

## SULTAN SAKOON: A PATRON OF HINDKO LITERATURE IN HAZARA

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### **Abstract**

Present research-work is about a living legend, Sultan Sakoon who is having a command on the Hindko language, its literature and culture of Hazara. His work is a valuable addition in the existing Hindko literature. By writing the first ever dictionary of the Hindko language, he lodged a cherished position in the history of Hazara. For his treasured amenities to the Hindko language, he earned numerous awards, medals, cash prizes. More than ten poetry and prose books are covering almost every sphere of life related to the culture and traditions of Hazara. His life and work is an example to all young poets and writers, who are working for the preservation of Hindko language. The sincerity and diligence with which Sultan Sakoon has served the Hindko Language is rarely found. Basic objective of the study is to analyse his work and services for the region of Hazara. Current research has mainly been conducted through primary and secondary sources including personal interviews of Sultan Sakoon, autobiographies, biographies, and books etc. it is generally admitted that whether it is a dictionary of Hindko language or riddles, idioms or proverbs, Sultan Sakoon has preserved them for the generations to come. His poetry in Hindko language is having a profound effect on the hearts of the readers by leaving moral and lessons for the readers.

**Keywords:** Sultan Sakoon, Hindko, Hazara, poetry, Language.

## INTRODUCTION

*Over the age of 90 years, Sultan Muhammad commonly known as Sultan Sakoon is a living legend of Hazara. His work and contribution for the development of Hindko language and culture is beyond limits. Current study is an effort to focus upon his services being a poet and writer of the native language of Hazara. Sultan Sakoon is one of those writers who rose to prominence on the literary horizon of Hazara Division and gained fame by staying away from big literary forums and centres. His endless efforts have provided a new life to the Hindko language. In order to preserve it for the coming generations his efforts including compilation of first ever Hindko dictionary is worthless to mention. Due to his simple lifestyle, passion, hard work and discipline, he got the honour of being a prominent writer of Urdu and Hindko literature and gained fame. (Ahmed, 2008) He is a very simple, dignified and sincere person, writing books has always been a part of his life. He occupies a unique status in Hazara literary columns. After gaining fame in Urdu poetry, he turned to Hindko literature and in this language; he accomplished memorable deeds. Whether it is Hindko dictionary, proverbs, idioms, riddles and stories, he has tried his best to do justice with every aspect. He made following poetic genres in his poetry in which Hamad, Naat, Salam, Nazam, Ghazal and Mahiya are notables. His work is being reflected by his 13 books written in both Urdu and Hindko language. However, his Hindko work is attaining more attention by the literary society of division which are a testament of his intelligence, consistency and artistic sense. His devotion and affection with the native land, language and culture has added more worth to his work. In response of his work he has received a numerous awards including gold medal for his decade's services to Urdu Hindko literature. (Sakoon, 2020)*

## EARLYLIFE

*Sultan Muhammad, being known as Sakoon in the world of knowledge and literature has carried out an intense struggle for the honour of Hindko language. He was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1932 at the place of Eidgah Kothiala. He received his early education in the area of adjacent to his village and then moved to Abbottabad for middle and high school education. After getting admission in Islamia High School which is now known as Government High School he started to enjoy the deep occasion of knowledge, however, in order to avoid the cost of hostels, he decided to stay in the homes of some of his relatives. In spite of financial hurdles he successfully passed the matriculation exam in 1953.*

*By looking into his abilities and capabilities it is clear that his education could have gone beyond matriculation. Even then when he passed the matriculation exam, there was hardly any person in the entire area with this qualification. (Sakoon, 2020)*

*Talking about his personal life in reference to his profession Mr. Qamar Zaman, who have written a biography of Sultan Sakoon said, "His father had served in the army as non-commissioned officer was a respected figure in the village. Due to his position and people use to give him respect who spent his life with honesty and dignity. His mother was a happy home maker and a simple women, she raised her children in a very cheerful manner and always taught them lesson of honesty and truthful earning". (Qamar, 2020). As per local instigation, his father wanted to see him a Patwari (lower cadre revenue officer). At the insistence of his father, he*

although got patwari training but did not join it. He started his career as store keeper in the supply department on July 10, 1953.

