CHAPTER 1

IDENTITY OF DOGRA LAND

1.1. Geographical Background:

The consolidation of the fragmented areas of the state of Jammu and Kashmir by Dogra kings, since Maharaja Gulab Singh’s time (1822-1856) and the period of peace and stability ensured by them, promoted higher values of culture, the folk-music came to be a common heritage of the state.

Before 1947, the entire state occupied an area of 222,236 sq.kms., out of which 78,932 sq. kms. went under illegal occupation of Pakistan; 5,180 sq.kms. was illegally handed over by Pakistan to China. The state occupies the north-west niche of India on south by Himachal Pradesh and the Panjab; on the north by China and Turkistan, and a little of Russian Turkistan; and on the east by Chinese Tibet; thus strategically bordering on the territories of three powers— Russia, China and Pakistan.

For the administrative convenience, the state is divided into three distinct provinces:


2. Kashmir province covering Anantnag, Srinagar, Baramulla, Sopore, Kupwara and Badgam.


(3) Ladakh including Rupshu, Zanskar, Nobru as well as middle Ladakh and the lofty plateau south of Karakorum.

The part of India, which is inhabited by the Dogras and where allied dialects are spoken is called Duggar land. There is a controversy among the scholars regarding the derivation of the word ‘Duggar’. Some are of the opinion that the “Country round the two lakes— Mansar and Saroinsar is called Duggar i.e. the country of two hollows, whereas some hold the view that Duggar is the corrupted form of Sanskrit word ‘Dwigarta’ i.e the area enclosed by the two rivers — the Ravi and the Chenab, the limit being the rising hills on the north and the foot hills plain tract merging into the Panjab plains in the South. The concept of explaining the term Duggar, derived from the Dogra words ‘Duggah’— deep (adjective) and ‘Duggehr’— made deep (verbal noun) appears to be more relevant.

Villagers believe that the Dogra land comprised of high peaks and deep valleys, as such the name ‘Duggar’ describing the land and its people, take its derivative from the deep valleys (depressions) called ‘Duggah’— deep in local dialect. The change of the word ‘Duggah’ into ‘Duggehr’ and then into Duggar is almost the same as the change of the month ‘Muggehr’ into ‘Muggar’— the eighth month of the Bikrami year. It is interesting to note that 'Duggehr' in some dialects in Jammu region suggests depressions or pits, and the people inhabiting these low-lands or pit like localities may be called Duggars or Dogras. This view is supported by certain observations made by the Scholars.

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to identify the word ‘Duggar’ as common in dialects; for example ‘Duggehr’ in Pangasta (a village situated in Tehsil Billawar), 'Dodi-Duggehr' in Aknoor, ‘Duggehd’ in Sumarta⁹ (land of Sumantaks); ‘Dogohd’ in ‘Samba’, have much in common in both the sound of the word and the meaning of the term signifying depressions and identifying the people living in such areas.

The core area of the Duggar consists of the middle Himalayas, Siwaliks and plains of Jammu regions, excluding the areas to which Kashmiris, Gaddis, Khasa and Siraji etc. have migrated and in course of time influenced local dialects and the people. The people of these terrains have the background and the traditions of a common culture, and unique set of values.

The people of the mountains are comparatively simple, hospitable and freedom loving. Living in the lap of nature, they are generally contented. The people of the plain are less simple and less straight forward and more wordly wise and clever and their pattern of living is influenced by the neighbouring Panjabi way of life. People of kandi (dry land) are the best lot of Duggar. They are conservative, hard working, self respecting, ready to die for the honour of their women and for the sake of their caste and country, and prepared to break rather than bend. This area, isolated for long periods from the political cross-currents of the plains, and abounding in the beauty of nature, has inspired folk-singers and has great schools of Indian painting viz “Basohli, Poonch and Jammu.”¹⁰

Duggar appears to have changed in the course of time and by the 19th century when British came to these parts, the entire mountainous and sub-mountainous region between Sutluj and Jhelum was called Duggar, hence its inhabitants are Dogras.¹¹

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(9) The original nucleus of Bhadu state was Sumarta, a tract to the west of Billawar. The people of Sumarta were called Sumbaria and they are referred to under the name of Sumantaks in two copperplate deeds in Chamba.


For the purpose of musicology, the study is confined to the Jammu region. The region has diverse physiographic characteristics comprising of mountains, hills, valleys and plain features. The slice of Dogra region in Jammu and Kashmir state is highly rich in culture, soil and greenery.

It is bounded by district of Chamba of Himachal pradesh in the east; Ladakh and Kashmir regions in the north; west Punjab of Pakistan in the west; district Sialkote of Pakistan in the south-west and district Gurdaspur of east Punjab in the South.

The region originally covered an area of 32,067 sq.kms., but as some of the area was un-lawfully occupied by Pakistan during war, the present area position of the region is given as 26,953 sq.kms. It stretches between 32-17’ to 34-10’ North latitude and 73-26 to 76-40 longitude. The population of Jammu region according to census of India, 1981, is 2,691,621. It comprises of many small nationalities— the remnants of old tribes speaking different dialects.

“There are within the boundaries of Jammu region, areas with marked variations in altitude, climate, rainfall, irrigational facilities and soil composition.” A close study of these features in each district is interesting and rewarding. The Jammu region comprises of six districts viz; Jammu, Kathua, Poonch, Rajouri, Udhampur and Doda.

