CHAPTER III

TOWARDS THE IDEOLIZATION OF BHOJPURI LANGUAGE, CULTURE, REGION AND NATIONAL CHARACTER

Nations and national feeling appear to be shaped not by nature but by nurture, by everything human and peculiar to times and places. In propagating cultural nationalism, historical scholars and artists, concerned to revitalize the community, invoke memories of the nation as an ancient and unique civilization. They attempt to regenerate the nation on communitarian lines. A distinction is worth-making between the 'cultural entrepreneur' who devotes himself to enlarging the solidarity resources of a community and the 'political broker' who mobilizes ethnicity in a given situation, crystallizing collective aspiration in the social and political realm. The cultural politician applies his skills to the optimum combination of the existing stock of factors of cultural mobilization. The cultural entrepreneur commits his energies to multiplying the capital. Language is a crucial expression of identity and will command much of his attention. The prestige of the language is affirmed by making it uniform so that it can serve as an effective written medium and intensify the solidarity of the entire potential speech community. The language is at once classicalized and modernized, it must be equipped with a vocabulary which describes the artifacts and conveys the ideas of a technological world and at the same time is bound to its origins by the resurrections of classical usage. Literature is of prime importance to an ideoliged culture, it provides a powerful
medium of socialization where the symbols of commonality are made familiar and intimate, where history is conveyed through poetry, fable, and saga, where a catechism of identity is elaborated. The history of the group must be unraveled and rewoven as epic poetry. The founding fathers, the great kings, the triumphant generals, the high priests must be rescued from obscurity and accorded their palace of veneration in the cultural hagiography.

In India, we have most highly ideologized cultural segments like Bengalis, Marathas, Tamils etc. and many of the partly only minimally articulated identities. In 'Hindi region' identities based on regional dialects are almost lacking in ideological formulation. The potential cultural entrepreneurs as well as political brokers are continuously absorbed into Hindi speech community.

In this chapter, we will examine Bhojpuri elites’ perception of Bhojpuri language, culture and region. They have tried to make language the unifying symbol of Bhojpuri national identity. Number of Bhojpuri speakers in India remains disputed as its speakers are enumerated in the census under the rubric of Hindi. Bhojpuri nationality has not been recognised officially. The ongoing process of nationality formation in the whole Hindi region remains handicapped and vexed. Given such a situation, Bhojpuri elite face a difficult task of regenerating the 'nation'. They have taken language as a basic element in Bhojpuri nationalism. Just as language so historical experience, as related by historians and popularizers, plays a major part in the development of nationalism. Bhojpuri writers and scholars have
embellished the histories of Bhojpur region with glorious legends of heroes. Linguists have sought the earliest evidence of Bhojpuri language and literature. Bhojpuri elites maintain that people possess peculiar and unique national character. Bhojpuri people have some common traits, customs, values and these somehow differentiate them from other people.

We will discuss the following questions in relation to Bhojpuri language:

   i. The status of Bhojpuri: a language or a dialect?
   ii. Regional variations in Bhojpuri: the problem of bringing uniformity and standardization of language.
   iii. Heritage of Bhojpuri literature.
   iv. Hindi and Bhojpuri.
   v. Magahi, Maithili and Bhojpuri.
   vi. Census and Bhojpuri.
   vii. International dimension of Bhojpuri language.

(i) **Bhojpuri: A language or dialect?**

The most crucial question which faces Bhojpuri litterateurs and writers whether Bhojpuri is a dialect or a language? If it is a dialect, is it a dialect of Hindi? In fact, whatever claims Bhojpuri elites advance for the better treatment of their language emanate from their stand that Bhojpuri is a language. They are at pains to assert the grammatical distinctiveness of Bhojpuri from Hindi. They resent the tendency of treating Bhojpuri as a dialect of Hindi. All of the journals and magazines published by various Bhojpuri organisations invariably deal with the issue of the status of Bhojpuri as a language. The
Bhojpuri scholars and writers have frequently found inspiration in Grierson to whom they turned for authoritative support of their claims that Bhojpuri is distinct grammatically from Hindi and hence a language.

George Grierson used the term 'Bihari' to denote several dialects spread throughout the province of Bihar. The term Bihari embraced three speech forms - Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri. He found sufficient similarity among Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri and sufficient difference between these three tongues on the one hand, and Hindi or Bengali, on the other hand, to classify the three mother-tongues as dialects of a common language, i.e. Bihari. Grierson stressed the grammatical distinctions of three dialects from Hindi and Bengali. He treated Bihari as a 'sister of Bengali' and only a distant cousin of the tongue spoken to its West. Like Bengali and Oriya it is a direct descendant of the old Magadha Apabhramsa. It occupies the original seat of that language and still retains nearly all its characteristic features. While comparing three languages under the title of Bihari Grierson wrote,

The division of dialects of Bihari into two groups, an eastern consisting of Magahi and Maithili and a western Bhojpuri commends itself on both linguistic and ethnic grounds. The two eastern dialects are much more closely connected with each other than either is connected with Bhojpuri. In grammatical forms, Maithili and Magahi have much in common that is not shared by Bhojpuri and on the other hand Bhojpuri has peculiarities of declension and conjugation which are unknown to the other two.

Grierson maintained that the speakers of Magahi and Maithili are much more closely related to each other than either of them is to Bhojpuri. According to him,
In pronunciation Maithili and to a less degree Magahi is much rounder than Bhojpuri. In Maithili the vowel a is pronounced with a broad sound approaching the 'o' in 'hot' colour that it possesses in Bengali. Bhojpuri on the contrary pronounces the vowel with the clear sharp cut tone which we hear all over Hindostan. On the other hand, it also possesses a long drawled vowel which is sounded like the aw in 'awl'. In the declension of nouns, Bhojpuri has an oblique form of the genitive case, which is wanting in the other dialects. The polite pronoun of the second person, which is frequently heard in conversation is 'apne' in Maithili and Magahi but 'raure' in Bhojpuri. The verb substantive in Maithili is usually chhai or achhi. In Magahi it is usually hai, and Bhojpuri bate, bare or hawe. The three dialects all agree in forming the present tense by adding the verb substantive to the present participle, exactly as in other modern Indian languages, but Magahi has also a special form of the present dikhā hai, the literal meaning of which is doubtful. The whole system of verbal conjugation is amazingly complex in Maithili and Magahi, but is as simple and straightforward in Bhojpuri, as it is in Bengali or Hindi.

Narayan Tewary in his book *Bhojpuri Bhasa Aur Sahitya* treats Bhojpuri as a language. According to him Bhojpuri is the Western most dialect of the Eastern or Magadhan group of Indo-Aryan languages. It is a major dialect in this group. To emphasize the status of Bhojpuri as a language. Tewary points out that the first mention of the word `Bhojpuria' as a language, is found in 1789; Sir George Grierson in his *Linguistic Survey of India* has given a quotation which runs as follows,

"Two days after, as a regiment of sepoys on its way to Chunargarh was marching through the city at day break, I went out and was standing to see it pass by, the regiment halted; and a few men from the centre saw into a dark lane, and laid hold of a hen and some roots; the people screamed 'Do not make so much noise', said one of the men in his Bhpjpuria idiom", 'we go today with the Frenghees, but we are all servants of Cheyt Singh and may come back tomorrow' with him; and then the question will not be about your roots but about your wives and daughters."

According to Tewary after 1789, John Beams used the term *Bhojpuri* in the sense of language in 1868 in the *Journal*
Thus, almost all of Bhojpuri literateurs and linguists have drawn heavily from Sir George Grierson and John Beams, to bring home the point of the earliest usage of the word 'Bhojpuri' in the sense of language.

Bhojpuri scholars maintain that Bhojpuri has been named after the Bhojpur pargana in the Buxar sub-division in the district of Shahabad. It was the capital of the Ujjain Rajput kings who were the descendants of the well known illustrious king Bhojraj of Malwa. They came here as invaders and after defeating the aboriginal 'chero' tribe of this place, established a small estate, which they named Bhojpur after the name of their famous predecessor. In course of time adjective Bhojpuri or Bhojpuria derived from Bhojpur, was being used to represent the inhabitants as well as the language of the area. At the end of the Mughal rule, these terms are found in common use.

