

Dardic: What Does the Label Denote?

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What is in a name, proclaim some? The noted creative critic of Hindi literature, Hajariprasad Dwivedi, has demonstrated the significance of a name in his monumental "*Anaamdaus kaa Pothaa*", roughly translated as '*The Book of the nameless*' - a rich piece of fiction.

When it comes to reconstructing history, name has a great significance and importance as it influences young minds in a positive or negative mode depending on its connotation and historical import. A wrongly but widely held notion that Sanskrit is mother of 'all Indian languages' is just an instance of the strength of a name/notion. Sadly, language science is studied by a very small fraction of people in our society where, historically speaking, one could get entry into the company of scholars only after mastering this particular science. In ancient India there were several schools of Siksha, Pratishakhya and Vyakaran. India has been the pioneer in linguistic research several centuries before Christ. Its significance seems to have lessened after the 10th century C.E. when the linguistic superstratum marked a significant shift and the sub-strata were beginning to evolve as independent communication systems. The society at large was in a flux.

Sir George Abraham Grierson in his monumental "Linguistic Survey of India" used some labels, like Behari, Dardic, and Pahari, to refer to a cluster of languages that are geographically proximate to one another. The label 'Behari Languages' has been abandoned already. The observation that Bengali has structurally nurtured the so-called 'Behari Languages' too

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has been rightly challenged. Similarly, Saraiki spoken in the Multan region of Pakistan has been wrongly regarded as a dialect of Panjabi. The corrections are being made here too.

At the phonological level the so-called Behari languages, namely Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri, exhibit divergent feature distribution in comparison to Bengali. The three eastern languages aspirate nasals, laterals and even trills, Bengali does not. Retroflex flaps are absent in Bengali but present elsewhere. The nasal aspirates begin with Maithili in the East and spread up to Rajasthani in the West.

Similarly, Saraiki has not lost voiced aspirated consonants. Panjabi has. Saraiki employs implosives like Sindhi, Panjabi does not. The requisite modifications are being made in the contemporary literature and rightly so. The label Pahari languages is one such usage that has not created much confusion although its reference has now shrunk to Kangri and its varieties spoken in Himachal Pradesh State of India. Nepali and Kumaoni-Garhwali are no longer covered under the label.

The label Dardic has been in vogue for over a century without any specific denotation. Kashmiri has been clustered with a few more languages under this label by some scholars. This has created an impression as if the label refers to a group of languages independent of Indo-Aryan sub-family.

Recently, Dardic has been used as a label to refer to a group of minor Indo-Aryan languages spoken in Pakistan and the adjoining Ladakh region of Jammu & Kashmir- India (See Cardona & Jain, 2003).

The earliest mention of 'Darads' in Kashmir⁰ has been made by The Poet-Historian Kalhana in the first *Taranga*^a of Rajatarangini- the earliest extant history of Kashmir. Kalhana while recounting the munificence of the peace-loving King Surendra (pre-historic times) states that the King "built the city called Sauraka ...and founded a *vihara* called *Narendra-bhavana near the country of the Darads*" (see R S Pandit's Translation of Kalhana's Rajatarangini; p.19, emphasis mine). This vividly demonstrates that Darads have been distinct and independent people adjoining Kashmir even in the prehistoric period. At another place in the same *Taranga* Kalhana informs that "when the **impious** Dards, Baultas, and Mlecchas"¹

had overrun the country, the tyrant King Mihirakula (8th Century B.C.E.) “had promulgated the observance of religious conduct...” (p.42). Again (VII *Taranga*), in the first quarter of the 11th century C.E., Kalhana reports that “some Dards, government clerks and Damaras(landlords) became overbearing”(Pandit’s tr. P. 271). In the second quarter of the same century, ‘the Darada ruler Acalamangala invaded Kashmir’ (Pandit’s tr. p. 275). All these mentions/reports indicate that Dards did not have fraternal or friendly links with Kashmir. In the first decade of the 12th Century C.E. the forces bent upon usurping the throne by force in Kashmir invited Dard King to invade Kashmir (See R S Pandit’s translation p.423). And during the 40s of the same century, following the death of the Dard King, his Ministers invited War-lords from Kashmir to secure the throne for them.² (ibid p.606ff).