**Jammu District**: Jammu city is the district headquarter as well as the winter capital of the Jammu and Kashmir state. The district comprises of four tehsils— Jammu, Samba, Ranbir Singh Pura and Akhnoor. Like the plains of Panjab, Jammu experiences hot climate.

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Kathua District: To the east and north-east of Jammu district spreads Kathua district with diverse physiographic features comprising plains, hills, and mountainous terrain. The district comprises of four tehsils—Kathua, Hiranagar, Basahi, and Billawar.

Udhampur District: To the north of Jammu lies the semi-mountainous and Himalayan Riasi-Udhampur tract, which extends from the Siwalik foot hills in the south to Pir-Panjal range in the north. The district comprises the tehsils of Udhampur, Ramnagar, Riasi, and Gulabgarh. This area is the favourite haunt of Gujjars and Bakarwals.

Doda District: Farther north and north-east lies the Doda district including Kishtwar, Ramban, and Banihal valleys bordering on the southern fringe of the valley of Kishtwar. The district comprises of four tehsils—Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, and Bhaderwah.

Rajouri District: To the west of Riasi-Udhampur tract, on the right side of the Chenab, lies the Rajouri district with a terrain changing from sub-mountainous to mountainous. The district comprises of three tehsils—Rajouri, Buddhal, and Naushehra.

Poonch District: It lies to the north west of Rajouri and forms the southern slopes of the Pirpanjal range. The district comprises tehsils of Haveli and Mendhar.

River system: The history and culture of Jammu and its economy is to a large extent the gift of the rivers. The territories of Jammu are flanked by the three great rivers of the Panjab viz: The Ravi on the east, and the Jhelum on the west, while the third, the magnificent Chenab, traverses it almost in the middle.

The Chenab drains a long tract of the Jammu mountains, from the borders of Chamba in the east to Rajouri and Bhimber in the west. During its course through the Jammu territories of Kishtwar, Bhaderwah, Reasi, and Akhnoor, it receives many affluents, and constantly grows in volume and grandeur.

The exquisite valleys of the Chenab in Kishtwar, Bhaderwah and Akhnoor have given rise to legends, and several ballads and folk-songs have its banks as their central point.

The Ravi is the smallest of the Panjab rivers. The river drains the southern slopes of the Pirpanjal range and northern slopes of the Dhauladhar. The river leaves the Himalayas at Basholi, and then striking the terminal spurs of the Dhauladhar, flows to the south-west and separates Jammu from Chamba and finally leaves Chamba boundary at Kheri to debouch on the plains at Shahpur and Madhopur in Gurdaspur district of Panjab. From Shakargarh downward in the south-westerly direction, it separates the Kathua district of Jammu from the Panjab.\textsuperscript{15}

The river Ravi has substantial claim in influencing the cultural and economic patterns of a part of the Jammu territory. Many water ducts drawn on its right banks have been irrigating from time immemorial, a large tract of Andarwah in Kathua district which renders it highly fertile and productive area.

The Jhelum: The river takes its name from the town of Jhelum in the Panjab (Pakistan) beneath which it flows. The Jhelum is a river of Kashmir, but at the same time it forms the boundary of the Jammu province on the west. In west of Manawar in the district of Jammu, the Jhelum flows often between steep and rocky banks.

The three great rivers discussed alongwith a number of their tributaries drain the entire province, cut across the various mountains and hills, and form deep gorges and valleys.

Physiographic Division:

The Jammu region occupies the southern flanks of the Himalayas comprising of:
1. Middle mountains (lesser Himalayas) 2. Siwaliks (Jammu hills) and 3. Jammu plains.

1. Middle mountains (lesser Himalayas): The tract between the outer hills and the high ranges may be called the region of the Middle mountains, varying in elevation from 3,000 to 4,500 metres in general. Deep ravines cut these mountain slopes forming irregular ridges. These are steep towards the outer-plains and have gentle slopes towards the Kashmir valley. The mountain range begins along a line that starts from a point ‘12 or 15 kilometres’ north of Basahi and runs just north of the towns of Ramnagar, Riasi and Rajouri. Hence it takes a general north-westerly direction towards Muzzafarabad. The northern boundary of the tract is made by the two lofty mountain ranges. The famous Pirpanjal range which is an extension of the beautiful valley of Kashmir from Jammu region. The second coming from the south-east, ends at Kishtwar, and also emerges in the middle of Jammu province at Patnitop and divides Doda and Udhampur Districts. The local name of this range is Sioj Dhar which is a vast grassy land. The width of the track between these two ranges is between 45 kms. to 60 kms; from that it lessens generally to 16kms. near Rajouri.

Some of the important ranges in the area are the Sioj Dhar, Kali Dhar, Lada-Sudh Mahadeva Dhar and Pirbadsha Dhar. In Sioj Dhar we find Baskund, Kali Kund, Sali kund— the abode of Naga gods; and in Pirpanjal range we find Kaunsar Nag lake. The sacred cave of Mata Vaishno is situated on the peaks of Trikuta mountains— a branch ridge that runs due south-west. People also go on pilgrimage on certain special days to worship gods and goddesses. They sing and dance in the praise of deities.

