### AGRICULTURE AND RURAL PROSPERITY

griculture has been the lifeline of rural India, providing livelihoods to millions and playing a crucial role in economic development. A sustainable agricultural sector ensures food security, boosts rural employment, and enhances overall prosperity. As India moves towards modernization, integrating technology, sustainable farming practices, and rural development policies is essential for achieving long-term rural prosperity.

Agriculture is more than just food production; it is deeply connected to economic stability, employment, and social well-being in rural areas. Nearly 60% of India's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. A agricultural sector contributes to higher incomes, better living standards, and improved infrastructure in rural communities.

Agriculture provides direct and indirect employment to millions. In addition to farming, it supports allied activities such as dairy farming, poultry, fisheries, and agro-based industries. Encouraging rural entrepreneurship through food processing and agribusiness can create new job opportunities and reduce rural-to-urban migration.

A productive agricultural sector ensures that the country can feed its population. Through policies like the Public Distribution System and Minimum Support Price, the government helps farmers maintain financial stability while ensuring affordable food for all

A strong agricultural sector leads to better infrastructure in rural areas. Investments in irrigation systems, rural roads, cold storage, and market linkages improve productivity and reduce post-harvest losses, ensuring farmers get fair prices for their produce

Integrating artificial intelligence (AI), drones, and satellite imagery in farming can improve productivity. Precision farming and organic agriculture can also enhance sustainability.

Promoting organic farming, crop diversification, and natural fertilizers can reduce dependency on chemical inputs and maintain soil health. Encouraging Farmer Producer Organizations helps small farmers collectively negotiate better prices, reducing dependence on middlemen.

Supporting food processing industries, dairy farming, and agritech startups can boost rural incomes and create employment.

To ensure long-term rural prosperity, government policies and community participation must go hand in hand. Programs like Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana provide crop insurance to farmers, protecting them from losses due to natural calamities. Similarly, PM-KISAN offers direct financial assistance to small and marginal farmers. Expanding these schemes and improving their implementation will boost agricultural growth.

Rural communities also play a vital role in driving prosperity. Encouraging self-help groups and women's participation in farming and agribusiness can lead to economic self-reliance. Training programs in organic farming, beekeeping, and aquaponics can diversify income sources.

Agriculture must evolve with technology, sustainability, and market-oriented reforms to drive rural prosperity. A holistic approach—empowering farmers, strengthening infrastructure, and promoting rural industries—will pave the way for a resilient, thriving agricultural sector that uplifts millions and ensures food security for future generations.

## Surya Putri-The grace of Duggar landscape



#### GL KHAJURIA

he Jammu city which is known as City of Temples throughout India for its monumental, archeological and historical importance is now losing its pristine grandeur and glory due exploding populating accruing from the migration of population from the valley, rural areas and from industrialization. The amounting pollution is yet another threat to the existence of ability.

Over the years, the Tawi which is the life line for Jammu city is depleting and its nectar clear water which perennially flowed is now losing its majestic look with every moment At one point of time, people in and around the vicinity of Jammu used to subsist on water. The same case is nowhere in sight now. Rather it he flowing water brings along with it. filth and debris from Nagrota and other areas.

The source of the Tawi river is "Kailash Kund Lasca and after taking Tums and twists all along the route it takes in its lap various tributaries varied catchments and reaches the base of "Suez Dhar"whose entire catchment drains into the Tawi at 'Seri and from Seri, the river encompasses various various micro to macro

watersheds of Lati Dhona, Jhaked, Marotihi,

Koi and Gharian on its both sides and then it reaches Sudhmahadev where small rivulets confluence down below Sudmahadev.

The river thence onwards moves serpentine and the entire catchments of Southern areas of Patnitop, Kud, Nathatop on the one hand and 'Jug Dhar' and its south eastern aspect on the other hand drains into the Tawi river.

Down below, the river loses its water table and is hugely encountered by garbage dumps, debris and other waste material of unprecedented nature. How this nectar of old golden days is to be kept clean is the clarion call of the day? And then what steps are warranted to restore back this most reverential river to its glory is doubtlessly, a paramount need of the hour. A few steps suggested are:

Averting encroachment: All out efforts are warranted to be taken to remove encroachments around the river Tawi and in this context the Forests, Revenue, JDA and MCD and other NGO's would have to come to the prefrontal.