Bhojpuri cultural leaders invariably faced with the question of the status of Bhojpuri as a language, deal with the issue at various levels. Those who express doubts about the claim of Bhojpuri for the status of a language raise following objections:

(a) Bhojpuri is a spoken 'boli' or a dialect and does not have a grammar.

(b) There are regional variations in Bhojpuri and it lacks uniformity and standardization.

(c) Bhojpuri lacks a literary tradition.

The first objection that Bhojpuri does not have a grammar of its own point out many a Bhojpuri scholars, is a false
They point out that amongst the European scholars, John Beams was the first to work on Bhojpuri. In 1868 his article "Notes on the Bhojpuri dialect of Hindi as spoken in Western Bihar" was published in the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society. After this many a European scholars worked on grammar of Bhojpuri amongst whom Grierson's survey published in 1902, is most important. The most authentic and comprehensive work by Indian linguists on Bhojpuri is that of Udai Narayan Tewary's Bhojpuri Bhasha Aur Sahitya. In this book Tewary has written a detailed grammar of Bhojpuri. Even at present most of the magazines and journals published by various Bhojpuri organisations invariably publish articles on Bhojpuri grammar.

The editor of Bhojpuri Academy Patrika (BAP) in an issue of the magazine made the following observation about the status of Bhojpuri:

Bhojpuri is a dialect as well as a language, because it is used in both ways, i.e., in literature as well as in daily usage. We can say that Bhojpuri is a very competent dialect and it is a language too with a vast potential and possibilities. A very frequently posed question before us is: Whether Bhojpuri is a dialect of Hindi? The answer to this question depends on how do we interpret the term 'Hindi'. It becomes necessary in this context to examine the nature of Hindi. Those who have written history of Hindi language, have concentrated on 'Khari boli' only, they have not included the so called 'dialects' (e.g., Awadhi, Brajbhasa, Magahi, etc.) of Hindi. In the history of 'Hindi/literature' Chandarbardai of Dingel, Vidyapati of Maithili, Kabir of Bhojpuri, Soordas of Braj, Tulsidas of Awadhi etc, have been included as poets of 'Hindi'. If these languages are dialects of 'Hindi' then modern poets and writings of these languages also should be given place in the history of Hindi literature. The fact remains that 'Hindi' as it has come to be used today, means Khari boli and this 'Khari boli' is being designated as our 'rashtra bhasa'. If we maintain that the term 'Hindi' connotes not only Khari boli rather it is an umbrella term for all the literary languages which
developed in Madhyadesha in last centuries then I would submit that a new term (for "Hindi") should be coined. Officially Bhojpuri is treated as a dialect of Hindi and hence denied constitutional recognition. Those who treat Bhojpuri as a dialect of Hindi, and on this basis oppose our demand for constitutional recognition of Bhojpuri, are doing a grave injustice to such a capable language as that of Bhojpuri.

While arguing that Bhojpuri is a language Bhojpuri scholars point out that dialect and language are not static categories. A dialect over a time period can evolve into a language and Bhojpuri has grown into a language., The President of eighth Akhil Bhartiya Bhojpuri Sahitya Sammelan (ABBSS) in his address said,

Bhojpuri is an international language. It is a sheer nonsense to raise the question of its status as a dialect or language. It has unfortunately become fashionable among a few scholars of Hindi to treat Bhojpuri as a dialect.

To substantiate his point the President referred to many works of grammars of Bhojpuri language, dictionaries, and a vast quantity of literature published in Bhojpuri over a few years. Some writers traced the origin of Bhojpuri language to vedic age. They maintain that right from the vedic age Bhojpuri has developed as a language. The misfortune with Bhojpuri has been that is never enjoyed royal patronage.

To claim the status of language, observes one scholar, four conditions should be met: a large area where language is used, rich vocabulary, grammar and capability to communicate. Even script can be included. So far as Bhojpuri is concerned it meets all these requirements of being a language. It is a complete language.

Inspite of the their frequent claims for treating Bhojpuri as a language, Bhojpuri writers themselves are very much
aware of the under developed stage of Bhojpuri. One writer, conceded to the fact that Bhojpuri at present is in an underdeveloped stage. He expressed the following views:

The oral tradition of folk songs, folk-tales, however rich it might be, is not sufficient in itself to confer the status of language upon a dialect. The speech employed in verbal communication is called 'boli' or 'dialect'. The speech which becomes the medium of expression through pen is language. Bhojpuri is still not a medium of expression for its speakers through pen. When it comes to writing people use Khariboli. The attachment of its speakers expresses itself through verbal medium only. This tendency has been one of the main causes for the under developed stage in which Bhojpuri finds itself today.

Similarly the editor of BAP in its very first issue had to write,

Howsoever high we praise over language, the fact remains that at present Bhojpuri is a crude and unsophisticated language. No dialect can claim the status of a language unless there is a uniformity in its usage in prose and poetry writing. In prose writing Bhojpuri language has to go a very long way.

Thus, while arguing strongly for a status for Bhojpuri as distinct from Hindi, scholars are not unaware of the need to make systematic efforts to develop Bhojpuri as a language, and this brings us to the second very important aspect of language development, i.e., of uniformity and standardization.

(ii) Regional Variations In Bhojpuri: the problem of uniformity and standardization

Bhojpuri is spoken in a very large area. It is also known by some other names given to it after the names of different areas or places in which it is spoken; Buxaries, Chaparhia, Banarasi, Kashika are few of such names. We
find basically four sub-languages of Bhojpuri:

1. Northern Bhojpuri
2. Western Bhojpuri
3. Southern Bhojpuri

Northern Bhojpuri is spoken in Gorakhpur, Deoria and Basti. Whereas Western Bhojpuri covers Varanasi, Azamgarh, Western Ghazipur, Mirzapur and Jaunpur. Southern or standard Bhojpuri is used in Bhojpur, Rohtas, Saran, Ballia and Nagpuria is spoken in Palamau and Ranchi districts of Chota Nagpur division. Bhojpuri spoken in the district of Champaran is known as 'Madhesi' due to its position between Gorakhpuri Bhojpuri in its West and Maithili in the East. In the lower region of the Himalayas from Jalpaiguri in the east to Kumanyun in the west, lives 'Tharoo', a Scheduled Tribe. These Tharoos of the adjoining areas of Champaran in Bihar and Bahraich in Uttar Pradesh, speak a kind of mixed Bhojpuri which is known as Tharoo.

Thus, Bhojpuri is spoken in a very large region and one notices significant regional variations in the language. The Bhojpuri as spoken at Arrah, Benaras, Chappra and Jaunpur show variations. When it comes to write stories, essays etc. in Bhojpuri the different forms of spoken language pose a great problem: Bhojpuri of which area should be taken as the standard one? As the leaders of Bhojpuri movement called on the writers to write essays, novels, criticisms in Bhojpuri, writers wrote in the language as it was spoken in their respective places. This posed a difficult task before editors of different Bhojpuri Magazines. The editor of BAP was perplexed to
find a great variety of usages in spellings, gender, verbs, inflections and suffix. He felt strongly that if such a state of affairs is allowed to continue for a long period, then Bhojpuri will never be elevated to the status of a language. The problem of lack of standardization and unity is very closely linked to the claim of Bhojpuri leaders that it is a language. The issue figures prominently in Bhojpuri journals and magazines. The Presidents of conferences organized by ABBSS and BA also underline the necessity to bring uniformity in the written form of the language. There is a consensus on the need for bringing uniformity and standardization. However, scholars differ on the source of standardization. While some prefer sanskritized Bhojpuri other strongly argue for the 'pure Bhojpuri' as it is spoken by masses at large. The group which favours Bhojpuri as spoken by masses feels that if Bhojpuri is sanskritized it will lose its 'indigenous form' and identity. Moreover, if efforts are made to sanskritize it, then there is a very strong possibility that writers will be creating an artificial language and Bhojpuri will sever its roots with the people.

Bhojpuri scholars point towards the fact that Bhojpuri might be a mother-tongue of educated people also but it is by and large a language of countryside. For writing and reading educated section of Bhojpuri do not use Bhojpuri. Therefore, they argue that in the name of standardizing the language it should not be made artificial.
On the other hand, those who favour the use of "sanskritized" Bhojpuri argue that even Awadhi, Braj bhasa, Maithili used sanskrit words. The use of sanskrit vocabulary will enrich Bhojpuri language and thus, its capability to express a wide variety of phenomena will be greatly enhanced.