(18) Ibid.
“The area of District Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar-Ramban belt and northern portions
of Rajouri and Poonch lie within this tract of the lesser or middle Himalayas.” 19 The
Chenab is the principal river in this division. The main tributaries are the Tawi, the
Manawar Tawi, the Ujh and the Basantar. People have different dialects, culture, shade
and colour, but Dogra culture and language is dominant. Many of the nomadic tribes —
Bakarwals, Gujjars and gaddis, climb up these mountains and grass lands with their
sheep and goats etc. and spend most part of the summer. They have their own customs,
traditions, religious beliefs, dance forms and music.

2. Siwaliks/Sub-Imallayas/Jammu hills: Geologically, Siwaliks were formed from
the detrital brought from great and middle Himalayas and subsequently they were com­
pressed into hilly topography, where the maximum elevation extends to 12,000 metres.
The Siwaliks comprise of conglomerates and clay, and the rocks are highly fossili­
ferrous. Wadia says, “The composition of the Siwalik deposits show that they are nothing
other than the alluvial detritus derived from the sub-aerial waste of the mountains,
swept down by their numerous rivers and streams and deposited at their foot.” 20

In Jammu region, this system lies between ‘Kandi’ and ‘Middle Himalays’ that is,
the south of the Pirpanjal is the Siwalik range comparatively much lower in elevation
and known as Jammu hills.

The Siwaliks are highly dissected by seasonal rivers called Choes or Nallahs. The
choes traverse the Siwaliks with parallel and sub-paralled lineament. These seasonal
rivers originate at the northern edge of the Siwalik hills along a highly sinous watershed
line.

(19) Charak SS. : 'History and culture of Himalayan States' Pub. N. Gopinath, Tilak Street, Pahar Ganj, New
The top most part of Siwalik hills is called Dun area, which has a plain summit. In Jammu Siwaliks, the ‘Dun area’ lies between Murrie (in middle Himalayas) in the north and Siwalik hills in the south. The typical Siwalik Duns are located in Udhampur and Ramnagar. For example, ‘Balahlta Dun’ in local dialect extends from Tikri to Udhampur. The river Devika originates and flows through it. Udhampur town is located on the crest of the Dun. Similarly ‘Dansal Dun’ is located in the heart of the Ramnagar area. It is a flat area that varies in width. It continues from some kilometres north west of Dansal to Basoli on the south-east. Near Ramkote, it become narrowed up and indefinite. To the east of that place up to Basholi it widens and may be called a flat plain.

The production of the good crops, abundance of China clay (kaolin), coal (from Jungle gali) and lime stone (from Jhajjar Kotli) make the area economically rich. The region has a typical culture which is primarily based on its ecology. The people of this area get pleasure from the folk-songs. The typical variety is of ‘Balahliti Bhakh’ which will be discussed during the study of its musicology. The music has direct co-relation with the environment, particularly the surrounding hilly terrain and atmospheric conditions supplemented with local dialects.

The zone of Siwalik hills: It lies adjacent to Dun region. The topography of this region is comprised of hogback ridges, different pattern of rivers along with their small valleys and extended gullies. This zone has a broken topography and extends from Udhampur to Jammu. This has resulted in the formation of hills and low valleys located near the seasonal river beds.

On the main national highway from Udhampur to Jammu, small valleys are located at Manthal, Tikri, Jhajjar kotli, Nagarota etc. The Siwalik hill-crests are found at Nandni, Panthal, Garhi etc. The beautiful lakes are also found in Siwalik hills viz; Mansar and Suroinsar.

Small hilllocks emerge from North to South making plateaus in this valley. The area remained a shelter place for the fugitive kings of the plains as is revealed by the existence of some historical forts available on some hillocks.\textsuperscript{22} The mention of the such towns is found in Kalahna's 'Raj Tarangni' e.g. Ballapur (Billawar) and Baba pura (Bahour) or modern Manwal on the bank of the Tawi.

Now-a-days Dhar-Udhampur road passes through this valley between Ravi-Tawi; Jandrah-Riasi, and Riasi upto Nowshera. Politically this area comes under Kathua (Billawar-Basholi), Jammu (Manwal-Jhajjar), Udhampur (Ramnagar-Riasi) and Rajouri (Sunderbani-Nowshera).\textsuperscript{23}

The hill-foot Piedment zone—‘Kandi’: This zone lies between Siwalik hills in the north and Jammu plains in the south and extends between the altitudes 380 to 550 metres. The average altitude of this region is 390 metres above the mean sea level. It has developed along the entire length of the southern slopes of Siwalik hills and has highly open scrub vegetation.

The seasonal ‘choes’ have washed away the fertile soil from the upper catchment area by sheet wash and lateral plantation erosion. Hence the majority of the villages are draught prone and mostly rely on rain god for irrigation. The main crop of this zone is millet, which is draught resistant. This vegetation is Jujube (Beir), kikar and phalai. The region is infested with poisonous snakes and scorpions.

The region has dry climate and barren topography because of which natives call it ‘kandi’. The word ‘kandi’ has been borrowed from Dogri word ‘kanda’ meaning edging landscape having dry thorny bushy vegetation with poor agricultural activity.

