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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF SARAIKI LANGUAGE IN CENTRAL PAKISTAN; A CASE STUDY OF SARAIKI LANGUAGE IN DERA GHAZI KHAN.**

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**Abstract**

Saraiki is considered one of the largest languages of South Punjab and it is also an ancient dialect of this region. The history of this dialect dates back to almost 4500 years in the Indus civilization. The people inhabiting South Punjab are also called as Saraiki. Dera Ghazi Khan is considered one of the important regions of Saraiki speaking people. Saraiki dialect is almost used by 86% people of Dera Ghazi Khan. Saraiki, as a major language was promoted by the intellectuals especially the Sufi poets in the region of South Punjab. This paper is an attempt to explore and highlight the origin and evolution of the Saraiki language and literature in Dera Ghazi Khan.

## **Introduction**

The Saraiki language played a vital role in the central region of the Indus Valley and led to the spread of Islam through Sindh. Saraiki is one of the ancient languages of the region. Saraiki language is spoken by millions in Southern and Southwestern Punjab, Northern Sindh, and southern district Dera Ismail Khan and Tank of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and eastern part of Balochistan especially Loralai and Naseer Abad divisions.

“O’Brien also tried to clear it as a different language of this region as Glossary indicated.<sup>1</sup> Although Saraiki is the major language of South Punjab but Pashtu, Balochi and Sindhi are also spoken in this Saraiki belt because of its geographical location among the four provinces and there is an inter-mixing of the adjoining languages into Saraiki and there is a great influence of Balochi on Saraiki language in Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur districts and in the same way, Saraiki also influences its neighboring languages. Saraiki is also famous with its alternative names as Jataki, Multani, Western Punjabi, Thali, Riasti and Deraywal in various Punjabi areas. The Muhajir settlers in Saraiki belt are also the part of Saraiki identity, South Punjab is mostly populated by the Saraiki people. The region consists of three divisions which include Bahawalpur, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan. Both Saraiki as a language, people of all three divisions use it as source of expression and communication. Dera Ghazi Khan has always remained a center of civilization through ages. It has a significant geo-strategic location in the region of south Punjab only but it is also connected with other three provinces i.e. Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). All surrounding districts of these provinces are under the influence of Saraiki language. Therefore, this paper takes into account the origin and evolution of Saraiki language and literature.

## **Methodology**

The paper uses historical method by employing the qualitative and quantitative approach. For data collection both primary and secondary sources have been used. For data collection both interviews and survey method is used.

## **Review of Literature**

Considering the importance of Literature review for research, relevant literature has been used in this research paper with primary and secondary sources as books, articles, interviews, parliamentary proceedings and news papers. Among books Tareekh-e-Dera Ghazi Khan, Saraiki Khazana, “Bare-Sagheer Mein Saraiki Tahzeeb”, District Census Reports, Linguistic Survey, Linguistic Gazetteer, etc.

## **Discussion on Topic**

The people of South Punjab have great concern about their economic interests against the largest province of Punjab as Dhareja<sup>2</sup> claims that the demand of a separate Saraiki province is basically a reaction against the Punjabi elites, according to him the formation of Saraiki Province will lessen the ethnic tension between Saraikis and Punjabis and it will bring a financial and economic balance between these two identities. He also explores that the formation of Saraiki province will be awarded a suitable and proportionate share in NFC Award to this region, which will prove a positive and decrease the economic exploitation. The Saraiki nationalists constructed the new identity as Saraikistan and in Saraikistan all the populated ethnic groups which are Saraiki, Muhajirs and Baloch are called Saraiki due to this region and it is not a language identity but also recognized as Territorial identity. This element also again started a debate about the Saraiki and Punjabi issue that Saraiki is a dialect of Punjabi or a separate

language. This concept again opened the door of intellectual discussion among the scholars to recall the origin and evolution of these regional languages.

The Punjabi intellectuals and scholars are constantly trying to insist that it is a dialect of Punjabi but on the other hand Saraiki intellectuals on the contrary consider Saraiki as a separate language and with full opposition to Saraiki being a dialect of Punjabi they seized the Saraiki resources. In this research paper, various aspects of the origin and evolution of Saraiki language have been discussed and an attempt has been made to touch its origin by making Saraiki language the subject of discussion in Dera Ghazi Khan.