So far as the uniformity is concerned, points out the editor of BAP, the main problem is that writers think in Hindi and then write in Bhojpuri. He called on them to discard this habit and start thinking in Bhojpuri.

Similarly, one scholar raised a very pertinent issue having bearing on Bhojpuri's claim to the status of language,

We are now raising the demand to recognise Bhojpuri as a medium of instruction in education. If this demand is conceded, then we will be in the need of text books. If ten types of spellings are in use in print it will virtually create a chaos. If we do not have a uniform language—how could we produce textbook which are acceptable in the whole of Bhojpuri region.

Some scholars argue that Bhojpuri is spoken in a very large area, therefore, it is only natural to find regional variations in it. It is not something unique to Bhojpuri. The President of seventh conference of ABBSS made the following observation:

If you look at any of Bhojpuri magazine, you come across various forms of Bhojpuri. One starts wondering: how many types of Bhojpuri exist? With so many variations how can you write its grammar? In fact, in every language you find regional variations. It takes centuries to standardize a language. So far as Bhojpuri is concerned not even half a century has passed since prose writing in it started.

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In fact, right from the beginning the leaders of Bhojpuri movement have been of the opinion that each writer should be allowed to write in the language of the region to which he or she belongs and leaders usually refrained at that stage of the movement to discuss the question of regional variations in Bhojpuri. They were afraid that this issue might not be in the favour of movement at the initial stage. Moreover, some scholars thought that if writers keep on writing in all the regional dialects of Bhojpuri, they will represent Bhojpuri language in totality, Bhojpuri of any place will not dominate and nobody will nurture a feeling that Bhojpuri of his/her place has been neglected. The fear of Bhojpuri leaders was not without any basis nevertheless. A leading scholar sums up the feelings:

In fact, Bhojpuri as a language is passing through a process—it is evolving. In the language of poetry a certain level of uniformity is being achieved—but the language of prose writing still contains many-a-regional variations. It should not panicky us. The Khariboli Hindi as we see it today—has come a long way when compared to Khariboli of, say fifty years old. That is why I personally feel that at present writers should continue to write in their own regional language. Gradually and systematically attempts should be made to standardize the language. It is a long process. Seminars should be organised to discuss the issues of spellings gender and grammar of Bhojpuri.

(iii) Heritage of Bhojpuri Literature

A big hurdle in the way of Bhojpuri is the allegation by some scholars that it lacks a literary tradition. It is often alleged by some that Bhojpuri, unlike Maithili, does not have its own literature. To counter this argument Bhojpuri writers point out that Bhojpuri has a very rich tradition of folk-literature which is mostly alive on the
tongues of the illiterate village folk. Different kinds of folk-songs, tales, ballads, proverbs, maxims etc. are found in abundance. Allahā, Lorikāyān or liriki, Kunwarvijai, Sorthi, Brijbhar, Savanga Sadabriksha, Bihula etc. are a few of them. The tradition of folk literature in Bhojpuri goes back up to Rigveda, Brahmin Granthas and Grihsutras. Oppression on Hindu women by the Mughals and Turks are found narrated in songs like Jantsar.

A few of Bhojpuri writers concede to the fact that Bhojpuri is not rich enough in the field of its written literature. They pose a question: why such a prominent language, which is spoken by over eight crores of population, has a meager written literature in it? In fact, in ancient times, the Brahmins of Mithila and Bengal adapted Sanskrit along with their mother–tongues for literary pursuits. Banaras has been the centre of learning which is situated in Bhojpuri area. Bhojpuri people have always been getting inspiration from this centre of learning and, thus, naturally, Sanskrit should have been the medium of their education and learning. In this way, Bhojpuri was neglected.

In the opinion of one eminent Bhojpuri scholar, the people of Bhojpuri region have been historically and culturally so much closely connected with the Hindi area that they never felt the necessity to develop an independent literature of their own. Uptill now the educated Bhojpuri people have been using the language of the central India as the language of their literature and culture.
A few scholars disagree with the view that Bhojpuri lacks a literary heritage. They have traced the origin of Bhojpuri literature to vedic age. They point out that some of the mantras of Vedas used Bhojpuri words. These writers are of the view that right from the time of Sarhapa literature is produced in Bhojpuri. It is ironical that the name Bhojpuri was given to it in the last quarter of nineteenth century. The writings of Chauranginath, Gorakhnath, Sarhapa and Siddha show the initial form of Bhojpuri language. They consider Sant Kabirdas as the first poet of Bhojpuri. One scholar observes:

Some people maintain that Bhojpuri does not have a written literature. I think that there is an urgent need to place this phenomenon in a right perspective. Apart from a very rich heritage of folk literature, most of the writings by Sant poets, for example Kabirdas and Dharmdas, which are clubbed under the label of Hindi, in reality are written in Bhojpuri. If this is so, then we would say that literature in Bhojpuri dates to five six hundred years back.

A few scholars point to the fact that this region had revolted against the hegemony of Sanskrit. Jain and Buddhist literature were written in Pali, which was spoken by people at large. The Pali was the older form of Bhojpuri. The editor of BAP in one of its issues informs the readers that between twelth and fifteen centuries a vast quantity of literature was produced in Bhojpuri about which people are not much aware. Nayak Banjara, Sorthibrajbhar, Lorki, Kunwar Vijayamalla, Brithari Charitra, Achar etc. were written in Bhojpuri. Even Ramacharitmanas the great epic by Tulsidas which was written in Awadhi, used a lot of Bhojpuri words. Moreover, poets from Dariyadasi and Sarbhang Sampraday have written many works in Bhojpuri.
Bhojpuri scholars have traced the origin of prose-writing in Bhojpuri to twelth century. It is maintained that the oldest form of Bhojpuri prose is found in *Vktivvakti Prakaran* a text of grammar, written in the twelth century. Between twelth and sixteenth century one does not find any written record of Bhojpuri prose. But since 1620 many a royal decrees, letters, records of Parmar Kings of Shahabad are found in Bhojpuri. In all the royal proceedings and minutes Bhojpuri was used.

Apart from tracing the literary tradition in Bhojpuri to the times of Buddha and Mahavir, Bhojpuri leaders also refer to the fact that in the past few years a vast variety of literature is being produced in Bhojpuri. Essays, dramas, novels, biographies, stories, criticisms, epics, poems, ghazals etc. have been published. The writers have produced literary writings in various genres of literature and it has diversified the base of Bhojpuri literature.

Bhojpuri Academy since its establishment has published collections of folk songs, folk tales etc. Attempts have been made to collect folk songs from the whole region and publish them. Much before Bhojpuri Academy was set up, Bhojpuri Sansad, an old organisation of Bhojpuri, at Varanasi, had published a collection of Bhojpuri songs *Bhojpuri Sanskar Geet*. Thus, Bhojpuri scholars have worked assiduously to counter the allegation that Bhojpuri lacks a literary tradition. According to Bhojpuri leaders the main obstacle in the way of written literature in Bhojpuri has been that it is not used as a medium of
instruction in primary education. They also underline the need to diversify Bhojpuri literature and to produce standard prose writings.

(iv) Hindi And Bhojpuri:

What is the nature of relationship between Hindi and Bhojpuri? Will not the development of Bhojpuri language and literature be harmful for the prestige of Hindi as the 'national language' of India? These are some of the questions which Bhojpuri leaders addressed themselves to. Most of the Hindi scholars expressed their displeasure over the demands and claims advanced by Bhojpuri writers, in the initial stage.

Bhojpuri writers point out that it is a mistaken belief that development of Bhojpuri literature will weaken the status of Hindi as the 'national language'. They strongly argue that instead it will enrich Hindi. They remind the people that writers from Bhojpuri region have contributed significantly to the development of Hindi literature. One of the leaders of Bhojpuri went on record to state:

How can we even think in our wildest dream to do a thing which will harm Hindi? We have developed Hindi at the cost of our mother-tongue. If I am convinced that Bhojpuri literature in any way is harmful to Hindi, I swear I will immediately stop writing in Bhojpuri. Nothing doing at the cost of our national language Hindi.

