

TWO DECADES OF DOGRI LITERATURE is a sequel to the *History of Dogri Literature* by the same author published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1976. It carries forward the story of the development in different genres of Dogri literature in the eighth and ninth decades of this century. It also dwells at length on some of the geo-historical and political contexts of Dogri language and literature and the constraints faced by it in its greater development. The period covered in this volume is important in this evolution when this literature shows signs of maturing in some genres and a certain widening of the spectrum of literary expression.

SHIVANATH is a Dogri writer, scholar and translator. Besides the *History of Dogri Literature* and a monograph on Bhagawat Prasad Sathe, published by the Sahitya Akademi, he has to his credit more than seven publications. He was also associated with the Dogri section of Sahitya Akademi's prestigious projects *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, *A History of Indian Literature* and *Anthology of Modern Indian Literature*. He has been member of Sahitya Akademi's Advisory Board for Dogri and Convenor for Dogri and a Member of the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi.



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Shivanath



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TWO DECADES OF  
DOGRI LITERATURE

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The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

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*Courtesy* : National Museum, New Delhi

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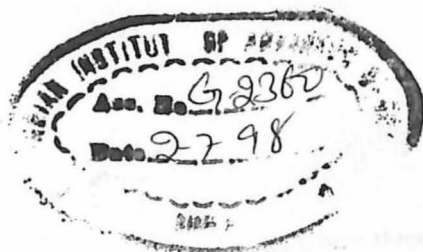
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## Preface

This volume is intended to be a sequel to *The History of Dogri Literature* published by the Sahitya Akademi which traces chronologically the growth of Dogri literature up to 1974. Important developments have taken place in Dogri literature during the eighth and ninth decades of this century and a recapitulation of these in hindsight has become imperative even at the risk of some repetition for better understanding and appreciation of this fledgling phenomenon. I can adduce at least three reasons for this exercise, one, the implications of some changes that had taken place in the geo-historical context of Dogri language and literature which could not be visualized at the time of writing of *History of Dogri Literature* and there is need for pointing out the significance of these changes; two, these two decades have seen the maturing of Dogri literature with the publication of books of literary merit in different genres and a certain widening of the spectrum of literary expression and an account of these developments will help, particularly non-Dogri knowing readers, towards better appreciation of Dogri literature; and three, as a student of Dogri literature, I have been a ringside observer of the Dogri literary scene all these years, capturing it for the readers of *Indian Literature* in my yearly survey articles from 1971 to 1990, I am getting on in years and may not see the day when the Sahitya Akademi decides to bring out a revised and updated print of this title.

I hope that this short companion volume, bringing the story of the growth of Dogri literature up to 1990, will prove useful to all those who may be interested in knowing about the meandering and murmuring of this, perhaps, the youngest and the leanest of streams that make up Indian Literature. It would also prove helpful in the writing of a revised History of Dogri Literature, in due course, perhaps, after the close of this century.



There is a slight change in the pattern of presentation of the subject; while the History of Dogri Literature dealt with recent developments from decade to decade, this volume clubs the developments in different genres for the entire span of two decades up to 1990.

Delhi

1 January, 1995

Shivanath

# *Introduction*

Between 1944 (the year of the founding of Dogri Sanstha, Jammu and commencement of Dogri literary movement) and 1969 (the year when Dogri was recognized as an independent modern Indian language by the Sahitya Akademi), Dogri literature was built up, brick by brick as it were, with the dedication of a group of literary and cultural activists of the Dogri Sanstha, Jammu, and some likeminded members of organisations like Dogra Mandal, Jammu and Dogra Mandal, Delhi on the foundations of the common folk literature heritage of Dogras

## **Geo-historical Context**

Before 1947, the Dogra region, where Dogri and its sister dialects like Kangri were spoken, covered the entire submountainous area spread between the Kashmir Valley in the north and the Punjab in the south, river Sutlej in the east and Manawar Tawi in the west, with a spill over to the plains spread over parts of the districts of Sialkot, Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur of pre-partition Punjab. Partition of India and the formation of Pakistan took away the areas falling in Sialkot district. Creation of the State of Himachal Pradesh on 1 November 1966 made way for exclusion of areas comprising that state from the jurisdiction of Dogri. The years 1966, 1969 and 1970 are significant for certain happenings to Dogri language and Dogri literature in the subsequent years. 1966 saw the formation of Dogra-Himachal Sanskriti Sangam in Delhi under the patronage of Dr Karan Singh, then a Union Cabinet Minister. The Sangam was formed in February 1966, with the objective of promoting social, cultural and literary activities, development of Dogri and its dialects and preservation of cultural heritage of Dogra Pahari people. Six

societies\* of Dogras from Jammu, Kangra and other areas of Himachal had come together to form the Association which was subsequently joined by three more\*\* similar societies of Dogras from Delhi, Varanasi and Bombay respectively. The Sangam envisaged a composite development of the Dogri-Pahari language and literature and a common platform for cultural and literary activities. The Sangam and its patron-in-chief projected a case for the recognition of Dogri as a modern Indian language by the Sahitya Akademi.

The Sahitya Akademi recognized the language in 1969 after clearance by a panel of distinguished linguists, opening a wide vista of possibilities for the language and its literature in years to follow. The year 1969 also witnessed the formation of a literary organisation called the Himachal Pahari Sahitya Sabha, Delhi by Shri Narayan Chand Parashar. While the Sangam represented centripetal forces of integration, this little organisation with hardly any strength became in the coming years, a centre of centrifugal forces working not so much in Delhi as in the State of Himachal Pradesh which had come into being in 1966.

The first three day All India Dogri Writers' Conference held in Delhi under the auspices of Dogra Himachal Sanskriti Sangam from November 29 to December 1, 1970 was attended by over 200 Dogri-Pahari delegates, including writers, poets, journalists, research scholars and cultural workers from not only Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh but also from Calcutta and Bombay. The resolutions passed at the Conference called among other things for the Dogri Pahari people to record their mother tongue as Dogri or Dogri-Pahari in the 1971 census, inclusion of Dogri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, introduction of their mother-tongue as medium of instruction at

- 
- \* 1. Dogra Mandal, Delhi.
  - 2. Kangra Sewak Sabha, Delhi.
  - 3. Himachal Bhratri Mandal.
  - 4. Kangra Jana Sudharak Sabha, Delhi
  - 5. Kangra Sabha, Delhi
  - 6. Polian Parohitan Rural Welfare and Development Society
  - \*\* 1. Mandaviya Kala Kendra, Delhi
  - 2. Dogri Sangam, Varanasi
  - 3. J & K Cultural Association, Bombay

the school level and setting up of Dogri departments in the Universities of Jammu and Himachal Pradesh. But the recommendations of the Conference did not find favour with the political authorities in Himachal Pradesh. The Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha passed a resolution on 30 December, 1970, recognising Pahari as the language of the Himachalis. Two meetings of so called 'Pahari' writers were also organised in 1970 and 1971 at Shimla and Delhi respectively. Two journals devoted to 'Pahari' viz. *Himabharati* and *Himadhara* were published from Himachal Pradesh in 1971. Himachal Kala, Sanskriti Aur Bhasha Academy came into being in 1972 and a separate language department was established by the Himachal Pradesh Government in 1973. The seventies and eighties saw gradual banishment of the word 'Dogri' from Himachal Pradesh, withdrawal of writers from H.P. writing in Dogri journals from Jammu and a movement for a separate identity for 'Pahari' and its recognition by the Sahitya Akademi. Consequently there was a considerable shrinkage in the area of Dogri literary activity. The vision of development of two broad centres of literary activities in Dogri—one in the State of J&K and the other in H.P. with a cluster of subcentres around each, faded in the course of these two decades and Dogra Himachal Sanskriti Sangam itself decayed and became more or less defunct.

While the area of Dogri literary activity shrank to within the Jammu region of J&K State, there was considerable expansion of subcentres and local organisations within the reduced area. Badralta Sahitya Mandal, Ramnagar was already in existence. New centres sprang up during these two decades at nine moffusil towns—Dattu Sahitya Sabha at Bhaddu named after the 18th century Dogri and Brajbhasha poet Dattu who hailed from that place, Dogri Sahitya Sabha, Painthal, the birth place of Dogri poet and playwright Dinubhai Pant, Dogri Sahitya Sanstha, Rajouri, Dogri Sahitya Jyoti, Jyotipuram, the seat of Salal Project, Dogri Sahitya Sabha, Karlup, Madh Block near the Pakistan border, Dogri Sahitya Kendra, Ghagwal, Dogri Sahitya Sabha, Akhnoor on the banks of the Chenab, Young Dogra Association, Parlah, and Duggar Sanskriti Sangam, Batairha. Two new organisations were formed at Jammu, viz. Duggar Manch, and Kalakar.

### **Language Policies & Programmes of the Government**

The language policies of both the J&K Government and the H.P. Government have not been very conducive to the development of Dogri language. In the J&K State, the official language is Urdu and Dogri is one of the six or seven languages (including 'Pahari' which is quite different from the 'Pahari' of Himachal Pradesh) recognised for support through the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. In Himachal Pradesh, the official language is Hindi and the State Government has recognised Pahari, besides Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu and English for support by the H.P. Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. Moreover, the J&K State has been very slow with regard to introduction of Dogri in educational institutions. It has not introduced Dogri as a medium of instruction in Dogri speaking areas and as a subject at the primary school stage. Sops to language enthusiasts have come slowly and half-heartedly and have moved from the top instead of moving from the grassroot level. The first to come was a Dogri Research Cell in Jammu University in 1971 which was redesignated as Dogri Research Centre in 1975 and upgraded to the Postgraduate Department of Dogri in 1983. In the same year Dogri was introduced as an additional optional subject in the ninth and tenth standards and as an elective subject in the eleventh and twelfth standards in higher secondary schools in the region. In 1986 Dogri was introduced as an elective subject in three Degree Colleges. But there was considerable delay in appointment of teachers and preparation of the syllabus. Dogri writers, intellectuals, students, teachers and cultural activists had to resort to a hunger strike to push their demands and get the decisions implemented on the ground.

### **Development of Dogri Language and Infrastructural Backup**

There has been a growing interest in the development of Dogri language during the eighties. Seminars on different aspects of Dogri language were organised by the Dogri Research Institute, Jammu, the Dogri Sanstha, Jammu, the Linguistic Society of India, Jammu Branch and the Postgraduate Department of Dogri. The Dogri Research Centre of Jammu University before its upgradation, brought out two volumes of a publication called *Shodh* in 1981-82 in which, besides survey

articles on different genres of Dogri literature, there were 16 articles on different aspects of Dogri language written by different scholars and linguists. During this period some Dogri scholars also presented papers on Dogri in sessions of All India Oriental Conferences organised in non-Dogri speaking areas. The Postgraduate Dogri Department of Jammu University organised some workshops on Dogri phonetics, teaching of Dogri and ultimately succeeded in getting the University Grants Commission to recognise Dogri for grant of Junior fellowships and thus encouraged research in Dogri. In spite of all this, no serious attempt appears to have been made to standardise the language with the result that each writer writes the language in his own way, creating problems for the readers. A comprehensive Dogri grammar in Dogri is long overdue. Dr Veena Gupta of the Dogri Department who has published two books on Dogri language in Hindi, viz. *Dogri Bhasha-Udbhav aur Vikas* and *Dogri Vakya Vinyas* during this period is reported to have been commissioned to prepare a Dogri Grammar in Dogri. An important factor in infrastructural backup to the language was attended to by the J&K Academy, by setting up a project on preparation of a Dogri-Dogri Dictionary, with a team of surveyors and scholars and an Editorial Board headed by Prof. Ram Nath Shastri. In the meantime, a Dogri-Hindi Dictionary prepared by H.R. Pandotia comprising 25000 words was also taken up for scrutiny by a Board of Editors headed by a linguistic scholar Shyam Lal Sharma. The first part of the manuscript consisting of 12,000 words was published in 1974, but the second part is reported to have been dropped due to change in policy. The first volume of Dogri-Dogri Dictionary came out in 1979 and the sixth and last in 1989. Six volumes of the dictionary which is a major contribution to the infrastructure of Dogri language and literature, contain 86,198 entries (vocables) including 7641 idioms and 887 proverbs spread over nearly 2600 pages. The new policy envisages preparation of any future bi-lingual dictionary including a Dogri-Hindi Dictionary on the basis of this Dogri-Dogri Dictionary. The editorial board of the Dogri-Dogri Dictionary also laid down some broad principles for written spelling of words which was a valuable step towards standardisation of the language.

### Role of Institutions

The J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Language, has played a major role in the development of Dogri language and literature. Its bi-annual journal *Shiraza* (Dogri) subsequently made quarterly and then bimonthly and its annual literary digest *Sarha Sahitya* have continued to appear regularly. It has brought out a number of Dogri publications including anthologies of folk literature, selections of poetry, one-act plays, prose pieces, translations, etc. It has also been granting subsidies to literary organisations and writers as support towards individual publication efforts. It gives awards to the best books of Dogri literature and best play-scripts. It also organises *kavi sammelans* and staging of Dogri plays in rural areas. It has organised two All-India Conferences of Dogri Writers at Jammu during the eighties. This is besides four such conferences organised by voluntary organisations—three by the Dogra Himachal Sanskriti Sangam (the first at Delhi in 1970, the second at Jammu—in the mid-seventies and the third at Delhi again in 1980) and one by Dogri Sanstha Jammu in connection with its Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1959.

The Dogri Sanstha's role in the development of Dogri language and literature showed a marked decline after 1970. It appeared as though its major role was over with the completion of 25 years of its existence, its silver jubilee celebrations and the publication of its *Rajat Jayanti Granth*. It has continued thereafter to fulfill a limited role of support to Dogri literature, striving to fill the gaps in different genres and encouraging and introducing new writers. Some of the active members of the Sanstha were employed by the J&K Academy and several were given commissions for translations and compilations and assignments to write for its journals. Growing dependence on the Academy for grants, besides assignments and awards has had a dampening effect on the creativity, initiative and missionary zeal of individuals. In 1979, for example, out of a total of 15 Dogri books published, only four were published by their authors on their own; the rest were either published directly by the Academy or with subsidy from the Academy. In 1981, out of 14 Dogri publications, 11 were brought out by the Academy and 2 with subsidy from the Academy. As mentioned earlier, the

Dogra Himachal Sanskriti-Sangam more or less packed up after the 1980 Dogri Writers Conference in which the aspirations of writers from Himachal Pradesh for a separate linguistic identity for their dialects, came out in the open. All the conferences had some representation from Himachal Pradesh, the number dwindling with each succeeding Conference. These Conferences afforded opportunities to Dogri writers and scholars to deliberate on problems relating to the language and developments in different genres of Dogri literature and taste bits of poetry and fiction in *Kavi Sammelans* and *Kahani Goshthis* which formed part of the Conferences.

After the recognition of Dogri by the Sahitya Akademi, it also started playing its role as a centre for encouragement and incentive to the development of Dogri literature, through its publication programme and scheme of awards. The publication effort was rather meagre to start with—it published a selection of Dogri short stories in Dogri in 1974, History of Dogri Literature in English in 1976 and a selection each of Dogri folk songs and Dogri folk tales in 1978. More books were published during the decade of the eighties—nearly twenty of them, including translations from Dogri and into Dogri, monographs in the Makers of Indian Literature series in English and Hindi, anthologies of selected Dogri poetry, literary essays, pieces of literary criticism and translations of two Sahitya Akademi Award winning books into English—a novella *Churning of the City* and a collection of short stories—*The Bird of Gold and Other Stories*. In 1990 it issued a Dogri translation of its *History of Dogri Literature*. The Sahitya Akademi also acted as a fulcrum to hoist what was more or less a regional phenomenon to the national level, and Dogri found its place alongside other 21 recognised languages in Sahitya Akademi publications like, *The Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, *An Anthology of Modern Indian Literature* and *History of Indian Literature*.

*Kashmir Times* the leading newspaper of Jammu & Kashmir made a gesture of contribution towards encouragement and development of Dogri writing by providing a Dogri page in its Hindi daily *Dainik Kashmir Times*.



## Dogri Literary Scene

The passage of time took away ten Dogri writers including some very promising and some well established writers during the past two decades. The two most promising Dogri fiction writers of mellifluous Dogri prose, Narendra Khajuria and Shri Vatsa Vikal passed away in 1970, the first Dogri short-story writer Bhagwad Prasad Sathe and the author of Dogri grammar Bansilal Gupta died in 1973, Urdu and Dogri novelist Thakar Poonchi passed away in 1974, the author of *Dogri Ramayan* Shambu Nath Sharma in 1976, poet Parmanand Almast in 1978 and Dogri essayist and translator of Katha Sarit Sagar, Kedar Nath Shastri and Dogri ghazal and song-writer Krishan Smailpuri in 1980 followed by the demise of Prof. Gouri Shankar, Basant Ram Basant and Shiv Ram Premi. Simultaneously new writers were coming up and making their own contributions.

There was a substantial increase in the output of Dogri books during the 1970s and 1980s over the output of 1960s. The number of Dogri books published in the 1960s was a little below 100. The total production of the eighth and ninth decades was over 300 giving a yearly average of about 15 books indicating a slow and steady growth in different genres with poetry predominating. A conscious effort to build up a certain corpus of literature which marked the earlier decades, persisted in the 70s and 80s also. However, in the latter half of the 70s and during the 80s, one comes across Dogri writers showing a greater measure of self-confidence and making forays into experimentation with form and handling of new themes. Attempts to highlight the literary contribution of some sub-regions, first observed in a couple of publications of Bandharatta Sahitya Mandal, Ramnagar in the 1960s can be seen in publications of the 1980s dealing with literary contributions from Madh Block and Akhnoor respectively.