His first posting was in Atar Sheesha Mansehra, later he was appointed in various places like Khaki, Balakot, Dadar and Ghari Habibullah. When this supply depot was coming to an end, he switched to education department. (Sakoon, n.d.) He said in his unpublished autobiography:

I had applied to the education department through one of my dear Muhammad Shafi and when I got the job, Muhammad Yahya was the director of education. He ordered my appointment as a clerk in the office of Assistant Inspector of Women's Madrassa Hazara, Shortly after this I was sent to Mansehra as a senior clerk, from there he went to Peshawar register office and then back to Government High School Batal, after this, I remained in Government high school Nawasher, then Government Degree College Abbottabad, then Comprehensive School and later moved to FATA and Peshawar. After that I remained in the office of District Inspector Schools of Peshawar, then appointed as account officer in the office of Mansehra, lastly moved to SDEO office Abbottabad. From which I honourably resigned from my duties on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1993 at the age of 60". (Sakoon, n.d.) Along with his jobs, he continued his academic activities. As a poet of Sarban Valley, Sakoon breathed new life into Hindko Urdu Literature, and started writing ghazals in weekly Jamhoor. Arif Battalvi, a renounce poet, used to correct his written ghazals. He started writing poetry regularly during 1957/58, in the beginning his nickname was Balakash but at the request of some esteemed friends, changed it in 1960 and kept the surname of Sakoon. (Sakoon, 2020)

It was a while ago in your academic journey that Sakoon along his friends founded an organization named Abbottabad Literary Society which is now known as Bazam Ilum-o-Fun.(Qamar, 2020) In addition to this, he also established many literary organizations including Bazam Ahl-e-Qalam, Bazam Urdu, Bazam Shahoor, and Anjuman Taraqi Urdu etc.

In the world of literature especially poetry, Sultan Sakoon has one ideal named Abdul Hameed Adam, besides his favourite poets are Qateel Shafai, Ahmed Faraz, Ahmed Nadeen Qasami, Mustafa Zaidi and Said-uddin-Saif. According to Sultan Sakoon, he has never received any formal correction from any poet but has achieved worthy place in the world of poetry through his personal hard work. (Zaman, 2018) Apart from Urdu poetry, he has achieved high position in Hindko language and literature, his greatest achievement is Hindko Urdu dictionary, besides He has also written 13 books in Urdu and Hindko language. (Zaman, 2018)

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Review of literature admits that very little academic research has been done on the literary and poetic contributions of Sultan Sakoon as he is the founder of Hindko Urdu First dictionary and a father of Hindko poets as well. Existing literature review shows that mostly books have been written by Sultan Sakoon. He writes his every book in such a beautiful manner that person from all ages can easily understand the message which he wants to convey. Sakoon (1986, 1994, 2002, 2008, 2009, 2016, 2018) writes different books of Urdu Hindko poetry and Hindko riddles, puzzles, idioms, phrases, jokes and Mahiyas. Sultan Sakoon himself the main source of attention in his books besides he also uses many different titles e.g. Kashmir, mother,

Pakistan, Woman, Labour, Allama Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam etc, and admires their role and contributions, shows his love for humanity and nature. Hindko culture is a versatile culture and centuries years old; many old traditions are vanishing from the Hazara screen, Sakoon has tried best of the best to keep that treasure for the generations to come.

Zaman (2020), writes a comprehensive biography of living legend Sultan Sakoon, he records many interviews of Sakoon and gathered all information in a book form. This is the first biography of Sakoon and Zaman adds all his life events and services towards Hindko language. Beautiful poetry is also included in this books and the last pages reflects the photographs of Sakoon, his companions and family members. This biography is the amalgamation of Sakoon's all published books and more important many new things he revealed in his interviews are also added in it.

Ahmed (2008) writes in his books about the history of Hindko literature and he admires the services of Sakoon in such a nice and pretty words. It is a good source of information about the Hindko literature and almost 15 Hindko poets are discussed in it with the brief history of Hazara. Abdur Rasheed (2002) describes the necessity of Hindko Urdu dictionary in his book and it is comparatively a good source of Hindko Urdu words, because Hindko speaking trend is disappearing especially in young generations, if it happens continuously then after sometime may be the strength of Hindko speaking persons is dangerously less. As books never die and keep the history alive for generations so these books will maintain the balance of Hindko language in near future and Hazarawals could easily get vocabulary and all treasure of Hindko Language.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and descriptive research techniques have been used in the compilation of this research paper. Primary and secondary both sources have been utilised to substantiates the arguments. Primary sources mainly include the direct interview of Sultan Sultan at his home *گوشہ سکون*. He not only gave his precious time but also shared many memorable events of his life which are not yet published in any paper or book. His books are also the primary sources of this research work, which have been used for the interpretation and analysis of information. While secondary sources revolves around books, biography and interviews of Hindko Urdu writer from Hazara. The present study mainly focuses on the living legend and father of Hindko Urdu poetry Sultan Sakoon, as his life is a great treasure and beacon of knowledge for all Hindko and Urdu speakers and literature lovers.