\textsuperscript{22} Nutan Dcsh Bandliu: 'Sheikha Khokhar – A Dogra hero', Daily Excelsior (6-12-1987).
\textsuperscript{23} Nutan Desli Bandliu: 'Dhar Udhampur Road and Transport Problem.' Daily Excelsior (8/7/19987).
The life of people is tough which is nicely depicted by Pandit Ganga Ram in his poem ‘Kandiya Da Basna’\(^\text{24}\) that goes as—

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\text{"kroh jai pani bhari, pathre\'n cha peir pahni,}
\]

\[
\text{\"dhak\'en d\'a dukh Pehne kusi j\'ai dasn\'a ;}
\]

\[
\text{\"ikkae gal sache di sa\'i lari\'a gal\'ai ditti,}
\]

\[
\text{\"sabne tho\'\'n kach\'a loko, kandi\'a\'n d\'a basn\'a."}
\]

\(\text{(whom to tell the miseries of going down and up the hills, and hurting the feet over stones in going to a far off place to fetch water. Daughter-in-law has truly said; ‘the life in kandi (dry land) is the worst’).}\)

Jammu-Pathankote railway line and few important roads viz: Lakhanpur-Basholi, Dialachak, Challan, Samba-Mansar, Jammu-Suroinsar, and Jammu-Lakhanpur, pass through this belt. Upper area of Kathua, Hiranagar, Tehsil Samba, Tehsil Jammu and Akhnoor (Upper area) fall in the ‘Kandi belt’.

3. **Jammu plains**: The tract has been designated by Drew\(^\text{25}\) as “the plain infront of hills.” This geomorphic region is an extension of Panjab plains and has been formed by the fill process of different rivers like that of the Ravi and the Chenab and their tributaries. The region is mainly comprised of thick alluvium, which is recent in age and is the fertile tract of Jammu, growing rice, wheat and maize in abundance.

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The belt is thickly populated. Many towns emerged from the womb of this land viz: Lakhanpur southern parts of Kathua and Samba, Nagri Parole, Hiranagar, Arnea, Bishnah, Ranbir singh pura, Kanah chak and southern lands of Bhimber and Mirpur (under Pakistan occupation).26

It may be of interest to say that along the Siwaliks can be found a clear cut division of groups offering a particular variety of folk-songs, although the common folk-songs like devotional, ceremonial, seasonal etc. form the common heritage of all Dogra people. We have a specific form of devotional music in the area streching from Jasrota to Billawar presided over by the two shrines of Mata Jasrota and Mata Sakrala.

The hilly areas interspersed over the Siwaliks are predominantly inhabited by the Rajputs who have been facing hardships and onslaught of enemy over long periods of time. They, therefore, sing in praise of heroes. The people inhabiting the plains also have their own heroes and they commemorate their sacrifice during annual fairs like Mela ‘Jhiri’

The hilly areas of Purmandal are mostly inhabited by Brahmins and they spend their time in meditation, as such the devotional songs are more popular there. From the hilly terrain spreading upto Ramnagar and covering the towns of Jammu, provide chiefly the songs in praise of heroes. Ramnagar in particular offers a special variety of folk-songs called ‘Karks’ because the tradition has it that the haughty chieftains of Ramnagar, who overawed simple and religious minded people, were subdued by Mata Vaishno Devi. The beauty of nature which has enriched Ram Nagar encourages the people to compose music in the form of Bhaints. They also go out in sprawling mountain slopes to sing ‘Bhaks’ to derive maximum pleasure.

Similiarly mountainous areas of Katra-Riasi blessed by Mata 'Vaishno', provides a rich variety of 'Bhakhs' and 'Bhaints' and other devotional songs, because the place offers proper climate for meditation and worship. The streamlets and the forest-cover encourage the singers to sing in praise of Mata 'Vaishno' but as we come down to the last lap of mountains at Akhnoor, we again find some religious songs, because there are temples and caves all over the area. However, the dominating folk-songs are 'Bhakhs'. As we reach the plains, we find the folk-songs depicting the cruelty of the Zamindars and the miser-y of the tenants. 'Kark' of Bawa jitto is the most noted form of Dogri folk-songs.

"The people of the up-lands maintain a very old tradition of devotional and ceremonial songs apart from 'Bars' and 'Bhakhs' but those of the low-lands living in conguity of Panjab have lost rigid traditional musical character and have absorbed influences of life and tougue of the people of Panjab, as evident from the seasonal and ceremonial songs in particular. This area spreads from Ranbir Singh Pura to Kathua along the Shakargarh and Gurdaspur belt."
1.2. Historical Survey:

The Dogra land which flourished in the valley of Siwaliks seems to have taken long time to develop into its present shape. The wheel of the time leaves behind imprints of every activity of mankind in every region, either in written or unwritten memoirs of its inhabitants or on the face of several objects included in the category of archaeological remains. A real history evolves out of social, economic and political events which have become settled and definite during any period, and which can be found from the study of the past records.

The early man is said to have lived in and around Siwaliks, whereof some fossils are found at certain places, viz Nagrota on the north of Jammu city and Utter-Behni near Purmandal. To protect himself from wild animals he used to take shelter in deep caves. Some famous caves are still in existence in Jammu Siwaliks and possess religious significance, for example 100 ft long cave of Vaishno Devi, Pingla Devi, Shiv Khori and Peer Khoh etc.

