

**THE ROLE OF NATIONAL &  
REGIONAL LANGUAGES IN  
BRINGING UNITY AND THE  
ROLE OF GOVERNMENT FOR  
THEIR PROMOTION SINCE  
1947**

## **Introduction:**

Language plays an important role in the development and progress of a nation in every field of its activity. It is a symbol of human consciousness and intellect. Collective ideology and interests can only be understood and safeguarded by the help of common language.

# **URDU**

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and enjoys an important role. It is almost 300 years old and got evolved during the times of Mughals. The blending of Arabic, Persian and Turkish gave birth to a new language called Hindi, Hindustani, Shahjahani and finally as Urdu. Hence it also called **Lashkari** language. The army camp in Turkish is called **Ordoo** which means horde and is derived from the word **Orda** from the Mongolian language. Under the Persian influence the word Ordoo became softer as **Urdu**. Basically, Urdu is a **Tartar** word and it is written in **Nastaliq** script while Hindi in **Devanagri** script.

## **Urdu as the national language:**

When in 1947 Pakistan came into existence there was a need for a symbolic language that could act as a unifying symbol amongst all the provinces in Pakistan, thus creating harmony. It was the only language that was easily spoken and understood in all the provinces of Pakistan. It was due to this very reason that the Quaid chose Urdu as the national language but there were other reasons too...

## **Urdu and the Pakistan Movement:**

Urdu played an active role during the Pakistan Movement. The emphasis was laid by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan when the Hindi-Urdu Controversy occurred. It was evident that the future of the language was at risk, so Sir Syed actively defended Urdu. It was due to his efforts that in **1900** the **United Provinces Government** declared that Hindi and Urdu were to be treated equally. Later on in 1930's the Muslim League discussed making Urdu their official language, an idea that was opposed by the Muslims in Bengal. Yet in 1937 the league went ahead with its decision and all the efforts were then made keeping in view this aspect. The role of students' union can't be ignored too.

## **The Rich Literary Background:**

One important reason was the work of eminent poets and writers who played a significant role in its development. **Amir Khusrau** adopted it for his poetry. Later on the work of **Shibli Nomani**, **Allama Iqbal**, **Nazir Ahmed**, **Hali** and **Ghalib** adopted this language in their poetry and writings.

Due to these efforts Urdu progressed well and reached almost entire India. A language with such prestigious background was what the nascent country needed at that time.

### **Efforts of the Governments to promote Urdu:**

Urdu has made great progress ever since the independence from the British was achieved. The government has taken steps to foster the growth of Urdu. It is the medium of instruction in many educational institutions in Pakistan. The government has made two federal colleges namely Urdu Science College and Urdu Arts & Commerce College in Karachi with the former now promoted to the status of Urdu University. A dictionary of office terms in Urdu has been published too. The government has established a National language Authority in Islamabad. Moreover, Urdu dramas, movies and songs are very much popular and attract a huge audience.

## **PUNJABI**

It is the regional language of the largest province of Pakistan. It has links with **Prakrit** which was the language of the old Aryans. The Punjabi vocabulary includes words from Arabic, Turkish and Persian language. Some also think that it is a production from the old **Drawari** language. It was given various names during different eras. Famous historian **Masoodi** called it **Multani** while **Al-Beruni** used the name of **Al-Hindi** for it. **Baba Guru Nanak** of Sikhs called it **Zaban-e-Jattan**. In the KPK province it is known as Hindko.

### **Progress & Evolution of Punjabi Language:**

Some ancient Buddhist monks wrote religious and devotional lyrics in Punjabi, which are considered as the earliest pieces of Punjabi literature. The real progress of Punjabi started in 10<sup>th</sup> century with efforts of Hindu ascetics and Muslim mystics. While **Gorak Nath, Pooran Bhagat, Guru Nanak** and **Baba Ratan** were the Hindu ascetics that played a major role in its propagation, there was **Baba Fareed, Amir Khusro, Sultan Bahu, Baba Bhullay Shah, Waris Shah** and others who not only made valuable writings in Punjabi but also preached Islam through their mystical odes and melodious kafis. Moreover, the folk tales like **Sohni-Mahiwal, Sassi-Panhoon** and **Heer-Ranjha** that are written in Punjabi still hold significance in Punjabi literature.

With the advent of 20<sup>th</sup> century Punjabi journalism grew leaps and bounds. Books written on diversified subjects like art, philosophy, history, linguistics, economics, and geography have given the language great emphasis. Today the language is taught as an optional subject in Punjab. There is a department of Punjabi language in the Punjab University. Also, one of the

new literary endeavors was the versified translations of the Holy Quran rendered by **Muhammad Ali Faiq, Ustad Daman, Ahmed Rahi** and **Munir Niazi** is the major exponents of a new wave of Punjabi writing.