The exercise needs to be initiated right from Nagrota downwards upto Ware House Belichrana and Soura Chak on both the banks of the river so that the sylvan surroundings of the Tawi is restored back to its pristine beauty.
Discouraging garbage dumping: The tippers,
small carriers loaded with waste filth, debris,
ply thence and other nonbiodegradable wastes
of all hues are dumped into the river making it
filth-ridden. These waste materials are mostly
an outcome of the marriages and other ceremonial occasions and the same is true of waste

material of hospitals and medicare centers. The

safest and healthiest way out is to recycle this

Catchment area treatment: All the catchments right from the origin of the Tawi, down below Ranbirsinghpura where it mixes with Rivi warrants to be treated by way of massive afforestation works, coupled with soil conseration works. In the forestry parlance, the campaign should start from top to bottom as the barren tops are benefit of vegetative cover and unless, these are well clothed. The entire exercise shall prove futile. And in achieving this mission a multidisciplinary approach on the part of

scenic beauty of the area.

Vehicular cleansing: Does anyone of us

forests, soil conservation, agriculture, horticul-

ture and sericulture departments has to taken

intense at this resections. This will enhance

claim that Tawi river is having clustered service stations for vehicles which of all hues intrude into it for cleansing? And where have the concerned authorities gone? They probably seem to have gone under deep slumber. So, at this juncture all -out efforts are needed to be taken to unit a blanket ban on this ugly practice which otherwise tantamount to desertification of river Tawi a pride of Jammu.

Fish Culture: Some natural springs and ponds do exist on the left bank of the Tawi river where there is ample scope of fish culture and the department of fisheries have to take a forward stride.

Massive afforestation along the Tawi banks-Arboriculture alongside the Tawi shall provide picturesque panorama to the people.

Bathing Ghats: On the left bank of the river exists idol of Lord Hanuman amongst a cluster of many temples. The place is also known as 'Hari Ki Pouri" where people of all hues throng for holy dip on the occasion of pious days. In case these steps are taken, there is hope that the Tawi will flow majestically once

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ual identities. A language is much

# Erosion of Dogri Language: The Linguistic Heritage

### DR RAKESH VERMA

he Dogri language, part of the Indo-Aryan family, is predomi-L nantly spoken in the Jammu region of India. Historically rich and deeply rooted in local culture, Dogri is not just a means of communication but a vessel of identity, traditions, and history for the Dogra community. Cultural significance lies in its oral traditions, folklore, and music, which enrich the collective memory of its speakers. However, this linguistic heritage faces significant threats, particularly from the encroachment of Hindi and, to a lesser extent, English. Preserving the Dogri language is critical not only for maintaining a vibrant cultural identity but also for fostering diversity within the broader linguistic landscape of India. Losing a language like Dogri equates to losing unique worldviews, traditions, and histories. Therefore, active efforts are required to encourage its use in everyday conversations, academic settings, and cultural expressions to revitalize and sustain this invaluable heritage. The Dogri language boasts a fascinating historical background that has greatly influenced its current status within the Indian linguistic framework. Emerging from the Indo-Aryan language family, Dogri's origins can be traced back to the early forms of Prakrit, which evolved into various regional dialects over centuries. This linguistic evolution was not merely a reflection of phonetic changes but occurred alongside socio-political transformations in the region.

Dogri's history is marked by significant events that shaped its identity and usage. The language gained prominence during the Dogra rule in the 19th century, particularly when Maharaja Ranbir Singh encouraged its development and standardization. This royal patronage was pivotal, as it laid the groundwork for Dogri to be recognized in educational institutions and governmental affairs. However, with the onset of British colonial rule, English and Hindi began to attain a higher status, further complicating the linguistic dynamics in the region. While Dogri found its niche among the languages of northwestern India, it has often been overshadowed by dominant languages such as Hindi and Urdu. The 20th century witnessed a concerted push for Hindi as a national identity marker, particularly after India's independence in 1947. As a result, Dogri's acceptance was significantly undermined, relegating it to the realm of regional and less prestigious narratives. The historical emphasis on Hindi not only weakened Dogri's position but also fostered a sense of inferiority associated with its use among urban populations.

The advancements in modernization brought about profound changes in

cultural and linguistic identity. As India rapidly urbanized, the importance of English grew alongside an increasing preference for Hindi, predominantly in spheres of education, governance, and media. This shift in language preference led to the construction of a linguistic hierarchy, placing Hindi and English at the summit while diminishing the status of regional languages like Dogri. Events such as the Partition of India in 1947 further strained the Dogri language's standing. Socio-political upheaval, accompanied by migration patterns and cultural dislocation, marked a period of significant linguistic and cultural loss. Additionally, the fading significance of Doori has led to its limit ed representation in mainstream media and literature, hampering opportunities for revitalization. The interplay between national iden-