While the quantitative picture is still one of a lean but steady streamlet, the qualitative scene presents a phenomenon of troughs and tops, excellent pieces co-existing with puerile and absolutely mediocre stuff. Signs of maturing of literature in the better writers are, however, unmistakable and there is a clearly discernible movement of this literature, from childhood to

adulthood, from gross superficial statements to more subtle and symbolic expression and psychological probing, from the mists of folk literature and hold of sentimental, romantic, didactic and idealistic preoccupations to more realistic portrayal of life around and its existential problems, from outward description to individual expression of personal feelings, from rural and semi-urban scene to urban life showing a greater awareness of social tensions and taking hesitant steps towards modernity. In poetry, the *ghazal* emerges as the most popular and widely practised medium of poetic expression, with the sonnet form making its first appearance. In fiction, mini stories and in prose the autobiographies get added to the existing forms.

Some attention now begins to be paid to the life and works of authors as seen in the seminar papers of Dogri Sanstha, *Adabi Safar* series of articles in *Shiraza* (Dogri), publications of the J&K Cultural Academy on some authors and publications by the Sahitya Akademi in its Makers of Indian Literature series. Stray essays of literary criticism also start appearing in journals although there is as yet no development of any principles of literary criticism or any systematic critical evaluation of Dogri literature. The Postgraduate Department of Dogri begins to provide for research.

The publication pattern of Dogri literature during these two decades exhibits some broad features—there are the veterans or senior writers who get together some of their earlier published work, add something more to it and bring out a book; there are new writers who rush in to publish immature, raw and inadequate stuff, while there are a few serious writers—very few, who bring out something original. While the works of the first category strike as *deja vu*, the publications of the second category give an impression of shoddiness. Behind most seems to lurk a concern, not so much for literature or creative activity *per se*, as for recognition, for the fruits of creative activity in terms of some Award, a place in the sun, at least some accolades! Also observable is a certain emasculation of voluntary creative effort and a more noticeable shift towards self-propulsion or writing with some reward in view.

## Folk Literature

The J&K Cultural Academy has played a pivotal role in collecting and publishing Dogri folk literature. It continued its scheme of collecting and publishing Dogri folk literature, during these two decades also; while it gained momentum in the 70s, it tapered off during the 80s. By 1970 the Academy had published seven collections of folk songs, four of folk tales, one of proverbs and one of idioms. By the end of the eighth decade it had published five more collections of folk songs and four more collections of folk tales. To these had been added, a second compilation of a dictionary of proverbs—*Dogri Kahavat Kosh* Vol. II, and a dictionary of riddles—*Dogri Bujharat Kosh*. Two collections came from individual efforts—a volume of Dogri short stories entitled *Chandravali* published by Surya Kumari the daughter of B. P. Sathe in 1976 and a book on Dogri folk ballads—*Madh Block De Shaheeden Diyan Lok Gathan*—by Surendra Gandalgil of Kalrup Sahitya Sabha. The year 1980 saw the appearance of two collections of Dogri folk songs numbered 13 and 14 published by the Academy and a book on some newly discovered folk ballads *Namiyan Dogri Baran* written by Dr Ashok Jerath. Two selections of Dogri folksongs compiled by Indu Bhushan and Om Prakash Gupta were also published during this period. In the meantime the Academy brought out six issues of *Sarha Sahitya* (1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1980 and 1983), the Academy's Annual Literary Digest and four of *Shiraza* (Dogri), its literary journal – devoted exclusively to Dogri folklore and literature. The Dogri Sanstha, Jammu contributed its bit in four issues of *Nami Chetana*, its quarterly—the March 1974 issue containing four papers relating to folk literature relevant to Dogri read at a seminar in Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, the March 1977 issue containing five papers on Dogri *Lokgatha* read at a seminar organised by the Sanstha, the March 1980 issue on Dogri *Daresgathas* edited by Dr Ashok Jerath and

April- September double issue on *Gugga Gatha*. There was a fall in the publication of Dogri folk literature thereafter with only six books being published. The Academy's fifteenth collection of folk songs appeared in 1981, the sixteenth in 1985 the seventeenth in 1990, its twelfth collection of folk tales in 1985 and a collection of folk ballads in 1990. One publication of Dogri Sanstha, Jammu, *Gugga Gatha* edited by Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and Shiv Ram Deep was contributed to the corpus of published Dogri folk literature in 1981. Ashok Jerath's book *Naniyaan Dogri Baaran* contains extracts of five ballads with explanatory notes and commentaries. *Meri Mitti De Khatole* by Surendra Gandalgal introduces folklore of a specific region of Duggar, viz. Madh Block, in seven essays relating to folk ballads connected with *dehras* and *dehris* situated in the region, the work of some martyrs of the area, current stories about a popular folk hero—Dharmu Langeh and information about three places—Kaleeth of Kandi, Gajansooh and village Karloop of Nardriah area. A more ambitious effort towards survey of Dogri folklore was seen in the publication of Dogri Sanstha in *Nani Parakh Nani Khoj* a collection of essays edited by Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and Shiv Ram Deep and published in 1980. The articles deal with subjects like Folklore of Duggar, *Karaks & Bars* (ballads), Dogri folk songs, Kahnachak in the context of Dogra history, rebel Chanotras and the history of rulers of Chanas. *Gugga Gatha* is the complete text of 82 pages of the Himachali version of the most popular folk ballad in the entire Duggar.

Twelve collections of folk songs added by the J&K Academy in the period 1970 to 1990 contain 2927 pieces. Volume VI had 176 pieces of short songs on diverse subjects, the majority of them being of *shringar rasa*. Volume VII has 216 *jhanjhotis*—songs of joy of love and pangs of separation, seasons, festivals and day-to-day activities. Volume VIII comes with a specific area flavour and contains 200 songs, all collected from the region of Chamtyals. Volume IX contains 99 *trodaks*—*bhakh* variety of songs and 8 *Geetadu kathas*, verse narratives, comparatively longish—celebrating the characters of some valiant, courageous persons in local history and a couple of pieces of magic incantations known as *jadiyan* and *masaan*. Volume X contains 201 pieces—8 *bhetas*, on devotional pieces, 21 *bisanpatas* or *bhajans*, 129 *geets*, 9 *bhaakhs*,

14 *lohris* i.e. songs sung on the occasion of *lohri* festival, 12 *suhags* and 7 *sitthanis*, sung on marriage functions and 1 *garlodd*i, a work song. Volume XI has a total of 361 pieces – properly classified – 36 devotional songs, 76 *Sanskar geet* like *behai*, *ghodi*, *suhag*, *sitthani*, *lori*, *jagarna*, 12 *Khed geet*—those connected with games, 15 *parva geet*, sung on festival occasions, 5 *geetadukutthan* narratives, 162 mixed fare, on diverse themes and 60 *bhaakhaan*. Volume XII has 41 *parva geet*, 36 *bhakti geet*, 7 *khed geet*, 51 *sanskar geet*, 80 *bhettaan* devotional songs and 166 songs on mixed themes including love-songs. Volume XIII has 262 songs of similar classification and also 59 dance songs, 26 sung by women and 33 by men. Volumes XIV and XV contain 359 and 189 songs respectively, with a fair smattering on vignettes of day-to-day living, relationships, and magic (*Jadoo-Jadiyan*) besides the usual classification. The XVI volume published by the J&K Academy in 1984 contains 181 pieces on themes like vignettes of life, *bhakti*, *sanskar*, mainly marriage, and *shringar*. Volume XVII contains 302 folk songs—*bhajans*, *bhetas*, *parva geet*, *sanskar geet*, dance songs, songs celebrating seasons and events, *loris*, songs accompanying some games and tasks, love songs and diverse other subjects. *Dogri Lok-geet*, a Sahitya Akademi publication brought out in 1978 contains 140 pieces, mostly selections from those published earlier by the J&K Academy, neatly classified under 13 heads including a sprinkling of folk songs in Kangri dialect spoken in Himachal Pradesh. Thus, there is a song in praise of *Duggar Des*, 12 songs of four varieties of *bhaktirasa geets* (*bhajan*, *ainijali*, *bishanpata*, *gujari*), 20 songs of *sanskar geet* variety—sung on occasions like marriage, birth, subclassified as *behais*, *ghodis*, *suhags*, *sitthanies*, *pakkadu*, seven songs connected with different chores, *swadi*, *garlodd*i and *chirani*, 18 songs of seasons, *bara-mah*, *dholaru* and songs specific to seasons like rains, summer, winter. Then there are dance songs, love-songs *bhaakhaan*, *tarodaks* and miscellaneous pieces on existential problems of life and happenings like the famine of 1934. *Dogri Lok Gathan* published by the J&K Academy in 1990 contains 56 verse narratives about locally-worshipped deities, heroes, martyrs, pirs, etc.

Ten volumes of Dogri folk tales published by the J&K Academy, one selection published by Sahitya Akademi and

three more published by Surya Kumari, Shankar Das Samnotra and Bishan Das respectively, during these two decades added 550 folk tales to the number already published, taking the total to over 700. These fourteen collections bear interesting titles, taken from one or other of the tales included in each volume like *Manukh Te Parmatma* (39 tales), *Denhaar* (28 tales), *Rajak Te Akaal* (35 tales), *Bhaagen Di Khed* (38 tales), *Jinyan Unde Din Phire* (68 tales), *Ik Dandiya Mahal* (63 tales), *Lakk Tanun Tanun* (37 tales), *Bane Diyan Minjaraan* (70 tales), *Nagbani* (79 tales), *Chal Meri Dholaki Tanika-Tun* (37 tales), *Manai Da Paap* (17 tales) *Chandravali* (14 tales) and *Bidh Mata De Lekh* (25 tales). The Sahitya Akademi selection containing 49 tales is entitled *Dogri Lok Kathaan*.

The tales present a wide spectrum of interest and a variety of forms—fables, legends, parables, myths, fairy tales, local history, didactic, humorous with anecdotes, adventure and mystery stories and stories embodying comments on society, family, relationships, human urges and predicaments and failings and ambitions and descendants from classics like *Katha Saritsagar* in local garb.

The first *Kahavat Kosh*, or dictionary of proverbs published by the J&K Academy contained 500 proverbs. *Kahavat Kosh* Volume II compiled by Bishan Das Dubey and Duni Chand Tripathi published by the Academy contains 525 proverbs current in Bandralta region of Duggar. *Bujharat Kosh* compiled by K. L. Varma and published by Santosh Parkashan contains 1023 riddles. Dr Siddeshwar Varma called these Dogri riddles “epitomized literature, richly flavoured with literary features like rhythm, imagery, metaphor, allegory, creative imagination and intellectual teasing.” The riddles have been classified under different subject heads like nature, flora, fauna, measures, money, apparel, musical instruments, tools, farming, food and drink, sweets, cosmetics, human beings, and so on.

These volumes of folk literature and those published earlier reflect Dogra life in its fullness and variety. The ballads sing praises of folk heroes, songs celebrate *sanskaras* like birth and death, love and marriage, festivals and dances and devotion and deal with different daily chores and a wide range of human emotions and relationships. Folk tales present a world peopled

by gods and goddesses, animals and birds and of course human beings. Among the deities that figure in these tales are Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesh, Indra, Varun, Krishna, Durga, Parvati, Lakshmi, Kalika and Bidh-mata, the goddess of destiny. Among the birds that appear in these tales are lions and leopards, jackals, deer, camels, elephants, cats, dogs, sparrows, pigeons, parrots, mynas, swans, owls, snakes, frogs, scorpions, wasps and so on with their special characteristics and status in their respective worlds. There are stories with denizens of the forests as characters and stories of denizens of the invisible world, gods, goddesses and ghosts playing their part in the lives of *rajas* and *ranis* and humble human beings, stories of sadhus and *pirs* and *faqirs*, stories of *apsaras* and other celestial beings, stories of traders and dacoits, stories with moral and worldly wisdom, stories connected with local places and people—martyrs like Jitto and Ranu and stories of pure fun. What is more, these volumes provide a rich storehouse of material for scholars and linguists, local history, social anthropology, the community's world view, values and concerns.

# Poetry

These two decades threw up about 90 books of Dogri poetry by 50 poets. These books can be classified into five categories. One, anthologies; two, books of poets who made their mark in Dogri poetry in the fifties and earlier; three, works of significant Dogri poets who made their contribution to Dogri poetry in the fifties and sixties and came out with fresh collections during the period; four, books of younger Dogri poets who show a lot of promise in their first works, and five, collections of poems, *geets*, *ghazals* etc. which can be termed mediocre, some a shade better, some a shade worse than mediocre, some of which are no better than rhyming lines containing oft-repeated statements and sentiments and some born in hurry, rather prematurely out of a desire to appear in print and be counted among poets.

## Anthologies

*Gunjaar* edited by Shri Ram Deep contains the work of 49 freshers—young and budding poets and most of it is immature stuff. *Dhaarean De Ale* edited by Duni Chand Tripathi of Ramnagar and *Ik Jhaank* edited by Surendra Gandalgai of Madh Block contain verse compositions of local poets of the respective rural and semi-rural areas. *Chaandi Madhoyian Aunsiyaan Sunne Madhoye Bol* published in 1960 and edited by Om Goswami for the J&K Cultural Academy is a selection of Dogri *ghazals*; 49 poets are covered and they include some from Himachal Pradesh also. This is a very valuable selection and gives a comprehensive picture of the state of Dogri *ghazal* till 1980. Two more volumes issued by the J&K Academy in 1980—*Azadi Pahlle Di Dogri Kavita* edited by Om Goswami and *Azadi Baad Di Dogri Kavita* edited by Ved Pal Deep cover the whole gamut of Dogri poetry, published and unpublished and are equally valuable. Both the volumes include also poets and their works from Himachal Pradesh. *Azadi Pahlle Di Dogri Kavita* brings to light the



poems of some poets who were not written about earlier like Maya Das and Reghbir Das, Hakam Jatt and Mool Raj Mehta, Ram Prapanna Shastri and Sant Ram Shastri. It contains brief biographical notes and poems of 28 Dogri poets. *Azadi Baad Di Dogri Kavita* contains selected poems, ghazals and geets of 52 poets well presented in four sections, one section being devoted to eleven poets solely from Himachal Pradesh. Brief write-ups on the poets is included at the end. *Ajkani Dogri Kavita* brought out by the Sahitya Akademi in 1987 and edited jointly by Prof. Nilamber Dev Sharma and Om Goswami purports to present not only the best of Dogri poetry but also a representative selection within the limitations of the number of poets to be covered. It contains selections from the works of 21 poets including three from Himachal Pradesh. Some of the selected pieces in this volume have been covered in *Azadi Baad Di Dogri Kavita*.

### Stalwarts

Krishan Smailpuri (1900-1980), Ram Nath Shastri, Tara Smailpuri and Yash Sharma fall in the second category. They began writing poetry in Dogri in the forties, had some of their work published in the fifties and have published their earlier work and some new unpublished work during this period. Krishan Smailpuri's *Meriyani Dogri Ghazalaan* appeared in 1973 and *Mere Dogri Geet* in 1974. His ghazals are characterised by their prosodic perfection and show traces of Ghalib's influence and his geets have a certain romantic stance and the sweetness of folk tunes. The main themes of his work are *shringar*, love in its different aspects, patriotic sentiment and eulogy of the beauty of Nature. Ram Nath Shastri's *Dharati Da Rin* (1971) is also a collection of his earlier works with very little new addition and his best work included in this book has been covered in the *History of Dogri Literature*. *Talakhiaan* is a collection of his ghazals. In this work, Shastri comes through as a writer with a mission, moulding his ideas in verse, intent on awakening self-confidence and pride in the Dogras, creating an awareness among them of the bright patches of their past glories and present predicament, and backwardness. The tone at places is philosophic and didactic. The intellectual element often seems to overweigh emotion. Some couplets of his ghazals are touching and memorable and bespeak of faith and determination as in:

*Jindi doansi dikkhiai keyi kaafale partoi ge  
Us unen baraaniiyen cha geet gaande aaye aan.*

(We have sung our way through wildernesses which turned back many a caravan.)

Tara Smailpuri's *Jeeven Lahraan* published in 1988 partly contains his earlier work including his beautiful vignettes of life in the Kandi area of Duggar and some new poems in free verse like *Anasambe Geet* (Unfinished songs), *Kuthe Kinyaan Tuki Pukaaraan* (Where and how should I beckon you) and *Balaur*. They are characterised by charming imagery and pleasing rhythm, embellished with assonance and alliteration, e.g.;

*Kal Kal Karade  
Chhal Chhal Karade  
hasade  
nachade  
aap-muhare  
Chaandi chitte chanchal naadu*

.....

(Silver white rills go laughing and dancing spontaneously, singing, drifting, rolling, creating music, teasing the sparkling white moonlight by their upmanship, shaking the green borders of eroding stony terrain, striking against rocks and boulders, creating images of milkpots being emptied.)

Whereas in the pre-1970 work, Tara Smailpuri had presented one tract of Duggar, viz. Kandi with its stark realities of life, in his post-1970 poems he picks on the hilly tract and its streams and greenery, forests and lakes, and meadows and mists, serpentine hill trails and the song of birds, particularly *peenja* and its dolorous cries reminiscent of the cries of the girl married away from the village and not allowed to visit her parents.

Yash Sharma who has been writing and reciting poems and *geets* and also stray *ghazals* in poets' gatherings since the late forties, published his first book *Jo Terai Mana Chitt Laggi Jaa* in 1990. The book contains selected pieces from his entire work, published in journals and anthologies and some unpublished pieces. Yash Sharma's forte is the emotional appeal of his songs and their sweet soulful rendering in a rich resonant voice. The

predominant theme is love, romantic love and the Dogra woman in all her beauty and also the aspect of her suffering and deprivation.