The primitive man of Jammu region used to depend on fruits and roots, and when he learned to make tools or weapons, he shifted towards hunting life and then to agrarian settlements at the Siwalik foot-hills down to the plains of Panjab and other low lands or along the river banks. Archaeological finds are available in abundance to testify the stone age in the Dogra region, whether Palaeolithic or Neolithic. At Jhiri near Akhnoor, some earthen vessels and two fragmentary stone axes excavated show the process of change into stone age. In Kathua district also similar early stone age

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tools were collected from the bed of the Basantar just near Samba. The pottery found there is generally hand made, leading to the conclusion that the people changed their nomadic character of old stone age, took to a settled life and started growing food grains. They made pottery and practised agriculture with stone implements. These finds lift the curtain from the face of the proto-historical era of Jammu region and we see the agro-pastoral man in a comparatively settled civilized society.

The sensational discovery of proto-historical site at the village ‘Manda at Akhnoor’ on the left of the Chenab river has revealed the existence of flourishing civilization of Harappan type. Among the antiquities, cultural remains like copper double-spiral-headed pins, bone-arrow heads, terra-cotta figures, followed by Kushan pottery both incised and plain etc. have been found at several sites in Jammu and Akhnoor tehsil viz Tikri mound, Guru Baba-ka-Tibba, Jhiri, Jafarchak and Dhetrial. These finds gives us the cultural sequence of Jammu region from the Harappan age, about 2,500 BC to early Christian era.

The antiquities and archaeological finds of Jammu lead to the inevitable conclusion that it witnessed the entire cycle of cultural evolution of North Indian Society. The primitive and the historical society of Duggar seems to have been a part of the Northern India, and in that capacity, was influenced by all the cultural currents which swept from age to age over the whole of North India from Bengal to Baluchistan. Therefore, in the process of evolution and through external influence came to be evolved a definite system of society and life which has given a peculiar character to the people of Jammu region.

The development of civilization in Jammu region seems to be similar to that in the other parts of the world. The signs of development in the various social stages of history, that is savagery, Barbarism of hunting period, domestication of animals during pre-communistic society tribal society (life of ganas of Rig Vedic period) and slave-owning society; and feudal societies, have been existing in this Dogra region.34

In the development of civilization of Duggar, the cave dwellers and hunting tribes who must have remained barbaric and aggressive, till they emerged as a cohesive unit living under a chieftain or governing lord, and must have formed a relationship like that of a slave and owner and gradually into serfs and the feudal lords. The weaker sections of people living under the command of a powerful leader must have recognized the suzerainty of the chieftain, who also controlled their social and religious life, and gave a direction to the emerging culture.

"Before the advent of Aryans various aboriginal tribes, which were living in India, are still in existence to some extent in the Jammu region. Kauruas, Sansias, Paernas, Bajigars etc. of this region still have preserved their old hunting life and eating habits."35 These people are generally Hindus and some of them eat snakes, mongoose and fox etc. even at this stage of history. Although these people are gradually adopting agriculture, yet their tribal life remains unchanged and most of them still live a nomadic life and have retained the peculiarities of language, dress, food habits, customs and traditions. Some of them are found in the southern parts of Jammu, mostly in Kathua. These primitive tribes had their confrontations with Aryans, but retained their own traditional way of life. On the contrary they even influenced the Aryans. The Nagas who were dominating people shoved away the Aryans, though the Dravidians were forced to move towards the south. We have a mention of the battle between god Indira and Bhairnaga in the Rigved.

The worship of the Naga deity is in vogue in the Jammu region among the remnants of old tribes. Many of them have Bhairnaga as their family god and celebrate the head shaving ceremony of their children at the place of Bhairnaga which resides in deep waters of river Tawi. In the Siwaliks and middle Himalayan belts of Duggar, shrines of Naga gods or goddesses are still existing, and are regularly visited by the people of the land to calm the wrath of the snakes who may otherwise turn venomous viz. Vasuki, Bhair, Surgal—(Male gods) and Kauri, Dodhi, Kali and Chichi etc.—(Female gods). Every spring of water (Bauli) is decorated with a tablet of Naga god. The common practice of burying a silver serpent in the foundation of a house under construction is still prevalent in the Jammu region. Even the names of some places reveal Naga names viz: Vaska-da-dehra (in Ramnagar, Bhaderwah and Kistwar), Bhairla (old name of Bhaderwah town), Bhairlai (a village of Ramnagar on Dhar-Udhampur road); Vaskund, Sali kund and Kali kund (Lakes in Dhar Sioj), Bhairnara (in Ramnagar Tehsil) etc.

The Anant chaudesh, Naga Panchmi or spring worship are the Naga festivals celebrated with fervour throughout the Dogra land and in Ramnagar town by some families of Mahajans and Chhimbas (dyers) and Goldsmiths in particular. Wearing of Anant (Serpent armlet) and Ananti (serpent ear ring) is a sufficient indication of Naga tradition preserved by the Dogra people to this day. At the later stage, even the Aryans who intermingled with the races in this part of India, seemed to have adopted Naga traditions and Naga worship.

During the confrontation between Aryans and Nagas, the Naga people would spread towards the high lands and attack the Aryans off and on. A mention of Takshak Naga in the Mahabharata epic and the resurgence of the slave class seeking the help of Nagas is important. In the Mahabharat war when the slave-owners grew weak, the wild tribes attacked them all around the sub-continent and shattered their Kingdom to smithereens. The last Panduva king Parikshat’s son of Abhimanyu was killed by Takshak Naga in a seven Day’s war.

