



Exploring Local Colour in Pandit Lakhmi Chand's Folk Literature

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Abstract— *This research paper explores the concept of local colour which refers to the unique cultural practices, traditions, and customs of a particular region that distinguish it from other regions. The objective of this paper is to explore Indian philosophy and socio-cultural ethics through Haryanvi folklore, where an ideal society is imagined as an ordinary lifestyle. It highlights a 'utopian' vision through the importance of the local colour of Haryana and other regions to ensure that our cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. Moreover, its focus is on Pandit Lakhmi Chand's use of local colour in a fictional presentation that reflects the customs, traditions, and beliefs and their preservation for generations for the people of Haryana. Through this examination, the paper offers insight into how local colour can enrich and enliven literature and how it can be used to reflect and celebrate the diversity of the human experience.*



Keywords— *Local colour, Folklore, Culture, Heritage, Traditions, Customs.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Local colour, also known as regional literature, is fiction and non-fiction that concentrates on the topography, dialect, customs, and other elements unique to a given location. In addition, the term used to describe fiction or poetry places a strong emphasis on its context and is interested in the distinctiveness of a neighbourhood or an era as shown by its customs, dialect, clothing, scenery, or other characteristics that have eluded standardizing cultural forces. Furthermore, such fiction refers to the practices, mannerisms, clothes, and other characteristics that give a location or historical era; and the unique or peculiar characteristics of a location, particularly as they are portrayed or depicted in a story, image, or film the setting greater realism. Things that is typical of a place that makes it interesting and that is used in an image, tale, or film to give the impression that it is there (Britannica; Cambridge Dictionary; Collins Dictionary; Oxford Learner's English Dictionary; Oxford

Reference; and Campbell Donna M.). However, Vladimir Kapur defines "Local colour is equated with the real-life colour of the object depicted and envisaged as its fixed attribute" (Kapur 231). In this way, the setting of a narrative is the local colour. Along with the way people dress, look, and speak, it also includes the appearance of the surroundings and the structures. It contains slang from several languages and dialects, as well as phrases and idioms. Furthermore, James D. Hart defines:

Local Color [Colour], is a term applied to fiction or verse that emphasizes its setting, being concerned with the character of a district or an era, as marked by its customs, dialect, costumes, landscapes, or other peculiarities that have escaped standardizing cultural influences. The earliest American writing reflects its locale, as all literature must, but the local-color [Colour] movement came into particular prominence in the U.S. after the

Civil War, perhaps as an attempt to recapture the glamour of a past era, or to portray the sections of the reunited county one to the other. (Hart 382)

It describes the distinctive cultural practices, traditions, and conventions that set one location apart from another. It is a crucial component of a community's identity because it reflects its past, core principles, and current outlook. Local colour is a vital component of Haryana's cultural legacy, which is passed down from one generation to the next.

In addition, despite the significance of local colour in preserving a region's cultural heritage, it faces several challenges. The growing influence of Western culture and the lack of government support for local artisans and craftsmen are significant challenges to the preservation of Haryana's local colour. These challenges can result in the erosion of cultural diversity and identity, which is a major loss for society as a whole.

Local Colour in Literature:

The regional literature is a depiction of the characteristics and quirks of a certain locale and its residents. The designation is specifically given to a subgenre of American literature that first appeared in its most distinctive form shortly after the Civil War and held the title of most widely read genre for about thirty years. It was a prominent literary trend in the Western world of the nineteenth century, but critics still considering it to be modest. The literature gained notoriety for shining a realistic spotlight on a particular geographic location, highlighting its customs, scenery, and language (Rajput 41). Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sarah Orne Jewett, Bret Harte, Kate Chopin, George W. Cable, Joel Chandler Harris, Hamlin Garland, Mark Twain, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, and R.K. Narayan (in the Indian context) are among the writers who covered the local colour through the fictional presentation but they failed to represent the relationship approach for God and the teacher-student relationship.