Another writer Narendra Khajuria who is basically a fiction writer, had his occasionally written poems published posthumously in a book entitled *Narendra Darpan* edited by Dr Ved Kumari Ghai. It contains 31 poems in free verse, outpourings of the poet's moods of disenchantment with society and observations on the callousness of people.

### Significant Contributors

There are about a dozen Dogri poets who have made significant contributions to Dogri poetry during these two decades. Kehari Singh Madhukar and Padma Sachdev, both, highly gifted poets who burst on the Dogri poetry scene in the 1950s with great promise and well crafted poems added two and three books respectively. While Madhukar's creativity has shown a certain decline in his later work, Padma has shown remarkable improvement with each new book. Madhukar's *Mein Mele Ra Jaanun* contains some good poems in his characteristic style marked by optimism, self-confidence and human compassion, progressive stance and gushing rushing rhymed verse. Yet, a large number of the poems, particularly those dealing with the contemporary socio-political situation are marred by an exhortative tone and bald statement and do not get transmuted into poetry and thus, lack the spark of inspiration. The better poems which strike a personal note and rise from the fullness of the heart, are more appealing like *Taan* where he talks of the pain and sadness of existence, *Kohlu*, symbolising the constraints and compulsions of living, *Dhruva Taare*, describing the hopelessness of waiting, *Sameen*, celebrating the sheer joy of emotional rapport and understanding between two lovers, *Wapasi* which shows the satisfaction of having returned from a state of insanity or the poems observing the flux of time, the moving finger of Time:

Daily drawing lines on water  
Minutes, hours, months and years,  
Guests, shining birds in flight,  
The light of love bespatters all  
with rainbow colours.

*Padam Gokharu* coming after a lapse of 13 years in 1989, is the least satisfying of his work. Compared to his classic *Dola Kun Thappeya*, it is a minor work, not only quantitatively (just sixteen poems) but also qualitatively, with little to show by way of newness of style or subject matter. There appears to be a sort of deliberate effort, a tendency towards prolixity, too many words to say too little, suggesting failing of inspiration and exhaustion of creativity. He seems to feel ill at ease in his forays into unrhymed verse. There are hardly two or three poems in this collection which give a glimpse of something of his earlier poetic perception of reality and the spark of imagination as in *Wasiyat-Name Adami De Naam*

*Meri duniya da baasaa ai  
sabal atom de dheren par  
mera chaanan tarai karadaa  
jugen de ghupp nheren par*

(My world rests on heaps of power-packed atoms. My moonlight floats on thick darkness of ages.)

Padma Sachdev is a poetess par excellence of romantic love, nostalgia, brooding over memories of childhood and youth left behind, sights and sounds of her dear Dogra countryside and the three books *Tawi Te Chanhaan*, *Nheriyan Galian* and *Pota Pota Nimbal* have poems and *geets* with this basic strand, with a few other poems which reflect the widening of her concerns and experience. The titles are suggestive of this extra dimension in each new book. The predominant sentiment of *Tawi Te Chanhaan* consisting of two parts is love symbolised by the two rivers flowing through Dogra country, the *Tawi* part containing rhymed poems and the *Chanhaan* part containing poems in free verse. Wistful memories of the poetess move like waves in her eyes and her imagination takes wings to weave beautiful evocative poems and *geets* out of them, full of romantic yearning, rhythm, music and images fresh from Nature like those of the moonlight hiding under her bed at midnight or evening colours woven into a child's dream or the village well harbouring sorrow and shadows. The additional dimension in *Nheriyan Galian* is her concern for the city of Jammu, its deterioration and erosion of environment, loss of trees due to increasing pace of

construction activities in the hills which are "driving nails into the bones of hills". There is a tone of nostalgic regret on seeing her dear city being polluted, its lanes getting crowded and darkened while she is fragrant with memories of it. In a beautiful poem she speaks of her own life (and suggestively of the life of woman in general) as a drop of water quivering on a lotus leaf, a drop of blood charged with insatiable love and yearning, a drop of tears simmering on a hot pan. Her life has been a vain effort to grasp a handful of sunshine, melting in the fire of love which is full of colour as well as bitter smoke. *Pota Pota Nimbal* contains three types of compositions: (i) poems and *geets* emerging naturally out of a sensitive feminine sensibility deeply rooted in her native Dogri soil, (ii) poems of a keen awareness of contemporary happenings, degradation of environment and loss of human values of love, compassion and concern for fellow human beings, and (iii) poems of a certain mystic element, in which there is a yearning for the limited to become unlimited, of a drop to become the ocean, a longing to die for a while in the beauty of the evening star, a desire to fill the emptiness within, with the splendour of the flaming tree.

Narasingh Dev Jamwal and Mohanlal Sapolia both born in 1931 show not only a remarkable maturity of thought and expression in their post-1970 poetry but also a search for new forms of expression. As a result of this search, Jamwal introduces his *Totakas*—three-lines verses in his second post-1970 book *Sogaat* (1987), and Sapolia comes out with *Chaupadas*, four-line verses, quatrains in his latest book *Sodh Samundaren Di*. Jamwal's *Koraj* published in 1971 is refreshing for its imagery and creation of moods as of poignancy in poems like *Ek Duas Raa*: ੴ optimism and love of life and courage to face obstacles which to him are signposts for progress:

Every day I create a new couplet,  
Life is on the run, fast moving,  
Where is the time for me  
To look for old crumpled papers  
And ferret out memories and forgotten faces  
From moth-eaten letters?

In some poems an excess of imagery and figures of speech tends to lead to an emotional surfeit bordering on false

sentiment which detracts from tautness of expression. His fourth collection of poems *Sogaat* is also marked by optimism and courage and contains about a dozen poems of superb beauty in which thought, emotion and expression are well integrated. In his *Totakas*, he grapples with abstract concepts like life, death, Maya, and love to concretise them into poetic images. Some of them are well sketched like *Waiting*.

Doors of the eyes open  
Breath rising and falling  
Consciousness eavesdropping

N.D Jamwal's latest contribution is a collection of geets entitled *Motia Khalaarai Khushboo* published in 1990.

Mohanlal Sapolia's *Chupadas* – 400 of them in *Sodhi Samundaren* cover a wide range of subjects and some of them are quite pretty and aphoristic with a lot of meaning packed in brief expression and delivered with telling punch as in this:

*Suneya ai tud maali gaddi leyi*  
*Jaani paayi te munda baddhi leyi*  
*Bhole painchihi di naadi ich*  
*Rang bhareyaa te ratt kaddi leyi*

(I hear that you have bagged the prize, breathed life into the innocent bird but cut off its head and drained its blood and poured in its veins colour instead.)

Sapolia the social activist who voiced protest in his political pamphlets and gave expression to people's problems and their feelings seems to have travelled far from those political verses as in *Daadhe Lekshan Hoye Num* (1975) and addressed himself to the larger issues of life and contemporary society in a more subtle ironic expression.

Ramlal Sharma and Shiv Ram Deep have given great depth to Dogri *ghazal* in their *Rattu Da Chanaan* and *Gamalen De Cactus* respectively. Ramlal Sharma's *Sargam* published in 1975 contained 30 *ghazals* besides 17 poems. *Rattu Da Chanaan* (1985) has only *ghazals*, 69 in number. These *ghazals* are marked by a certain tone of ironic humour, creative use of Dogri and local homespun images, idioms and intensity of feeling about reality

of life and human suffering. His compositions born out of experience of life have a ring of authenticity and maturity of expression and at places a spiritual element. His philosophic comments on life and the world find expression in pithy aphoristic couplets of his *ghazals*. A suffering heart is like a smouldering cowdung cake—burning slowly. With keen insight, he sees shadows and darkness crouching under lamps, tall buildings blocking light from hovels of the poor, parasite creepers climbing up on whatever comes within their reach, people who see everything in terms of weights and measures but incapable of judging themselves, people pouring pitcherfulls of water over stone idols but not giving even a drop to the thirsty at their door, radiance of blood lighting the lamp of life, fragrance of freedom spreading beyond the fences over flowers; and inexorable time grinding everything fine.

Shiv Ram Deep is equally at ease at writing poems as well as *ghazals* and in both, one observes a certain balance between intellectual and emotional elements and a subtlety of suggestiveness and symbolism. His second book of poems *Mangami Latten Di Daud* appeared in 1971. Then, he came out with *Gamalen De Cactus*, a collection of 100 *ghazals* in 1981, followed by *Peed Pakheru Sunnai Gaas* another collection of poems in 1986 and *Ik Baari Di Gull* a collection of narrative poems for children in simple Dogri published in 1990. He displays a wide range of concerns in his compositions. There are poems and *ghazals* of self-expression, comments and observation on contemporary social reality, and attempts to probe the truth of existence. Quite a few of the 100 *ghazals* of *Gamalen De Cactus* are finely chiselled strings of couplets full of meaning, poetic grace and superb imagery. The predominant mood is one of optimism and courage in the face of adversity with emphasis on the worthwhileness of love which like the fragrance of flowers cannot be cribbed or confined by taboos, the importance and beauty of living, even with sorrows and freedom, openness to new ideas and experiences which may be threatened by a flood of memories. The same mood inspires a large number of his poems also although he sees truth in splinters, his own mind a sandalwood forest full of snakes, and people of his age full of trepidation, the growing exploitation of people through

established institutions like the system of justice, pollution, duplicity and hypocrisy of leaders and so on. The poet considers happiness incomplete without the experience of sorrow, there is hope and the sky is studded with diamonds and streams strike up the music of life.

### New Wave—Experiments of Form

Kunwar Randhir Singh "Viyogi" and Dhyan Singh, both Dogra Rajputs are experimentalists of sorts. The former used *ghar* (home) as a peg and refrain to string together 238 four-line verses embracing a wide variety of subjects and ideas and feelings into a long poem published under the title *Ghar*. It was quite a marathon effort to present something new, although in the meantime Jitendra Udhamपुरi had come out with a similar effort earlier in his *Chaanani*. There is however, a difference in conception of the composition. *Ghar* or Home is used as a symbol of the centre of life, our hopes and fears, anxieties and achievements and failures, dreams and also a symphony of love. Later, in 1987 he published Dogri's first collection of sonnets—*Paihliyaan Baangaan*. It contains 200 sonnets, poems of self-confession rendered with an intensity of feeling and candidness of expression in plain unadorned speech. There is a certain openness of uninhibited mention of sexual imagery and symbols seen in Dogri poetry for the first time and also an element of self-exhibitionism. The poet comes through in these sonnets as a dilettante, an epicurean, a lover of life who is sensitive, proud, concerned about his Duggar, Dogri language and culture and literature, words and their meaning, people around him and social justice and loneliness. The flight of his imagination is however, limited to the concrete, sensual and mundane.

Dhyan Singh's two books *Fil-haal* and *Silsila* contain a pot-pourri of different levels and kinds of verse, *ghazals*, *geets*, poems mediocre to superb, and, experimental pieces patterned on folk forms like *Bhaakh*, *Qawwaali* and *Tappa*. Subjects dealt with range from Dogra heroes like Jitto and Dido to Communist International to a rikshawpuller to present day Jammu, Pahalgam, Akhnoor and concepts like greed and contentment. Experimentation is seen both in the use of language and in poetic form. Many of these pieces are in the romantic mould,



beautifully crafted and soaked with the smell of the soil, rich in imagery and idioms drawn from the local folk tradition and picturesque environment of nature. They also have musical quality with their refrains and rhythm and rhyme-scheme, for example the poem, *Ghuggi Rondi Ai* (The Dove Wails) with its symphony of sounds on a summer day. There are poems like *Syaalu Soka* which has striking imagery and evocative power and *Syale Di Ik Lammi Raat* which creates a mood of sadness and poems about today's burning problems like *Punjab Da Raula* and poems brooding on the beauty of the river Chenab and poems like *Kanso* where the poet eavesdrops on the sounds of the naked wind on the road seeking apparel of words from him who is bereft of everything and in search of some eternal shore.

Like Viyogi, O.P. Sharma 'Sarathi' is also a poet of modern sensibility but of a different calibre with a certain spiritual quest and imaginative plasticity. His *Tandaan* (Threads) is a long poem of 44 pages in blank verse and is born out of self-introspection. It has a thought-flow of its own in an attempt to express his inner tension on the question of Who Am I ? *Partaan* (Layers) has compositions which are in the nature of confrontation with life with an intense quest to grasp Reality or the Truth of Life. In this quest he finds that all faces are masks, that a poet's soul dies everyday to be born again. He wonders what would happen if instead of blood, there was gun powder in his veins or if his arteries had fragrance of flowers in them. He compares his love to sour buttermilk, churned out of self-introspection which cannot be one with the love of his beloved which is like fresh butter. Sometimes he finds his head like a firing range, the target of thousands of thoughts, hopes and fears and at others he sees himself as a solitary flower in a sea of sand. He visualizes that Time has tied life to a yoke and man carries on like bullocks going round and round, grinding oil out of hopes and wishes until,

The oil overflows on to the chest of Time  
And the oilcakes fall into the vessel of old age

He sees crosses fixed on all sides and men nailed to them and asks for a sheet of the sky to cover the wounds of men. He calls upon the Sun to roll up its net of heat and the Earth to stop

growing crops before man's bestiality blinds the Sun. In another poem he imagines himself as a lump of sugar melting in the Creator's mouth and wishes he were a splinter of glass instead so that he could feel the tenderness of the Mouth of Time. The poems are full of bold images and tantalizing, even mind-boggling questions.

Jitendra Udhamपुरi has been the most prolific poet of these two decades, publishing as many as nine books and presenting a wide range of poetic forms. Beginning with *Chaanani*, a long string of 102 verses on moonlight and different aspects of its beauty seen in different moods, followed by four collections of poems entitled *Banjara*, *Chetey De Suraj Mukhi*, *Ik Shahar Yaaden Da* and *Kish Kaliyan Tere Naan*, an epic *Jitto*, a collection of songs *Geet Ganga* and two collections of *ghazals* called *Basti Basti* and *Peeden Di Barant*. In his first five books, Jitendra comes through as a poet of romantic nostalgia with the predominant mood as one of melancholy and brooding sadness distilled out of memories. Most of his poems contain a sentimental cocktail of desire and regret, love and self-pity, hope and hopelessness, despair and despondency. Several of these poems are striking for the freshness and newness of imagery and simplicity of line. One comes across the images of prison and shadows, caged bird and dark lanes, lamps of memories and cactus jungles of memories and memories as masons building bridges between the present and the past, between the poet and his beloved. In between, he shows concern for society, sympathy for the underprivileged and the poor as in *Eh Chann Tunda* and strikes a note of rebellious protest as in *Ik Kranti Ik Ramal*. In the songs of *Geet Ganga*, the accent is on devotion to God, yearning for the deity, pangs of separation and a sense of loss, as of a child separated from his mother in the melee of (fair) *mela*. The mood is one of prayer, making garlands of songs, sitting on the bank of the river of life washing the accumulated dirt of impurities, making his body a *thaali*, a platter of *pooja* and his breath the beads of prayer. He realizes that God is within him like *kasturi* or musk in the deer's navel, and a pearl within the shell and breath in life. There is nothing new in the sentiments and metaphors and images used in the songs. There are echoes of some lines from Hindi devotional verse and also of senior Dogri poets like Padma

Sachdev and Ram Dhan. The two collections of *ghazals* present a mixed fare — some very good *ghazals*, some average and prosaic, some just passable, some tinged with shades of Urdu poets Iqbal and Firaq, but all of them marked by neatness of line and simplicity and lucidity of expression. Some key words of the bulk of his poetry like *chete* (Memories), *peed* (Pain) *duasi* (Sadness) recur in these *ghazals* also. There are some memorable lines with fresh imagery like that of night like a newly wedded bride washing her feet in the river Tawi or of an ailing woman slowly descending the slope of a hillside on a winter evening. In spite of the general mood of nostalgic melancholy, there is a note of hope and faith in Destiny:

The sky has the moon, stars, darkness  
It depends who gets what.

*Jitto*, an epic of 260 pages, divided into 9 cantos is a masterpiece of craftsmanship and skilful weaving of a legend into an interesting work, mixing history, myth, legend and local colour, embellished with figures of speech with imaginative details. It attempts to capture life in its totality—Nature in its different moods with Trikuta in the background, in beautiful imagery; man in revolt against injustice and exploitation, a common farmer standing up against feudal powers, with a sprinkling of philosophic comments on life and society evoking a mix of *Karunarasa* and *Virarasa*.

Prakash Premi's single book of poetry is his epic *Bedan Dharati Di*. The sweep of its concept is much wider than that of *Jitto* and it consists of 276 pages divided into 11 cantos. It sets out to narrate the story of the Earth, its breaking away from the Sun, evolution of life on it and the role of the first six incarnations drawn from the mythology, *Dashavatar* processed with a rational scientific outlook and finally turns out to be *Ramayana* retold with a prelude. The central theme, however, is the suffering of Mother Earth and of woman who produces beauty and life and Sita is used as the symbol. The poet appears to have taken pains to structure the epic, sandwiching a longish canto between 4 and 6 short cantos respectively. The last six cantos could have been compressed into four by cutting out some superfluity of detail and verbal excesses and avoidable comments, in order to give

the work a certain structural symmetry. In spite of these flaws, *Bedan Dharati Di* is a significant contribution to Dogri literature. It compels attention for its beautiful descriptive passages about Nature, with fresh figures of speech and evocative imagery, and a new interpretation of characters of Ravana and Kaikeyi as noble, wellmeaning beings, for humanisation of the concept of Earth as a suffering woman and for the sheer sweep of the subject.