It is believed that in Duggar, the end of the Naga leadership was caused with the advent of Gujjars, spreading all around the hills and valleys, there is a mention of Battle between Raja Mandleek (Gauga Chauhan) and Nagas in Dogri folk-songs (Karks and Bars). The shrines of Raja Mandleek located in Jammu Siwaliks and middle mountains, are regularly visited by the people to be cured of the snake bite.

After receiving the final defeat at the hands of Gujjars, the Nagas were relegated towards forests and hills. Their remnants are still in existence and have adopted the trade of weaving, smithy and the like. e.g. Chhimbas are dyres, Meghas are weavers, Socchi are tailors, while some are goldsmiths.37

The feudal system of social life favoured the slave owner system in the early 6th century B.C which started in the Kaushal and Magadha empire in Northern India. Although slave-owner system does not seem to have existed in Duggar, yet there are some traces of the influences of Alexander-the great of Macedonia in ancient Dogra land. There are records of Alexandra’s invasion on Poonch, Rajouri and Kathua areas.38 It is believed by the scholars that the Kathoyee tribes inhabited the area to the south of Jammu, and in course of time formed the territory called Kathua.

After the invasion of Alexander there was an end to the supremacy of slave-owner society in the Northern India and Mauria period came into lime light. There is a mention of Vishnu Gupt Chanakya of Mauria period as belonging to Gool Gulab Garh area of Jammu region.39 There exist archaeological remains also like that of Gandhara art and sculpture of the Mauria period (317-318) B.C.40 in this area.

The feudal system gave rise to the powerful land lords, and their autocratic way of life is pictured in our folk-songs (Karks and Bars) and traditions. The significance of the landed class is understood by the influence they wielded over powerful lords and emperors. The plaintive and emotional folk-songs illustrate their atrocious treatment with the poor and the helpless. The folk-songs of Baba Jittoo and Bua Bhagan of Thara Kulwal in Billawar area speak graphically of the injustice and cruelty of land lords.

Although no one particular feud continued long in Jammu region, yet we find mention of some of the chieftains (Rajwaras) in our folk lore and folk traditions, who assumed such despotic powers over the poor tenants that they shrieked with pain and agony. At the time of invasion of Turks, the Pahari Rajas of Duggar provided military aid to the Indian Rajas of their own consent but never accepted a centralised rule under any compulsion. When the central power was in disarray and while the Tughalaks and Sayyeds were in a state of conflict and clash, the feudal lords, Jasrath and subsequently Sheikha Khokhar, rose in rebellion against them. They are said to have ruled over the entire territory between Jhelum and Sirmore for about fifty years with their capital at Talwara on the bank of the Chenab in Siwalik valley till the rise of Mughal emperors.

The myths which are generally prevalent about Jammu town or state among the court historians (started during the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh) have no mention in any old authentic document or record either in Mahabharta, Ramayana or Raj Tarangni of Kalhana pandit. But for the first time, the mention is, explicitly made in “The Exploits of Amir Timur (1399-AD)”.

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After the decline of Mughal empire, the Sikhs established their principalities in Panjab. With the alliances of Jamwal Princes, Maharaja Ranjit Singh usurped the hill states of Jammu region too. i.e. Jammu, Bandharalta, Poonch etc. and later bestowed these to Gulab Singh, Dhain Singh and Suchet Singh. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh principality of Lahore was totally shattered by the British imperialism. Gulab Singh was recognised by the Britishers as the master of these states and in 1846 he was installed as Maharaja of Jammu, Kashmir, Gilgit, Ladakh and Tibet. During the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1856-1885), Dogra art and language flourished by leaps and bounds, but during the reign of Maharaja Partap Singh (1885-1925) Dogra art and culture got no royal patronage and there is a slight decline in Dogra art and culture. During the reign of Maharaja Hari Singh (1925-1947), Dogra Art and Culture again rose up after a long slumber and it started its progress independently with out any royal patronage, and with establishment of the Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages in Jammu (1960) Dogra art and culture once again started gaining patronage of the government.

After 1846, Panjabi Culture and Language started influencing Jammu town due to the rush of Panjabi establishment and there are a few people who speak pure Dogri language and celebrate Dogri festivals. The pure Dogri Culture, Language and Art is also found outside Jammu town like, Old Bandharalta, Balahita, Sumarta, Pangasta areas lying in the districts of Udhampur, Kathua, Tehsils of Samba, Bishnah, Akhnoor, and Jammu tehsil (Rural).
1.3. Development of Dogra thought and culture:

The early man did not live as a social being. He would freely roam about, hunt and kill to feed himself. Human relationship and family sense came as a casual thing. A feeling of satisfaction arose when settled life grew. This was the initial step to live in group and develop intimacy and liking for each other, each being a subsidiary and a help in one way or the other. The feeling of joy and sadness got expression with evolution of society and formation of a language. As settlements began to be formed, a definite thought began to take shape. Materialism which prompted a feeling of well-being and comparative comfort and riches, replaced the purely selfish and narrow-minded philosophy. Group superiority in terms of material riches, power, superior strength and compactness gave a chance to art and music to develop, because with a feeling of well-being came the element of amusement and entertainment. Mature thinking at the elementary level encouraged dances, hero-worship and even worship of God, through song and dance. The saviour and heroes have been given a place of respect as is revealed in Karks and Bars.