Bhojpuri scholars argue that Janpadiya dialects have played a very important role in enriching Hindi literature. The writings of Kabir, Tulsi, Soordas which were written in the then popular folk languages, have enriched the storehouse of Hindi literature. Hindi and
regional languages have a mutually beneficial relationship between them.

Though claiming for a distinct status for Bhojpuri and expressing resentment over the tendency to treat Bhojpuri as a mere dialect of Hindi, spokesmen of Bhojpuri movement anxiously point out that their devotion to Hindi should not be underestimated. Each of them extends his unconditional support to Hindi as the 'national' language of country. They differentiate themselves from Tamils or even Maithils who resent the adoption of Hindi as the official language of the Union. They point with some pride that it were the writers whose mother-tongue was Bhojpuri, who have enriched Hindi literature. In fact, the contribution of writers from Bhojpuri region has been most significant. Pandit Sadal Mishra (who is considered the first prose writer of Khari boli Hindi), Bhartendu Harishchandra, (the father of modern Hindi literature) and number of distinguished scholars of Khari boli Hindi have hailed from Bhojpuri region. Bhojpuri leaders think that for the integration of the country a pan-Indian language is necessary and no language other than Hindi can do this job. Shri Hajari Prasad Dwivedi who was hesitant initially to support the activities of ABBSS in one of his addresses stated:

We are very proud of our mother-tongue, nevertheless, Bhojpuriyas are always for the unity and integration of the country. They do not have separatist feelings. We have never hesitated to sacrifice our most cherished and loved things for our country... I want to make it absolutely clear that Bhojpuri has no enmity to Hindi. We do not visualise any competition with Hindi. In fact, Hindi is as much ours as Bhojpuri. Both are like two eyes of ours.
Thus, the relationship between Hindi and Bhojpuri poses a very tricky problem before the spokesmen of Bhojpuri. All of their claims for the development of their mother-tongue originate from their stand that Bhojpuri is grammatically distinct from Khariboli Hindi and hence a language in its own right. As soon as they claim a distinct status for their mother-tongue their intentions are doubted. To make their position clear Bhojpuri scholars stress the role of mother-tongue in the overall development of personality of an individual. Rahul Sanskrityayan, one of the early advocates of Bhojpuri movement, while addressing a Bhojpuri conference in 1947 had emphasized the role of mother-tongue in making people literate in a short period. In a democratic political set up, he argued, it is desirable that a substantial proportion of population is literate and this could be achieved in a much lesser time if education is provided through people's mother-tongue. He expressed his belief that no language can displace Hindi. Bhojpuri scholars argue that if literature is produced in various regional speeches of Hindi region it will go a long way in removing the misapprehensions of people in the South about Hindi; they will come to know that Hindi is not the mother-tongue of people in the North. They point out that Hindi as a language-system is like river Ganga whereas regional speeches, including, Bhojpuri are estuaries of it. Hindi has an all India basis. The Khariboli Hindi literature originated, developed and flourished in Bhojpuri region. Eminent scholars of Hindi belonged to this region who had laboured hard to elevate Hindi at its present status. Nevertheless, at present Hindi as the 'national language'
is not dependent on any particular region for its survival.

v). Magahi, Maithili And Bhojpuri

Grierson considered Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri as the three main dialects of the Bihari language. However, Grierson divided the three dialects into two groups—an eastern group consisting of the closely related dialects of Maithili and Magahi and a western group, consisting of Bhojpuri. Maithili and Magahi are both languages primarily of Bihar, whereas the Bhojpuri speakers are divided between Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The official State language in Bihar is Hindi which is not the mother-tongue of any major population group. The Magahi and Bhojpuri people have adopted Hindi as the medium of education, administration and political communication. In fact, Hindi in Bihar has become preeminently the language of the Magahi speaking population. The three main speech-communities in Bihar have different attitudes towards their mother-tongues. Generally it is seen that a well educated Maithil will talk and write to another Maithil in Maithili. An educated Bhojpuri will talk to another Bhojpuri in his mother-tongue but when it comes to writing he will use Hindi. An educated Magahi in most instances, adopt Hindi even when he talks to another Magahi.

It is true to a certain extent that attachment of Bhojpuri to their mother-tongue was restricted to it as a spoken speech-form only. Bhojpuri people lacking a standard literary language of their own have adopted
Hindi as the medium of education, administration, Journalism etc. They did not use Bhojpuri as a medium for their literary and scholarly pursuits. It was not till recently that attempts started to collect folk songs and folk tales in Bhojpuri and get them published. It was only after the mobilization of Maithils for Maithili and its recognition by Sahitya Academy that a few Bhojpuri writers became conscious of the potential of Bhojpuri language for instrumental functional roles also. The success of Maithili movement, howsoever small, made writers and poets of Bhojpuri aware of the immediate need of looking at the question of their linguistic identity in a new light. They came to realize that Bhojpuri elites, due to historical and political factors, have never had a chance to develop a literary tradition of Bhojpuri, was not properly evaluated. Meanwhile, Maithili was included as a subject in Bihar Provincial Civil Services examination. This made the competition relatively easier for those who offered Maithili as one of the subjects. This put the speakers of Bhojpuri in a disadvantageous position compared to Maithils. Now, the issue of recognition for Bhojpuri got linked to the problem of employment. Remarked one of the members of ABBSS,

The recognition of Maithili by Bihar governments puts our children in a very disadvantageous position. The language issue has become a political one now. If we do not make enough efforts to get the recognition for Bhojpuri, our children will curse us for having done nothing for their future.

(vi) Bhojpuri And The Census

Bhojpuri spokesmen and organisations proclaim that Bhojpuri is spoken by almost 1/10th of the total
population of the country. The exact number of Bhojpuri speaking population is not known because in the census they are clubbed under the label of Hindi. Bhojpuri organisations and scholars admit the fact that people at large mostly in the villages do not know that the name of their mother-tongue is Bhojpuri. The bulk of the population prefer to return Hindi as its mother-tongue. Obviously, there are severe limitations upon the utility of the census as an objective measure of the distribution of languages in Bihar. But census reflects the extent of language-consciousness of different language groups and the relative degree of absorption of the mother-tongues by Hindi.

Bhojpuri scholars are not unanimous on the desirability of giving Bhojpuri as the mother-tongue in the census. The ex-secretary of ABBSS narrated an incident related to census enumeration. When Devendra Nath Sharma was the Director of Bhojpuri Academy, he called on people to give Hindi as their mother-tongue. His appeal was published in the leading daily newspapers. The ex-secretary of ABBSS pointed out with a mixture of despair and sarcasm that such incidents are not rare from Bhojpuri scholars.

Thus, the fact that Bhojpuri is spoken in a very large area is not of much help to Bhojpuri spokesmen in advancing their claims for official recognition.

vii). International Dimension Of Bhojpuri Language

Bhojpuri is spoken by a large number of people in a number of countries other than India. In fact, some one hundred
and fifty years ago Britishers had taken a large number of men and women from Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar as labourers to Carribbean countries. These immigrants to British Guiana, French Guiana, Trinidad, Surinam and Fiji were indentured in these colonies and they worked as plantation labourers. These immigrant labourers took Bhojpuri language and culture with them and preserved it in those countries. Bhojpuri organisations point out with a sense of pride that Bhojpuri is the only speech of India which is spoken by a very substantial population outside India in almost half a dozen of countries. Bhojpuri magazine publish reports of various cultural activities organised by Bhojpuri speech communities abroad. They maintain that the good and cordial relations which India enjoys with these countries owe a lot to Bhojpuri language. Bhojpuri movies and songs are in great demand in Nepal, Burma, Singapore, Fiji, Soorinam, Kenya, Trinidad, Mauritious etc. Bhojpuri spokesmen point out that in the global context Bhojpuri language and culture have an international status which no other language in India enjoys.

** Territory And History Of Bhojpuri Region**

Bhojpuri is spoken in a very large region. Bhojpuri leaders are not unanimous in delimiting the territory where Bhojpuri is spoken. Most of them follow Grierson in delimiting language boundaries. Grierson observes that.

