

ARABIC LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Arabic language is among those language which had been popular in non-Arabic countries like India where it grew and developed through the different periods. Unlike Persian which had been an official language of the different dynasties in India, Arabic had never been an official language. The history of Arabic language begins from the first invasion by Arab general Qassim and letter with start of Arab settlement in Western provinces of India like Sind etc. Due to main source of Islamic study, the Arabic literature became a center of attraction among the religious scholars and also flourished further during the patronage of different dynasties in India specially Mughals. Later after the independent of India, the Arabic literature gained momentum as different institution and department had been established in universities. Its importance became much important due to relationship that India needs to have with Arab countries. This paper is to attempt to analyze the Arabic literature throughout the Indian history and its special importance throughout Indian history till date.

Keywords: Arabic Literature, Arabic, Arab Muslims, Mughal Rulers, India.

Introduction

Arabic belongs to the Phlogistic group of language and Yarib bin Qahtan is father of this language. Today this language is one of the official languages of the UNO. In Asia and Africa large no of people spoken and learning Arabic language. It has left much penetration over the European as well as Indian languages. Arabic is a holy language of Islam. Beside this many people in the world studied Arabic languages and nowadays study of the Arabic language is essential from the cultural, socio-historical, job opportunity as well as Indo –Arab relationship perspective. In India Arabic language was developed before Islam and after Islam religious appearance was added append the spread of Arabic in India. After the batten of these relations, many Indians have adopted Arabic language and literature.

Political relations between Arab and India were first established in the seventh century after Christ, and the trade relations between them back to the pre historic times. Trade relation batten between them because “two of the three routes by which trade was carried on in ancient times between India and the west, passed through Arabia. The first route ran from the mouth of the Indus and up to the Euphrates, at the point where the road branches off to Antioch and the Levantine ports. The second route, more important than the first, lay from the Indian coast to that of Yaman and Hadramawt and from there, passing along the red sea coast, to Syria and thence to Europe, either directly from the Syrian coast or via Egypt an Alexandra”. (Ahmad 1968, P.3)

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In seventh century when Islam came in India very little Arabic literature was produced during this period and it was mainly of religious nature after the birth of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, conquest of western Indian province of Sind in 711CE by Muhammad bin Qasim al-Thaqafi, India came in first notable and retain contact with both the religion of Islam and the Arabic language because Arabic had religious reliability being the language of Islamic scripture and familiarity with the Arabic Quran was assumed necessary for the correct formality practice of Islam. (Qutubuddin2007, P.315-16).

According to Professor Sherwani, "This comparative lack of Indian authorship, in Arabic was mainly due to the fact that it was Muslim Perso –Turks –Turkish in race but Persian in culture who came and conquered India, and it was again leaders owning Persian culture who created Muslim dynasties in the deccan. It is not generally remembered that Mahmud of Ghazni was primarily an empire builder, and the Muslim settlers in Sindh and Multan were over powered by him in much the same way as the Hindu Sahis of the Punjab. It is therefore no wonder that it was Persian and not Arabic which was the main field of linguistic activities for centuries". (Article shared by Purnima p).

Influence of Arabic language on Indian Language and Literature

The impression of Arabic on Muslim is well unveiled in their language and it left a prodigious influence on the languages and literature of Muslim nations like Iran, Afghanistan and India etc. Persian language and Arabic language are little bit similar and Persian is written in Arabic script, and more than 30 percent of vocabulary is of Arabic origin. Before the reforms of the twenties, Turkish was also written in Arabic. Before the coming of the British colonialist the Hausa language was written in Arabic and the script is known as Ajami script. The occurrence of Arabic loan-words in Hausa language is very high, 'Ali Abu Bakr' perceived that one fifth of currently used words in Hausa and Fulani are of Arabic origin. In a Hausa speaking community if one ventures with an Arabic speaker using only Arabic; such a speaker has been found to make quite a fair degree of relevance with the people. Thus, Hausa words Bindiga (gun), Al-maksh (scissors), hakimi (ruler), al kalami (pen) are of Arabic origin. Another feature of the significance of Arabic among Muslims is the lodgment of Quranic Arabic schools in every Muslim community to teach the holy Quran, Arabic language and basic of Islamic religion. A remarkable number of words have been written on the language in Arabic and other languages spoken by Muslims. This appetite is computed up in the observation of Al-thaalib (d, 1038A.D). He says, "when the almighty ennobled and exalted the Arabic language, he elevated its rank and showed greater regard to it than any other language. He decreed for its fate guarding and treasuring a select people, the leaders of virtues and the luminaries of the earth who gave up lust and roamed the desert land in its service; who befriended the notebooks, the book case and inkstand for its acquisition, and who exerted themselves systemizing its rules, and dedicated their life to immortalizing its books". In the present scenario, for the growth and promotion of Arabic language, we all have to make efforts in the right outlook and need to make a recourse to our span-new values, we should be the senders of knowledge, exclusively that of Arabic language and Islam, from our ancestors to our descenders. (Abdul 2001). (Basharat (IJAMSR),2019).