The powerful communities of Rajputs and warring tribes spread over a large territory were divided and had their own chieftains and lords, who literally ruled the masses. Their deeds of valour were extolled by the singers, because they were their patrons. In the songs the call of 'sapahia' or 'Rajea' finds association with brave and mighty lords. In the case of cruel and selfish chieftains the songs carried their names and they were depreciated in various ways, such as Mehta Bir Singh is described as injust and cruel in his treatment for a simple and virtuous farmer, Bawa Jitto.

The bards sing before the public or the chieftains glorifying their sacrifice, spirit of adventure and dying for a great cause. This became a family legend and went down in history as an epic. The minstrels who sang in praise of a saint or a "peer" on occasions of religious or ceremonial functions created excellent legends of mercy, sympathy, public-good and popularity due to essential humanitarian deeds. Often a regional
or tribal colour was assumed by their compositions which were simple, sentimental and sonorous. These are associated with certain remarkable events and a definite local colour has been given to them. The well known tribes are Bakarwals, Gujjars, Gadis, Paernas, Sansis, Chhimbe, Batwals (In Kathua), Nagas (In Bhaderwah), Chewars or dooms. The nomadic tribes have very emotional songs which possess peculiar local colour. For example the song of Bhunku (a gadi) describes a youth wearing a long tunic, taking his flock of sheep to the mountains of Lahul sapiti. He is fond of a home made brew and enjoys a free life of the hills. Such references abound in the folk-songs. Even certain words peculiar to the dialect give an impression of the local colour.

Since the events are practically ceremonial in essence, these musical utterances are now the spirit of folk songs, and continue to be concentrated in celebrated historical or legendary pieces, Where the worship of superior powers super-natural or mythical developed, a community touch was given, and certain places of commemoration were established, which came to be known as ‘deories’. These are the places visited by the community settled at certain places. We also have temples of Kul-devtas (family deity) including devsatans and devi-sathans worshipped by chieftains or group leaders or kings. Since religious or mythological character has been lent to them, faith in their mercy and help developed in course of time. They are visited, and their mercy is evoked in times of distress and sufferings.

In order to provide cohesion and stability in the group certain requirements had to be met with and the general public followed the conventions. They followed the chieftain in letter and spirit. His faith of philosophy became the philosophy of all. As agriculture and cattle wealth were regarded as material riches, territorial sovereignty began to assume a lot of importance. Social character of the group or community came from a sense of well-being and self-sufficiency. With this, multiple faiths grew which included worship of earth and water, sun and rain; royal throne and king; warrior and weapons; books and priests; trees and temples; and there arose a feeling of sacredness of birth places of saints and seers.
As philosophical school of thoughts like Saivism or Buddhism or Islamic thoughts took shape, the religious dogma did not die altogether. Different sects adopted different modes of worship and codes of conduct. Symbols, rites and ceremonies were retained to go with the changed philosophy. Sufi idea became popular as it resembled the thought of Vedanta and group singing like Kirtan in the form of Naat and Qawwali and use of drum and sarangi in choral songs got introduced by the Chistiya cult of Muslim sufis* (as in Ajmer Sharif and Delhi), which was accepted in the Dugger land too. The disciples of this cult spread to places such as Rajouri, Jammu city, Doda District etc. The prominent places among them are identified by the ‘Dargahs’ such as— Shah-dara Sharif (Rajouri); Peer Roshan Shah Wali, better known as ‘Nau Gaza Peer’, the first Arab Faqir who came to Jammu city (at Gumat) in the reign of Raja Sarbhal, Faqir Peer Mitha, whose Dargah exists at Mastghar, Jammu. His real name was Syed Abdul Rehman. He had the same spiritual thinking as was possessed by Hindu Jogi Sidh Gareeb Nath, who used to meditate in the cave named after him as Peer Kho (Jammu). Both were elevated saints and performed miracles. Budhan Shaha Wali near Jammu air-port, and Israr-ud- Din Shah Wali at Kishtwar (Doda) are some names in point. These walis relieved the sufferings of the people by invoking spiritual powers. They gave the message of ‘Vehadat’ (oneness of God) and spoke of ‘Vajada’ (communion with God) through meditation.

The sufis lived a life of austerity and shunned worldly pleasures. This attracted the peasantry and the poor sections of the society very fast; because it was anti-feudal in approach. According to the sufis, only selfless and spiritually perfect person could reflect the divine essence, and this was possible only through love, which could

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* There are four sections of Sufis— (i) Chistiya (ii) Soharaworthia (iii) Naqashbandia (iv) Qadria. The chistiya sect introduced in India in 1142 A.D. The chists give music, a prominent place. Qadris do not allow any music. Whereas Soharaworthis and Naqashbandia believe in the tradition of preceptor and the disciple.

(De Om Prakash and Prof. Sudarshan Sharma 'Hindi Sahitya Ka Sari Itihas, National publishing house, 23 Dariva Gang New Delhi, first edition 1987. Refer pages 15-17.)
inevitably lead to union with the divine being. Sufism, which arose as a religious form of protest against the excess of feudalism (12th to 16th century), became in practice an instrument of reconciliation and compromise with the existing social order. The mystics encouraged love as a token of dedication and sincerity, but gave it a new interpretation. In most cases the love-verses were symbolic in meaning. Ishq Mizaji (wordly love) was transformed into complete surrender of the lover (man) to the beloved (God). This was better termed as Ishaq Haqiqi.