Of the three Bihari dialects Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri, it is the most Western. North of the Ganges it lies to the west of the Maithili of Muzaffarpur and South of the that river, it lies to the West of the Magahi of Gaya and Hazaribagh till it has covered the entire Ranchi plateu, including the great part of the distts. of Palamau and of Ranchi. Here, it is
bounded on the east by the Magahi spoken in the sub-
plateau pargana of Ranchi and by the Bengali of
Manbhum, of the Oriya of Singhbhum and the native
state of Gangpur. The boundary then turns to the
north, through the border of Palamau, along which
line it marches with the form of Chattisgarhi spoken
in Sarguja and Western Jashpur. After passing along
the western side of Palamau, the boundary reaches
the Southern border of Mirzapur. It follows the
Southern and Western borders of that district upto
the river Ganges. Here, it turns to the east, along
with the course of that stream, which it crosses near
Benaras, so as to take in only a small portion of
the north Gangetic portion of Mirzapur. South of
Mirzapur it has still had Chattisgarhi for its
neighbour, but on turning to the north, along the
western confines of that district, it has been
bounded on the west first by the Bagheli of
Baghelkhand and, then by Awadhi. Having crossed the
Ganges, its boundary line has nearly due north to
Tanda on the Gogra, in the district of Faizabad. It
has run along the Western boundary of the Benaras
district across Jaunpur, along the West of Azamgarh,
and across Faizabad. At Tanda, its course turns west
along the Gogra and then north upto the lower-ranges
of Himalayas, so as to include the district of
Basti. Beside the area included in the above
language frontier Bhojpuri is also spoken by the
members of the wild tribe of Tharus, who inhabit the
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districts of Gonda and Bahraich.

Udai Narayan Tewary in his book BHOJPURI BHASHA AUR
SAHITYA follows Grieson in delineating the boundaries of
language except its boundary in the north. He extends its
boundary to further north. The author made excursions in
the terai region of Nepal to collect samples of
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language.

Some scholars include even Allahabad and Pratapgarh as
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Bhojpuri speaking districts. These two districts are
57
widely recognized by linguists as Awadhi-speaking.
Bhojpuri scholars have minor differences of opinion with
regard to the delimitation of language boundaries.

(i) Bhojpuri Regional Identity

Regional and national movements in India and elsewwhere
frequently select out of the past symbols which establish
the continuity-distinctness, and grandeur of the historical-political traditions of the area (for example, the cultivation of the Shivaji myth to build a Maharashtrian regional identity). Bhojpuri cultural entrepreneurs also have applied their skills to trace the history and grandeur of the region.

Bhojpuri scholars adhere to the view that Bhojpuri has been named after the Bhojpur pargana in the Buxar subdivision in the district of Shahabad. There are two small villages in this paragana - old Bhojpur and new Bhojpur. It was the capital of the Ujjain Rajput kings who were the descendants of the well known illustrious King Bhoj or Bhojraj of Malwa. They came here as invaders and after defeating the aboriginal 'Chero' tribe of this place, established a small estate which they named Bhojpur after the name of their famous predecessor. Reminiscences of their old fort known as 'Navratna Durga' can be traced in the new Bhojpur even today. In course of time, adjective Bhojpuri or Bhojpuria, derived from Bhojpur, was being used to represent the inhabitants as well as the language of this area. The scholarly source of this history for Bhojpuri for 'cultural entrepreneurs' are Buchanan’s, survey of Shahabad district, an article by Blockhman published in the Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1871 and translation of Ain-e-Akbari by Blockhman. Udai Narayan Tewary writes:

In the Journal of Royal Asiatic Society 1871, while discussing the details of Chotanagpur and Palamau by Muslim historians Blockhman has mentioned about Bhojpur also. According to him the King of South Bihar was very painful for the Delhi emperor. During the reign of Akbar, the king of Bhojpur, Dalpat, was made a prisoner near Buxar after his
defeat. He was freed after he paid a heavy penalty. Again he revolted against Akbar. He continued his fight even during the reign of Jahangir also. As a consequence his descendant was punished and given death sentence by Shahjahan.

Udai Narayan Tewary while tracing the history of the region points out that Blockhman in the first part of Ain-e-Akbari also mentions that to the north of Sahasram pargana and West of Arrah - Bhojpur was the native place of Ujjain kings. In the tenth year of Shahjahan's rule, Pratap, king of Bhojpur, revolted against the emperor. Then Bhojpur was attacked. Pratap surrendered himself and was hanged later on by an order of Shahjahan. Tewary further points out that in the atlas of James Rennel, published in 1781, the region of north Arrah is being referred as Rohtas province. He derives the inference that even in 10th century there existed a Bhojpuri province.

On the basis of above mentioned details of history of Bhojpuri region Udai Narayan Tewary concludes:

It now becomes very much clear that once upon a time Bhojpur was a very famous kingdom. Its rulers had come to Bihar from their original place Malwa in ancient times. In the medieval Indian history - especially that of Western Bihar the place of these Rajputs is very important. Their influence remained intact till the revolt of 1857. Kunwar Singh revolted against Britishers in 1857, as a consequence of which Bhojpur was destroyed and it came to an end.

Similarly Durgashankar Prasad Singh indulges in portraying the old grandeur and glory of Bhojpur kingdom. He writes:

It is said about this town that once upon a time this town Bhojpur covered an area of fourteen Kosa and was very prosperous. According to one proverb the town had fifty three roads with market on both sides, had fifty two gullies... If we assume that on an average each family had five members, then its population would be around two lakhs and eighty
The old persons narrate the stories of temples, places, tanks, palace of Maharaj Vikramaditya, Singhasan - Battisi, the place where it was buried, the hall where 'navratnas' of Vikramaditya used to assemble etc. Even today in Bhojpur one can see the signs of mounds, tanks etc.

Durgashankar Prasad Singh also mentions that according to some sources Bhojpur was established by Dhareshwar king A.P. Bhojdeva (1005 to 1055) of Malwa after his victory over eastern provinces. Then, this region was known as 'Sthali-prant'. It, then, included modern Ballia, Ghazipur, Eastern Azamgarh, Saran, Gorkhpur and Shahabad. This Bhojpur remained the capital of eastern Kingdom of Parmars of Malava till the time of Arjun Varma i.e., 1223. Moreover, in a book Aara Puratatva published by Aara Nagri Pracharini Sabha, in 1910 it is mentioned about Bhojpur that King Bhojraj of Dharapuri was a famous person. He was a great lover of Sanskrit. His work 'Bhoj Prabandha' has made him immortal. It is said that he built Bhojpur after defeating the Chero king. Bhojpuri spokesmen and scholars have tried to point out that once upon a time Bhojpur was a very prosperous kingdom. They also say that in any time of history the Bhojpuri region (as language boundaries exist today) was never under one ruler. It was divided between Karush, Keekat, Pippali Kanan and Bojjji. According to Brahman Sahitya this region was under Kashi and Kaushal till six hundred B.C. Here, Prakrit was used as a spoken language by people. During Magadh rule the whole of eastern India was under Magadh which included Bhojpuri region also. In this region Brahmin religion was not able to exercise its authority and influence in full. The hegemony of Brahmin orthodoxy was challenged by Buddhism and Jainism from Bhojpuri
region. This region has a long established tradition of protest against the established authority.

Some of the Bhojpuri scholars, while elaborating upon the historical and cultural significance of Bhojpuri region, have pointed out that in the Siddha ashram of this Janpad most of the rishis obtained Vedic mantras. In Rigveda 'Bhojganas' are referred to as those who feed and nourish. In Mahabharata Bhojganas are depicted as as the descendants of Druhieu, the son of Yayati. Descendants of Druhieu were called Bhoj due to a curse from Yayati. In Mahabharata the Bhojganas have been described as having immense strength, intellect and valour. In the time of 'Dwapar' population flourished in this region. Karush was one of the descendants of Manu. There was a Gurukul in this region where nearly eighty thousand sages acquired knowledge. The famous sage Vishwamitra hailed from this region; he knocked off demons' arrogance. Moreover, Sashram is in Bhojpuri region which is a place where fierce fight took place between legendary Parashuram and Sahastrabahu. The famous fort of Rohtas also lies in this region which reminds one of Maharaja Harischchandra who is famous in history for speaking truth. Bhojpuri region was ruled by King Ashoka also. It was a place for Buddhist monastries. After the decline of Mauryan empire, Samudragupta referred to this region as 'Jangal'. The reference to 'Jangaldish' is also found in a copper-plate belonging to king Shakashobha. Probably Brahatsanhitab by Varahmihur mentions about these forests which have been said to be situated north of Prayag.
It has been pointed out that before the arrival of Raja Bhoj of Malwa this region was known as Karush. Coming to the period of modern history of the region, Bhojpuri scholars point out with great pride that the first President of India, Rajendra Prasad, was from Bhojpuri region.