During the Caliphate of Mamun (Abbasid period) a number of Sanskrit books were translated in Arabic, Mamun took a number of Sanskrit scholars from India to Baghdad. But very little was produced in Arabic in India. This looks all the more extravagant because Arabic language was very popular during this period and was taught in many schools and colleges.

After the Ghaznavid period (998-1186 A.D) was started their great leader Mahmud Ghazanavi was a victor of culture and learning and extended his supervision to some of the most preferable scholars from remote Asiatic countries which gathered to his court. He was interested specially in Persian, but his knowledge of Arabic was scarce. He also wrote a book on fiqh entitled Al Farid-fil-furu. During his sultanate that Al –Biruni came to India to study Hindu culture and to collect material for his famous book KitabulHind. In India Arabic language continued to batten further under the superintendency of the Muslim rulers of the Mamluk, khilji, Tughlaq, the sayyid and the Afghan lodi dynasty in Delhi, the Adil –Shahis, Brahmanis in the Deccan, the Shah –Mir in Kashmir. All the rulers of these dynasties continued to encourage scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies for religious purpose though the language of their court was one of the Indian languages or Persian. (Mukhlesur,2014).

During the Sulatanate of Mughal empire Arabic language by increasing their superintendency to writers, author, theologians and learned men. Mr. Madhavarao Scindhia, minister of (HRD) in 1995 while addressing a Muslim education conference held in Delhi on seven May 1995, presented that "during the time of the Mughal reign in India there were 125000 Madrassas in India. The report of all India survey by Hamdard education society published in June of 1996 confirmed the said figure".(Haque 2013, P.15).

“Thus, under the Mughal dynasty which represents the last epoch of Muslim rule in this country we find a larger number of Arabic authors than under any other dynasty which had ruled India. Some of the authors of this period have acquired name and fame even outside India and their works are greatly appreciated in the Arab world as well. Amongst such authors mention may be made here of Faudi, Abdul Haq of Delhi, Abdul Hakim of Sialkote, Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi, Ghulam Ali Azad of Bilgram and Muhibbullah of Bihar”. (Ahmad 1968, introduction.P.50-51) (Mukhlesur2014).

During the British period in India, due to educational policies accepted by the British government as English language was adopted as medium of ground rule in educational institution, and the arts and science became the centralize of learning. Subsequently, language of Arabic and Islamic studies lost its superintendency. So Muslim youth tended to fall behind in their availability to formal education and jobs due to lack of knowledge in modern education and English language. So, some intelligence came out with plans to establish educational institution or universities for study of Arabic and Islamic studies. The list of most famous colleges of India in which Arabic language and literature have been taught is Calcutta university established in 1857 A.D. In this university Arabic literature study was started since 1916 A.D. Madras university established in 1857 A.D and Arabic language was started in 1927 A.D. in this university. Aligarh Muslim university was founded by Sayed Ahmad Khan as a college in 1875 A.D and was recognized as university in 1920 A.D. , and Arabic course was offering since 1920 .And many more universities like Bombay universities (1857 A.D), Jamia Millia Islamia university in (1920) , Delhi university , Lucknow university, Usmaniyah university, Banaras Hindu university , Allahabad university , Kerala university, Kashmir university, JNU university, Gauhati university , Assam university etc. Offering courses on Arabic language and literature. And nowadays Arabic is being taught in various levels of learning like M.A, M.Litt., Ph.D. and certificate and diploma courses.

In 1947 after the Independence of India Arabic language continued to receive special attention from Government of India. After independence founded Madrassas and institutions of Arabic and Islamic for development of Arabic language and literature, below is a list of Madrassas: -

- Jamia Islamia Sanabil-1980-Joga bai New-Delhi.
- Darul- Uloom, Umar-Abad, Maharastra.
- Al- Madrasa Al-Islamia Shahi Muradabad- UP.
- Jamiatul Falah- Uttar Pradesh.
- Al- Jamia –Al-Salafia 1963 Banaras.

Nowadays more than 40 universities in India where Arabic languages is being taught. “Indian exposure to the Arabic language was primarily through the medium of religion, and Arabic came to India as the language of Islam”. (Qutbuddin 2007, p.316). But at present Arabic is no longer limited to the Muslims. Non-Muslim are also getting attracted with this language. Today we see many non-Muslim are learning Arabic in colleges, universities.

Conclusion

Language and literature are important aspects of civilization that contribute to the development of a society. It is not that every society or nation or country is dependent on itself. Rather, relationships, influences, trade and other important connections, such as the acquisition of knowledge, knowledge of other languages and cultures of the region, are of great help in the development of a civilization. There is no denying that Arabic, being an ancient language, has a long association with India. The article focuses on these aspects, highlighting the historical aspects as well as the needs of today. Today, from a trade point of view, relations with the Arabs are in some way in India's interest and its effects can be felt in the lives of ordinary people. On the other hand, the Arab countries, especially the Gulf countries, have emerged as a developed country with a lot of economic opportunities for the new generation. It can also indirectly benefit the Indian economy. All these points which mentions in the papers show the importance and relevance of the Arabic language in today's time.

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