tity and language preference has cre-

ated a profound impact on the Dogra community's relationship with the Dogri language. In contemporary India, the perception of Hindi as synonymous with national identity has led to a widespread adoption of Hindi at the expense of regional languages like Dogri. This linguistic shift reflects deeper societal attitudes where language is intertwined with notions of belonging and pride in one's national identity. The discourses around national identity often draw a direct correlation between language and patriotism. Many members of the Dogra community express their beliefs that proficiency in Hindi is indicative of being a "true Indian." One parent reflected this sentiment thus: "If my child speaks Hindi fluently, I feel they are better representing our country. This perspective not only highlights the association of Hindi with national pride but also diminishes the perceived value of Dogri as simply an old dialect instead of a vital cultural asset. As young individuals internalize these perceptions, their language choices begin to reflect a struggle between cultural heritage and societal expectations. A poignant example is a 12-year-old from Jammu, who noted, "I'd rather speak Hindi at school because it feels more modern and everyone understands it better." Such statements indicate a growing trend among younger generations where the use of Hindi symbolizes inclusivity and social advancement, while Dogri is increasingly deemed outdated.

A recent gathering of a local Dogra family revealed the dynamics at play when language preferences were discussed. During this event, one family member proudly proclaimed, "We speak Hindi at home because it connects us with the larger India." In contrast, the elder members lamented that their own childhoods were filled with Dogri stories and songs, now fad-

ing into obscurity. These contrasting sentiments demonstrate the ongoing generational divide fueled by the association of language with national identity. Furthermore, many urban Dogras, who once conversed in Dogri, have restructured their interactions to prioritize Hindi, especially in social settings. One young woman confessed, "Whenever I meet new people, I only use Hindi. It makes communication smoother." This choice not only reflects her immediate environment's influence but also emphasizes how societal norms dictate language preferences. The implications of shifting language preferences extend beyond mere communication; they touch the of cultural identity Urban Dogras often find themselves negotiating their cultural narratives as they assert their identity; they embrace Hindi when socializing but feel a tinge of nostalgia for Dogri. This paradox illustrates how deeply entrenched ideas of national identity can dictate individual choices, often resulting in the gradual erasure of one's heritage.

The generational shifts within the Dogra community have brought about a notable change in language use, particularly regarding the preference for Hindi and English over the Dogri language. As families navigate the pressures of modernization and national identity, the linguistic landscape shifts, often to the detriment of their mother tongue. The younger generation increasingly views Hindi as a marker of sophistication and belonging. An example can be found in the experiences of Aditya, a 10-year-old living in Jammu. When asked why he speaks Hindi predominantly, he indicated, "Kyunki main Indian hoon" (Because I am Indian). This reflects a concerning mindset among youth who equate their national identity with the

use of Hindi. As generational shifts unfold, the detachment from Dogri language leads to a disconnection from cultural practices. Festivals and celebrations that were once steeped in Dogri traditions now feature more Hindi and English content. For instance, during a recent Lohri celebration, the gathering showcased vibrant performances but predominantly featured Hindi songs and dialogues, overshadowing Dogri performances that previously held significance. This shift illustrates a paradox: cultural pride in heritage remains, yet the means of expressing it-through language-are increasingly abandoned. The younger generations often engage with deeply rooted customs but do so in languages that fail to encapsulate their true essence. Education systems significantly contribute to this decline, with curricula emphasizing Hindi and English as mediums of instruction. As a result, many parents, even if they speak

Dogri at home, find themselves switching to Hindi when communicating with their children. One parent noted, "I want my child to succeed in a competitive world; knowing Hindi is essential."

The societal norms surrounding language use can enforce a sort of linguistic hierarchy, favoring Hindi and English at the cost of regional languages like Dogri. The parents and grandparents who once advocated for Dogri often struggle to instill the same values in their children. This cultural erosion, compounded by societal pressures, raises crucial questions regarding the future and survival of the Dogri language within families. identity marker and a vessel for cultural heritage is fundamental, yet the current trajectory suggests a concerning trend that could jeopardize the legacy of Dogri for generations to come. The erosion of the Dogri language cannot be assessed without considering the role of socio-economic status and elite preferences. In urban settings, where economic opportunities often dictate social interactions. the tendencies of the elite class impact language choices profoundly, influencing the broader community.