Apart from the articles, essays and presidential addresses delivered at annual conferences organised by ABBSS and BA, poets have written songs praising the great land of Bhojpuri region. In one of such songs one poet elaborates on the ancient glory of the land, mythological characters and great personalities which belonged to Bhojpuri region.

The short translation of the poem is as follows:

Great is the land of Bhojpuri -desh'/Legendary Rama & Lakshman came here to study Vedas/To its West lies famous Prayag and to its north is Nepal/In the east flows Sone river,/And, we have Kashi/All the Saint poets were/born here-/It is a land of Shershah and Kunwar Singh/The women sing beautiful Kajri, they also sing alha-Udal,/People are tall and sturdy It is a land of brave people, of chivalrous great men; Kabir was born here and so was Bhikari/This land gave birth to Bhartendu,/Famous Sonepur fair is organized here/This is the land of Rajendra Prasad,/Jayaprakash and Jagjivanram/Gandhi conducted his first experiment of/non-cooperation at Champaran/May god bless the land of Bhojpur.

If one looks at various magazines and journals published by Bhojpuri associations one frequently comes across poems and articles in which the ancient glory of the region is sung. Articles elaborate upon the famous and important personalities belonging to Bhojpuri region.

Bhagvatsharna Upadhyaya while delivering presidential address at ABBSS said:

No Janpad in the history of India could gain such importance as that of Bhojpur which had Kashi within its boundaries. In ancient times Magadh and Bhojpur
were under one system of Government. Chandra Gupta Maurya and great scholar Chankya belonged to this region. It is a region of brave people. Shantan Shah had defeated 'chero' tribal chiefs and established the rule of Ujjain dynasty. The rulers of Bhojpur region kept struggling for their independence even during Mughal rule. Descendant of Parmar Kings, Kunwar Singh during 1857 at the ripe age of eighty gave a tough fight to British army. In the twentieth century Bhojpurian Janpad played a glorious role in the political awakening of India. Gandhi, after returning from South Africa conducted his first experiment of satyagraha in Champaran. In the Quit India movement this region played a glorious role. Jayaprakash Narayan played a very important part in 1942 movement, Bihar movement led by Jayaprakash in 1974-75 has been a milestone in the political history of our country.

One Bhojpuri writer proclaims that heart of India is Kashi which is the Centre of Bhojpuri region also. This very fact in itself, according to him is a testimony to the significance which Bhojpuri region enjoyed in the cultural map of India.

Leaders of the Bhojpuri movement have looked upon Veer Kunwar Singh who played a leading role in the revolt of 1857 as a rallying point to integrate Bhojpuri community. Kunwar Singh is a popular hero of 1857 widely mentioned in Bhojpuri folk songs. Bhojpurias adore him as the "father of Bhojpuris." In mass popularity he ranks with the Rani of Jhansi. He was as much dreaded by the British as he was loved by the people in the region between Calcutta and Lucknow and an either side of the Ganges. In him Bhojpuri leaders see the scope to establish the grandeur of the historical-political traditions of the area. One spokesman of Bhojpuri movement made the following remarks about Kunwar Singh:

*Kunwar Singh was already seventy years old in 1857 and yet he plunged into it and led the struggle in Bhojpur, his homeland, the region of Western Bihar and Eastern U.P. even in his old age he fought pitched battles and
also conducted long drawn, guerilla struggle against the Britishers. The insurgent Dinapur regiments joined his banner and he marched all the way to Banda, Kanpur, Lucknow, Azamgarh and crossing the Ganges came back to home and died fighting in liberated Jagdishpur, his native place.

Bhojpuri journals and magazines are replete with songs and stories praising the great hero of 1857 revolt. All that Kunwar Singh stood and fought for is portrayed in the following folk song:

Oh Babua, that day our Grandpa took up his sword  
Oh Babua, to keep safe our pride and our plenty, our religion, our cows  
Oh Babua, to protect rent-free lands of our widows to protect sisters from disgrace  
Oh Babua! to defend the fair name of our fathers and grand fathers,  
Oh Babua! when hour of calamity was upon us  
That day our grandpa took up his sword!  
Oh Babua! when the Marathas had laid down their lives  
And the Sikhs they fought to death  
Oh Babua, the sons of the Peshwas had turned into slaves  
The Emperor of Delhi, he too a pauper had become  
And they begged and begged but could receive no alms!  
Oh Babua! that day our grandpa took up his Scorpions bred in our cannons the barrels of our guns have rusted  
Oh Babua! we had made sickles out of the steel of our sword,  
Oh Babua! the Bhojpurias had even thrown their lathis aside  
Oh Babua! that day our grandpa took up his sword  
Oh Babua! he was eighty years old  
His head shook as he moved  
His hair was white like the hevon  
Oh Babua! all his thirty-two tooth he had lost  

The textbooks published by Bhojpuri Academy contain songs adoring Kunwar Singh. The Academy has published five epics on Kunwar Singh. The spokesmen of Bhojpuri movement organise every year a function on 22 April (to celebrate the victory of Kunwar Singh over British) since 1984. In the souvenir entitled 'Eighteen Fifty Seven and Virvar Kunwar Singh', fourteen articles were published dedicated to Kunwar Singh's memory. One writer gives
the following details:

After the Dinapur regiments revolt on July 25 when the sepoys joined him, Kunwar Singh liberated the district town of Arrah and on 29 July annihilated the British force under Durban in the battle of Gangi. The very first battle established his prestige. The British, however, under Eyre put through another attack from Buxar. On August 7 the battle of Bibiganj was fought. Kunwar Singh put up dogged resistance, harassed and weakened the enemy, and later organised a masterly retreat, successfully escaping with all his force.

The battle of Bibiganj is described in the following song:

It was a night of the month of Bhado
And dark clouds covered the sky,
Babu Kunwar Singh went to war at the
dead of the night;
The Firangis trembled with fear,
The spies poured torrents of rain
And the guns showered bullets in the
battle field below
Babu Kunwar Singh's horse advanced
with prancing steps,
And the white army, he kept beheading,
Heads fell thumping,
with the clap of each trotting hoof!
And once when he was surrounded
Alone by the whites
He fought with his both hands,
His horse ran in strategic circles
And sword clanked against sword
A bloody war was fought in Bibiganj,
The Cannons roared and the bayonets flashed,
And the contending sides fell upon each other
Eyre was stricken with panic and he struck
his chest in despair
He said, "This Babu, he is a wizard
swiftly like a tiger he pounces
Blessed is the mother who bore
A son mighty as the mountains,
The firangi raj is now doomed yet,
it can be saved no more,
I am totally helpless, here fights a man like Kunwar Singh".
The poet Nath Singh as 'Sohar' Kunwar
Singh's fame shall live for ever.

There are also whole 'panwaras' (ballads) devoted to Kunwar Singh and his younger brother Ajit Singh.

One Bhojpuri scholar states that Kunwar Singh's memory to the people of the region meant liberation from foreign domination. Every year during the 'Holi' people sing of him

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and repeat this pledge:

O Babu Kunwar Singh We shall dye no more garments in sacred safron till your raj comes again
From hither came the Firangees to surround them
And from thither, came the two Kunwar brothers
As freely as the spray of colour in Holi
The guns of both spouted fire
In the middle raged a grim battle,
Oh Babu Kunwar Singh
We shall dye no more garments in sacred safron
Till your raj comes again.

Thus, Bhojpuri scholars and writers in propagating Bhojpuri cultural nationalism have attempted to invoke memories of Bhojpuri region as an ancient and rich Kingdom. They have selected the legendary King Bhojdeva and his kingdom to suggest that once in the past Bhojpur was a flourishing region. Similarly to instil a sense of community of a Bhojpuri national identity among the speakers of Bhojpuri leaders of Bhojpuri movement have chosen Kunwar Singh.