## SAKOON'S WRITINGS

Main contribution of Sultan Sakoon is to compile local lyrics, proverbs, terminologies and riddles etc which have not been done before. The first compilation of Sakoon is comprised upon Hindko riddles titled *میری بھارت* which have been published in January 1987. Sufi Abdu Rasheed says about the introduction of this book in these words:

"Today I have before me the written pages of a compilation which has refreshed the memories of the forgotten era. Tired people from the day's work, when they met at night by the light of a lamp, they either entertained each other with story or warm their heart by songs. One of the sources of entertainment was puzzles and

riddles which were meant to be a mental test in addition to enjoyment". (Sakoon, 1986)

The 51 riddles in this book are full of eloquence and delicacy of Hindko language, this master piece was awarded by Abaseen arts council, certificate was also granted to Sakoon Shahib. After compilation this book, he credited with the services of Urdu Hindko literature and performed everlasting deeds. His second book is چنورات چودھوں رات, it is also a beautiful collection of Hindko riddles, published in August 1994 and comprised upon 98 old and rare riddles. (Sakoon, 1986) Writer from Hazara Qamar Zaman writes about this book and pay tribute in these words, "Sultan Sakoon's book on Hindko literature is also important because it preserves the disappearing rural culture, through it even those who are not familiar with Hindko language will get acquainted with the colour of such culture". (Qamar, 2020)

In December 1994, Sultan Sakoon's third book was published with title, کازی دی گل, it was a collection of events, stories, puzzles and jokes of Hindko language. Although it was a difficult task to collect humorous stories and jokes, but the Sultan Sakoon collected this precious treasure with great effort and laborious work. Most of these elements were not in common use especially in urban areas of Hazara. Even in the rural areas these terminologies were being used rarely. Due to which, it is scholarly admitted that this book is a proof of his love for Hindko language, culture and traditions.

His fourth book ہندکو ضرب امثال, have been published in 1999. It was an assortment of Hindko proverbs and 796 idioms and phrases, and no doubt this is a great service to the Hindko language. (Sakoon, 1994) The fruit of Sultan Sakoon's four decades of poetic practice is in fact his first collection of poetry, which is also his fifth book. نہ کوئی خواب ہے، نہ خیال ہے is a collection of Urdu poetry is actually a collection of Ghazals. For this excellent endeavour, Sakoon was awarded a certificate of merit and a gold medal by Abaseen Arts Council in 2001. His sixth effort is تارا لوی والا, published in December 2001, it is basically a collection of Hindko Mahiyas, and some have been collected from the old culture heritage while some are created by Sultan Sakoon and covered the all aspects of Hindko culture and literature like Hymn, Naat, patriotic Maiya, Funny and friendly Mahiyas. After this book, he compiled Hindko Urdu dictionary which is a monument to Sultan Sakoon regarding Hindko Urdu language and literature.

His most important work is the compilation of Hindko dictionary. After many years of hard work this dictionary was published in year 2002. It is admitted that the honour of compiling first ever Hindko language dictionary goes only to Sultan Sakoon. (Sakoon, 2002). The importance of the dictionary is explained by educationist and writer Sufi Abdur Rashid in such words, "Without an authoritative dictionary, no language can assert its scholarly status. Vocabulary is the greatest means of understanding and examines the essence of a language." (Rasheed, 2002)

In recognition to this great scholarly service, Sultan Sakoon has been

presented with an award by Abaseen Arts Council in 2002-03. He was also awarded an honorary shield by Ghandhara Hindko Board. Abaseen Arts Council later awarded him a gold medal, even in the world of ghazal, Sultan Sakoon also confessed his art through public. سوچ رت is a collection of his lyric poems, it is comprised upon 80 ghazals of different renowned poets. Published in 2002, this book contains the ghazals of poets from all over the country and the ghazals are decorated in it according to the chronological order. (Sakoon, 2020) Hindko poetry collection دلسونھے is Sultan Sakoon's ninth book, published in 2008, Through Hindko poetry, he gained nationwide fame and due to دلسونھے his fame reached its peak.

