

# Folk heroes in the Dogri Literature with reference to *Baran*

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## ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the ballads of the area of Jammu in which *Karkan* and *Baran* are significant in character. The paper intends to study the heroes who held an important position in these poems and about whose achievements these poems were recited orally on various occasions. The poems which are known as *Bars* or *Baran* are written on the bravery, chivalry of the heroes. The paper intends to highlight the role of common masses in bringing about a change in the society of the Jammu. They raised their voices on various issues pertaining to the socio-economic causes. These poems are sung on the special occasion remembering the heroes.

**Keywords:** *Baran*, *Karkan*, *Dres*, *Jogi*, *Samadhi*

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## INTRODUCTION

The paper deals with the ballads of the area of Jammu in which *Karkan* and *Baran* are significant in character. The paper intends to study the heroes who held an important position in these poems and about whose achievements these poems were recited orally on various occasions. The poems which are known as *Bars* or *Baran* are written on the bravery, chivalry of the heroes. The paper intends to highlight the role of common masses in bringing about a change in the society of the Jammu. They raised their voices on various issues pertaining to the socio-economic, political causes. These poems are sung on the special occasion today also remembering the heroes.

The poems or Lok Gatha are divided into two parts i.e. *Karkan* and *Baran*. *Karaks* are the religious poems which are sung on the name of some religious deities or those persons who have attained the status of God among the people. *Bar* or *Baran* are sung about a situation or a person. *Baran* are the tales of bravery and heroic acts of the brave hearts. The heroes in these poems are driven by various emotions. Prominent among these emotions are to save the honour of homeland, to keep said words, freedom etc. The *Bars* mainly talk about the way in which the hero fought the battle in the battleground and died bravely while fighting. One thing peculiar about these poems are that they don't talk about the past life of the protagonist but of their brave acts.

*Bar/ Baran* are sung by *Dres*, *Jogi*. These *Dres* would occasionally accompany the kings or warriors to the battleground where they would motivate the soldiers and king by repeating their brave acts. The word *Bar* was first used in 1774 by the poet Keshavdas in which he wrote about the Maharaja Amar Singh who was the king of Patiala and it talks about the bravery of the king. *Bar* may mean the songs which are sung on the auspicious day as *Bar* in Dogri language means day, so it may refer to the some auspicious day. These poems are sung on the auspicious day of the hero on his *Samadhi/ cemetery* by the *Jogi* who tells the people about his achievements so that upcoming generations get to know about the sacrifices made by the great men of their homeland. Primarily by recounting the heroic acts these *Jogis* or *Dres* try to inflict upon the sentiment of respect and honour for one's homeland.

Although the *Dres/ Jogi* gave it the element of fiction by connecting the heroes to the far flung area and removing the rationality from the event. Moreover these songs were not in written form, they were sung orally and passed on from generation to generation orally which made them restricted to one family or one section of the society who sung these songs and passed amongst themselves.

The heroes in these poems fought for the unjust in the society without caring for their own comfort. Some of the heroes who were prominent in the *Bars* were Baba Jitto, Veer Gugga, Mian Dido, Wazir Zorawar Singh, Gernail Baaj Singh, Raja Hari Singh. To start with Baba Jitto is a famous hero in the area of Jammu and every year there is a fair organised in his memory which is popularly known as *Jhiri Mela*. It is a seven day fair and people from all walks of life attend this fair. Apart from attaining the status of hero he is also hailed as god or *Kul Devta* of many families in Jammu and

Punjab, every year on the day of Jhiri Mela, annual congregation of the families who worship him as Kul Devta takes place in Jhiri which is around 20 kms from the main Jammu city.

Baba Jitto's name was Jitmal, born in 1421, he was born in the village Gahar which is near Katra in Reasi. His father's name was Rupo, mother's name was Jojala, wife was Maya and he had a daughter whose name was Kaudi or Gauri. The story of his sacrifices has travelled orally for centuries together. The main characters who are mentioned in the poems are Baba Jitto, Bua Kaudi, Jojan and Mehta Birsingh. Jitmal or Baba Jitto decided to leave his ancestral village because of the harassment given to him by his maternal aunt Jojan and her seven sons. He goes to his friend Iso Megh in Kahnachak, after coming to his friend he requests the zamindar of Ambgharota Mehta Bir Singh to provide him land for agriculture. Mehta Bir Singh however gave him the land but after signing an agreement where Baba Jitto was to give one fourth of the produce to the landlord. After months of hard work Baba Jitto turned the barren land into the fertile one, Mehta Bir Singh's mind got corrupted and he asked his men to take three fourth of the crop which further frustrated Baba Jitto, and he stabbed himself on the heap of the crop uttering his last words 'sukki kanak nain khayaan mehtya, dinna ratt ralayi' (don't eat raw wheat, oh Mehta, let me mix my blood in it'). Bua Kauri upon finding his dead body burned herself along with his funeral pyre. It is said that a fierce rain storm hit the area after their deaths and blood stained crop washed away and whosoever ate that crop suffered from diseases and miseries.