### Other Poets

There are about forty other Dogri poets who have published one, two or three books of poetry and more than twice that number who have written and published in journals or recited in Kavi Sammelans but not yet published a book during these two decades. A little less than half of them hail from the mofussil towns or rural areas of Duggar. From places like Ramnagar and Basantgarh in the hills of Sivalik, Jaurian and Madh near the Indo-Pak border, Akhroor on the Chenab and Samba in the plains, and the rest are from the city of Jammu and thereabouts. They come from different backgrounds—peasants, farmers, teachers, Government officials, doctors, housewives and the self-employed. Their books have interesting titles, some romantic, some high flown, some suggestive and some meaningful. But except for about half a dozen of them who show promise in their first/second works, the rest have nothing profound or moving or original to say. The common subjects of their poems are nostalgic memories and regrets, aspects of nature, Duggar, loss of values, hope and loss of hope and so on. There is repetition and superfluity of words in some and false sentiment and superficial handling of themes in others. But more importantly, there is a certain satisfaction and joy in self-expression, in being able to string together rhyming lines, above all, in making creative use of their mother tongue.

Three of these poets are women—Dr Champa Sharma, Kanta Jamwal and Santosh Khajuria. Champa Sharma and Kanta Jamwal are content to give expression to feminine sentiments, love for Dogri and Duggar and description of some aspect of nature in simple verses in the form of *geets*, *ghazals* and poems in *Duggar Dharati* and *Ghere Sochen De* respectively. Santosh

Khajuria, on the other hand, shows remarkable richness and plasticity of imagination in the poems of her only published book *Trichauli*. She has the genius of breathing life into things inanimate and creating evocative imagery. The sky is visualised as a man intently watching everything; the wave a wayward girl going her way lost in singing; a flock of birds on the river bank, a bevy of belles full of mercurial liveliness, chatting away; and windstorm, a playful wilful girl who snatches *odanies* of girls and shows them up from the sky, knocks at doors, and throws dust in the eyes of people.

Two of the other poets are musicians – Moti Ram Sharma the sitarist and Pradyumna Singh Jindrahiya the popular sweet-voiced folk singer. Their geets, full of *sringara-rasa*, have simplicity and directness and a certain charm of folksongs but nothing more. Moti Ram Sharma's book is entitled *Mere geet Saanjhe geet* and Pradyumna Singh's book which also gives the musical notations to the geets is called *Phuharan* (light misty drizzle). Padam Singh Nirdosh's *ghazals* and *geets* collected in *Khalaar Sochen Da* (Thoughts scattered pellmell), are also eminently singable and some of them have been set to music by a Jammu composer and are quite popular. Gyan Singh Pagoch appears to be a plodding type who has picked up the legend of Bawa Jitto, a Dogra hero, enshrined in a popular *Karaka*, and expanded it into a minor epic of seven cantos in his *Nyaan* and followed it up with another minor epic *Mattanga Ashram* (also 7 cantos) woven around the character of Shabari and her meeting with Rama from Valmiki Ramayana in which he makes use of different rhyme-schemes and figures of speech to draw good verbal pictures.

Then there are some elderly poets, six of whose collections were published during these decades. Jagadish Chandra Sharma from Jammu city, inspired by Mohanlal Sapolia, began writing poetry after retirement, and produced three publications—*Guldasta* (A bunch of flowers), *Durga Stotravali* (a Dogri translation of some verses of *Durga Saptashati* in Dogri verse) and *Bujhadiyan Aashaan* (Vanishing hopes). Poems, *ghazals* and *geets* of the two collections are in the old traditional style with comments on life, old age, religion, passage of time, hopes, regrets, seasons, Dogra land. The tone is moralistic and

philosophical. Shiv Ram Premi's poems and *geets* published in *Bhaava-Shuaale* deal with subjects like workers, farmers, the social and human situation and nature. Satya Pal Mishra's collection *Phull Baretai Da* has poems with a more personal and rather sentimental note. Goga Ram Saathi from Jaurian and Ramlal Papiha from Madh block are farmer poets. Goga Ram Saathi published *Dikhane Ali Akh Nayeen* and *Hirakhi Dhage* and R.L. Papiha published his second collection, *Premi Rasa* after his *Papiha Di Pukaar* (1970). These poets bring a certain rustic naivete and smell of the soil and a devotional, faith-anchored approach to their work. Simple rhyming verses in colloquial language of day-to-day use are seen in these *bhajans*, *geets*, and poems giving descriptions of seasons, the beauty of nature, expression of love for the country, some philosophic, didactic comment and so on. Saathi is more philosophical with a world view corresponding to that of sufis and Hindi poet Kabir. There is metre and rhyme in their compositions but little of poetic imagery or emotional intensity.

Nearly two-thirds of the remaining poets, both with rural and urban background show lack of poetic imagination and emotional intensity and immaturity of craftsmanship in their works. Their books only make quantitative addition to the corpus of Dogri poetry. While T.R. Magotra from Gurha Salathaian has added two volumes—*Kungale Pattar Khidade Phull* (Tender leaves and blossoming flowers) and *Peeden Da Badshah* (The king of pains), Puran Chand Sharma and Ram Lal Kesar from the border district and Munshi Ram from Ramnagar, Jiyalal Jia from Painthal, Uttam Chand Uttam from Basantgadh, Shiv Dev Susheel from Bilawar, Shiv Khajuria, Jagdeep Dubey, Man Singh Mashal, Rajinder Singh Jamwal and Balwant Singh Jamodia from Samba have given one each—*Dharati Da Chann* (The moon of the Earth), *Parmeshar Ik Saaren Da* (There is only one God for all), *Sucha Moti* (Pure pearl) *Hasade Pathar* (Laughing Stones) *Mere Haasse Meri Khushiyan* (My laughter my happiness), *Aunsiyan* (Tears), *Pailhi Gain* (First Step), *Aalhadan Da Moh* (Love for nests), *Ik Aala* (A call), *Jog Bajog* (Union and Separation) and *Maansar* respectively. Of the poets from the city of Jammu, Anand Kishore Anand added two volumes —*Aasen Di Doli* (The palanquin of hopes) and *Dadi Anman* (Grand mother) and

Sudarshan Ratanpuri, Chaman Lal Chaman, Ram Sanyasi, Sita Ram Sapolia and Shamsher Singh, one each—*Kaltaraan* (Small pieces of cut cloth), *Dua Janam* (Second birth), *Peed Manai Di* (Mental suffering), *Chete Bani Ge Geet* (Memories became songs) and *Kaliye Nayin Joaan Hoyeyan* (Bud, don't blossom) respectively. The subjects of their compositions are hackneyed—sentiments of love and patriotism, seasons and aspects of Nature, hope, frustration, struggle, time, life, the world—but the handling of these subjects is superficial. The only commendable feature about their compositions, is the flow of language. Three of them, T.R. Magotra, Shiv Dev Susheel and Ram Sanyasi show some potential and promise in some of their compositions. Magotra seems to possess a certain facility in stringing rhyming lines with rhythm and movement but he lacks literary discipline and tends to repeat and use too many words. Shiv Dev Susheel appears to strive to express his personal private anguish in simple, unadorned, unrhymed lines but more often he slips into plain bare prose, broken into lines of different length and in very few lines is he able to achieve a certain heightened expression. Ram Sanyasi has a certain seriousness of approach and the capacity to vary his style—rhymed verse or free verse—to suit the subject and he spreads his net wide enough to turn out poems, *ghazals* and *geets*. Duni Chand Tripathi from Ramnagar shows much greater promise in his collection *Dharan Te Phuharan* (Mountains and misty drizzles). There is beauty of rhythm and striking original imagery in lines describing memories muddying the deep waters of consciousness or the Tawi river spread like molten silver or Neeru streamlet joining the Chenab like tears trickling or sadness settling like dust but he tends to get sentimental at places.

Two young poets hailing from Ramnagar also show considerable promise in their maiden collections—Om Vidyarthi in his *Chaanani Di Kanso* (Moonlight Eaves-dropping) and Abhishap in *Kaali Chidi* (Dark Sparrow). Om Vidyarthi's best poems in his collection are striking for their tautness of structure with short clipped sentences in free verse, rhythm of lines, and effective evocative use of figures of speech as in description of the evening with 'sunlight turning pale' and the mind 'smouldering with memories'. Abhishap's *Kaali Chidi* has fifteen

longish poems—some descriptive, some narrative and some in dramatic monologue. The striking feature about them is the passionate intensity of feeling and creative tension and his concern for the worker, the woman and mother earth. A similar passion and creative tension marks the 40 page long poem *Shabda Amrat* by Mohammed Yasin Baig, another young poet from the moffussil, published in a special issue of *Nani Chetana* (issue No. 85—July-September 1988)—what impresses one about this poem is the richness of allusions, freshness of metaphors and imagery and the poet's vision, his world view, the individual consciousness linking up with universal consciousness, the whole of humanity from all ages, all continents, all religions and the sweep of history stretching over centuries. The poet feels sad and lonely, suffocated, cribbed and confined, trying to break out of the prison to reach out to something beyond, waiting to be rescued, searching for a small light within, seeking solace in memories of his mother, dead and buried, of earth and its pristine primitive now wounded mines, countries divided, people with masks, city walls littered with posters spitting venom, time running out like grains of sand.

There are five other young Dogri poets who show great promise—Ashwini Magotra, Virendra Kesar, Mohan Singh, Gyaneshwar and Dr Arvind. Of the new crop of young poets, Ashwini Magotra is the most significant and versatile and has published three books during this period—*Khubatiyaan* (1972), a collection of 22 *ghazals* and 25 poems, *Lehraan* (1976), a single theme long poem, and *Meri Basti Mere Lok* (1981), a collection of *ghazals*. The qualities that mark his compositions are exuberance of expression with a sense of rhythm and a feel for a wide range of subjects, a spirit of experimentation, capability of image-making and an attitude full of courage, hope and optimism. Poems and *ghazals* of *Khubatiyaan*, his first published work suffer from sentimentalism and a surfeit of words. The prevailing sentiment of poems and *ghazals* is one of loneliness, loss of hope and awakening of hope, reaction to paradoxes of life, people and their ways and courage to walk to the end and to change society. *Lehraan* which is in free verse, has psychological and metaphysical elements and the poet views consciousness as an ocean full of movement with its waters kneaded blue by the



wind, in which all sorts of waves arise to merge back into the ocean again—waves of love and concern for humanity, waves of pain, frustration, conflict and compassion, of historical events, and of creativity. The poet draws on mythology and legends and weaves some memorable images in the texture of the poem, like birds embracing light, 'sunlight resting on roof-projection', and 'ray of light descending on the wings of the wind'.

Virendra Kesar has also published three books—*Gilla Baalan* containing 10 poems, 51 *ghazals* and 11 *geets*, *Laava* a collection of 111 *ghazals* and *Kish Kirchaan Kish Turiyaan* a collection of 76 poems. The accent in the compositions of the first two books is on contemporary society, today's man who appears to him like a termite-eaten tree, loss of values, and words having lost their meaning, flight of tenderness and perfume from life, stones blossoming in place of flowers in the garden, and masked men passing for good men. The poems of *Kish Kirchaan Kish Turiyaan* are mediocre, rarely rising to any poetic height and the inspiration behind them is also the poet's dissatisfaction with the prevalent situation in politics, culture, religion and human relationships.

Mohan Singh gives the impression of an angry young poet, angry at social evils and disparities, political chicanery and manipulation, besides exploitation, and he gives vent to his sentiments and feelings in the poems of *Us Lok* (We people). There is youthful zeal in his exhortative tone but not much poetic imagery or depth of thought. The poems are at times, verbose and repetitive. *Ghadi* (Timepiece) a string of 187 eight line verses, linked together by the refrain word *Ghadi* at the end of each line like Kunwar Viyegi's *Ghar* shows a certain verbal felicity and purports to be a symbolic poem trying to capture different moods and stages of human mind through the ticking of the time piece.

Two young poets from Jammu city who show a lot of promise in their first published works are Gyaneshwar in his *Choog Sochen di* (Thoughts to ponder) and Dr. Arvind in his *Mera Safar mere Saathii* (My journey, my companions). Gyaneshwar comes through as a sensitive poet, idealistic, imbued with deep humanity, reverence for Nature and a plastic image making

imagination and some of the poems and *geets* of his collection have beautiful imagery, like clouds resting on hill tops, embracing trees. He is at ease both in rhymed verse and free verse. Arvind writes in free verse and his book contains reflections on his journey through 36 years of his life in relationship with others and the world, exploring, questioning. Below the simple unadorned, unrhymed, short, broken lines, lurks a certain intensity and straining after expression and a deep sincerity of intent. The book is divided into six sections, entitled Relationship, Disenchantment, Paradoxes, Death, Search and Return. Love of mother and motherland shines through in the first. The second deals with the state of the society—as seen by the poet—callousness and unconcern of city folk, injustice to woman, meaningless pursuits of man and his quest to conquer nature and space. Paradoxes deal with metaphysical concerns, the basic questions of life. In the section ‘Death’, he looks at death from different angles with varying emotions. The last two sections enquire into life and its meaning.

## Short Story

These two decades produced a fairly rich crop of short stories in Dogri—rich in numbers, quality and variety of themes. A total of 40 volumes were published—four anthologies, 35 collections by individual authors and one co-authored work of four young and upcoming writers. The anthologies, *Katha Kyari* edited by Jitendra Sharma and published by Dogri Sanstha, Jammu, *Chonamiyan Dogri Kahaniyan* edited by Madan Mohan Sharma and *Dogri Kahaniyan* also edited by Madan Mohan Sharma and published by the Sahitya Akademi, in the early 1970s largely contain short stories from books and journals published before 1970 while *Dogri Katha Kunj* edited by D. C. Prashant and published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1990 contains stories of the later period.

The other 35 collections contain works of 20 short story writers—some established writers of the genre, some new but impressive and some novices. They represent three different waves, three generations of Dogri short story writers. R.N. Shastri and D. C. Prashant represent the first phase and rely on romantic yarn and didactic social problem related themes respectively. Ved Rahi and Madan Mohan Sharma belong to the second phase, when the foundations of Dogri short story were firmed up by them along with Narendra Khajuria and R. K. Abrol in the 50s and 60s, who went to polish their art taking it to newer heights. Om Goswami, Bandhu Sharma, Chhatrapal and O.P. Sharma 'Sarathi' ushered in the third phase of the realistic, socially relevant short story. They were soon joined by up-and-coming writers like Narsingh Dev Jamwal, Chaman Arora, Lalit Magotra, and Krishan Sharma. Some others too have joined this stream with one or two volumes, thus, creating a fascinating scenario in which rural Duggar and urban and semi-urban Duggar come alive with all the community values, social concerns, some interesting characters and documentation of contemporary problems and situations.

D. C. Prashant belongs to the old school of short story writers whose main concern was the art of story telling and building up suspense to hold the readers' interest. R. N. Shastri was more concerned with social problems and he used the medium of the short story to highlight them. Prashant's collection *Qile Da Qaidi* (1990) contains some stories already published earlier and they take one to a romantic world far removed from reality—built around some semi-historical event or local legend. The approach is slightly stilted. Shastri's *Badanaami Di Chhaan* (1973) is his only collection and its stories are marked by realism hedged in by idealism and reformist accent. He builds a bridge between the stories of Sathe and Prashant and those who came later. The stories are woven around some idea or social problem and the characters are moved almost puppet like, to drive home the idea or highlight the social problem. The emphasis is on delineation of character under the impact of social forces and values.

The collections of short stories entitled *Aale* (1982) of Ved Rahi and *Dudh Lahu Zahar* (1971) and *Nayak* (1986) of M. M. Sharma contain some of the best Dogri short stories. These two short story writers who published their first collections in the late fifties, have perfected their art over the years, spread their net over various themes, experimented with new techniques and in the process, presented the contemporary day-to-day reality of life and its problems and drawn memorable characters with indepth presentation of their psychological and mental states. They are equally at ease in dealing with rural and urban scene. Ved Rahi is particularly strong in characterisation and building up an appropriate atmosphere as seen in stories such as *Aale* (the story of helplessness of an old woman deserted by the fleeing population of a village against the background of the Indo-Pak War of 1965), *Taihlán* (the story of a chambermaid in a raja's palace, her socially unacceptable relationship in the background of palace intrigues), *Paala Pawa Da Ha* (representing the situation of a poor widow living in the hills coveted by a contractor), *Uchi Daali Da Amb* (situation of a maid servant in a metropolis), *Maut* (dynamics of Hindu-Muslim relationship under the impact of partition) and *Phatte Da Boot* (showing tensions and frustrations in a big city). He is particularly good in laying bare the psychological dimensions, like loneliness and emptiness of life, in simple sentences, with utmost economy of expression. But

Rahi's output is rather limited. Against this M. M. Sharma's output is substantial—34 short stories in 2 volumes each one of them powerful and interesting. Particularly worth mentioning are *Pathari*, *Meri Gali Da Paap*, *O, Ik Lamakadi Loth*, *Shainkari Da Buddha*, in *Dudh Lahu Zahar* and *Tandav*, *Train*, *Keeda*, *Nayak* in *Nayak*. And what is striking is the variety of tones and techniques and devices employed like drama, fantasy, symbolism as in *Nayak*, and a mix of fact and fantasy as in *Tandav*, diary, point and counter point with rhythmic balance, rumination, juxtaposition of contrasting situations, different value systems and different psyches. The themes he addresses himself to, have a psychological dimension, which he has probed remarkably well - fractured principles and ideals, mental frustration and conflict, boredom, alienation from family, self-pity, disillusionment with a life of honesty and self-abnegation, predicament of a pensioner and fear of death, awakened lust, anxiety eating into a man's soul like a beetle, a gnawing feeling of guilt, or hurt, pressures of family responsibilities, psychological complexes, psychological pressure of waiting, and search for meaning of life and so on.

In delineating the psychological terrain of the characters of his stories, M. M. Sharma employs a simple unadorned style and in the process he not only takes the lid off the psychological goings on in the minds of his characters but also captures the culture and values of life of these denizens of society. What jars the reader at places, is his excessive emphasis, expressed in long sentences, repetition and dash of sentimentality.

