang*' i.e. (without '*ang*') and that particular part of the land was called '*Ang*'. (Kushwaha. 1999). In ancient times *Ang* region was consisted of Modern Bhagalpur, Munger, Santhal Parganaa, Purnia and Koshi Parmandal. Angika language was first illustrated in the year 1810 by Francis Buknan. In the Mahabharata period '*ang*' was a popular state whose capital was Champa Nagri established by the king Champa. His heir King 'Adhirath' brought up 'Kunti-putra' Son of Kunti 'Karna' was announced as the king of the coun-

try Ang by Kaurav prince Duryodhan. (Doman Sahu 'sameer' 1997). In 'Baudhh Granth' *Lalit vistaar* (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) sixty-four scripts are mentioned in which 'ang script' is mentioned on the 4th position. It is possible that later *mithilakshar*, *wang* and *asamiaa* script developed from 'ang script'. (Doman Sahu 'sameer' 1997).

### **Geolinguistic Distribution**

The name Angika appeared in 1961 census. Angika speaking belt is stretched in 50408 square kms. The distance between North-South stretch is 302 km and between East-West is 294 km. It consists of Bhagalpur, Munger, Banka, Lakhisarai, Jamui and Seikhpura district in Southern Bihar; Katihar, Purnia, Madhepura, Saharsa, Araria, Kishanganj, Supaul, Khagaria and Begusarai District in Northern Bihar and Sahebganj, Dumka, Godda, Deoghar, Pakur, and Giridih district of Jharkhand. It is also spoken in Malda district of West Bengal and Tarai region of Nepal. Dumka, Godda, Pakur, Sahebganj, Katihar, Purnia and Kishanganj regions are close to Bengali speaking belt; Sekhpura, Lakhisarai and Jamui District are close to Magahi speaking region; Araria District is close to Nepali speaking belt and Begusarai and Khagaria districts are close to Maithili speaking belt. Whole Angika speaking region is divided into two parts by the river Ganga. Angika speaking people differentiate between themselves by using the deixis '*is par*' and '*us par*' (this side and that side with reference to the river). It is an interesting fact that there is much language variation in the phonetic features of '*is par*' and '*us par*'. This might be as a result of language contact with different speech communities. The District Bhagalpur earlier known as 'Ang Desh' or 'Champa desh' is supposed to be the cultural seat of *Ang* region.

A sizeable population of Bengali, Muslim and Santhali people falling in this belt also speaks Angika language. Angika was earlier written in Kaithi script. Unlike Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri languages it is not known much outside the state of Bihar. One possible reason behind this may be "the low level of subjective consciousness". This has been rightly observed by ghosh (2006) "the linguistic identity among the populace has often been attributed to higher level of caste consciousness that has been witnessed in Bihar". But with rise in language consciousness, the Angika speaking community is also showing a concern towards its identity, as "Language identity faces challenges in a situation where the speakers of a particular language group move out of its natural environment to a distant land as a result of socioeconomic and political factors". (Koul 2006).

### **Socio-cultural aspect of Angika Language**

"A society's language is an aspect of its culture. The relation of language to culture is that of part to whole" (Goodenough 1957 cited in Hudson 1980). If we try to look at language separately, very subconsciously we switch to the thought of its social use. The use of a language in a particular society determines grammaticality or acceptability of a sentence. Through language we understand a society and culture and vice-versa. But there may be a problem "for the semantic universe represented by a language is vast, various and expanding- and cultures and social organisms are likewise complex and intricate"(John Spencer cited in K.S. Misra 1977). So to study any lan-

guage we need a proper classification of the structure of society and a delimitation of language use within it. We have taken four such classifications i.e. Kinship terms, Address terms, Pronominals and Vocatives and have tried to see how language describes them.

### **Kinship Terms**

“One of the ways that a linguist can look in the new society is by studying its kinship terms”. (Abbi 2001). The factors for naming are blood relations, hierarchy, gender, and marital institutions. For the present study, we have taken up only those kinship terms which display slightly different morphological properties and the ones which shows cultural specificity.

First we talk at the level of formality and informality. Let's consider the informal relations first. In Angika, formal kinship relations are non-basic or non-affinal. These are of husband's or wives' mother and father '*saaus-sasur*' ; in between the mother and father of a bride and a bridegroom '*samdhi-samdhan*', husband's elder brother '*bhainsur*', with husband's brother's children are named as '*jaidhi* (female) and *jaaut* (male)' and with husband's brother's wife. With '*saaus-sasur*' and '*bhainsur*' purdah system is observed. One reason for this might be to offer a high reverence to husband's family members. As it is very rightly pointed out by Harry Hojer “at the other extreme are the relations of an individual with the relatives of his spouse, which are marked by extreme deference and studiously maintained respect observances. This distinction is faithfully reflected in the language, which possess not only its considerable vocabulary of respect terms to be used in reference to one's in-laws but also employs a special third person pronoun for respect relatives and a special second person form when such kin are addressed directly.” (Harry Hojer). (1964).