"The book contains one long hymn, three naats, two salams, thirty one poems and 26 ghazals, while 63 Mahiyas, two songs and eight sections are also part of دلسونھے. Most of his poems are thematic, in which titles are Quaid-e-Azam, Mother, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Life, Earthquake, Terrorism. The first attribution of دلسونھے to poet Anjum Javed and second is dedicated to Calligraphers Tasneem Syed". (Sakoon, 2002) These worthy Hindko poetry collections have won many prizes and awards. In 2010, the Academy of Literature Pakistan awarded him Rs. 100,000 in cash and award. Sultan Sakoon was also awarded the pure Gold Medal by two Welfare Organizations and a literary and social organization in Abbottabad. (Zaman, 2020) His brilliant endeavour in the world of Hindko proverbs is کوزے وچ دریا, published in 2009, contains 582 old and rare proverbs, 26 prayers and 9 curses. This literary collection is also awarded with Faragh Bukhari Award in 2011 by Abaseen Arts Council (Sakoon, 2009). "کوزے وچ دریا" is translated by Engineer Abdul Wahab Sehtu in Sindhi language and published in 2018 by Dr. Mohabbat Academy Qambar". (Sakoon, 2020)

Like Hindko, on the Urdu poetry scene, Sultan also received significant acclaim for his work, کوئی ہے is his second poetry collection published in 2013. The beginning of this collection includes one hymn, two naats, one salutation and one prayer, apart from this, seven poems and seventy three ghazals are also included in it. (Zaman, 2020) He has included some lyrics from his first collection of poetry in this book. His next collection of poetry is کوئی ہنستا دکھائی دے, published in 2016, it is his 12<sup>th</sup> book. He has written about the nature of poetry in this collection in the introductory section of this masterpiece. "There is no specific theme in these poems, nor is there any poetry of emotion to compel the reader bow his head. Overall it is full of humour, many of which are direct while somewhere waves of humour and stair can be felt". (Sakoon, 2016) Title of his last book so far is extremely deceptive کچھ پھول عقیقت کے, basically a collection of poems, published in 2018. Majority of these poems belong to well-known personalities, country and Kashmir. "These important topics include Allama Iqbal, Quaid-e-Azam, Fatima Jinnah, Ahmed Naseem Kasmi, Ahmed Faraz, Qateel Shifai, Wahid Siraj, Hafiz Kosar, Sufi Abdur Rasheed, Kashmir and watan (homeland) etc." (Sakoon, 2016) According to Qamar Zaman, "The poems in

this book express the heartfelt sentiments of Sultan Sakoon, he has shown flowers of devotion to his forefathers and offered loving words to his friends". (Zaman, 2021)

### SELECTED HINDKO URDU VERSES

Sultan Sakoon is admittedly a renounced poet who has inscribed excellent poetry in both Urdu Hindko languages. Few verses, in this regard, are given as under. In the praise of Almighty Allah, he has written very beautiful hymns:

تو ہی تو ہے یگانہ و یکتا  
کوئی تیرا نہ دو بدو اللہ  
اک نهنے سے پھول میں تونے  
بھر دیے کتنے رنگ و بو اللہ  
اس کو تو بھی پسند کرتا ہے  
عاجزانہ ہو جس کی خو اللہ (Sakoon, 2008)

Along with praise, he has also offered flowers of devotion in honour of beloved Prophet (SAW).

مجھ سے کیا ہو بیان حضور کی شان  
میں کہاں اور کہاں حضور کی شان (Sakoon, 2008)

Apart from Hymn and Naat, he also has beautifully presented the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hussain:

جلا کے مشعلیں اپنے لہو کی  
سجا کے حق کے بام و در گیا ہے  
عبادت کو رہے گا ناز جس پر  
حسین اک ایسا سجدہ کر گیا ہے (Zaman, 2020)

He has presented a poem for Quaid-e-Azam in which he has expressed embarrassment before the father of the nation.