The next wave of short story writers—Om Goswami, O.P. Sharma 'Sarathi', Bandhu Sharma and Chhatrapal carried the Dogri short story forward in a very significant way. The four of them added 12 collections and gave a new direction to the Dogri short story. Om Goswami has been the most productive with six volume in these two decades, followed by O.P. Sharma 'Sarathi' with three volumes, Bandhu Sharma with two and Chhatrapal with one collection. What is common to them all, is their social awareness, modern temper, freshness of approach and sharp effective realistic style, and delineation of raw experience of life around, with common place characters picked up from contemporary society in the throes of change.

Chhatrapal has given only six stories in his collection *Taapu Da Andami* and his concern seems to be with delineation of man who is an island to himself. *Soonkadiyan Cheedaan* (Sighing pines) is a memorable etching of the state of mind, mental suffering, impotent rage and helplessness of a wayside hotel boy of the Jammu hills whose wife back in the village has been raped by some miscreants.

Bandhu Sharma also shows interest in probing the terrain of the mind of his characters with psychological insight as in the title story of his book *Parshaame*. The stories of *Keengare* are imbued with deep human interest where he seems to grasp his subjects with tender empathy and delineates, with remarkable economy of strokes, the human situation and behaviour with sensitiveness informed by keen observation and produces stories of human daring and courage, human predicaments and concerns, anxieties and fears, with memories of the past casting shadows over the present, as in *Moe Ra Pakkhru* and *Tukude Tukade Ateet*. The stories are short and crisp and gripping, characters alive and atmosphere realistic.

Compared to the canvas of Bandhu Sharma's stories which is rather limited, Om Goswami's sweep is very wide and compared to the intuitive approach of Bandhu Sharma, his approach is analytical, with the scalpel of a sharp intellect but he tends to be long winding and involved and quite a few of his stories in the later volumes tend to be lengthy. He published three collections of his stories in the 1970s—*Nainh Te Pote* (1971), *Haasahiye De Notes* (1972) and *Nhere Da Samunder* (1973) and three volumes in the 1980s—*Sunne Di Chidi* (1983), *Nherai Ghiri Di Puli* (1988) and *Pagdandi Par Suraj* (1989)—a total of 48 pieces. The stories are striking for the authenticity of experience and observation behind them and the author's capacity to grasp the tension in the changing Dogra society, his awareness of social problems, creeping corruption, complexity and corrosion and corrupting nature of city life, encroaching on simple beauty of the rural human scene and his realistic powerful presentation of raw realities of life without comment, without sentimentality. There is maturing of his art and sensibility over the years and widening of the sweep of his pen, sharper focus on social inequalities, class conflict and clash of values and interests,

feelings of alienation and frustration, hollowness of feudal system and hypocrisy of politicians. *Patoi di Itt of Nhere Da Samundar*, *Magar Machh* and *Keeng aren Alaa Chunn of Sunne Di Chidi*, *Nherai Modai Di Lo* and *Pagdandi Par Suraj of Pagdandi Par Suraj* are powerful stories. The characters and atmosphere built up with pathological detail linger in one's mind. The reality of man, struggle for existence, his consciousness and aspirations overshadowed by realities of existence, deepen and chasten our consciousness.

O. P. Sharma 'Sarathi's' three collections—*Lok Gai Lok* and *Sukka Barud* both published in 1971-72 and *Pagal Da Taj Mahal* (1979) have stories which are marked by their visual quality. Sarathi employs the technique of a painter in his story writing—he prepares a set and unfolds the story within its parameters by his simple, readable effective style and his sincere involvement with life and its problems and social tensions, his empathy for common people, like porters, war-scarred soldiers, labourers, farmers and a deep sense of awareness of change—engulfing old ways of life and the city drawing people to its fold. A characteristic of his stories is the way he makes the milieu come alive. His stories are built around characters caught in psychological conflict, suffering, tensions of relationship and breakups of relationship, generation gaps, loneliness, mechanical existence of city life, economic disparities and related problems, problem of marriage of girls of marriageable age, social exploitation, ravages of war, the chasm between two world views, selfishness of people and lack of concern for the other, effects of drinking, inferiority complex and so on. Some of his stories like *Laam* and *Ruaar Paar* woven out of local events/situations assume universal dimensions. There is a gentle irony in some and sharp satire in others.

Five other writers added to the corpus of Dogri short stories by publishing more than one book each, while seven others added one book each. Narsingh Dev Jamwal's second collection *Chaanani Da Sek* was published in 1979 and the third, *Mera Des Mere Lok* in 1989. Jamwal has tried his hand in almost all literary genres—poetry, novel, plays and short story. Stories of *Chaanani Da Sek* are better than those of his first collection called *Dhukhade Gohte* and those of *Mera Des Mere Lok* appear better than those of

*Chaanani Da Sek*. In the stories of *Chaanani Da Sek*, like *Mohern Da Dard* and *Partihari*, his concern is family life, and domestic problems faced by women. In the stories of *Mera Des Mere Lok* he seems to shift his focus from the physical to the psychological, from the concrete to the abstract, exploring how thoughts arise and spread like waves on the fall of a stone in water. He also explores the nature of relationship, a scandal or psychology of fear eg. *Dar* (fear), about fear in a situation of terrorist attacks.

Chaman Arora first appeared on the Dogri short story scene in 1974 as one of the very promising young writers who jointly published a collection entitled *Sach Te Sach* in that year. The collection contained stories based on the truth of life, largely city life and lower middle class society, the problems of common man as seen by these young people—Chaman Arora, Dr Lalit Magotra, Dr Manoj and Dr Arvind and presented realistically in stark bare prose the psychology of the characters and the tensions of their relationships and economic and social pressures. Their first stories—Chaman Arora's *O Kuthen Ai*, Lalit Magotra's *Naali De Keede* and *Masterji*, Manoj's *Hathen Di Loti* and *Ik Phatt Kayi Pachh* and Arvind's *Chakravayuh* pointed to great promise and future for Dogri short story in the hands of these upcoming writers. But only Chaman Arora followed up that promise to some extent with the publication of two collections—*Lohe Diyan Pheengaraan* (1978) and *Kandhaan Te Quile* (1986). In the stories of these two collections, he employed gentle irony, symbolism and suggestiveness to expose man's hidden selfishness as in *Skinheads*, manipulative cleverness as in *Love Politics* and *Kheerala Mode*, frustration of a lower middle class working girl as in *Lohe Diyan Pheengaraan*, sexual exploitation as in *Silsila*, financial problems as in *Hill Station*, double standards in social and political life as in *Green Revolution*, and erosion of the moral fibre of the middle class. Keen observation and the capacity to create an appropriate realistic atmosphere with varying format, techniques and pace of narration, are his strong points.

Satya Pal published two collections entitled *Panchhaan* and *Buaal* in 1980 and 1982 respectively. These stories are simple, one-dimensional, narratives put down in an easy flowing style in chaste Dogri. The characters are from poorer classes drawn



largely from rural Duggar or small towns. The treatment is rather superficial and situations are common place. His forte seems to lie in his command and effective use of the language and building up a typical Dogra atmosphere and the inspiration behind his efforts—to throw light on social evils, exploitation, duplicity, greed and growing corruption in social life.

Krishan Sharma is another promising young short story writer who impressed with his first collection *Tarkaalen Te Bhyaaga De Bachhkaar* published in 1986 and followed it up with two more collections—*Khuushi De Athrun* containing stories for children published in 1987 and *Tankor*, a collection of mini stories (*laghukathas*) in 1988. The five stories of his first collection are remarkable for their deep humanism and accent on psychological delineation of the workings of the minds of the characters set in an interweave of relationships, domestic and social. The author shows confidence and self-assurance in his narrative style using the technique of flashback and recapitulation of memories. Mini stories of *Tankor* are experimental in nature and the author has spread his net wide to capture in sharp sketches some social situations and institutions with biting satire—religion, educational system, social exploitation, bureaucracy and human frailties.

Shiv Dev Susheel's two collections *Nyaan Di Maut* (1983) and *Atit De Parshaame* (1988) have stories which try to recapture some vignettes of life around and society in the throes of change and some characters who touch the author's sensitivity. Characters are drawn from the outside with little psychological dimension. Narratives are straight and one-dimensional. The attitude is one of social concern looking at corruption, exploitation and loss of values and ideals and sympathy for those suffering.

Besides the five short story writers discussed above seven others who published only a single volume each, also showed promise in their work. Ashwini Magotra, basically a poet, exhibits not only poetic flair in idiomatic use of the language but also a capacity to experiment with form and employ psychological insight and symbolism to explore the goings-on in the minds of his characters as in *Andarai Di Chuppi* and *Adhiyan-*

*Adhuriyan Kahaniyan*, from his collection *Kheerli Boond* (1974). Smt. Krishna Prem in her stories of *Sur Te Tal* (1977) adopts a simple story line and simple language to portray the psychology of her characters. Prakash Premi who has tried his hand at poetry and prose essays, produced a collection of 10 short stories also, entitled *Ik Kotha Dus Doaar* (1985)—a mixed bag of good and average stories dealing with subjects like Hindu-Muslim amity in the hills of Duggar, romantic love, bureaucratic and political corruption and feudal exploitation. Poet Om Vidyarthi's *Jarami Roz* has twelve stories of rural life captured in an interesting narrative style in the tradition of B.P. Sathe—the plots are interestingly developed and characters are life-like and the language is beautiful and catching, although the approach is rather romantic and idealistic. Desh Bandhu Dogra 'Nutan' who is essentially a novelist has contributed a collection of 18 short stories under the title *Sainskar Te Mukwaani*. More than one third of the stories are set in hilly rural Duggar which comes alive in the pages of this book as in his three novels—the topography, the flora and fauna, the people with their customs, rituals, superstitions, caste and orthodox values, their avarice and heartlessness, misery and suffering and exploitation of the weaker sections. A couple of stories like *Sainskar* and *Bachairi Manaso* are powerful indictments of that society and the main characters, Bhukkadu and Manaso, pushed to the limits of deprivation, are memorable. A couple of stories point to the simmering discontent and protest for change in that society. There are also stories of ironic humour and character delineation. The stories on the whole show the author's social awareness and deep concern for exposure of false values and need for change.

Compared to the stories of Nutan, the stories of Sudarshan Ratanpuri's collection *Addhi Battai Di Poori Kahani* (1988) and mini stories of Ashok Khajuna's *Nikka Jadugar* (1990) appear pale and anaemic; while Ratanpuri's stories are simple, straightforward narrations of certain happenings drawn from the life around which made some impression on him, the brief sketches of Khajuria are in the nature of comments on society and people, some interesting, some effective and some just trite.

The Dogri short story before 1970 was mired in problems of poverty, *dohri* (marriage by reciprocity) ill-matched marriage, domestic tensions, rural setting, contrived plots, typed characters, with romantic, idealistic, didactic approaches. During these last two decades it has moved towards a realistic probing into realities of today's existence with the attendant struggle, frustration, alienation, psychological conflict, search for identity in changing relationships, and social pressures and acquired intellectual depth and artistic maturity that is so essential for the modern writer.

## Novel

Development and growth of the Dogri novel has been rather slow and unsteady—three novels emerged in 1960, the fourth in 1970, three more were published in 1972, two in 1976, three in 1978, two in 1979, one in 1980 and seven thereafter spread over a decade. The three Dogri novels published in 1972 are *Badsis* by Shakuntala Sharma Birpuri, *Jis Aillai Nhera Peyi Gaya* by Pishorilal Gupta 'Sharar' and *Dared* by Ved Rahi. *Badsis* and *Jis Aillai Nhera Peyi Gaya* do not add much to the development of the genre. *Badsis* is the story of a young girl who falls in love with a school master, is jilted by him for another girl who brings dowry, curses him for his faithlessness and then takes up an independent career as a doctor but regrets her curse when she finds him, years later, wheeled in, seriously injured in an accident. The plot is diffused by the introduction of irrelevant elements and stories of unrequited love in the shape of a subplot and the character of the protagonist emerges confused between self-reliance and sentimental pulls. *Jis Aillai Nhera Peyi Gaya* is also sentimental stuff and tries to focus attention on the plight of women in Dogra rural society—girls sold by parents, wives locked up and ill-treated by husbands and mothers-in-law, poor girls sexually exploited by the sons of well-to-do apparently respectable village chiefs. The mixing of three different plots is unsatisfactory and while long dialogues and irrelevant elements jar the idiomatic speech of the characters, some passages of description of nature are pleasing. *Dared* by Ved Rahi appears like a short story plot stretched into a novel. Its main interest is psychological chasm created in the mind and heart of a wife in the advanced stage of her pregnancy, deserted, though temporarily, by her husband, under fear of Pakistani bombardment in a village Chhamb-Jaurian on the Indo-Pak border during the 1965 war.

In 1976, two novels were published—Thakar Poonchhi's *Chaanani De Chor* and Narsingh Dev Jamwal's *Saanjhi Dharati Bakhle Maahnum*. Thakar Poonchhi was basically an Urdu novelist and short-story writer and was known as a minor Krishan Chander. He adopted one of his better known and popular Urdu novels, *Vaadiyan Aur Veeraane* into Dogri and published it as *Chaanani De Chor*. It is a romantic novel with unrealistic situations and urban setting but interesting. Jamwal's novel, on the other hand, is drawn from life portrayed realistically and effectively. It has a historical setting—India between 1930 and 1970 and attempts to project the story of a Rajput family of Jammu and also the effects of partition of the country in 1947 and Indo-Pak War of 1965 on families, friends, relationships. The two strands of the novel, are finely enmeshed. Time passes, people grow, and change with the passage of time, are affected by cataclysmic happenings like Partition and War, dividing people, leaving scars on their minds, and taking away near and dear ones. The narrative is engaging, although its flow at places is rather slow, with some descriptions being rather long, and the emphasis on Dogra values of life, like pride in one's profession and overriding importance of duty, being too pronounced and obtrusive. This was the most satisfying of Dogri novels published till then—its spread of action was geographically wider, its characters were more numerous and the exploration of relationship between individuals and the two communities of Hindus and Muslims was deeper and what was more significant, was the portrayal of the inexorable march of Time—an important element in the narrative.

The year 1978 saw the appearance of three more novels, each different from the other, and all the three much smaller in size compared to their predecessor *Saanjhi Dharati Balikle Maahnum*. *Trutti Di Dor* by Ved Rahi is set in the metropolis and it takes up the story of the breakup of a marriage due to the wife's suspicions of her husband and attempts of their daughter to bring the separated parents together. The author in the process of developing the story, underlines the complexity of relationships and the boredom, tensions and sense of alienation generated in a working woman living alone in a city. O.P. Sharma brought out two short novels—*Treh Samundar Di* and

*Nanga Rukh*. The former is an idealistic, almost utopian novel in straight narrative while the latter is an experimental novel in the existential explorative mode, and impressionist symbolic documentation of the reality of city life. Both the novels appear to be the result of intellectual endeavors of the author. *Treh Sumundar Di* being in the conventional narrative mode has a plot and characters woven by the author to expose the deficiencies of the existing educational system and to project an ideal system of education. *Nanga Rukh* has no plot and no characters—it is built up as a series of situations seen through the eyes of a nameless 'he', the sum total of which shows up the reality of urban existence where there is unemployment, hypocrisy and deception, family bickering and political intrigues, injustice and exploitation, a bazaar of masks where there is loneliness and alienation, every one far away not only from one's neighbours and relatives, streets and localities but also from one's own self. There is a certain world view and a certain philosophy of life which the author projects effectively in a symbolic, gentle, irony-laced style.

O.P. Sharma 'Sarathi' gave four more novels to Dogri—*Resham De Keede* and *Makaan* in 1979, *Pathar te Rang* in 1981, followed by *Apana Apana Suraj*. All the novels are in the same style as of *Nanga Rukh*—philosophical, symbolic, exploratory, ironic, without characters or plots, problem-and-situation centred. *Resham De Keede* deals with the contemporary socio-political situation, *Makaan*, with individual's psycho-spiritual situation, *Pathar Te Rang* with the problems and situation of artists and *Apana Apana Suraj* with the problem of truth—absolute truth and individual truth. In *Resham De Keede* the theme is worked out through two groups of people with different ideologies—the co-coon people who are aware of what is happening and who want to make the people aware, who think that society can be improved by common endeavor, by working for society and the people but whose efforts go in vain and the platform people who know how to manipulate people, who know that people can be easily exploited because each person pursues his own self-interest and is apathetic towards common social political problems, who are good at devising new strategies, hood-winking and exploiting and depriving people of

their rights. But a day comes when people rise but the situation remains unaffected in the absence of a selfless leader.

*Makaan* deals with the question of man's aloneness, anxiety of insecurity, transient nature of worldly relationships and attractions of the world and the need for search for the Reality, the Truth of human life. Man's mind, his consciousness is restless, like a fish in a pond—always in movement. The house in which the protagonist Chetan lives, is made of sand standing on sand and has to be vacated one day. When he sits in meditation to contemplate, he sees colours of light enlightening his consciousness and then Maya, the daughter of the house-owner enters with questions, attractive, full of life and vivacity. Maya is a metaphor for the house, for the structure of relationships, for warmth and security against storms and ruthlessness of Nature, for the senses which link man's consciousness to the palpable world. The protagonist realizes that this Maya is made up of sand, standing on sand and he is scared. He can possess Maya but he has to leave the house in order to seek the Truth.