The prevailing linguistic preferences within socio-economic groups have wider cultural implications. For the Dogra community, the shift towards Hindi not only alters communication practices but also affects self-perception and cultural identity. Here are key aspects of this transformation: Many individuals conflate speaking Hindi with being part of a modern national identity. This redefinition often sidelines the endemic cultural narratives tied to Dogri. As stated by a participant in social observations, "Using Hindi makes me feel like I am part of something bigger, something more inclusive." This sentiment highlights how language can serve as a gatekeeper, defining one's place within the community. Within elite circles, a clear stigma exists against less commonly spoken languages. Despite expressing pride in their Dogri heritage during cultural celebrations, individuals will often resort to Hindi or English during normal interactions, indicating a duality in language use that signals both pride and a sense of inferiority towards the mother tongue. The reluctance from these circles to embrace Dogri creates a cultural paradox-valuing it in theory while neglecting it in practice. The shifting preferences among generations show a distinct trend; younger generations are increasingly distancing themselves from their heritage. This generational divide exacerbates the erosion of Dogri, where children raised in households that once prioritized the lan-

guage now find comfort and utility in

Hindi and English.

These linguistic shifts can fracture social cohesion within the Dogra community. As language is intrinsic to cultural identity, the move towards Hindi and English can lead to feelings of rootlessness among younger members. With communal bonds often reinforced through shared linguistic practice, the decline of Dogri threatens the fundamental fabric of cultural expression and continuity. Societal norms thus play a pivotal role in steering the community's linguistic choices, as many individuals navigate between the desire to maintain cultural ties through Dogri and the pressures to conform to more dominant linguistic The persistance dynamics will have lasting repercussions on the cultural identity of future generations and the overall viability of the Dogri language.

The decline of the Dogri language significantly impacts the cultural practices, rituals, and celebrations inherent to the Dogra community. Although the erosion of Dogri has led to a weakening of authentic cultural expressions, some traditions still retain a semblance of their original cultural identity despite the prevailing dominance of Hindi and English. Cultural festivities such as Lohri, Baisakhi, and Dangal once thrived on the exchange of Dogri folk songs, proverbs, and stories. The vibrant tones and narratives deeply engraved in these traditions are gradually fading. For instance:

ing. For instance:

Lohri Celebrations: While participants still gather to revel in the festival, the prominence of Hindi songs outshines traditional Dogri hymns. Ironically, Dogri cultural identity is often asserted through Hindi during performances and dances. A typical Dogri wedding incorporates rituals symbolizing the community's ethos. Yet, conversational exchanges often occur in Hindi, reflecting a chilling departure from genuine Dogri communication. Participants may recite vows in Hindi, even when the costumed festivities are inherently Dogri.

This cultural overshadowing creates a paradox where individuals assert their Dogri identity yet engage predominantly in Hindi. For example, during cultural gatherings, locals might proudly declare their Dogra roots while simultaneously relegating Dogri to a secondary status in favor of Hindi conversational ease. This disconnect illustrates an ongoing tension whereby cultural pride exists alongside the abandonment of the language, prompting critical questions around cultural survival and identity reconciliation within the Dogra community. The decline of the Dogri language carries profound psychological and social ramifications impacting communal ties and individ-

more than a communication tool; it is the vessel of culture, history, and communal belonging. Its erosion correlates strongly with diminishing cultural identity and the weakening of social connections. When speakers abandon their mother tongue, they often experience a profound disconnection from their cultural roots. The Dogri language embodies narratives, traditions, and values that have been passed down through generations. As the language fades, the associated cultural practices and local knowledge also diminish. For instance, stories traditionally narrated in Dogri encapsulate the unique experiences and history of the Dogra people. With les engagement in their native tongue, younger generations may find themselves isolated from these crucial cultural narratives, leading to a diluted sense of self. The erosion of Dogri also disrupts the communal bonds formed through shared language. Linguistic practices are integral to social interactions, reinforcing a sense of belonging. In contrast, a shift toward Hindi and English can create barriers between generations. As young Dogras prioritize Hindi, the family discussions that once revolved around Dogri folklore or significant cultural events become increasingly rare, fostering a sense of alienation among older family members. The psychological effects of language loss cannot be understated. Individuals may grapple with feelings of inadequacy and cultural inferiority when their native language is perceived as less valuable compared to more dominant tongues like Hindi or English. This internal conflict can manifest in anxiety, identity crises, or even a muted cultural pride, particularly among those who still harbor a deepseated connection to their linguistic heritage. The quote, "When people abandon their language, they lose their soul as well," resonates strongly here, emphasizing the existential nature of language loss. This sense of loss extends beyond mere words, penetrating the very fabric of community spirit and personal identity-making the survival of Dogri not just a linguistic issue but a crucial cultural necessity. As Dogri continues to diminish, the effects ripple through the community; social practices, traditional ceremonies, and even familial bonds risk being redefined or forgotten altogether. As younger generations grow up speaking predominantly Hindi, the vivid expressions of Dogri culture and identity may exist only in memory-rendering them increasingly obscure in the contemporary setting. The implications of linguistic erosion thus extend far beyond individual preference, impacting the entire socio-cultural landscape of the Dogra community.