Cardona & Jain (2003) have not clubbed Kashmiri with Dardic. The Volume carries an independent essay on Dardic (pp 818-894) where the author (E. Bashir) has clubbed a number of minor languages spoken in Ladakh region (India), and the adjoining Pakistan and Afghan territories under the label Dardic. The group includes at least one language that is claimed to be extinct now³. She rightly calls Dardic an ‘*umbrella*’ term, “a *geographical cover term* for those **Northwestern Indo-Aryan languages** which, because of their isolation in the mountains of the Hindu Kush, Swat and Indus Kohistan, the Karakorams and the Western Himalayas, have retained ancient and developed new characteristics different from the IA languages of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Although the Dardic and the Nuristani (previously Kafiri⁴) languages were formerly grouped together, Morgenstierne (1965) has established that the **Dardic languages are Indo-Aryan** and that the Nuristani languages constitute a separate subgroup of Indo-Iranian.” ... “*Dardic implies neither ethnic unity among the speakers of these languages nor that they can all be traced to a single stammbaum-model node...*The similarities of the Dardic languages today are due to differentially shared retentions, innovations affecting **various subsets of these languages**, and contact (areal) development.” (Bashir p.821-22). Even this clubbing is, therefore, unwarranted as the author herself seems to indicate; thereby the label Dardic becomes superfluous. Bashir candidly advocates the abandonment of the label Dardic. She has

provided a long list of characteristics of these languages to demonstrate that these Speeches are not homogenous at any level; hence the case for abandoning the label Dardic becomes stronger. Fussman (1972) and Strand (1973) seem to have reached a firm conclusion regarding the hypothecality of Dardic.

Phonologically speaking, Kashmiri⁵ has lost voiced aspirated consonants; Panjabi, Dogri and Pahari too have lost such consonants. Palatalization is an important productive feature in Kashmiri, it can also be seen in Pahari, Bangru (Haryanavi) and Panjabi where, unlike Kashmiri, it is neither inflectional nor derivational. Kashmiri has lamino-alveolar affricates that are also found in Konkani and Marathi. Some of the languages put under the label Dardic too have lamino-alveolar affricates: a few of them have the voiced segment as well.

The central high vowel present in Kashmiri is widely employed in Tibeto-Burman languages!

The V2 syntax of Kashmiri links it to German, Icelandic etc.!

At the phonological level there is sufficient divergence among the Dardic languages. The **uvular** (*alijihviya*) stop *q* has been borrowed from Arabic and is confined to Standard Urdu, Standard Sindhi and a few Dardic languages (Sawi, Indus Kohistani, Swat-Dir Kohistani, Khowar, Pashai, and Katarqalai). The voiced aspirates are not attested in some of the Northern languages, namely Panjabi, Dogri, Kashmiri, Pahari, Dardic (Khowar, Shina, Shumashti, Dameli, Tirahi, Swat-Dir Kohistani, and Katarkalai). Sinhala, and Dardic (Grangali and Pashai) do not have aspirated stops; in fact aspiration is completely lost from these languages. All the five unaspirated nasals are phonemic in a few languages only, namely Sindhi, Kalasha(Dardic), Saraiki, and Dogri; The bilabial *m* and alveolar *n* are present across the IA sub-family. Some NIA languages like Maithili, Bangla, Dardic (Khowar & Tirahi) employ just these two. Oriya, Dardic (Gawarbat, Pashai, Shumashti, Grangali, Dameli, Swat-Dir Kohistani, Torwali), and Sinhala employ four nasals; Oriya and some Dardic languages exclude the palatal *ɲ*. Torwali (Dardic) aspirates *m*, *n* and *ɲ*. Standard Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Konkani, Panjabi, Pahari, Dardic (Watapuri-Katarkalai, Indus Kohistani) have three nasal phonemes- *m*, *n*

and *ʃ*. The largest number of fricatives (ten) is employed in Torwali (Dardic). The voiceless, cerebral fricative *ʃ* is present, as a continuation of Sanskrit sound system, in Marathi and a few Dardic languages (Torwali, Kalasha, Indus Kohistani, and Shina) the latter employ its voiced cerebral counterpart also. Kashmiri has *ts* and its aspirated counterpart *ts^h* only, Marathi, Konkani and some Dardic languages have voiced *dʒ* as well and the aspirated counterpart of the latter (*dʒ^h*) is available in Marathi and Konkani. The lowest number (two) of affricates is available in Sinhala and the highest (eight) in Konkani; Marathi has seven, Kashmiri five; Grangali (Dardic) has four -- the palatal *c*, *j* and the alveolar *ts*, *dʒ*. Retroflex fricatives and contrastive pitch accent of Shina are the features that are non-existent in Kashmiri.

It seems reasonable to abandon the label Dardic completely and refer to these IA languages independently.