*Patthar Te Rang* deals with the problems of anxieties of creative artists, their loneliness, their value and relevance for the common people. Clever people with power and resources in the city use artists for their own benefit, common people are incapable of distinguishing between genuine colours and synthetic colours. Most people want to see not art, but themselves in the pieces of artistic creation and what is most painful—art is considered by some as only an object of commerce, and some consider it a waste of time to talk about art; a vast number of people do not know anything about art. Even artists do not understand the real import of art, and the unity of all arts, the importance of sustained dedication for art and its place and significance in the life of society. Artists in the novel go on strike. The city is drained of all colour and the artists themselves also suffer loss. The novel also raises some basic questions—should art be for art's sake or for the people, for the city? The question of depicting the concrete reality or making the abstract, concrete, palpable. Should an artist follow conventional modes or adopt new modes of expression? Should art be an individual activity or a social collective activity? The author

appears to suggest that every artist has within him creators of every discipline—poet, fiction-writer, musician, sculptor, painter, scientist, philosopher etc. and the conceptualization of creativity is realisation of one's own self, one's immediate milieu, the city, and the total environment.

*Apana Apana Suraj* projects a protagonist who believes in absolute Truth and not in individual truth. People call him 'Ulata'— an anarchist. There are two other characters, an opportunist, and a practical woman, who act as foils. The main character acts as a mirror to reflect reality—distortions in society, burial of values like sympathy, modesty, compassion. Sunrise and sunset are irrelevant to people. There are fountains playing but they do not wet your hands. There are trees but their leaves are of steel. Security of the city is in the hands of men who wear masks of *rakshasas*. The Legislative building has several doors and at each of them there is a *Naaradamuni* singing in praise of the builders. Everyone inside the building is busy exploiting the situation. The book is an indictment of present day polity. The Legislature is there in the city but not concerned with the city and its problems.

In all the five novels, which are metaphors of the present day reality, different facets of the reality of our urban existence have been sharply laid bare with gentle irony and series of symbolic situations, in a manner which is both arresting and revealing.

In 1980 came *Qaidi*, the first novel of Desh Bandhu Dogra Nutan— another landmark in the history of development of Dogri novel like *Nanga Rukh*. While *Nanga Rukh* laid bare the psyche of the city and the city dweller, *Qaidi* explored and exposed the reality of rural Dogra life in great depth and detail. Unlike *Nanga Rukh* which had no characters and plot, *Qaidi* was a straight narrative, with a central character and a chain of events forming the plot. The central character is Bhaagan and the novel is the story of her struggle for survival and maintenance of integrity in a hostile, orthodox and exploitative society. Married to an old man at the age of nine, widowed with one child, she receives harsh treatment from her husband while he lived and harsher treatment from village folk who dub her as a witch, excommunicate her, object to her ploughing her own small patch



of land for subsistence. The village chief's son tries to rape her and is killed at her hands. She is subjected to police atrocities and torture and is raped in jail by a jail functionary who is also killed by her. She confesses her crime, gives birth to the illegitimate child of rape and brings him up. In the end she is released and goes back to her village with her first son and the second son but dies on the threshold of the village boundary. The end of the story converts it into a sort of sentimental journey, and the descriptions of police torture and jail corruption are rather too stretched and thickly laid. It appears that the story of the woman has been used by the author as a peg on which he has hung his very evocative description of Dogra rural society and perceived excesses of police practice and jail administration. In the process, he kills three birds with one stone—creates a memorable character, idealised, but living and lovable; recreates Dogra rural society, decadent, male dominated and caste and superstition ridden, and makes a powerful indictment on the prevalent police and jail system. And he accomplishes this by the creative and artistic use of the local language and thus enriches Dogri language also.

In 1984, Nutan published his second novel, *Pyoke Bhejo*. Set in the hills of Duggar, the novel is a pathological probe into the social structure of a group of five villages and the community of Dogra Brahmins inhabiting the area. It lays bare the realities of their existence—the ripple-effect of the J&K State politics on their lives, caste and custom stratification of village life resulting in victimisation of women and the weaker sections, petty jealousies and intrigues in a close knit superstition bound, backward society—where there is greed, lust, corruption, ambition, extra-marital escapades, family feuds, absence of human sympathy and compassion. Description of the suffering of poor Gayatri, a girl of nine, married under the prevalent system of *dohri* (marriage by barter) to a brute of a man of thirty-one and the beatings that she receives at his hands and the hands of the police, betray a certain sadistic streak in the author. Characterisation in the novel is rather weak; most of the characters are types, not flesh and blood characters changing and growing. Even Gayatri does not quite come alive. The novel is, however, a very severe indictment of social injustice and

corruption, and manipulations and intrigues of those who happen to acquire power and position.

Nutan's third novel *Jangali Lok* emerged in 1987. Written before the other two novels were written and published after them, it shows certain structural weaknesses, romantic idealism, overlay of ideology, undercurrent of protest for change and disjointedness and jerkiness in narrative. Different strands of the tale are not well-balanced in relation to each other and transitions are not smooth. The author has attempted to tie up three or four different themes in the narrative—one, the way of life and mores of Muslim *bakarwals* or nomadic shepherds who live and work on the margins of civilized established society, two, the course of love between Satish, a Dogra Brahmin idealist youth who wants to work among the underprivileged and Gori, an uneducated beautiful *bakarwal* girl who is more placid than passionate, three, class conflict in the village situation where the haves with money and power, exploit the have-nots, the marginal and landless farmers and bonded labour, and four, the author's obsession, viz., police and their corruption, high-handedness and of course horrible jail administration. The author's foray into the town and city is a disaster but his description of rural society of Dogra hills and its natural setting is authentic, engaging and evocative. The author has also built in a moral, suggested in a tongue-in-cheek manner, that people termed *jangali* or rustic are actually more civilized as shown by their behaviour and values, than the well-to-do characters of the village. As in the earlier two novels, this novel also impresses by the richness and plasticity of the language used.

Narsingh Dev Jamwal published one more novel, *Bin Kandhen Kotha* in 1985, in three installments in *Sheeraza* (Dogri). It is a very short novel, compared to his large *Saanjhi Dharati Bakhle Maalnum*, and experimental in nature and symbolic in intent. There are five characters in jail—a detinue who has committed no crime, a victim of the corrupt system, an opportunist, a woman victim of man's lust, a ten year old victim of prisoners' lust and a young revolutionary who lands up to fight for reform and improvement of jail conditions. The novel is a critique of the social system-establishment and corruption.

Three more novels were added to the genre during the period. *Blukh* by Shiv Dev Susheel in 1985, *Sarkande* by Kewal Krishan Shakir in 1986 and *Jeevan Dan* by Tara Danpuri in 1988—each one of them, the author's first novel. All the three are simple, straight stories, without any depth and dimension. *Blukh* is the story of an educated, unemployed, idealist youth who takes up cudgels on behalf of the poor and the exploited who are crushed under a system in which moneyed contractors join hands with a corrupt bureaucracy and a powerful police. The author seems to have tried to project class-struggle through a set of weakly sketched characters and the protagonists' speeches seem to echo the author's Marxist views. The story is unidimensional, the handling is superficial and the plot is contrived. *Sarkande* is a novel in the mould of the earliest Dogri novels—set in rural Duggar, inspired by reformist zeal, bearing marks of superficial and immature handling of the subject with stock characters like the village zamindar, the village moneylender, a village belle with her father in debt, a bold young lover, exposed to exploitation, and a change agent from the city, a well-meaning helpful school teacher who creates awareness and unity among the villagers, in order to thwart the zamindar's wrong doings, the zamindar's plans to avenge his humiliation in the Panchayat and failure of these plans through the intervention of a dacoit. The plot appears contrived. The plot of *Jeevan Dan* is even more palpably contrived and the story line strains credibility and lacks authenticity of real life experience. The language is good but no creative work of fiction can stand simply on the strength of language if the plot is a series of improbable happenings and the different elements of the work, ideology of socialism, cheap sentimentality of romantic relationship, and factory owners' and workers' clash are crudely mixed and an element of suspense is brought in a typical Hindi film story style.

## Drama

Forty-two books of drama in Dogri were published in the course of these two decades. Eighteen during the seventies and twenty-four in the eighties. Of these, sixteen were of full length stage plays, three *nukkad nataks* (one of them containing three short plays), four anthologies of one-act and radio plays and nine of one-act plays of individual writers, seven collections of radio plays, one radio play in four parts, and two collections of plays for children.

The largest contribution to Dogri drama came from Narsingh Dev Jamwal (seven full-length plays and one collection of one-act plays and odd contributions to anthologies) and Madan Mohan Sharma (one full-length play, one collection of one-act plays and four books of radio plays) followed by Mohan Singh who contributed three books of *nukkad nataks*. Jitendra Sharma and Narendra Khajuria gave to Dogri drama, one full-length play and one collection of one-act plays each. Shiv Dobia added two books of one act plays. Others who made their contributions to Dogri drama with a book each are Deenu Bhai Pant, Shanta Sharma, Lalit Magotra, Chaman Arora, Shiv Dev Susheel, Ratan Doshi, Vishwanath Khajuria, Ram Nath Shastri, Dev Ratan, Om Goswami, Shiv Dev Singh Manahas, Vishnu Bharadwaj and Suteekshna Anandam.

Narsingh Dev Jamwal is the most prolific of Dogri playwrights and has covered a wide range of subjects in his plays—mythology in *Ramlila*, Dogra folklore in *Raja Mandalik* and *Allarh Goli Bir Shapahi*, Dogra history in *Sarkar* and contemporary life in *Aan Maryada*, *Pinjara* and *Kaude Ghutt*. *Ramlila* is his longest play, designed to be staged on seven evenings like the popular Ram Lila. It is a play of religious sentiment and the author has drawn on Valmiki's *Ramayan*, Tulasidas's *Ram Charit Manas*, Kamban *Ramayan* and Maithili

Sharan Gupta's *Saket* for the plot of the play. The language is a mix of verse and prose with words from all over Duggar. *Raja Mandalik* is based on a *Veergatha*, the folk legend of Dogra folk-hero Gugga Chauhan. *Allahi Goli Bir Shapahi*—a verse play has as its inspiration the folk song of Kunju and Chainchalo popular all over Duggar. It is a play of romantic sentiment and the technique used in that of flashback. There is some good bit of poetry and dialogue and romantic atmosphere but the plot is thin and suffers from lack of any dramatic conflict. *Sarkar* is built around a historical character—Dogra ruler Ranbir Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. *Aan Maryada* is a play of patriotic sentiment and is set against the background of Indo-Pak conflict of 1965; the emphasis, too pronounced, is on Rajput pride, a martial family's pride in fighting bravely and dying honourably. There are elements of experimentation in technique in the plays *Pinjara* and *Kaude Ghutt*. In *Pinjara* people of different strata are symbolically likened to prisoners in cages—there is focus on problems of publishing and the present educational system. *Kaude Ghutt* shows glimpses of a middle class family and economic, sociological and psychological problems of its members. The author uses a mix of fact and fantasy in his treatment of the subject. The theme of *Kaude Ghutt* forms the subject of another Dogri play *Jeene Di Qaid* jointly authored by Lalit Magotra and Chaman Arora but the treatment is markedly different. The subject is a lower middle class family in which the son is jobless and frustrated, complex ridden while the daughter who is employed is caught up in a psychological conflict occasioned by the clash of old values of orthodoxy and the compulsions of the situation in changing society.

Madan Mohan Sharma's full-length play *Ik Parshaama Badali Da* focusses on the exploitation of a Pahadi woman by a timber contractor's manager who deserts her with child, and creates a powerful and memorable character Makkhu. What jars in the play are the long dialogues at places and the author's tendency to make his point detract from the natural flow of dialogue.

Narendra Khajuria's play *Dhaundiyan Kandhaan* deals with the decay and erosion of the institution of *Jagirdars* with comic situations and elements of wit and humour and exposes the false facade which becomes untenable in changed circumstances in a

changing society and changing values. The characters are typed and are moved by the author like puppets.

*Kach* by Shanta Sharma is based on Guru Shukaracharya's daughter Devayani's love for his disciple Kach. Dinubhai Pant's *Ayodhya* offers a new and sympathetic interpretation of the Ramayana character Kaikeyi who is shown as a bold woman of great foresight who stood for women's rights and sacrificed her love for Rama and risked widowhood for the greater good of the country and integration of north India with south India. The dialogues are crisp and the atmosphere of the plot and setting convincing. The end, rather melodramatic, and Kaikeyi's deportment are not so convincing. Jitendra Sharma's *Koonshjadi* is remarkable for an intelligent and effective mix of the main theme with the folk tale of *Koonshjadi* and some memorable characters, albeit typed and interesting dialogue and gripping plot. The use of flashback technique is effective and insertion of a *Kavita* (poem) sung by a minstrel helps in creating a proper folk atmosphere. Movement of the plot has varying tempo—sometimes fast, sometimes slow. The basic plot is romantic and the accent is on upholding moral values. *Kaljug Da Parmatma* is Ratan Doshi's first play. It has a touch of idealism in dealing with social tensions between those with power and those who are exploited. It has crisp dialogues interlaced with proverbs but the plot structure is not satisfactory. *Faisala* by Shiv Dev Susheel also portrays class disparities and is inspired by idealism like Doshi's play. It exposes funny self-motivated acts of those in power and the sufferings of workers.

Not all these plays have been staged. Friends' Club of Jammu has staged *Allah Goli Bir Shapahi* in Delhi and Jammu and *Pinjara*, *Kaljug Da Parmatma* and *Dhaundiyan Kandhan* in Jammu. Radio adaptation of *Kach* has been broadcast from Radio Kashmir Jammu.

Mohan Singh, leader of a performing group of Jammu broke new ground in Dogri drama with his *Kaala Suraj* (1982), a *nukkad-natak* successfully staged at Abhinava Theatre, Jammu in 1979 and 1981 and awarded by the J&K Cultural Academy. With eight characters—a common man and a common woman, a communist comrade and a socialist leader and four youths

representing the new generation, the author comments on contemporary society, corruption and degeneration of values, exploitation of people by leaders and masked selfish people. The tone is ironic and dialogues racy and the effect is a powerful indictment of society. *Panj Kalyani*, Mohan Singh's second play is also experimental, symbolic and with five characters named after playing cards, *Yakka, dukki, trikki, chauka* and *panja* the author exposes social corruption and exploitation and man's selfishness, duplicity and deception of leaders as also notions of India's glorious past. The use of five characters in different roles is unique in Dogri drama and breaks fresh ground

*Apani Dafali Apana Raag*, his third book contains three plays, all of them inspired by social activism on problems of dowry, marriage and employment. *Apani Defali Apana Raag* exposes the manipulation of leaders to remain in power, dividing and bribing people, threatening and blackmailing them. *Nami Aawaaz*, the second *nukkad natak* in the book deals with the problem of unemployment and underlines the need for self-employment and doing something on one's own. The third play, *Dana Socho Te Sayi* shows the tension of generation gap—the old generation trying to impose their decisions on the younger generation and provoking defiance. In the last book one notices a certain deterioration in the quality of literary craftsmanship and lack of newness in both the style of presentation as well as in the subject matter.

Madan Mohan Sharma's *Anibar Chihooai Dharat Nanaani* is a serial play in four parts written for radio broadcast. It is the first serialised radio play in Dogri. The play has a single story but each part has a different theme. The story line is interesting and absorbing and the four themes, all pertinent, have been well integrated through the characters. The first part projects the theme of Hindu-Muslim amity and the value of personal loyalty against the backdrop of mass hysteria and communal violence that accompanied the partition of India. The second part deals with the theme of marriage and caste taboos which cause so much suffering to the affected persons. The third part looks at growing erosion of values and increasing corruption, loss of moral fibre which makes a contractor abet his wife to please a CPWD functionary to get his bills passed. The fourth part

illuminates the complex matrix of husband and wife relationship and the attendant psychological complexes.

Twenty-two collections of one-act plays were published during this period—four anthologies of one act plays, all brought out by the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages—*Shiraza Ekanki Anka I* and *Shiraza Ekanki Anka II* (1973), *Satta-Rang* (1984) and *Shiraza Ekanki* (1984-85), containing 22 one-act plays in all including some radio plays, one of them Narendra Khajuria's previously published popular *Aitwar Di Sair* finding place in two anthologies, nine collections of one-act plays of individual writers—Madan Mohan Sharma, Narsingh Dev Jamwal, Ram Nath Shastri, Narendra Khajuria, Jitendra Sharma, Vishwanath Khajuria, Shiv Dobalia, and Dev Ratan, seven books of radio one-act plays—Madan Mohan Sharma (3), Suteekshna Anandam (2), Chaman Arora, (1) Vishnu Bhardwaj (1) and two collections of one act plays written for children—Om Goswami's *Dogri Bal Ekanki* (7 plays) and Shiv Dev Manhas's *Panjeekada* (5 plays).

A single one, act play each by O. P. Sharma 'Sarathi', Lalit Magotra, Mohan Singh, Manoj Sharma and Desh Bandhu Nutan included in the Anthologies, is in the nature of an excursion into a different genre—Sarathi is basically a poet and fiction writer, Lalit Magotra and Manoj Sharma and Nutan are mainly fiction writers and Mohan Singh a playwright who specialises in the *nukkad-natak* variety of theatre. The concerns of the writers which find expression in their main work, are seen in these plays also.

Sarathi focusses on the educational system and unemployment (a theme dealt with in one of his novels in his play *Jeene da Laah*, Lalit Magotra on assertion of individuality leading to alienation from relatives in *Sakke Ajanabi*, Manoj on futuristic fantasy projecting changes as a result of developments in medical science in the course of next 500 years in his *Panjivi Sadi De Doctorai Di Hatti*, Mohan Singh on tensions in a lower middle class family in *Berve* and Nutan on corruption and manipulations of petty revenue officials in villages in *Sehat Andraaj*.