The Demand of Saraiki province also motivated the historians and provided them an opportunity to start a meaningful debate on this issue. There are various concepts about the meaning and origin of the term Saraiki. Some scholars said Saraiki belongs to Lahnda language. As Danni<sup>3</sup> says it originates from an ancient Sauvira Kingdom, mentioned in Mahabharata and this is accepted by the language experts in Pakistan.

Before the British occupation, the fabric of the region resembled the ideas of the Muslim conquerors, exemplified by the resistance in Multan. The Saraiki region has been honored with such great resistance. Such bold incidents helped to sharpen the views of local intellectuals. In Saraiki literature, Khawaja Farid has the status of Malik al-Shu'ara. This great Saraiki poet paid homage to the cultural representation of the region against English domination.<sup>4</sup> Considering the four boundaries of the Saraiki region, this area is basically not clear because the surrounding nations are also painted in the color of Saraiki orthodoxy, but still its boundaries are from Loralai and Barkhan to the east Sutlej and Pothohar in the north. It extends from a large part of Khairpur to Khairpur. The mother tongue of the majority in the area is Saraiki.<sup>5</sup> Before the invention of the word Saraiki, this area was called Multani. Multan was the cradle of knowledge and literature in terms of civilization and culture. The real credit for the publication of the Saraiki language goes to the Talpur rulers of Sindh. The mother tongue of these rulers was Saraiki, so the Talpur rulers patronized the Saraiki language and literature. The Saraiki language had spread to Sindh and the poets of Sindh got connected with Saraiki poetry. Most of the Saraiki poets of Sindh belong to this period.<sup>6</sup>

Changwon thinks Saraiki is not only the ancient language of this region, it is also one of the oldest languages in the world. He says that civilization in the world started from this region. The sweetness of the Saraiki language has helped to make it a beloved language not only of the region but of Pakistan as a whole. Moreover, the simplicity and simplicity of Saraiki is so charming that it can be easily understood by every person in the entire world.<sup>7</sup>

Saraiki is the largest language spoken in the region of Dera Ghazi Khan and so is the Saraiki ethnic influence. This language has been spoken since ancient times and was once known as Multani, State, Hindko, Jatki and Lehnda. But for some time now, this common name has been known as Saraiki. The Indus Valley was considered to have three regions, namely, "Sira" means North, "Vichalo" Middle and "Laar" South. Since Saraiki is spoken in the northern part of the Indus Valley, it was identified as Siraiki. Lehnda Surag refers to the west as sunset. This refers to the western part of the Punjab. This is not a new thing. They call it Western Punjabi or Western dialect of Punjabi which is a historical fallacy. And there is no truth in that.<sup>8</sup> H.T Sorley pointed out that Punjab is the land of two different types of language. Lehnda's mother is a Dravid language that spread from the Indus Valley to the east. Similarly, Sindhi and Saraiki languages are sister languages in this region. But another important point is that the region in which Saraiki is spoken

has a distinct national or geographical identity from ancient times. And the reason for the distinct identity of this region was the linguistic identity of this region and the linguistic differences.<sup>9</sup>

Grayson and Sorley, two independent researchers, very clearly and without prejudice, described the language of the region as a different and unique language and pointed out its breadth and antiquity in historical context.

Like various scholars, Ain-ul-Haq states that Punjabi, Saraiki and Sindhi are the three neighboring languages of the Indus Valley and there are close similarities between them. But this is not true because its uniqueness compels it to be a separate and permanent language, and this is the position taken by Grayson.<sup>10</sup>

Explaining his position in his book *The Language*, Russian linguist Smirnov said that researchers have turned a blind eye to the facts and are deliberately pushing for Saraiki to be translated into Punjabi, but the fact is that either they are not aware of the facts or they are deliberately downplaying the importance of Saraiki over Punjabi. And the idea that languages are part of Hindi is also wrong.<sup>11</sup> Smirnov believes that Punjabi completes its speech with a combination of different components, but Saraiki is unique in terms of its structure. There is an evolutionary form in Punjabi. Similarly, in Saraiki, there is a specific style of verb, noun, pronoun, the concept of grammar and rotation.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, another researcher Prem Prakash thinks that Saraiki language (Lahnda) has existed in this region for a long time and it is different from Punjabi. However, it has had an effect on Punjabi. According to him, due to the antiquity and breadth of Saraiki, Urdu has also accepted its effects. Therefore, it is not correct to describe it as a Punjabi accent.<sup>13</sup> Research has shown that the evolution and origins of Saraiki have been elucidated by experts and researchers. That it is the mother tongue of an ancient regional and cultural heritage that came into being centuries ago and is the mouthpiece and expression of the emotions of the people in this region. One of the different regions of this language is Dera Ghazi Khan which is the cradle of civilizations and the center of generations. Here Saraiki language and literature have a special place.