یہ تیرا بار امانت بھی ہم اٹھا نہ سکے  
جو تجھ سے عہد کیا تھا اسے نبھا نہ سکے  
عمل پر اپنے بہت شرمسار ہیں ہم  
تیرے حضور آئے ہیں قائد اعظم (Zaman, 2020)

After this, Sultan Sakoon has paid homage to the poet of the East Allama Iqbal:

تیرے سخن سے ہو سنگ میں شرر پیدا  
تیرے سخن سے دلوں میں ہوا اثر پیدا  
ہزاروں سال بھی گریہ کناں رہے نرگس  
نہ شاید اب کوئی تجھ سا دیدہ ور پیدا (Sakoon, 2020)

According to Qamar Zaman, Sultan Sakoon has written many thematic poems, in them Hawaey Shehar Janan, beauty parlour and Mujasam Dukh. He writes about woman in such words:

اک ماں ہے، بہن ہے، بیٹی ہے  
 اک بیوی ہے اک سہیلی ہے  
 بوجھ سکتا نہیں جس کو  
 اک عورت پی اک پہیلی ہے (Zaman, 2020)

Sultan Sakoon has also done satire and humorous poetry in an excellent manner, titles of his poems are, rented house, story of water, home budget and election mandate etc. His real identity is Hindko poetry, in this language he describes the greatness of Allah and offers his love to Holy Prophet (SAW).

تیری مرضی بائج خدایا  
 کوئی پتر پل نہیں ہکدا  
 کھڑ نین ہکدا پھل کوئی نہیں  
 کوئی بوٹا پھل نہیں ہکدا  
 تیری مرضی آگے خدایا

زور کسی دا چل نہیں سکدا (Sakoon, 2016)

He expressed his unlimited love and devotion for Holy Prophet (SAW) in his Hindko dictionary in such words:

جدوں عرب دا سونہا چن چڑھیا ہر پاسے نور ظہور ہویا  
 جدوں عرب دے باغ دا پھل کھلیا خوشبو نل جگ پر یہور ہویا (Sakoon, 2016)

According to him the most sacred personality is Mother and considers the Mother to be the holiest person on this earth.

ہک ماں اوہ اے جڑھی جنتر دی اے  
 ہک ماں اے وطن دی تہرقی اے  
 دوئے ماواں ساڈیاں ماواں اے  
 دوئے ماواں ٹھنڈیاں چھاواں اے  
 اسی ان دی چھاواں بہندے ان  
 دکھ سہے کے وی خوش رہندے ان (Sakoon, 2018)

Sultan Sakoon appreciates mother's greatness as well as father's compassion, according to him, Allah is pleased with the one whose parents are happy with him.

جڑھا مائو پیو دا خدمت گار ہوندے

بیڑا اسدا سکے اتے پار ہوندے  
کسے پڑ بیج لگدی نینھ کنڈ اسدی  
دشپن اپ اس دا خوار ہوندے  
ہوندے حج دے برابر ثواب اس دا  
(Sakoon, 2018) ماوں پیو دا جدوں دیدار ہووے

*He loves his city Abbottabad very much and describes the beauty of his city in these words:*

ایبٹ آباد کی رونق ہے انھی کے دم سے  
سبزہ و گل، یہ حسین لوگ، یہ بادل یہ بارش  
کبھی بھولیں گے نہ، نتھیانگی کے دن رات  
(Sakoon, 2018) وہ میں، وہ تم، وہ گھنی دھند، وہ جنگل بارش

## CONCLUSION

At the end of this discussion, it may be concluded that Sultan Muhammad Sakoon, a living legend of Hazara, spent his entire life for the nurturing of Hindko language. Hindko is the majority language of Hazara region with slight difference in dialects. The land of Hazara has a unique place in Pakistan due to its beautiful places, historical heritage and diverse culture. Although a number of people who have been written their names in the field of language and literature yet a shining star is Sultan Sakoon who devoted his valuable time for the development of literature and poetry especially related to Hindko. Over the age of ninety years, he has been continuously striving to serve the native language of Hazara. The figure of simplicity Sultan Sakoon is currently the author of thirteen books and has won numerous literary awards, cash prizes, gold medals and medal of performance and excellence for his services. Yet the most remarkable achievement in this regard is the compilation of first ever Hindko-Urdu Dictionary defining the terminologies being used in Hazara. In spite of unfavourable circumstances, he strived hard for different offshoots of Hindko language. Along with existing vocabularies, he defined refuted words by preserving Hindko proverbs, puzzles, and riddles in manuscript form for future generations. Sultan Sakoon, who has lived a life with honesty and integrity, is now the most valuable asset of Hazara. His simple life is an admirable illustration for all youth and future generations. Unfortunately, like other local languages of Pakistan, Hindko is also facing a constant decline mainly because of other language's intervention including Urdu. It has been observed that majority of the local residence of Hazara, especially the educated class are preferring to speak Urdu and English with their kids leaving them unaware of many basics of Hindko. Due to which, in order to develop the language and cultural deeds, such dedication, devotion and hard-work done by Sakoon are rarely found in to preserve of the local heritage of Hazara.



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