The term portrays rural or small-town life in a part of a country that is noticeably remote or uninhabited and takes advantage of the quaintness of the location being described rather than providing an impartial picture. They deliberately try to draw readers' attention to the peculiar particulars of the distinctively different locations he describes. Among such writers regarded as the first local colour story, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and Bret Harte's *The Luck of Roaring Camp* (1899) is a type of writing that the movement most distinctively influenced. Examples from well-known writers are provided to further clarify the issue. Thomas Hardy uses his fictionalised depictions of Wessex and Rudyard Kipling's India to keep the spirit of the setting alive in the readers' minds. Similarly, in the Indian context, R. K. Narayan depicts the fictional

South Indian village of Malgudi charmingly. In the same way, Amit Chaudhuri has excelled by putting his unique stamp on the locations he has worked in. Amit Chaudhuri frequently celebrates local subjectivities and cultures in his works. His singularity as a writer, however, largely stems from the fact that his most sensitive depictions of place are done through an exclusive focus on the commonplace and the quotidian in fragmented, episodic form, never woven into a comprehensive narrative, much less one about the rise of modern India. In reality, in his works, locality and ordinary create each other as prerequisites.

This paper is centered on the use of local colour in Pandit Lakhmi Chand's poems, with a focus on how he employs this technique to create a sense of place and convey cultural and social meanings. He created a distinctive voice that captures the essence of Haryana and its people. Pandit Lakhmi Chand (1901-1945) was born in Sonipat's Janti Kala. His family was really poor and his father was a simple farmer, therefore his upbringing was very challenging. He was used to humming certain phrases that he had memorized while grazing animals in childhood. Lakhmi Chand developed a reputation for singing as he gradually began travelling to other places and began humming his songs; as a result, some *bhajans* and *sangis* decided to accompany him. He was always thinking about singing, which put a lot of stress on his family. Since he was a little child, he has been drawn to folklore songs performed while the animals are being fed. He started gradually moving to other places and singing his melodies. He used to be accompanied by various *bhajans* and *sangis* as his prominence as a performer grew. The family was usually worried because of his interest, but Lakhmi Chand was absorbed in singing.

Therefore, Lakhmi Chand had to overcome a number of obstacles because singing and acting were not considered to be admirable in the contemporary period. He was driven to improve, so he joined the Shri Chand Sangi of Mehandipur song troupe and Sohankund Wala to further develop his talent. Lakhmi Chand continued to work with several artists, although he still regarded Man Singh as his mentor. In the meantime, Sohankundwala insulted Mansingh in a gathering, which caused Lakhmi Chand to become enraged and start singing while breaking away from him. In literary contributions, he had composed more than 20 songs. The following are among the important songs such as *Nautanke*, *Shaahee Lakadahaara*, *Raaja Bhoj*, *Chandrakiran*, *Heer-Raanjha*, *Chaap Sinh*, *Nal-Damayantee*, *Satyavaan*, *Saavitree*, *Meeraabae*, and *Padmaavat*.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vandana Rajput in “A Sense of Place: Exploring Local Color through Amit Chaudhuri’s A Strange and Sublime Address and A New World” observes that Amit Chaudhuri captured the minute, and typical elements of a person’s daily life. He concentrates on the appearance and quirks of Calcutta and its people. In addition, it’s crucial for writers to accurately portray the local population, culture, and landscape in their works. He has made an effort to capture the essence of Calcutta, his home region, utilising a variety of techniques. By discussing regular, everyday tasks, he highlights the unique characteristics of his region, Calcutta. In addition, Rajni Jaimini and Priya Raghav write in “Of Men and Morals: *Saangs* of Lakhmi Chand (Haryana) as Narratives of Local History, Identity, and Culture” that folklore of American culture cannot be implemented in the Indian context but *Saang* acts as a vehicle for Haryanvi culture and beliefs and in turn, becomes the cultural identity of Haryana. In another work, Rajni Jaimini and Priya Raghav’s “Folk Literature and Social Space: Interdependences and Correlations” concentrated on examining the content of various *Saangs* written and performed by Lakhmi Chand to examine the complex issue of how culture and morality are represented, as well as how the main social issues of the day are reflected in the tales told by the *Saangi*. In addition, The *Saangs* were the primary means of education and communication for the common people of villages before television and print media engulfed every part of our lives. *Saang* was a university for the villagers as it served as a source of education for the regular people who couldn't read or write, much like WhatsApp has become a university for millions of people in India. However, Anuradha Sharma and Neeru Batra’s “SAANG: Its Origin and Relevance in Modern Haryanvi Folk Literature” presents that the culture of any nation can be seen in its folk literature. Folk literature is truly connected to the average citizens of that nation, state, or territory. People from both the urban and rural areas of the region are included in the term ‘folk’. Folk literature is a product of the local soil and is useful to the local population. Folk literature has its origins in the oral poetic tradition and typically is passed down from generation to generation, amusing and educating future generations.