There are some relations which are 'joking' still certain distance is maintained, these are the relationship with wife's sister and her husband (*saair-saRhu*) and wives's brother and her wife (*saar-sarhoij*) ; husbands' sister and her husband (*nanoid-nandosi*) and husband's younger brother '*deoir*' (dewar). The liberty of making jokes makes these relations a bit informal in conversations. The relation with the children of brother- '*bhatijaa-bhatiji*, children of sister '*bhaignaa-bhaignii*' are mostly informal relations. For children there is a specific term named as "*dhiyaa-putaa*", 'bachhe' in Hindi.

Now coming to the informal relations we find basic kinship terms such as father, mother, sister etc.. are informal relation carried with love and affection. In Angika these basic kinship terms are termed like this '*maai, maay*' mother, '*baap, baabu pappaa baabuji*' father '*bhaay*' brother '*bahiin*' sister '*maamaa*' grandmother (father's side) *baabaa* grandfather (father's side).

Angika has bifurcate collateral kinship terminology system, in which there are separate terms for mother, father, mother's sister and brother and father's sister and brother. If we look at the society it is patriarchal as well as patri-local i.e. where the man with his wife lives with the his parents. Society is monogamous and polygamy is not practised, in general. In marriages exogamy is practised. One can't marry to closely related biological kins or other close relatives. Thus exogamous relations result in extended circle of

contact and alliance and thus a small kin group enters into a wider social constellation. In good and bad times both expectations from relatives are high. Besides exogamy in particular village endogamy is also practised. One cannot marry outside the village and outside the 'gotiaa' i.e. who are usually but not necessarily patrilineally related kin. Caste endogamy is strongly practised to enclose affinal alliances and exchanges within group boundaries. Parallel or cross cousin marriage is also prohibited.

There are instances where an understanding of these terms puts a restriction on selection of address terms, pronominals, and vocatives for the person to whom we are having conversation.

### Address Terms

"This is not surprising, given the fact that they (address forms) offer a useful means of understanding the values, norms and practices of different societies." (Dakubu, 1981; Fang and Heng, 1983; Fitch, 1991) cited in (Joseph Benjamin, Archibald Afful 2007).

Even to approach a kinsmen we do require a address term. In order to communicate with any person known or unknown, distant or close we always use address term. "they symbolize a man's social position in relation to the people around him, so that, by the use of one or other of them, the status of the speaker to the person addressed is readily recognized"(E.E. Evans- Prit Chard cited in 1964 )

Address terms in Angika include proper names, titles, caste names, occupational titles, kinship terms, pronominals, some honorific terms and calls.

Addressing names are a bit different from Hindi. Usually '-baa', '-aa', '-yaa', (for male names) '-raa', '-iaa', '-iyaaN' (for females) suffixes are added to the proper names like Raajiv becomes 'Raji-bbaa', Ritaa becomes 'Rit-iaa' etc. Mostly non-educated people use this frequently but in informal situations educated people also practice this. To address a young girl and boy the terms 'chauri' and 'chaura' are used respectively. These terms are used in informal relations, frequently by non-educated people, lower age group, to address an unknown boy or girl supposed to be of lower caste or lower status and sometimes in disgust and anger. While for upper caste or higher status people in the same situation the term 'nunu' is used. To address a small child or to a 25-35 year old by an older person 'nunu' is used.

Caste names are very frequently used as titles like *pandiji, lala or lalaji*. Occupational titles are common, like sipahi ji, daaktar baabu, engineer baabu.etc. In villages manytimes the people of higher castes take the name of lower castes to address them like 'ho dhobi, ho baniyaa' while in towns this is not practiced they use the title of the person.

Some honorific titles are also used like *maharaj, babu, saheb, maalik*, (for males) *malkini* (for female). 'malkini' is also used by a mother-in-law to address her daughter-in-law and by husband's sister sometimes as a joke and sometimes as a comment. It signifies that the bride will be possessing a power to take decision in her husband's family. Daughter-in-law is addressed as 'kaniyaiN or kaniyaaN or *dulhin*' by her mother and father-in-law.

One of the interesting aspects of Address form is that there is a particular address form which is used when calling a women in a house is called with reference to her native place that is ‘maaykaa’ by adding ‘waali’ suffix like ‘ramdiri-waali’, ‘bihat-waali,’. Married women are rarely addressed by their name in their spouse house (sausraair) ‘sasural’. Women do not address their husbands by names instead they use the expressions like ‘sunlai, sunai chathin, ..... Ka baap’. Husband also use such terms to address her wife. Women also do not use any address form for husband’s elder brother here also ‘sunai chathin or sunalai is used.