Grierson<sup>14</sup> in *Linguistic Survey of India* describes Saraiki as something belonging to Northern area. He argued it is "Siro" which means north in Sindhi language. But Shackle<sup>15</sup> rejected this concept. Scholars believe that it is originated from the word "Sarai" which means a place of rest on road side. South Punjab was a gateway for the people coming from Afghanistan and Iran to the subcontinent and they used the Sakhi Sarwar Pass in Dera Ghazi Khan. There were many Saris and the caravans of traders and visitors used to stay here and this was the reason, even today's many words of Persian and other languages are used in Saraiki.

According to Rehman<sup>16</sup> (2002: 452-454) the Multan ruler Sumras who ruled Multan, Uch, and Sindh used Saraiki as an official language. Saraiki is written on a wall of a fort in Bahawalpur from this period in Devanagari script. Some Punjabi linguists thought Saraiki as a dialect of Punjabi. But Rehman explained that the classical writings of Punjabi in central and northern Punjab greatly relate to Saraiki.

There are large numbers of languages which are listened and spoken in different parts of the world. In a current survey it has come to know that almost eight thousand languages are spoken by the people. Among these languages Saraiki is one of the most important and ancient language of central Pakistan and it is the language of hundred millions of people. After Sindhi language Saraiki is the second ancient language. Basically it is developed by the people who inhabited the banks of Indus. According to the opinion of Dr. Shackle in his book "The Saraiki Language of Central Pakistan" and Mr. "O" Braine his book "A Glossary of Multani Language" that Saraiki is a totally different language of Punjabi and Sindhi.

There are many dialects of languages spoken in the world. A recent survey has revealed that there are seven thousand four hundred and seventy languages spoken in the entire world. Among them, one of the largest dialects is Saraiki. The region of Pakistan is very fertile and Saraiki is the second largest language after Sindhi. Mr. Obrien pointed out that it is a totally different language.<sup>17</sup>

Zami Bahawalpuri says that Saraiki is the language of the people who first came to this area along the river Indus. However, there are many nations that have their share in this. Among them are Magadhi, Shorseni, Assyrians, Aryans, Arabs, who have continued their activities till today. Dr. Christopher Shackle, a great researcher of the Saraiki language, has written several books on the Saraiki dialect and has spoken openly about the Saraiki dialect.

It is an important book in life and writing which is the main language of Saraiki is the language of the youth. Dr. Shackle has divided the Saraiki language into six major sections, including<sup>18</sup> Central Saraiki, Southern Saraiki, Shahpuri, Jhangi Saraiki, Northern Saraiki, and Sindhi Saraiki. The Saraiki wells are scattered. The type of Central Saraiki is known as Jagdali in the old valley.

The whole circle of the leaders of Dera was engulfed by the Saraikis, and Multan was torn to pieces. Later, the name of Multani was changed to State V. Anda. With reference to the name of O, Brian Lahnda, Commissioner Multan, he listened to the speeches of the local people and came to the conclusion that it has spoken differently. The interest grew so that when I started writing the next word, I would make a book by writing the word idiom. I named the book Glacier of Multani Language. The root is the main source of the Saraiki dialect. In the 19th century, the first Saraiki dictionary was compiled under the name Pothi Dictionary of Western Punjab. Seventy-two thousand words of Saraiki have been used in Hind. This area of Saraiki has an honor. Later, along with poetry, the genre of prose also flourished.