A glance at some basic lexical entities-- numerals, body parts, verbs-- would enable one to draw conclusions regarding the linguistic affinity of Kashmiri.⁶

Kashmiri	Sanskrit	Hindi/ OIA	Gloss
ak ^h	eka	ek/ ikk	one
tre	tri	tiin/tre	three
tsoor	catura	caar	four
sat ^h	sapta	saat/satt	seven
ə:T ^h	ashTan	aaT ^h / aTT ^h	eight
nav	navan	nau/nou	nine
dah/dEh	daSan	das dass	ten
hat ^h hundred		Satan	sau

lac ^h lakh/lac		laksham	laak ^h lakk ^h
nas	naasaa	naak/nak	nose
Ec ^h	cakshus/akshi	aank ^h /akk ^h	eye
at ^h l	hastah	haat ^h /hatt ^h a	hand

k ^h oor k ^h or	paada padam	pEEr	foot
onglj	angulii	angulii aanglii/ungal	finger
shongun	swap	sonaa/soNaa	sleep
k ^h on	K ^h aad	k ^h aanaa/k ^h aaNaa	cat
pakun	car cal gam	calanaa/calaNaa	walk
vadun	wilaap rudan	ronaa	cry
ranun	pac	pakaanaa	cook
vanun	waac/kat ^h	kahnaa/kahNaa	say
tulun	ci	uTT ^h aanaa/cukNaa	pick
yun	aagam	aanaa aaNaa	come
gats ^h un	gam	jaanaa/jaaNaa	go
Davun	d ^h aaw	dauRnaa	run
tsalun away	d ^h aaw	b ^h aaganaa	run

One can easily relate Kashmiri *pod/pEdy* 'foot-print-s' to Sanskrit *pada*; The Kashmiri verbs *tulun* 'pick' and *ranun* 'cook' have a strong phonetic-semantic echo in Bengali.

OIA refers to Other Indo-Aryan languages, like Punjabi, Dogri, adjoining Kashmiri.

Transcription:

E stands for schwa; I for high central vowel; S for palatal fricative; sh for cerebral/retroflex fricative; T/D/N stand for cerebral/retroflex voiceless/voiced stops/nasal, ts for lamino-alveolar affricate, ^h following a consonant indicates aspiration of the C concerned; ^y stands for palatalization.

Notes:

0: The term Darad has been mentioned in the Sanskrit epic *Mahabharata* which should be considered as its earliest occurrence. Greek historians/travelers to India, after Alexander's invasion, too have mentioned Darads.

a. *Taranga* means wave. The *Rajatarangini* comprises eight *Taranga*-s, R S Pandit has rightly translated the work as "The River of Kings".

1. Daradas of K. (Kalhana) are the Dards- Aryans who inhabit the mountainous region from Chitral across the Indus extending to Gilgit and Kishanganga Valley...See S P Pandit p.43.

2. During this campaign, K. mentions non-intelligibility of unknown language between the forces. (RS Pandit's Tr. p. 631).

3. Following Cardona & Jain **Dardic** encompasses a group of languages spoken in parts of India (Ladakh), Pakistan and Afghanistan. The languages are: Gawarbari, Kalasha, Torwali, Indus Kohistani, Palula, Khowar, Shina, Shumashti, Dameli, Tirahi, Swat-Dir Kohistani, Katarkalai. [Katarkalai is reportedly extinct].

4. Kafiristan (now Nuristan) "enclosed between Chitral and Afghan" territory is the land of Pagan mountaineers who maintained their independence until 1895 when by the terms of an agreement entered into between the British Government and Abdur Rahman, Amir of Kabul, the whole of Kafir territory passed under the sway of Kabul."The Kafir language is of Prakrita origin. (See R S Pandit p. 631).

5. R S Pandit (1935) in a footnote in his translation of Kalhana's Rajatarangini reflects a view of the linguistic scholarship of the era thus: Kashmiri is closer to Pushto as both have evolved from the Paishachi Prakrit. P.734.

6. Cardona and Jain (2003) carries an independent essay on Kashmiri (pp. 895-952) where the non-committal author shifts the onus on Historical linguist who according to him are in agreement regarding the genetic affiliation of Kashmiri: that it "belongs to the **Dardic branch of Indo-Aryan family.**" (P. 898). Masica (1991) presents a chronological overview of Grierson's opinion with regard to 'Dardic' and remarks that "Even less should Grierson's tentative classification be taken as the last word on the "Dardic" question." (pp. 460-462). The oft-repeated loaded statement that Kashmiri is close to Shina is found in these texts as well.

E. Bashir in Cardona & Jain(2003) mentions Kashmiri in a different context: "Present linguistic interactions in Pakistan involve Balti and Kashmiri with the eastern dialects, Burushaski and Khowar with the Gilgit dialect,..."(p. 878).

A couple of examples comparing Shina (from Bashir 2003) and Kashmiri are given here:

1. *tu-s hiish nee t^he* (Shina).

tsI ma van ak^h laphIz. /tsI maa van kenh ti. (Kashmiri).

‘Don’t say a word’.

2. *riney dado-s ga tu k^hook dubey.* (Shina).

tihund buDibab ti hekii nl tse k^het^h /tse hekii nl tihund buDibab ti k^het^h
(Kashmiri).

‘Even their grandfather cannot eat you’.

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