

Evolution of Urdu Language in India

It is rather strange that the Urdu language gained currency first in the South. In 1327 Muhammad Tughlaq invaded Deccan and founded Daultabad as his capital. Allauddin Hasan Bahmani who rebelled against the Tughlaq ruler and set up a Bahmani kingdom, played an important role in popularizing Urdu in the Deccan.

In Deccan Urdu language came into contact with Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese spoken by the local people. Explaining the reasons for the growth of Urdu in Deccan Prof. S.R. Sharma says, “Especially after the rise of the Bahmani kingdom the native Muslims of the South wished to be as separate as possible from the imperial capital in the North and they developed a local patriotism with a desire to emphasise their own life and modes of thought, and lastly they began to suspect and dislike outsiders. This resulted in cultivation of Urdu as opposed to Persian, which was the language of the Emperor’s Court. This new dialect was known as Deccan and was considerably influenced by Gujarati and Marathi.”

One of the first treatise written in Urdu or Rekhta in the South Mirat ul-Ashiqin by Khwaja Banda Nawas Gesu Daraz. This book though written in Persian script made liberal use of Hindi language. After the break up of the Bahmani Kingdom the Muslim Sultans of Golconda and Bijapur continued to patronize the Urdu.

Qutb Shahi Sultans of Golkoda not only patronized Urdu scholars but also composed numerous poems in this language. Two prominent poets from Golconda were Wajahi and Ghawasi who occupy a very important position amongst the scholars of poetical romances and masters of prose.

The Sultans of Bijapur were also great patrons of Urdu poets. Ibrahim Adil Shah II made the Deccani Urdu as the court language in place of Persian. Some of the prominent scholars of Deccani Urdu which flourished in Bijapur were Shah Miranji Shams-ul-Ushahaq and Burhan-ud-Din Janun, who composed fine poems.

Shah Miran was a Sufi saint who wrote Khushnama and Khushnagaz. He also wrote one of the largest poem entitled Shahai-ul-Haqiqat in lucid and simple language and avoided the use of

Arabic and Persian words. Muhammad Nusrat wrote Gulshane-Ishaq, Alinama and Tarikh-i-Skandari which are works of great imagination and clarity of thought.

These works were greatly appreciated by Adil Shah and he honoured the author. Syed Miran Hashmi wrote Yusuf Zulekha ; Shah Aminuddin Ala wrote Muhiba Nama and Rumuz-us-Satikin dealing with the spiritual love and unity of God.

Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah of the Qutb Shah dynasty was also a prominent writer of Urdu. He composed ghazal, qasida, masnavi and morthiah, in which he deals with the incident of every day life in a simple and simple style.

Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah also patronized the famous Urdu poet Wajahi the author of Qutb Mushtri. Another important work of Wajahi was Sabras. Successors of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah were also great patrons of Deccani style Urdu.

While Abdullah Qutb Shah wrote poetry in Persian-Deccani language, Tana Shah, the last Qutb Shahi ruler patronized the scholars like Faiz, the famous author of Ruzwane Shah o-Ruhafza, a thought provoking masnavi.

In Gujarat, the credit for popularizing Hindawi language goes to Sheikh Qutb Alam and Sheikh Ahmad Khattu. These Sufi scholars migrated to Gujarat after the invasions of India by Timur in 1398. In course of time a number of disciples gathered around these two scholars and an Indian school of literary style developed which is popularly known as the Gujarat style.

Some of the prominent scholars who belong to Gujarat were Shah Ali Muhammad Jiv, author of the Jawaharu'l Aarar, Khub Muhammad Chisti, author of Khub Tarang and Amin, author of Yusuf Zulekha. The most outstanding mystic writer of Gujarat was Khub Muhammad Chisti.

Apart from writing Khub Tarang, he wrote a number of treatises on Sufism. Another prominent work of this author is Chand Chandan which deals with the Hindawi and Persian prosody.

In the North although Urdu did not make much progress under the early Mughal rulers some of the prominent scholars like Nuri Azampuri, Hazrat Kamaluddin Makhadum, Shaikh Sadi and Mohammed Afzali, flourished during the times of Akbar, the great.

Similarly Nasir Afzali Allahabadi and Pandit Chandrabhan were prominent Urdu poets during the times of Shah Jahan. Under the later Mughal rulers Urdu was given every possible encouragement. Emperor Muhammad Shah invited the famous Deccani poet Shams-ud-Din Wali to recite his poems at his court.

One of the immediate impacts of the visit was that Wali started making use of Delhi idioms in place of Deccani idioms in his works.

As a result of this change, Urdu became quite a different language from Hindi. Certain other scholars also followed the foot-steps of Wali and wrote Urdu poetry with a large number of Persian and Arabic words. Thus Urdu was completely separated from Hindi.

The Urdu writers also adopted the Persian forms and themes in their works. Efforts were also made to purify the language by excluding the unfamiliar words and expressions of the Deccani.

Thus we find that the Urdu language was enriched from generation to generation and new techniques and traditions were adopted by it. No doubt, the problem of linguistic adjustments gave rise to numerous stresses and strains in the beginning but in course of time it became a means of cultural expression and mutual understanding.

In fact Yusuf Husain says, **“Urdu language...bears throughout indubitable marks of that process of absorption, compromise and accommodation which is the keystone of medieval Indian thought and history.”**

Anilchandra Banerjee has observed:

“Almost every work in Indo-Persian literature contains a large number of words of Indian origin and thousands of Persian words became naturalized in every Indian vernacular language. This mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskrit origin is extremely interesting from the philological point of view, and this co-ordination of unknown resulted in the origin of the beautiful Urdu language. That language in itself symbolized the reconciliation of the hitherto irreconcilable and mutually hostile types of civilization represented by Hinduism and Islam.”