III. RESEARCH GAP

The above studies have explored nativisation through folklore by Pandit Lakhmi Chand. His *Saang* played an important role in the exploration of Haryanvi culture. In comparison to modern culture, which has improved technology but is losing its ethical norms, *Saang*'s art of education was very different in that it taught

cultural values and ethics while there were few communication channels available. It is concluded that more research is needed to fully understand the ideal study as it is shown through Lakhmi Chand's folklore.

IV. OBJECTIVE

This research paper aims to explore the concept of local colour and examine the challenges to its preservation. It highlights the importance of local colour in preserving the identity of a community or region and emphasises the need for collective efforts to promote and preserve the cultural heritage for future generations through Pandit Lakhmi Chand who incorporated local colour in his works. His poems are known for their vivid descriptions of life in the Green State, as well as the customs, traditions, and beliefs of the Haryanvi people.

V. LOCAL COULOR IN PANDIT LAKHMI CHAND'S POETRY

One of the most striking features of Pandit Lakhmi Chand's poetry is his use of local colour. His poems are filled with vivid descriptions of the landscape, the people, and the culture of the region in which he lived. For example “Seth Tarachand”, Lakhmi Chand, Ragni 27 describes the culture in evocative detail:

वेद रीत और हवन-कुंड एक श्रेष्ठ सा घर चाहिए है || इन्द्रियाजीत पराक्रमी पति मेरे को वर चाहिए है | मात-पिता की सेवा कराके चरणां मैं सिर धरता हूं | सम दम उपराम सात धाम कुछ संयम यज्ञ भी कराता हो | अग्निहोत्र पंच महायज्ञ ॐ का नाम सुमरता हो | तीन काल संध्या तर्पण में मन इधर उधर न फिरता हो | कृष्ण जैसा योगी हो ना ते अर्जुन सा वर चाहिए है | गुरु मानसिंह का पंजा सिर पै के लखमीचंद दर से |

ved reet aur havan-kund ek shreshth sa ghar chaahie sai || indriyajeet paraakramee pati mere ko var chaahie sai | maat-pita kee seva karake charanaan main sir dharata ho | sam dam uparam saat dhaam kuchh sanyam yagy bhee karata ho | agnihotr panch mahaayagy om ka naam sumarata ho | teen kaal sandhya tarpan mein man idhar udhar na phirata ho | krshn jaisa yogee ho na te arjun sa var chaahie sai | guru maanasinh ka panja sir pai ke lakhameechand dar sai | (Qtd., Sharma, 32, I)

Vedas, a Havan-Kund, and a decent home are required. My powerful spouse, the master of the senses, requires a groom. After serving my parents, I bow down at their feet. Sanyam Yagya rituals are also performed by Sam Dam Upam Saat Dham. The name of the Agnihotra Panch Mahayagya Om is recalled. During the three evening prayers, one should not let their mind stray. You desire a groom like Arjun because

you aspire to be a Yogi like Krishna. Guru Mansingh's paw brushed against his head at Lakhmi Chand's pace.

In the vibrant tapestry of Haryanvi culture, as reflected in Pt. Lakhmi Chand's poetry, the study finds intricate threads that weave together the various dimensions of life. Just as Manusmriti serves as a guiding light to instil discipline in human existence, Pt. Lakhmi Chand's verses delve deep into the essence of duty and righteousness. Through the prism of local colour, we witness the vivid portrayal of Seth Tarachand's wife, who, in her spirited way, emboldens her resolute husband to tread the path of duty, drawing inspiration from the very soul of Haryanvi traditions.