Khawaja Farid, father of the Saraiki language, is one of the great names in the life of many people who have been able to advance this language through Saraiki poetry. He is also related to the central language of the Saraiki dialect. After all these Saraiki dialects have found a place today which is considered as the second largest mother tongue of Pakistan at the official level? Poets belonging to Dera Ghazi Khan Division played a key role in the beginning and evolution of Saraiki poetry. One of them is named Khawaja Ghulam Farid but at the same time some other famous names are as Molvi Noor-ud-Din Miskeen Molvi Noor Muhammad Kehtir Ghulam Haider Khan Yateem Kaifi Jampur. These were the famous poets who planted the first plant of the Saraiki language and then patronized it in unfavorable conditions and played a full role in making it a tenacious tree. Dera Ghazi Khan considered a rich area of Saraiki as Qazi Fakhar Razi published first Saraiki Qaida in 1893 from Dera Ghazi Khan. After that Aslam Rasolpuri, and Muhammad Ahmadani also published Saraiki Qaidas in 1893, 1976, 1978 and 1979 respectively. While first Saraiki book of Ibne Qaisar also published in 1979. Similarly first and second books of primary education published from Shadalo and a village of Dera Ghazi Khan.

The first Saraiki language fiction writer is Hassan Haiderani from Dera Ghazi Khan. Dr. Tahir Taunsvi thinks that his fiction is up to ten. Along with poetry, prose also flourished in Saraiki literature. There is a large collection of short stories in the Saraiki language. In the same way, more work is being done. The region is privileged to have the full opportunity for Saraiki to flourish here. Saraiki culture is also being nurtured. Similarly, Saraiki literature has been made a part of the curriculum which will further increase the prose collection of Saraiki.<sup>19</sup>

This is an important step as Saraiki scholars have linked not only Saraiki but also themselves to the national language and some who have made Saraiki not only Urdu but also Saraiki the source of their writing. Similarly, during the Pakistan Movement, Saraiki poems were sung in jails in

Dera Ghazi Khan. Sophia's sayings, i.e, philosophies, were also quoted in Saraiki. Similarly, Saraiki writings have the effect of fully reflecting the cultural landscape. As a result, political consciousness has increased and literary tastes have increased. Along with the poets, prose writers also came forward whether it was the poems of Iqbal Sokri or Lala Barbat Taunsvi, Aziz Shahid and Irshad Taunsvi or the fictions of Hassan Haiderani and Ismail Ahmadani. It is a ray of hope for the society.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, in Saraiki mythology, Haiderani portrayed rural culture, while Zafar described the feudal system. Aslam Aziz Durrani, from the same region, targeted the class struggle and the communal system. Aslam Qureshi and Sajjad Haider Pervez contributed to the development of regional literature by making social values the subject.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike the Saraiki Man novel, fiction was more popular and when it came on the market before the novel, many writers from the region wrote novels and write stories which are the capital of Ashraf Buzdar's Saraiki folk tales, Hassan Haiderani, Ahsan Wagah, Sajjad Haider Parvez, Aslam Aziz Durrani's fiction.<sup>22</sup> Many important books of Saraiki author's published from this division i.e. Tareekh-e-Layyah, 23, Muraqa-e-Dera Ghazi Khan<sup>24</sup>, Tareekh-e-Dera Ghazi Khan<sup>25</sup> also reflect the culture of this region.

### Conclusion

This paper is an analytical study to explore the origin and evolution of Saraiki language. In the light of the arguments of the various researchers Saraiki language is one of the ancient language of this region and is the representative of the historic culture and civilization especially connected with old Indus civilization. There are different concept about its status whether it is a of Punjabi or a separate language of this region. The different researchers of this topic especially the foreigners have their opinion that due to its natural and geographical position it is not a part of any language as Sindhi or Punjabi but a separate language of central Pakistan. According to the latest Census report of Pakistan it is considered as the second largest language of Pakistan now. Due to its simple and common words, it attracts the writers especially the mystic poetry is very much persuasive, therefore, people of all provinces understand and communicate through this language very easily. Among the different important region of this language Dera Ghazi Khan is one of the important regions. The Scholars of this language mostly belong to this region as Khawaja Ghulam Fareed the great Saraiki Sufi Poet is the representative of this land. Ghulam Hasan Haiderani also belonged to this region, Molvi Noor Muhammad Kehtir and Noor ud Din Miskeen also belonged to this area. So, we conclude this discussion with this fact that Saraiki is a historic and separate language. Dera Ghazi Khan as a central region of this dialect contributed magnificently in the promotion of Saraiki language and literature.

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