Using titles for addressing is not common among males. There is an asymmetrical way of addressing in between a people of a higher and lower class, caste, and power. “The asymmetrical use of names and terms of address is often a clear indicator of a power differential.” (Mehrotra 1981).

Kinship terms are one of the most common ways to address and “Addressing persons with no common blood relations are usually the variant forms of mata, pita, dada, bhai.....” (Mehrotra). In Angika to address the people of same age group ‘bhay (male), bahiin’ is used. To address person up to 50 years old ‘chachha’ (male), ‘chaachi’ is used. Persons up to 60 are addressed as ‘baba’ (male), ‘maama’(female).

### Pronominals

For intra and inter-cultural communication pronominals play a very important role. Use of pronominals not only reflect the norms between two age groups, class, community, castes but also the power and solidarity in between these groups. If anyone violates the rule of using pronominals then they violate social and cultural norm. This has been rightly observed by “Pronominal choice and especially pronominal shift reflects speakers’ views about themselves and their role in social world” (Neslihan kansu-Yetkiner 2006).

The following table shows the pronominals and their grammatical use. This Pronominal system is discussed in *A Reference Grammar of Maithili* (Ramavtar Yadav 1942) . As Angika, Maithili and Maghi have the same pronominal system so we can put Angika pronominal system in the same frame. Whether Maithili burrowed non-honorific pronouns from Maghi or Angika and whether high honorific is burrowed from Maithili into these languages needs a separate discussion.

### Pronominal system

Person	Honorificity	Singular	Plural
I	Non Hon	ham/hamme	hamme sab/sini/sani/hammer
II	Non Hon	toiyN	toiyN sab/sini/sani/ toiyNr
	Mid Hon	toiyN	toiyN sab/ sini/sani /toiyNr
	Hon	ahaaN	ahaaN sab/sini/sani/ahaanr
	High Hon	Apne/hini	apne/hini sab/ sini/sani/apner
III	Non hon/Hon	u	u sab/ ur

Pronominal system in Angika is mainly based on honorificity and mostly “.... the second-person pronouns are often the target of honorific elabora-

tion” (encyclopedia). There is basically a hierarchy in pronominal system. It is common with other languages spoken in Bihar as for example Maithili and Maghi.

The non- honorific singular is used for oneself. Second person non- Honorific is used for friends, younger ones, servants younger in age and many times in intimacy with mother, grandmother, mother’s sister and father’s sisters.

For grand mother and grand father, uncle, aunty, informal friends, persons who are lower in social status but older in age like servants and people of lower castes middle honorific is used. Actually the distinction between non-honorific and middle honorific II person pronominal is realized by the verb agreement with them. For example ‘*toiyN jaai chha-hiN*’ you go (non-hon). ‘*toiyN jaay chha-ho*’ you go (mid-hon.).

Second person honorific is used with colleagues, formal friends, and persons older in age and with higher status, castes. In kinship relations it is used with generally non-affinal relations. Sometimes higher honorific ‘*apne*’ is also used with these relations to sound more polite.

Higher honorific is mostly used with mother and father-in-law and persons equivalent to such relations. Here the use of ‘*ahan*’ instead of ‘*apne*’ is supposed to be less polite and less cultured. While conversing with mother and father in law passive sentences are used.

Thus pronominal systems give a better view of relational identities and positioning.

**Vocatives**

Here is a short description of vocatives. Only to understand its distribution with the kinship, address terms and pronominal.

Person	Honorificity	Masculine	Feminine
II	Non Hon	he re/ re / re he	he ge/ ge/ ge h
	Mid Hon	he ho/ ho	he he/ he
	Hon	.....	.....
	High Hon	.....	.....

Angika lacks gender differentiation in its pronominal system and also in verb agreements. But vocatives in Angika marks gender differentiation. Vocatives are only used with second person non honorific and middle honorific terms. This signifies that when we want to show a particular respect towards a person we are not supposed to use vocatives. So for the relations like mother or father in law, husband’s elder brother, elder brother or sister in law, son in law these vocatives are not supposed to be used. With mother and father in law it is strictly prohibited.

In society one cannot use it with higher caste. But if the person with higher in caste is younger in age middle honorific vocative ‘*ho*’ is used. People also avoid these vocatives in very formal relations especially when talking with the person elder in age. The vocative ‘*re*’ is in a sense derogatory especially when we use it with formal relations or for the unknown person.

This vocative is used especially in more informal relations and when talking to servants or used in anger.

### Conclusion

It can safely be stated that Angika, not so prominently recognised as an 'independent language' does display its distinct socio-cultural terms distinctly different from other established cognate languages. Many Indian languages have not really been worked upon much, Angika being one of them, reiterates the point that in times of technology, when we have more easily access to IT equipments, it's the time ripe that we do study such under-studied languages with phonological, syntactic point of view.

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