Om Goswami is known as a competent short story writer and a successful editor of Dogri journal *Shiraza*. But he has also



shown interest in children's literature and edited a children's magazine *Jote*. His seven plays of *Dogi Bal Ekanki* have elements of instruction combined with entertainment of children and also the author's concern for values like hard work, parents' attention to children and his disapproval of certain social practices, present day educational system, artificial city-life and so on. Shiv Dev Manhas's *Panjeekada* contains three stage plays and two radio plays which deal with simple matters of interest to children—tricks, games and fun in a family setting.

It is curious that two books of radio-plays appearing in 1989, have a lot in common. Suteskshna Anandam's *Parse Di Khushboo* (The smell of sweat) deals with the questions of exploitation of the illiterate villagers by a village money-lender and the importance of education and self-employment, while Chaman Arora's *Mitti Di Khushboo* (The smell of the soil) contains four short radio plays dealing with social themes like unemployment of educated youth, exploitation by relatives, dowry and tensions of a competitive society. Two more radio plays of Anandam published in 1990 in a book entitled *Panchihaan* have marriage and dowry and problem of management of a cooperative society as their themes.

Dev Rattan's five one-act plays collected in *Panj Rang* deal with family life and attempt to provide a mirror to different aspects of social reality—like domestic budget of a middle class couple, family bickerings and man's cruelty to woman. Shiv Dobalia's *Lottery Da Ticket* incorporating four plays published earlier under the title *Jote Ekanki* and adding one more *Sapp-Gai Sapp* are woven out of contemporary social situations and human nature—all dished out with some humour and irony and the subjects dealt with are hypocrisy and bluff, building castles in the air in the fond hope of getting lottery money, man's ambition and greed for dowry, exploitation of the poor and blindness of justice, and man seen through the eyes of insects. Vishnu Bharadwaj's three radio plays contained in his only published collection *Thandiyan Dhaaraan Makade Ngare* are set in the hills of Duggar and the author tries to show the poverty, orthodoxy, blind superstitions and exploitation of the poor at the hands of moneylenders against the backdrop of nature's beauty. The plots look contrived.

Three Khajuria brothers—Vishwanath Khajuria, Ram Nath Shastri and the late Narendra Khajuria who have contributed to different genres of Dogri literature—did not leave Dogri drama untouched. Each of them has a collection of one-act plays to his credit—*Neelkanth* of Vishwanath Khajuria, *Jhakadiyan Kiranaan* of Ram Nath Shastri and *Apne Paraaye* of Narendra Khajuria. *Apne Paraaye* published posthumously in 1975 contain five plays, three of them published earlier in anthologies including his popular *Aitwar Di Sair*. Of his two plays not published earlier, one deals with Bawa Jitto and his daughter's exodus and the other with contrast of life in hills with life in the city. *Tand Je Truttai Taan Gandhi Laini* deals with the abandonment of Roopan, a Pahari belle by a city babu with whom she gets involved neglecting her true lover Chandu and Chandu trying to win her back. Three out of six plays of Ram Nath Shastri's *Jhakadiyan Kiranaan* have also been published earlier, the other three deal with subjects like contrast of two generations as symbolised by the title *Paraana Bad Te Nani Sidak*, erosion of social values and the value of childhood friendship irrespective of difference in social status. Ram Nath Shastri's radio play, *Maile Darpan Dhundale Chelre* is about egocentred people who refuse to look at themselves and want to mould others according to their own ways. Another one-act play of his, *Saanbli* projects the selfless greatness of Raj Purohit Bawa Ambo celebrated in Dogri folklore. Vishwanath Khajuria's *Neelkanth* has five plays including *Achlhut* written and staged in the small town of Ramnagar way back in 1935 and considered to be the first Dogri play and a play entitled *Ghundiyan* published earlier. The other three plays and two plays published in anthologies deal with subjects of Hindu Muslim amity, social inequalities, family relationships, and artist's need for recognition and Bawa Jitto. Bawa Jitto has inspired all the three brothers. Ram Nath Shastri's full length play on Bawa Jitto's life directed by Balwant Thakur has been successfully staged under the auspices of Sangeet Natak Akademi and awarded by the Akademi.

Jitendra Sharma has written very little but whatever he has written and published—one full length play discussed earlier and one collection of four one-act plays called *Buddh Suhaagan* bear the mark of a conscientious craftsman with a fine sense of

dramatic properties and engaging suspense. One of the four one-act plays, *Nhere Di Taani* was published before 1970. *Trishna* shows the callousness of a husband who kills his wife for money. *Shooting* shows the contrast between the image of a film actress and the reality of her life and character. *Buddh Suhaagan*, a rather complex composition structured by mixing three different elements, highlights the problems of relationship in the scale of old social values and now changed perceptions and changed attitudes towards social practices like widow re-marriage, reinforced with a popular Dogri folk-tale. The play is characterised by innovativeness of style and covers a wide range of relationships among in-laws.

Narasingh Dev Jamwal contributed four new one-act plays to the genre of Dogri Drama during this period—two, *Ateet de Bhoot* and *Dhukhan* contained in his collection *Chausar*, and two, *Nateja* and *Seeraan* included in anthologies. *Dhukhan* is based on the Pauranic legend of Shukracharya's daughter Devayani's yearning for his disciples Kacha. The other three have an element of didacticism in them—importance of studying hard for success in examinations, need for leaving behind shadows of the past and attending to the present and the future, and the need for love, filial love of a couple whose only son has been kidnapped and who find satisfaction in adopting a beggar boy; *Saanjlhi Bhull* has husband wife misunderstanding as its theme.

Madan Mohan Sharma has the largest contribution of one-act plays to his credit—8 one act plays for stage collected in *Banjar* (4 pieces) and in anthologies (4 pieces) and 16 in three collections of radio plays *Ik Janam Hor* (6 pieces) *Yaatri* (6 pieces) and *Angaaren Di Lo* (4 pieces). He has made significant contributions to Dogri short story and Dogri Drama. His concerns are the same in both genres and some of them find expression in two different garbs. He spreads his net wide for themes and also experiments with form. *Gladiator* in the collection *Yaatri* is a single character monologue and is about a writer who is compared to a gladiator. The theme of *Research Scholar* is also about a writer and his relationship with publishers who sometimes fail to recognise merit, but once the merit of a writer is established he becomes affluent. The beauty and atmosphere of the hills of the Duggar area of Bhadrawah have a special appeal for him and he has set

some of his plays against the backdrop of these hills, capturing something of their charm and atmosphere and portraying the life of the people there; these plays are *Jayi Di Ik Raat*, *Yaatri* and *Pahaadi Kaan*. *Margai* is a play about a beautiful village girl from the hills who feel suffocated in a city atmosphere and is reduced to a skeleton. Situations and psychology of women are explored in plays like *Nyaalap* where a woman pines all her life for Krishna Murai, *Chaar Thanm Charaasi Barge* where a woman does not get married because she has to look after her dependents; *Ambar Door Uchaa* explores the psychological state of a self-respecting, intelligent woman married to a poor man who becomes suspicious of her; *Banjar* dealing with the sacrifice and suffering of woman. The two Indo-Pakistan Wars form the subjects of two other radio plays—*Bin Aalade De Panchhi* and *Mera Laah Tera Paani*. *Dil Darya* deals with the ways and customs and values of a scheduled tribe, Saansis, and feud between two families. *Goonj* deals with student unrest and an ideal teacher and his commitment to principles. Idealism and commitment to principles form the subject of another play *Kurukshetra*. Lower middle-class family life and dynamics of relationship between its members form the subject of exploration in two other plays. There are also other subjects like imitation of western ways of life in contrast with one's own and the question of personal happiness, boundless love of a father for his daughter, character of a crude and violent man, an idealist son's suffering contrasted with pleasure-loving and cruel zamindar father; emotions like jealousy and propositions like life being a journey full of good and bad, and that Time pours cold water over the heat of all moments, grouses, complaints. Madan Mohan Sharma's plays thus show a writer exploring different aspects of life, human emotions, situations and predicaments through the medium of plays.

While most of the radio plays have been broadcast from Radio Jammu & Kashmir, very few other plays have been staged. But they provide good reading and an interesting mosaic of life as seen by the play-wrights.

## Prose

Dogri prose started looking up during these two decades with the publication of over fifty books including anthologies, books about Dogri literature, literary criticism and Dogri authors, books of literary essays, collections of articles on diverse subjects and biographical and auto-biographical writing.

Among the anthologies, three can be said to be important works—*Din Din Jot Soayi* published by the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in 1980, containing selected pieces of Dogri prose, *Akkhar Akkhar Chaanani*, also a selection of Dogri prose published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1989 and *Duggar Da Sanskritit Itihaas* consisting of articles for which scholars were especially assigned, published by J&K Academy. *Accent in Duggar Da Sanskritit Itihaas* (Cultural History of Duggar) edited by Om Goswami is information-based. This 490 pages volume is divided into 4 parts. Part I contains four articles on (i) Definition of culture and characteristics of Dogra culture by Dr Ved Kumari Ghai, (ii) A Glimpse of Dogra history by Dr Sukhdev Singh Charak, (iii) Dogra land, people, professions and economy by Desh Bandhu Dogra Nutan and (iv) Dogra-Pahari region in Rigvedic times by Jagadish Chandra Sathe. Part II deals with Dogra arts—folk arts, Pahadi painting, architecture, sculpture, music, folk dances and folk drama. Part III contains 7 articles dealing with Dogra folk culture and life, dwelling on subjects like religion, faith and values, festivals and other religious observances, common practices and customs, and the cultural background of the region of Bhadrawah by Dr Preyatam Krishna who has made indepth studies on that area. Part V has two long articles—one on Dogri folk literature by Dr Bal Krishna Shastri and the other on Dogri literature by Shivanath.

*Din Din Jot Soayi* (1980) also, edited by Om Goswami for the J&K Academy makes a serious attempt to present specimens of

different kinds of Dogri prose essays. It is divided into six parts arranged subject-wise. Part I contains five essays on serious subjects like life's journey, development of human civilisation, aims of life, family and progress made by man in this world; Part II contains five essays on subjects which have psychological dimensions like annoyance, superstition, laziness, sense of humour and the shades of meanings in the usage of word *Ji* (Sir). The third part also has five essays—which are in the nature of recollections of memories about people and places. Part IV contains six essays dealing with recapitulations of journeys from Baran VS Hugel's through Duggar of early 19th century to more recent one of the author Madan Mohan Sharma to Bhadrawah. Part V contains five essays of wit and humour and Part VI has five essays in the nature of pen-pictures with a touch of irony. *Akhar Akhar Chaannani* edited by Om Goswami and Shyamlal Sharma for the Sahitya Akademi contains 22 literary essays, four of which have been selected from *Din Din Jot Soayi*. The essays cover a variety of subjects and show a wide range of moods, thoughts, descriptions, throwing light on the different authors' personalities, styles and predilections besides the richness of the language and its potential for creative use.

Two collections of essays by different writers brought out by Dogri Sanstha, Jammu in 1972 and 1984, respectively, contain 16 essays between them. *Name Nibandhi* edited by Baldev Singh has six articles/essays and *Dogri Lekh Sangrah* edited by Nilambar Dev Sharma and Shiv Ram Deep has nine and they cover diverse subjects like women characters in the short stories of Narendra Khajuria and Madan Mohan Sharma, poet Dattu, remembrances of people and places, social life of the people as reflected in Dogri folk songs, like their blind faith and superstitions, wit and humour. *Samhala* edited by Surendra Pal Gandalgai for Dogri Sabha Marh Block is a collection of 8 articles on Dogri folklore, martyrs, customs and tribes from Marh Block. Similarly *Namin Parakh Namin Khoj* published by Dogri Sanstha, Jammu contains six articles with the accent on alternative history—derived from folklore, folk ballads, songs, legends and so on.

Of the 20 books about Dogri writing and writers, 9 are on literature and 11 about writers. N.D. Sharma had written *An Introduction to Modern Dogri Literature* for Jammu and Kashmir

Academy of Art, Culture and Languages way back in 1965. Its Dogri translation was published during this period. Dogri Department of Jammu University brought out two collections of essays on Dogri language and literature in 1981 and 1982 respectively, entitled *Dogri Shodh-Granth I and II*, each having two parts—the first dealing with language and its aspects and the second with different genres of Dogri literature, poetry, novel, short story, drama. The essays written by different scholars are more in the nature of surveys than in-depth critical assessments. The J&K Academy brought out a special issue of Dogri *Shiraza* (December '76) containing eight essays on different genres of Dogri literature and an issue of *Sarha Sahitya* (1977) dealing with development of different Dogri prose genres—novel, short story, essay, drama. Dr Champa Sharma contributed two books—(a) *Ik Jhaank* a collection of seven essays—five on different aspects of Dogri folk literature and two on some aspects of Dogri poetry, i.e. mysticism in Dogri poetry and new trends in Dogri poetry, and (b) *Kavya Shastra Te Dogri Kavya Sameeksha* consisting of two parts—the first part dealing with different schools of Sanskrit poetics—theories of *Rasa*, *Dhwani*, *Auchitya*, *Vakrokti*, etc. and the other, introducing books of Dogri poetry, new trends in Dogri poetry with essays on poet Brahmanand, another on treatment of nature in Dogri poetry and a review of a Dogri book of poems by Shiv Ram Deep entitled *Peed Pakheru Sunnai Gaas*.

*Najar Apani Apani* by Chanchal Sharma is a serious effort to critically examine some Dogri works—the first three Dogri novels, three short stories of Madan Mohan Sharma from one of his collections, short stories of O.P. Sharma 'Sarathi', poetry of poets Parmanand Almast and Charan Singh—and to locate social values in Dogri folk tales and discuss the nature of the essay as a literary genre.

*Dogri Sahitya Darshan*, edited by Shivanath and H.R. Pandotra and published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1988 contains essays and excerpts of essays from different sources and attempts to introduce Dogri literary criticism written up to that time.

Seven books dealing with the life and works of six Dogri writers were published in original Dogri. Narendra Khajuria,

Shrivatsa Vikal and Charan Singh were Dogri writers who died very young when at the height of their creative potential. Their untimely deaths were commemorated by the publication of a volume each on Narendra Khajuria and Charan Singh and two volumes on Shrivatsa Vikal. *Shri Vatsa Vikal Smaarika* ably edited by Paras Ram Poorba was brought out by the Bandralta Sahitya Mandal, Ramnagar and *Kalamkar Shri Vatsa Vikal* also edited by Paras Ram Poorba was published by the J&K Academy; *Narendra Smaarika* was published by Dogri Sanstha Jammu and *Kalamkar Charan Singh* by the J&K Academy. Three more volumes in the Kalamkar series were brought out by the J&K Academy on elder poets Har Dutt, Parmanand Almast and Shambhunath after their death. Each one of them gives a comprehensive picture of the writers' lives, writings with pieces from their published and unpublished works.

The Sahitya Akademi added four volumes on writers in the 'Makers of Indian Literature' series, in Dogri translation—two on Dogri writers B.P. Sathe and Brahmanand Tirth, one on the Hindi writer Prem Chand and one on Baba Farid, a medieval Punjabi poet.

Four books of autobiographical and biographical nature were published during these two decades. *Pagadandiyaan* is the first autobiography in Dogri written by V. N. Khajuria. It is an interesting story of a multifaceted personality—teacher, social reformer, author and political activist and besides describing the life history of the author, it documents a certain way of life and values of the Dogri people in the city of Jammu and villages around where the author served as a teacher. *Avyaya Jeevan Kavya Darpan* is also biographical. It is written in verse by the Sanskrit and Dogri scholar poet—Ram Krishna Shastri Avyaya.

Sukh Dev Singh Charak's two books *Maharaja Ranjit Dev* and *Jarnail Zorawar Singh*, appear to be by-products of his valuable work as a historian, on the history of Dogra *rajas* of Jammu and other hill states in English. They have both historical and biographical value. *Maharaja Ranjit Dev* was a very competent and enlightened ruler of Jammu in the 18th century and the book describes his life, his exploits, administration and his secular policies of religious tolerance and his encouragement to trade,



commerce, scholarship, art and literature. Jurnail Zorawar Singh was the intrepid and valorous strategist and tactician of Maharaja Gulab Singh's forces in the first half of the 19th century, who extended the boundaries of the J&K State of India in the north. The book describes his early life, his campaigns, his loyalty to his *raja*, his military prowess and strategic skills.

Fourteen collections of articles and non-literary essays deal with subjects ranging from antiquities of Kashmir (Dr Ved Kumari Ghai's *Kashmir Darpan* consisting of articles dealing with contributions of Kashmiri Sanskrit scholars like Bilhan and Kalhan, Jayanak, Kshemendra, Ruyyak, old coins, temples, texts like Nilmat Purana); Dogra heroes like Gugga, Bawa Jitto, Dido and others (in Ram Nath Shastri's *Bawa Jitto*, *Gugga Gatha* and *Duggar De Lok Nayak*, and Dogri Sanstha publication *Duggar Diyan Chaar Namwar Hastiyaan*), Dogri folk culture and literature and Dogra martyrs and popular legends of a Dogra area Marh Block (in Surendra Gandalgai's two books *Meri Mitti De Khatole* and *Marh Block De Shahid en de Smaarak*), some unpublished new folk ballads (Dr Ashok Jerath's *Namiyan Dogri Baaraan*), river Devika as mentioned in ancient Indian texts, its importance and life of the people living on its banks (*Devika Tat Di Sanskriti* by Kedar Nath Shastri), prominent persons, writers, poets, legends from the Akhnoor-Chhamb region (Nasib Singh Manhas's two volumes *Tapaash* and *Sur Chanhaan De*), flora of Duggar (Om Vidyarthi's *Duggar Di Vanaspati*) to principles and practice of translation (*Anuvad Vigyan* by Dr Champa Sharma and Dr Veena Gupta) linguistics (*Bhaashaa Vigyan* and *Vaakya Vigyan*) and various aspects of Dogra life, Dogri folk literature and culture (Dr. Champa Sharma's *Duggar Da Lok Jeevan*), art heritage of Duggar in the shape of wall paintings in palaces of Dogra *rajas* of Jammu, Ramnagar, Reasi, Chenaihni and sculpture and architecture of temples at Shuddh Mahadev (*Sanihaal Us Kallai Di*) by well known painter-sculptor Vidya Ratan Khajuria.