## **SINDHI**

It is one of the oldest of languages that is vastly spoken in the province of Sindh and also the Indian province of Rajasthan. Some language experts believe that Sindhi language belongs to old **Dravidian** languages that were spoken in South India. This language has been derived from Sanskrit language. In the beginning it was written in **Marwari** and **Arz Nagari** way of writing but after the invasion of Sindh by the Arabs the language got a new way of being written in Arabic script. Later on when the Mughals invaded India, the language got merged with Persian that was the language of the administration.

### **Progress & Evolution of Sindhi Language:**

The language holds a unique distinction when an Arab ruler of Sindh Abdullah bin Umer Bihari first motivated a scholar Mansoor Akhund Azizullah to translate the Holy Quran. **Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai**, perhaps, was the first Sufi poet whose poetries are a great combination of Islamic lyrics and the description of natural beauty of Sindh. Similarly, the poetry of **Sachal Sarmast** and **Ramzan Qandhar** is deeply influenced by the environmental atmosphere and is considered a valuable contribution towards the development of the language. Later on, the work of **Makhdum Nuh** of Hala and **Qazi Qazan** of Thatta further bolstered the language. The publishing of the journal **Ta'alim AlKashaf-o-Touheed** in the 19<sup>th</sup> century showed that Sindhi was moving in the right direction.

After independence effective steps were taken to promote the language. **Sindhi Literary Board** was set up in **1948** for progress and publishing of the Sindhi content. Besides that, several books have been published on the folk literature. **Bazm-e-Talib-ul-Moula** was set up in **1954** which is rendering meritorious services to Sindhi literature. Similarly, **Dr. Ali Akbar Draz** established **Sarmast Academy** which publishes books in memory of Sachal Sarmast. Add to that, a **Sindhology Department** has been established at Sindh University Jamshoro while Karachi University also has a Sindhi department in it.

# PUSHTO

Pushto is the language spoken in the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province of Pakistan and also in Federally Administered Tribal Areas and North-West Balochistan. The linguistic experts think that Pashto is a pure Aryan language as the words of Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi and Urdu are included in it. Also, many of the words have been taken from Pali, Prakarat, Pehlvi, Arabic and even Greek, German and French.

## Progress & Evolution of Pushto Language:

Although Pashto as a language is very old yet the Pashto literature developed very late. Like all the other languages it developed with poetry. **Amir Karoro** is generally regarded as the first Pashto poet. The initial period was all about the exploits of Pashto heroes. The period from 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century is called the first period of Pashto literature. During this period **Bayazid Ansari** wrote on Sufism with his famous work being **Khair-ul-Bian** which is considered as the first book on Pashto Sufism. The second period started from 16<sup>th</sup> century and lasted for a century. During this period **Khushal Khan Khattak** (1613-1689) produced national unity among Pathans through his poetry while **Rahman Baba** (1632-1703) developed religious thoughts.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the foundation of modern literature was laid. Also, during the same period the literature played an important role in creating opposition to the British rule and in the movement of independence. **Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum** worked a great deal in creating awareness among the people of NWFP. After the independence, the language got further boost. By 1951, **Peshawar University** had been established. To make Pashto research possible, **Pashto Academy** was established in 1955 which later got affiliated with Peshawar University in 1962. Today Pashto language has a vast treasure of literary works.

# BALUCHI

The language of the province of Balochistan in Pakistan is Balochi. The old relation of Balochi language is linked with the old languages spoken in North-Western parts of Iran and hence, has a close resemblance with the Persian. Today, the Balochi language is spoken in three main dialects **Sulemanki, Makrani & Rakhsani**.

### **Progress & Evolution of Pushto Language:**

The Balochi poetry was started in the period of Rind dynasty (1488-1555). It was the time when many folk tales were also written. The famous poets of this period are **Mir Chakar Khan, Mir Shahdad Khan, Meeran Rind** and **Jam Darang**.

Since 1947 the language started to gain prominence. Radio Pakistan Karachi began broadcasting Balochi while the first Balochi monthly magazine was published in **1952**. Likewise, in **1960**, an official monthly magazine **Olassis** was published from Quetta. In **1962**, **Balochi Academy** was established to promote Balochi language and literature. A number of organizations are working for the promotion of the language, one of them being Balochi Literary Association. Moreover, the Quetta Television broadcasts its programs in Balochi.

### **CAIE Exam Questions:**

- 1 What steps to foster the growth of Urdu have been taken? [4]**
- 2. Why did Pakistan choose Urdu as its national language? [7]**
- 3. How successful has the promotion of local languages in Pakistan been since 1947? Give reasons for your answer. [14]**