Bhojpuri Culture And National Character

A cultural region is one in which there are widely shared and recognised cultural traits and patterned behaviour, particularly among the common people. Descriptively, one of two kinds of behaviour, customs, or traits are taken as diagnostic of regional culture. Gods, Goddesses, rituals, myths and festivals are the most frequent diagnostic traits used to establish the reality of particular regions. Other kinds of cultural items, which are sometimes thought to be diagnostic of a region are dress, style of turban, ornaments agricultural implements, housetypes and settlement patterns. Bhojpuri litterateurs maintain that region has a distinct culture
and community has a unique national character. For example, while presiding over the annual conference of Bhojpuri Academy in 1982, Vishwanath Varma said:

Since ancient times this Janpad has a unique culture. 'Kashi' can be regarded as the cultural centre of Bhojpuri region. According to Manusmriti, the region of ancient Vedic culture was Brahmrvarata, Brahmrishidesh and Madyadesh region which lies in the east of these three, i.e., region from the confluence of Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati till the confluence of Ganga and Gandak, can be called the backbone of Bhojpuri culture. In the spread of knowledge, during the age of Upanishadas, scholars of Kashi played a dominant role. Buddha and Jain rejected the cultural hegemony of Brahmimism and Sanskrit. Bhojpuri region has a tradition of rejecting any sort of domination.

Vishwanath Varma, points out, in the course of the same address that the personality of 'Bajrangbali Hanuman' represents the typical Bhojpuri personality. People here are bold, adventurous and very enterprising. When Kabir wrote that Kabir stands in the midst of market, one, who is ready to bear heavy losses, should come along, he reflected on typical Bhojpuri psyche and mentality. He notices a deep sense of commitment to humanitarian values in Bhojpuri culture. As Bengali culture is religion oriented and Punjabi culture has naturalism, Bhojpuri culture along with religiosity is deeply committed to humanism.

Bhojpuriyas cultivate their land among all sorts of hardships. They have a fighting spirit against all odds. Hard labour and preservance are two defining features of Bhojpuri culture. So far as the social aspect of culture is concerned, Varma points out that patriarchal family system prevails in Bhojpuri region. The region still has feudal set up and poor people are exploited socially and economically.
Bhojpuri literateurs and scholars are unanimous in stating that Bhojpuri culture is basically a culture of heroism. Bravery, tolerance and religiosity are the distinct features of Bhojpuri community. The King Karush who had cut his son by a sword and Kunwar singh are the heroes of Bhojpuri people who themselves are fearless and brave. Kunwar singh's character reflects the true national character of Bhojpuri people. It is maintained by Bhojpuri writers and poets that Bhojpuri culture is a 'mardani'—masculine culture. The songs sung at festivals especially at Holi are sung by groups of males.

Free thinking and courageous conduct, points out a scholar, are two features of Bhojpuri culture which make it distinct from other cultures. Inspite of having deep respect for Shastras people from this region never reposed blind faith in them. An air of arrogance, indigence and carefreeness is found among Bhojpuri people. They are not much bothered to adorn themselves and do hate any kind of artificial decoration. Bhojpuri culture has a certain air of masculinity about it. People are brave, fearless and dauntless.

Bhagwat Saran Upadhyaya while presiding over 3rd ABBS$ at Seewan in 1977, said:

In Bhojpuri region Veer Hanuman is worshipped with great devotion. He is regarded as the supreme God for his immense strength. To the people of this region the lover aspect of Krishna does not fascinate much; they adore him as the destroyer of demons.

It has been pointed out in Bhojpuri writings that this is the birthplace of brave Alha and Udal. There are so many
proverbs depicting the fierce and martial nature of 94
Bhojpuri. Cadget, 'lathi', is the cultural symbol of Bhojpuri people. 'Great are the virtues of stick' is sung by Bhojpurias in villages. Bhojpuri litterateurs are very fond of quoting Grierson who said:

Bhojpuri is the practical language of an energetic race, which is ever ready to accommodate itself to circumstances and which has made its influence felt all over India. The Bengali and Bhojpuri are two of the great civilizers of Hindustan, the former with his pen and the latter with his cadget.

In fact, Bhojpuri speaking tract is well known as one of the homes of a martial race in India. Bhojpur has been famous for martial activities throughout different ages. The Bhojpurias were given the name of 'Bandukchi' match-lockman during Mughal India. The stalwart Bhojpuri with his burly 'lathi' has been a familiar object striding over the field far from his home.

A Bhojpuri scholar made following observation regarding Bhojpuri culture:

At the level of ethics, in Bhojpuri culture, you will find an emphasis on the notion of fulfillment and not on negative asceticism. People, here, regard the world and its manifestations as real and not as illusory. Man's ethical endeavours should be directed towards fulfilling his duty to the world. So far as arts, paintings and sculpture are concerned there is a quest for strength. Artistic specimen represent the fulness of manly vigour. Compared to the Moughal style of painting Bhojpuri artistic specimen represent elements of vigorous masculinity. Agriculture provides the economic base of our culture. Capitalism has entered here negligibly. Economy largely is that of subsistence. Everyone has to struggle hard for survival. Therefore Bhojpuri culture is realistic.

(i) Nationalist Fervour In Bhojpuri Region

Bhojpuri writers and leaders underline the great 'nationalist fervour' which the people of this region have
always nurtured. They proclaim that Bhojpuri region never encouraged 'narrow regionalism' and regional chauvinism.' Nationalist sentiment has always dominated the psyche of the people. The political leaders from Bhojpuri area, for instance Rajendra Prasad, Jaya Prakash Naryan, Jagjivanram, inspite of their great attachment to their mother tongue, championed the cause of Hindi as the 'national language' of India. Political leaders from Bhojpuri region, unlike leaders from other parts of the country never encouraged linguistic-regional chauvinism; instead the symbols of national identification have been given priority by the elites of the region over regional symbols. The tradition of sacrificing 'regional interests for the sake of country's larger interests' has deep penetration in the psyche of Bhojpurias. During the freedom struggle Indian National Congress yielded considerable influence in the region and in the process Bhojpuri society was integrated into 'national mainstream'. The region did not distinguish between region and nation, the two fused together in Bhojpuri psyche and it is true even today.

A Bhojpuri litterateur has a point when he states:

A few people maintain today that Bhojpuri lacks a standard literary tradition. These 'scholars' refuse to go a step further and ask - why this has been so? Bhojpuri people have a high sense of patriotism. Rajendra Prasad, Sacchidanand Sinha, Majrul Haque - all of them championed the cause of Hindi. Writers from Bhojpuri region have made a distinct contribution to modern Hindi literature. The first prose writer in Khari boli Sadal Mishra, the originator of modern Hindi literature, 'Bhartendu', the best novelist Premchanda, greatest poet of 'Chayavad' Jayashankar Prasad, and a whole galaxy of modern literature in Hindi belong to Bhojpuri region. If they wished, they could have easily written in their mother-tongue. But, they did not do so. It
does not mean that they had no love for Bhojpuri. It reflects their priority for national interests.

Even when Bhojpuri litterateurs took up Bhojpuri to write, they chose to write songs like 'Firangia' and 'Batohia.' They sang the glory of 'Bharatdesh' and not of their 'region'.

'Batohia' is a very popular song written by Raghuvirnarayan in 1912. The song had become very popular in the 1920s and 30s even in South Africa, Trinidad and Kenya. 'Batohia' enjoys a very important place in the history of Bhojpuri literature. Udai Narayan Tewary hails this song as the 'national anthem of Bhojpuri region'. In this song the poet eulogizes the beautiful land of 'Bharatdesh'. The song sketches a geographical, cultural and religious picture of India. The poet is held in awe and admires the beauty of Himalayas, river Ganga, Jumuna and Sone. It salutes to the great philosophers like Nanaka and Shankaracharya. The poem praises the literary excellence of Vidyapati, Kalidas, Soordas, Jaydeva and Tulsi. 'Batohia' is hailed as a milestone in Bhojpuri literature, in which the patriotism and nationalist fervour, a dominant feature of the psyche of this region, is found at its height.