The story of Baba Jitto a simple farmer tells us the social condition of his time; the farmers were exploited at the hands of the landlords, Baba Jitto being one of them, exploited by the society he laid down his life for the cause of the cultivators.

A bar or poem is written showing the plight of his daughter

*Chitte uppar kala likheya, daag e mitda neyi |  
Dheyen de dukkh dahde loko, jaan kaleje aayi |  
Je jandi migi pave bchodha , jamdi ge mari jayi |  
Jamdi ge mari jandi babla, daag ni lagda koyi |*

#### **Mian Dido:**

Another folk hero popular in the folk culture is Mian Dido born in 1780 in the village of Bheta Jagti. He was a great warrior expert in handling swords and bow and arrow. He raised his voice against the king Ranjit Singh who was trying to install his rule over the area. Mian Dido fought with the Mian Mota Singh against the forces of Ranjit Singh in which Sikh forces lost but still Mian Mota Singh signed a treaty with Ranjit Singh which irked Mian Dido and he raised his voice against this decision of Mian Mota, many a times Mian Dido was called to Lahore in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but he never obeyed and whenever the king sent the forces to capture him he always succeeded in running away and killed the forces. He followed the guerrilla warfare. To capture Mian Dido his close associates were also killed, in one incident when forces were sent to his village Jagti, to capture Mian Dido , he ran away and his old father who was said to be of 90years came out to fight with sword but later he was captured and killed.

Maharaja Gulab Singh and Wazir Zorawar Singh went to capture Mian Dido and it is said in the Trikuta hills where Mian Dido was hiding they found him and shot him, he was 40 years old at that time. Mian Dido was popular among his folks, once he gave a call to the masses for not paying tax to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, nobody paid a single penny of tax and Jagirdar Kadak Singh told Maharaja Ranjit Singh that he couldn't collect a single penny from the people, such was the impact of Mian Dido, he fought for his homeland and died for it. A poem regarding his death was as follows:

*Jande gi goli lagdi e aayi ,  
Jinde hath neyi aaya Miyan Jamwal |  
Kaal leyi geya fadkiye Miyan Jamwal |  
O khabran gulab singh raje gi geyian |  
O khabran takhat Lahore geyian |*

Gugga Chauhan( Raja Mandlik)Gugga Chauhan is very popular in the folk culture apart from Jammu region, he is prominent in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and many more areas, fast, festivals are celebrated on his name. In the area of Jammu, he is popular by the name of Raja Mandlik. The poems written on his name have Rani Vashla,Gugdi, Gugga and Rani Sirgala. Veer Gugga was a warrior who travelled as far as Bengal. He fought with Mahmud Ghazni and it is said that in the battle between two, Mahmud Ghazni lost the battle. Again Mahmud Ghazni attacked him and veer Gugga along with Kalibeer attacked Mahmud Ghazni and won the battle. A poem celebrating the birth of Gugga have been written:

*Judi rathe gi mata vashla, tan dudhnehre aayi|  
Bhadron mahine, naven di tithun , janam raja ne payi |  
Arbi baje bajjan lagge, mehalen bajje badhai |  
Mehalen bajje badhai, raje tofen di dhamak karayi|  
Gaas-lok te maat-lok kambe, prithvi kambi saari |*

*Hukum kita raja vasake , mudi pyuli pant sadayi/  
Ved vacheya piyuli panta, kunn chadeya e balkari/  
Dudhnere ch gugga jameya, e i tussen da beri*

Although these *Baran* or ballad poems have many interpolations in them as they have been travelling from centuries together, it can be said there have been addition and deletions in these poems which could be according to the imagination of the poet, as when these poems got written the main idea of the poets may have been to eulogise the king and the ruling family and to boast about one's culture. Moreover these poems have been popular in the folk culture where people could make a connection with the hero of these poems as the theme of these poems was always in favour of the poor and common masses who could not raise their voices against the unjust rule of the society.

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