This idea was further strengthened during the Bhakti movement towards the end of 12th century. The romantic factor of love was forged into man’s search for God along the path of love. Folk-songs were based widely on this idea and it gave it a universal character.

To conclude, from very simple and mundane base the Dogra thought and philosophy or outlook developed into a subtle spiritual form, although the rituals and conventions did not change. Regular gatherings at Durgahas and Dev-Sathans adopted ritualistic practices creating scope for devotional songs. The poets and singers added volumes of hymns, songs and penagyries etc; and that gave a new dimension to our Dogri culture.
1.4. Diversity of Dogra life:

In spite of basic element of oneness or unity, there are always certain diversities in every community and country. In Jammu also, it is easy to find differences in respect of language, lifestyle, customs, physical features, behaviour and deportment. Undoubtedly, human culture is a growth of a series of different patterns formed by social attachments, customs and beliefs, dress, food and geographical influences, as well as historical influences arising out of relationship with neighbouring areas or the impact of foreign influences due to the invasions, long-time rules, pattern of civilisation and administration, all forming a social ethos.

It is interesting to find a fundamental unity among all the divergent cultures prevailing in each region or political unit. Needless to say that climatic and geographical influences mostly govern emotional, sentimental and physical features in each society. The link established with a different society due to dependence, trade, inter mobility of group and links create peculiarities which show some thing common inspite of preserved identity of each ethnic group.

The play of action and interaction in the cultural affairs is going on for ever. The struggle for existence and sharing of common joy or sorrow, bring some sort of harmony essential to human life and happiness. Otherwise , there will be complete isolation and break since all social groups tend to accept the fundamental agreement based on the identity of human aspiration.

Geographical or ethnic units grow out of peculiar geographical features and prevailing conditions of life like hardship, scarcity or bounty and rural or agricultural form of life, including nomadic life of wandering tribes, who migrate from one hill-slope to another or to the plains with their cattle and produce. They take with them the colour of the place that they visit for further improvement in their own personal life, as of taking a transistor-set with them to far off mountain areas or certain choice textiles to be used on festive occasions.
As a unit, the territory of Jammu enjoys diversity in respect of climate, races, cultural tracts, language, dress, ceremonies, religion and social life. Although, there is an interplay of influences from one geographical portion with another and inspite of the apparent differences some common strands run through them all. It is interesting to study an emotional synthesis in the diverse elements and this issues forth in music, dances, rituals and ceremonies at places of worship, dargahs and shrines of faquirs and saints. The mystical and spiritual feelings act as a cementing force and these are expressed in folk-songs, which may be interpreted as expressions of sentiments and cultural links making a common heritage of the people.

It is interesting to see that the social and ethnic units in each region carry on traditions and customs, which look much similar in content, but are vastly different in form. Surely the expression of a person's belief and interpretation of life, often expressed in ceremonial and ritual practices at a place of worship, where people generally gather in veneration of the deity. The entire village would meet for a mass prayer (Kirtan). The kirtan plays a considerable role in social and cultural life. Thus music represents an evolved and complete form of expression adopted by even the primitive tribes. This has influenced the followers of Islam also, who join the Qawali (naat) singing in praise of a great 'pir' and pray for granting wishes as...

"भर दे जोली मेरी या मोहम्मद तीट के मैं ना जाऊंगा खाली"

"Bhar de jholi meri yā mohammad lout kē mein nā jāoīga khālī"

(O Mohammad! grant wishes mine. Empty handed I go not).

Music plays an important part in social life. The deepest emotional outburst becomes rhythmic, and forms the pattern of folk-music. Coming to the content of the folk-music many things are common in the divergent ethnic groups and tribes. The differences are mostly due to geographic and climatic elements. This can be understood by reference to the folk-songs of a camel driver in the desert in contrast with the singing belle of the fertile plains of Panjab standing amid the rich and ripe corn fields. There is a lot of diversity in flower and fruit crop and beverage, dress and life style.
Although the themes of joy and sorrow, union and separation, pleasantness and hardship of life remain common everywhere, but the horizon being different, the imagery is bound to be different. As such there is a dominating unity in diversity. Once again, the people of dry land or 'Kandi' have different experiences and their folk-songs continue to be less sonorous, whereas the people living in the temperate areas provide a mild and floating music. The people in hilly terrain possess a less accomplished music, little depending upon instrumental accompaniment for a musical flourish. The urban population, particularly fairly well-off sections of the society contribute to changes in the folk-music because of the modernity of the city population.

To conclude, we might say that in every society, group or tribe, expressions of deeply felt joys or sorrows, sentiments and emotions take the form of songs and dances. The underlying themes are the same, content being common, yet the forms are different. This is mainly because of the background and the horizon of feelings as well as the geographical and historical conditions prevailing from time to time. The historical influences promote synthesis and geographical influences lend diversities. This can be noted from the fact that the geographically isolated groups retain certain features and peculiarities which pass into their social life, dances and music. In the plains, in areas where there is a greater inter-mobility and inter-action between sections of the people, there is a tendency to adopt new things and this leads to evolution in culture, life and thinking. What is very important is that some sort of identity continues to be preserved inspite of all external influences and this is duly expressed in Dogri folk-music and folk-dances.