नौ दरवाजे दस पहरे पै भोगे हवा उमंग की | चार का भाग पांच संग मिलके
झुकी दुधारी जंग की | पांच का रूप स्वरूप से मिलके जगह बनी बणी नए ढंग
की | व्यापक ज्ञान दिवा बिच धरादे मिटज्या सकल अंधेरी | चौबीस गुण प्रकृति
के चित्त चारोवण खातिर | इताना कुणबा कट्टा कर लिया क्यूं जंग झोवण खातिर
| हंसै फिर कभी करे नजाकत न्यूं मन मोहावण खातिर | माया उत्तर चली पृथ्वी
पै जीव भलोवन खातिर | बिन सत्संग सत्य श्रद्धा बिन काया मोटी केसी ढेरी |
छः विकार सत् प्रकृति खेल खिलावण लागे | एक शक्ति दो नैनों के बीच तीर
चलावण लागे | जीव पुरंजन बहु पुरंजनी मेल मिलावण लागे | ईश्वर व्यापाक
जड़ चेतन की डोर हिलावण लागे | कहै लक्ष्मीचंद निष्कर्म करे बिण छूटती ना
हेराफेरी ||

*nau daravaaje das pahare pai bhoge hava umang
kee |*

*chaar ka bhaag paanch sang milakai jhukee
dudhaaree jang kee | paanch ka roop svaroop se
milakai jagah banee nae dhang kee | vyaapak
gyaan diva bich dharade mitajya sakal andheree |
chaubees gun prakrti ke chitt charovan khaatir |*

*itana kunaba kattha kar liya kyoon jang jhovan
khaatir | hansai phir kabhee karai najaakat nyoo
man mohavan khaatir | maaya uttar chalee prthvee
pai jeev bhalovan khaatir |*

*bin satsang saty shraddha bin kaaya motee kесе
dheree |*

*chhah vikaar sat prakrti khel khilaavan laage |
ek shakti do nainon ke bich teer chalaavan laage |
jeev puranjan bahoo puranjane mel milaavan
laage | eeshvar vyaapak jad chetan kee dor
hilaavan laage |*

*kahai lakhamechand nishkarm kare bin chhutatee
na heraphere || (Qtd. in Sharma, 33, I)*

Within Pandit Lakhmi Chand's poetic realm, the complex labyrinth of Haryanvi culture unfurls, revealing profound insights in succinct yet powerful expressions. The metaphorical journey of 'Nine doors, ten guards, and the wind of enthusiasm' intricately depicts the complexities of existence, resonating with the cultural nuances of the

region. The fusion of 'four bowed down with the five of the double-edged war' symbolizes a harmonious synthesis that local colour beautifully accentuates. This fusion gives birth to a new narrative path, akin to a comprehensive knowledge lamp dispelling the obscurity that shrouds the human experience. In the heart of these verses lies the essence of 'Twenty-four qualities for the sake of nature's mind', a reflection that resonates with the cultural ethos of Haryana. Through the lens of local colour, familial bonds are questioned, and the enigmatic laughter of 'Jang Jhovan' finds delicate expression, unveiling moments of introspection and tenderness. 'Maya's' northern sojourn, driven by an earnest connection with earthly life, captures the cultural pulse of the region. Pandit Lakhmi Chand's verses intertwine faith and inner strength, where 'Satsang' and 'true faith' stand as pillars amid the allure of the 'six vices'. In these verses, Pandit Lakhmi Chand's poetic brush paints a portrait of Haryanvi ethos, where concise yet impactful expressions encapsulate a fusion of personal and cultural depth, leaving an indelible mark on the poetic landscape.

VI. CONCLUSION

Thus, local colour is a vital element of the rich cultural heritage of Haryana. The state's unique blend is made up of the customs, rites, and practices that have been handed down through the generations. The vivid folk music and dance, scrumptious food, and distinctive handicrafts are all significant facets of the regional identity of Haryana. However, there are significant obstacles to the preservation of Haryana's regional identity, including the growing influence of Western culture and the lack of government support for local artisans and craftsmen. The government must take action to support and promote traditional behaviours and customs to overcome these obstacles. To maintain Haryana's rich cultural legacy, society must also recognize and appreciate traditional handicrafts and other cultural practices. The significance of local colour in literature lies in its ability to preserve and celebrate the unique cultural traditions of a region, and in doing so, it promotes a sense of pride and identity among the local people. Furthermore, it helps to bridge the gap between different cultures and communities by promoting an understanding of the diversity that exists within a country. The regional literature also provides a refreshing perspective on life and culture, which often goes unnoticed in mainstream literature. Consequently, Pandit Lakhmi Chand's poems provide a valuable contribution to the local colour movement in Indian literature. His work serves as an inspiration for future generations of writers to continue exploring and preserving the cultural heritage of their regions through literature.

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