Another song which matches the popularity and admiration of 'Batohia' is 'Firangia' written by Manoranjan Prasad Singh in 1921. In this song British raj is referred to as 'Firangia'. The popularity of the song has become a history. Bhojpuri leaders are very fond of pointing out that whenever Mahatma Gandhi addressed any public meeting in Bihar, first 'Firangia' was sung. The song narrates
the sufferings, distress and poverty brought by exploitative British raj. The song holds Britishers' policies responsible for making India so poor - which once upon a time was so prosperous that it was referred as 'a bird of gold'. The poet longs for the old happy and prosperous days for which independence and freedom from foreign clutches is a necessary condition.

Leaders of Bhojpuri movement refer to 'Batohia' and 'Firangia' as depicting the 'true national character' of Bhojpuri people. This 'nationalist fervour' of Bhojpuri region also puts Bhojpuri spokesmen in a difficult situation. They concede that Bhojpuri lacks a regional consciousness. Ex-Secretary of ABBSS sums up the feelings of leaders of Bhojpuri movement:

This region suffers from 'national syndrome.' People think that to talk of Bhojpuri language and culture is something antinational and development of Bhojpuri will harm Hindi. Even scholars of the calibre of Hajari Prasad Dwivedi, Namvar Singh were skeptical, at the initial stage of our efforts, about the repercussions of Bhojpuri development for Hindi. Hajari Prasad Dwivedi had, for this reason only, turned down our request to contribute an article for Bhojpuri Sammelan Patrika. People in this region have not been able to maintain a balance between 'regionalism' and 'nationalism'. And, I am sorry to say that role of politicians from this region in creating this impression upon people's mind has been dubious. Politicians in their public speeches and press statements have juxtaposed 'region' vs 'nation'. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

The foregoing discussion shows how Bhojpuri cultural entrepreneurs have made attempts to ideolize Bhojpuri language, culture, region and history. They have taken language as the basic element in Bhojpuri nationalism. Linguists have maintained that Bhojpuri is grammatically and lexically different from Hindi and hence a distinct
language. Scholars have sought the earliest available evidence of Bhojpuri language and literature. They have also attempted to create a symbol-pool for the region. They have chosen legendary King Bhojdeva and his kingdom to bring home the point that once in the past Bhojpur was a flourishing region. They have selected Kunwar Shingh to underline the unique national character of Bhojpuri community. Having established the distinctiveness of language, culture and region, Bhojpuri cultural entrepreneurs have raised demands for the development of language and preservation of Bhojpuri culture. The mobilisation aspect of Bhojpuri cultural nationalism will be dealt with in the next chapter.
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SOURCE: Ramesh Bihari Pandey, "Bhojpuri Bhasa Ka Itihas" (Bhojpur: Loksahitya Sangam, 1986)

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REFERENCE

--- Boundary, International
--- Boundary, State
--- Boundary, District

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REFERENCES

- Eastern Bhojpuri
- Northern Bhojpuri
- Western Bhojpuri
- Southern Bhojpuri
- Nagpuria Bhojpuri
- Tharu Bhojpuri

REGION OF BHOJPURI LANGUAGE

CHINA (TIBET)

A.L. SAHA
NOTES AND REFERENCES


3. ibid, p. 47.


6. ibid.

7. ibid, p. 150.


10. ibid, p. 7.

12. Bhojpuri litterateurs and linguists underline the research work carried on by European and Indian scholars on Bhojpuri language to bring home the point that Bhojpuri is a language and has a grammar. For instance see, Presidential Addresses delivered at the annual conferences, organised by Akhil Bharitya Bhojpuri Sahitya Sammelan and Bhojpuri Akademy at Patna; Ganesh Chaube, "Bhojpuri Par Shodh Karya Ka Silsila" Smarika (released at 3rd Annual Conference of Akhil Bhartiya Bhojpuri Sahitya Sammelan, held at Seewan in April, 1977) pp. 91-95 (in Bhojpuri).


15. See Veerendra Narayan Pandey, "Bhojpuri Ke Badat Deg Aa Saaran Ke Sajhedari" Iaad (Souvenir
16. Presidential Address by Viveki Rai delivered at VIII Annual Conference of ABBSS, held at Bilaspur in Madhya Pradesh from 30th December to January 1984 (in Bhojpuri).

17. ibid.

18. A number of Bhojpuri writers trace the origin of Bhojpuri from Vedic age, and thus establish the antiquity of the language. See, for example, Sawaran Kiran, "Bhojpuri Bhasha Sahitya - Ek Sarvekshana" in Raman Shandilya(ed.), op.cit., p.79.


22. ibid. The editor also expressed his anxiety that if he becomes strict on the issue of standardization and uniformity, Bhojpuri writers might feel offended and stop contributing to the magazine.

23. ibid.
24. Presidential address by Ishwar Chandra Sinha delivered at 7th conference of ABBSS held at Amnor, Saaran from 29 Oct-31 Oct. 1982. (in Bhojpuri); Presidential Address delivered by Ramavtar Shukla at the second conference organised by Bhojpuri Akademy.


27. Presidential Address by Devendranath Sharma, op. cit.


29. Presidential Address by Ishwarchandra Sinha, op. cit.

30. Interview with one Bhojpuri scholar at Patna in March 1986.


32. ibid.


38. See, the editorial, Iaad, 1981, op.cit.

39. The ex-secretary of ABBSS narrated an incident to prove his point. In the early 1970s, some supporters of Bhojpuri movement had approached Hajari Prasad Dwivedi and requested him to contribute an article for a Bhojpuri magazine. Dwivedi is reported to have asked them what will be the fate of Hindi as the national language if everyone starts writing in one's mother-tongue. He finally refused to write an article in Bhojpuri.

40. Interview with Vishwanath Singh who edited BAP for few years.

41. All the spokesmen of Bhojpuri movement with whom we had a chance to talk to in detail made it clear that they are ardent supporters of Hindi as the official language of the Union.
42. Presidential Address delivered at 2nd conference of ABBSS held at Patna on 15 & 16 May 1976.
44. Interview with ex-secretary of ABBSS.
45. See, for instance, "Editorial", in BAP (Dec, 1978).
49. Interview.
52. See, the editorial, BAP (Feb. 1980) p. 6.


58. B.S. Cohn; "Regions Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society", in Robert I. Crane (ed.) *Regions and Regionalism in South Asian Studies*, Monograph No. 5 (Duke University Programme in Comparative Studies on Southern Asia, 1967) p. 7.


60. Bhojpuri scholars, while tracing the history of Bhojpuri region and language, quote these sources.


62. ibid.

63. ibid.

64. Singh, 1958, op. cit.

65. ibid.


68. ibid.
69. ibid.

70. Presidential Address by Krishnadeo Upadhyaya, op. cit.


72. See, Presidential address by Ganesh Chaube delivered at IXth conference of ABBSS at Rane on 26-27 Oct. 85.


74. Presidential Address by K. Upadhyaya, op. cit.


76. ibid.

77. Interview with an active member of ABBSS. He narrated this with a great sense of pride.

78. English translated of a very famous folk-song in Bhojpuri.

80. Kaljayi Kunwar Singh; Kunwar Singh Virda Vali; Babu Kunwar Singh; Amar Senani Kunwar Singh; Mati Ke Mariad - Kunwar Singh (Patna: Bhojpuri Academy, year of publication not given) (in Bhojpuri).

81. "Eighty Fifty Seven and Virvar Kunwar Singh", Souvenier (Patna: Bhojpuri Academy, year of publication not given).

82. ibid, p. 44.

83. English translation of a folk song in Bhojpuri which pays tributes to Kunwar Singh's bravery.

84. These panwaras are sung even today by village folks with great enthusiasm in the Bhojpuri region.

85. English translation of a very famous and popular song in Bhojpuri.


87. Presidential Address delivered by him at Patna (in Bhojpuri).

88. Also see his article "Madhya Gangeya Sanskriti", BAP (May 1976) p. 47 (in Bhojpuri).

90. ibid.


93. English translation of his Presidential speech.


97. Interview with Shri V.P. Varma at Patna in March 1987.


100. Interview with Viveki Rai, a distinguished Bhojpuri writer, at Ghazipur in May 1986.


102. This point was made by almost all of Bhojpuri scholars.

104. ibid, pp. 58-59.


106. He expressed these views in a discussion with us at Patna in March 1987.