Only seven books of literary essays showing an imaginative and creative use of language, to throw light on human foibles and contemporary socio-political situation and portray character and nature, were published during this period. Lakshmi Narayan Sharma's *Nikkiyan Nikkiyan Gallan* contains 11 essays of wit and humour in his same inimitable style as shown in his first volume

of essays *Kandyari De Phull*; they are marked by the quality of gentle irony, fitting the right word at the right place and sustaining interest. Irony, wit and humour mark the two collections of essays of Dr Sansar Chandra also *Boorai De Laddu* translated into Dogri from the author's essays originally written in Hindi and Punjabi and *Teelen De Ghaat* which contains 14 essays including one on a fantasy on Narad's visit to Jammu and starting 'Narad Panth'. Some of the essays draw interesting pen-pictures of persons. Prakash Premi's *Trumbaam* combines gentle irony with calculated digs at socio-political situations and human weaknesses and humorous posers and a show of wide reading by quotes from his reading. Essays of Satyal Pal's *Nibandha Sushama* in an interesting personal style throw light on Dogra life and places of natural beauty and show up the author's weakness for moralisation and verbosity.

*Goorhe Dhundale Chehre* by Dr Champa Sharma is a collection of pen-portraits, recollected from the author's impressions about some memorable characters in a very plastic, richly textured Dogri prose in a racy, intimate style interspersed with proverbs. The sketches cover both men and women and appear to be drawn from close and empathetic observation and reveal not only human frailties and strengths but also the Dogra society of yesteryears marked by communal harmony, and a great fund of human understanding and compassion. Dogri poet Ram Lal's foray into the field of prose essay yielded twelve delightful experience-based essays woven with bits of legends, history and descriptions of natural setting of forests and hills in an engaging style and rich Dogri prose, in his work *Goongi Dharati Da Zindaginaama*.

## *Literature for Children*

An attempt to produce some writing for children was first made by the late Narendra Khajuria in the 1960s with two books—*Rochak Kahaniyan* and *As Bhag Jagane Ale Aan*. The next effort in this direction was made by Om Goswami with a collection of plays for children published in 1974 under the title *Dogri Bal Ekanki*. This book and another collection of plays for children *Panjeekada* by Shiv Dev Manahas have been mentioned earlier in the section on Dogri drama. In between, the Dogri Sanstha Jammu brought out a special issue of its journal *Nami Chetana* with abridged versions of three well-known epics in simple Dogri translation for children—the three epics being Homer's *Iliad*, Firdausi's *Shahnama*, and Waris Shah's *Heer*. Two more issues of *Nami Chetana* were devoted to writings for children. But no serious effort was made to fulfil the need for literature for children until 1987 when a quarterly magazine for children entitled *Jote* made its appearance and Krishan Sharma's collection of short stories for children entitled *Khushi De Athrun* was published. In 1990, three books for children were published—Shiv Ram Deep's *Ik Baari Di Gull*, Nirmal Vinod's *Aapun Raja* and *Khidade Phull* brought out by Dogri Sanstha, Jammu. *Ik Bari Di Gull* is a collection of stories in rhyming verse in simple Dogri with interesting themes. *Aapun Raja* contains 35 poems for kids. *Khidade Phull* contains 35 pieces especially written for children—eight prose pieces, two short plays, 25 verse compositions and they present an interesting fare—Dogra history with Maharaja Ranbir Singh and Mian Dido, besides local humour, morals, information and *geets*.

## Translations

In the two decades dealt with in this volume 47 translations were added to the existing corpus of fifty-odd books in Dogri translation. The J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages was the single, largest contributor to this corpus with approximately two thirds of the total number. The source languages continued to be Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and English, Sanskrit alone accounting for one third the number, pointing to the linguistic discipline of translators. The books translated from Sanskrit ranged from *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, *Vivek Chudamani* of Shankaracharya, *Katha Sarit Sagar*, Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* (*Shakuntala Natak* in Dogri), Kshemendra's *Deshopadesh* and *Narmanala*, *Dootvakyan* of Bhasa, *Mricchakatikam* (*Mitti di Gaddi*) of Shudraka, *Bhagavad Ajjukeeyam* of Bodhayana and *Matthavilas* of Maharaja Mahendra Vikram (*Sanskrit De Do Prahasan* in Dogri) besides 4 short plays of Bhasa as *Bhasa-Ranga* and some *Upanishads*. All the novels in translation were translated and published by the J&K Academy. They also show the selectors' predilection towards Bengali novels for example, Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyaya's *Srikant*, *Path Ke Davedar* and *Grihdah* (*Lore* in Dogri) and Tagore's *Chokher Bali* (*Akhin Di Radak* in Dogri). Two well known Hindi novels were selected—Vrindavan Lal Varma's *Mriganayani* and Phanishwar Nath Renu's *Maila Anchal*. From Urdu, the novels translated were Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Ek Chadar Maili Si* and Mirza Hadi Ruswa's *Umrao Jan Ada*. Two novels were picked up from the southern languages and translated from Hindi into Dogri—one, Thakazhi Sivashankara Pillai's called *Daan Tuppe Dhaan* and the other by Kalki called *Parthav Da Sukhana* in Dogri. Three books from Kashmiri literature in Dogri translation were published—Lal Ded's *Lalla Bachanamrit* and two collections of short stories entitled *Satt Keengare* (short stories of Akhtar Mohiuddin) and *Jadun Baraf Paundi Ai* (selected short stories).

Other short stories published were a volume of selected world famous short stories entitled *Sansar Prasiddha Kahaniyan* and two selections of Indian short stories from other Indian languages under the titles *Bharati Kahaniyan*, and *Jadeed Bharati Kahaniyan*. Five plays in Dogri translations also became available—Badal Sarkar's *Baqui Itihas* and Shombhu Mitra's *Kanchan Ranga*, Rewati Saran Sharma's *Deep-Shikha*, Shanta Gandhi's *Jassamaan Odan* and a Hindi play of Dogri writer Narendra Khajuria's *Rasta Kante aur Haath as Nherai Rastai Chaanan Hoai*. Additions of prose translations came mainly from the Sahitya Akademi and the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. The former published translations of its own publications in English—*Contemporary Indian Literature*, *A History of Dogri Literature* and five volumes in Makers of Indian Literature series on Dogri writers Swami Brahmanand Tirth and Bhagawat Prasad Sathe, and Premchand, Baba Farid and Bankim Chandra Chatterji. The J&K Academy's contribution consisted of translations of Babu Ram Saxena's *Samanya Bhasha Vigyan*, Maxim Gorky's autobiography in two parts *My Childhood* and *Apprenticeship* under Dogri titles *Mera Bachapan* and *Painde Jeevana De* respectively and Nilambar Dev Sharma's *An Introduction to Modern Dogri Literature*.

Among the notable translations are B.P. Sathe's *Mriganayani* from Hindi, Ram Nath Shastri's *Mitti Di Gaddi* (from *Mrichlakatikam* in Sanskrit), Vishwanath Khajuria's *Neela Kamal* (Renu's *Maila Anchal* in Hindi) and *Umrao Jan Ada* from Urdu.

## *Journals*

Literary journalism in Dogri has been limited to very few journals. Only three continued to come out regularly—*Nami Chetana* brought out by the Dogri Sanstha, Jammu and *Shiraza* and *Sarha Sahitya* published by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Jammu. Attempts by individuals to bring out journals in Dogri have not been very successful. The Jammu and Kashmir State Department of Field Survey had started a monthly *Phulwadi* in 1967 ably edited by Mansa Ram Sharma Chanchal which published both Dogri poetry and prose in its issues, but it ceased publication in 1974. Two attempts were made to start Dogri weeklies. In 1970 Dogri poet Mohan Lal Sapolia launched *Shankha Dhun* but it soon shut down for want of circulation; in its place he started a paper under the same name in Urdu which is running till date, with advertisement support from the State Government and individual traders etc. *Ranbir* was a well-organised established weekly in Urdu; it launched a Dogri weekly *Ranbir* in 1971 with Sahdev Romitra as its editor. The venture did not succeed.

The first children's magazine in Dogri *Paniri* was started in 1970 with Vijay Suman Puri as editor. It carried stories, folk tales, poems, features, articles and also pictures. It stopped publication after three issues. A small literary magazine *Anibar*, a monthly, was started by Om Goswami in 1975 with himself as the editor. The magazine was intended to blaze a new trail and bring in fresh air as it were, into an otherwise compartmentalised and closed organisations like the Dogri Sanstha (*Nami Chetana*) and the J&K Academy [*Shiraza (Dogri)* and *Sarha Sahitya*]. It made a promising start with a wide variety of contents and a new approach, a sort of opening up to external influences partly through translations and partly through articles and comments. It soon cracked up and crumbled under the weight of apathy of

Dogri readers and subscribers and financial burden and ceased publication after five issues.

In 1987, a similar, almost parallel effort was made to start a children's magazine and a literary journal of good standard. The children's magazine *Jote*, a quarterly, was a joint venture of Shiv Dobalia, Pala Sharma and Om Goswami. And the literary journal *Pattan*, also a quarterly, was started under the inspiration and patronage of Padma Sachdev. It was meant to be the organ of a literary association *Kalaankar* and was edited by Anuradha Sharma. Started as *Pattan*, it changed its name to *Koonj Kataaraan* but stopped publication after a couple of issues. *Jote* started in March, 1987 continued to bring out issues for four years. It was a laudable venture of Shiv Dobalia and his colleagues and Om Goswami, the honorary chief editor. The magazine had a pleasing get-up with title page illustrated in colour and rich material of interest to children—humour, poems, short stories, grandma's folktales, from India and abroad, fables, riddles, scientific facts, general knowledge, descriptive notes on important places in Duggar, festivals and fairs, health notes and children's novel in serial form.

Three literary journals in Dogri that continued to come out during the entire period and made considerable contribution to the sustenance and growth of Dogri literature were *Nami Chetana* and *Shiraza* (Dogri) and *Sarha Sahitya*. They published established writers as well as new and upcoming writers, filled gaps left by books in different genres and broke new ground, in their own way. *Nami Chetana* continued to come out, sometimes irregularly, during this period in spite of paucity of resources and a limited number of subscribers and readers. Its editor was honorary and its contributors were not paid any honorarium. *Shiraza* and *Sarha Sahitya* on the other hand, being produced by the State Academy had all the resources—a paid editor and paid contributors. Having begun as a bi-annual *Shiraza* because a quarterly in 1970 and a bimonthly in 1979. *Sarha Sahitya* was, of course, an annual digest.

Dogri Sanstha brought out about 80 issues of *Nami Chetana* during these two decades and all except seven of these were edited by Ram Nath Shastri. Some issues were books of drama,

novel, poetry, translation etc. required for examination in Dogri like Shiromani, some were devoted to folk culture and folk literature, some carried proceedings of literary seminars and discussions and conferences while some were commemorative issues, dedicated to writers, some special issues on personalities like Guru Nanak Dev, Mahatma Gandhi and Ghalib, some on occasions like International Year of the Child and some on special subjects like *Gugga Gatha* and *Rajavali*.

The journal gave a lead in thinking on problems related to Dogri literature, encouragement to new writers by publishing their work like the works of Kunwar Viyogi, Yasin Beg and J.C. Sathe (poetry) and Krishan Sharma (short story), giving information about literary activities of the *Sanstha* and other sister organisations in the moffusil, furnishing reports of activities of Dogri literary organisations in the moffussil like Dogri Sahitya Sanstha, Rajouri, Dogri Sahitya Kendra, Ghagwal and Bandralta Sahitya Mandal, Ramnagar, Duggar Sahitya Jyoti, Jyotipuram, Dogri Sahitya Sabha, Karlup, and so on.

In these two decades, close to 100 issues of *Shiraza* (Dogri) and eighteen issues of *Sarha Sahitya* were published. These two journals acquired pre-eminent position in Dogri literary journalism by virtue of the support of the Academy and the enthusiastic and dedicated editors which together made great contributions to the development of Dogri literature, over this period. They not only published articles on different aspects of Dogri folk literature but also brought out special issues devoted completely to Dogri folk literature and Dogri language. They published new and unknown writers and writers from rural areas and brought out special issues containing exclusively Dogri short stories, one-act plays, radio plays, *ghazals* and travelogue.

*Shiraza* published extracts from a Dogri epic, reports on seminars/conferences with the papers read at them. Both *Shiraza* (Dogri) and *Sarha Sahitya* also published issues devoted to literary criticism in Dogri, Dogra history and eminent persons, women and children, and commemorative special issues on Mahatma Gandhi, Shere Kashmir Sheikh Abdulla, Baba Kanshi Ram, Ghalib, Iqbal and Premchand. The pages of *Shiraza* also carried interviews with Dogri authors and reviews of some books. Quite



a few issues of *Sarha Sahitya*—the annual literary digest published by the Academy, are topic-centred and carry well-researched articles of scholarly interest like the issues on Dogri language, Dogri folk tales, folk songs, prose, literary criticism in Dogri, critical appreciation of Dogri works and so on.

## Epilogue

The Dogri literary scene of the early nineties looks rather depressing. Dogri language has failed to be included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution while some other languages recognised by the Sahitya Akademi later, have been included. Four eminent Dogri writers have passed away. The pace of publication of Dogri books has shown slackness, including the three Dogri literary journals which have failed to come out regularly. Besides, there has not been any significant development in any of the literary genres.

Dogri was recognised as an independent modern literary language in 1969 while Manipuri was so recognised in 1971 and Konkani and Nepali got recognition only in 1975. Dogri did not get sufficient political support for its inclusion in the 8th Schedule and has been left out. In the Jammu and Kashmir State, Dogri had always enjoyed parity with Kashmiri. It is all the more galling for Dogri-speaking people because Kashmiri literary output in the post-Independence period has lagged behind Dogri literary output, with Kashmiri having no more than 9 novels as compared to Dogri's 22 at the close of the 9th decade. A movement of sorts for inclusion of Dogri in the 8th Schedule was organised by Dogri literary organisations, with Duggar Manch in the forefront, but it did not succeed in its objective.

The writers who passed away in the early nineties were among the tallest figures in Dogri literature—Vishwanath Khajuria, Dinu Bhai Pant, Mohan Lal Sapolia and Rama Krishna Shastri. Khajuria's contribution lay in Dogri prose, drama and translation; Dinu Bhai Pant's in poetry, drama and translation; Sapolia's in Dogri poetry and Rama Krishna Shastri's in poetry and translation (excellent translation of verse portions of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* in matching stanzas in Dogri). The passing away of Narayan Dutt Misra, a founder member

and pillar of Dogri Sanstha and translator is also a big loss to Dogri.

The average number of Dogri publications has come down from about 15 to about 10 works a year. Poetry has continued to be predominant and nearly one-third of the publications are books of poetry. Three of them are for children—a continuation of the trend set by Shiv Ram Deep's *Ik Baari Di Gull* and Nirmal Vinod's *Aapu Raja* published in 1990. *Bhole Bhaav* by Santosh Khajuria is a very good addition, at once evocative, transporting the reader to one's childhood and a make-believe world of children. Other books of poetry worth mentioning are Mohan Lal Sapolia's posthumous collection of poems and quatrains entitled *Chaanana Safar*; Padma Sachdev's fourth collection *Uttar Bailni*, Abhishaap's *Laalasaa* and Gyanshwar's second collection *Baddali Kalaawe*. *Ghazal* appears to be a favourite mode and two collections have been added in 1993—Virendra Kesar's *Sceraan* and Ram Sanyasi's *Niggo-Saariyaan*. Only four collections of short stories and three novels have appeared after 1990, Ved Rahi's *Garbh-Joon* being one of them. Its locale is Jammu of the 1950s and the author has tried to recapture his days of youth and the socio-political context of the time. Among the five plays published after 1990 is Ramnath Shastri's *Bawa Jitto* staged successfully by Balwant Thakur under the sponsorship of Sangeet Natak Akademi. There are also two collections of radio-plays broadcast from Radio Jammu Kashmir, Narsingh Dev Jamwal's *Panj-taara* and Chanchal Sharma's *Rosse Pahaaden De*. A very competent translation of Rahul Sankrityayan's *Volga se Ganga* is a very welcome addition to the translations.

On the whole, the output is skimpy and quite a big chunk of it is of poor literary quality. Many of the negative factors inhibiting the growth and development of Dogri language and literature, noticed by me in my *History of Dogri Literature* twenty years ago are still present. Although, a comprehensive six-volume Dogri-Dogri dictionary is now available and work on a Dogri-Hindi Dictionary and a Dogri Grammar is reaching completion, yet very little is being done to standardise the language. There is hardly any writing in Dogri on various subjects of knowledge—social and physical sciences, not to speak of new academic disciplines. The thawing of the apathy towards Dogri writing

among the Dogri speaking people has not picked up. The number of Dogri writers and readers of Dogri literature is still small. There is very little spontaneous creativity among writers who are sandwiched between their respective vocations and writing and have got used to dependence on the Academies for commissioned work, subsidies for publication and recognition through Awards. Readership base has not increased much because Dogri has still not been introduced in primary classes or as a medium of instruction in schools. There are also no daily, weekly or monthly journals in Dogri and no organised network of outlets for sale and purchase of Dogri books. Another weakness is the near-absence of any tradition of literary criticism in Dogri. A lot more needs to be done to bring Dogri literature at par with developed literatures of other Indian languages.



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