

Arabic Language and Literature in India: Historical Dynamics and Contemporary

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مستخلص

يبحث هذا المقال في تطور اللغة العربية وآدابها في الهند مع التركيز على إسهاماتها المهمة في المجالات الفكرية والروحية والثقافية. يعود تاريخ اللغة العربية في الهند إلى القرن السابع الميلادي، عندما أقام التجار العرب علاقاتهم الأولى مع المنطقة. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الديناميات التاريخية التي شكلت مسيرة اللغة العربية وآدابها في الهند، وتستكشف تحولاتها المعاصرة في عصر العولمة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم منظور متعمق لدور اللغة العربية وآدابها كجسر يثري الحوار بين التقاليد الهندية المحلية والمجتمع العالمي، وذلك باستخدام منهج التحليل التاريخي والثقافي. كلمة مفتاحية: اللغة العربية؛ الأدب العربي، الهند

Abstrak

This article explores the development of the Arabic language and literature in India, emphasizing their significant contributions to intellectual, spiritual, and cultural life. The presence of Arabic in India dates back to the 7th century CE, when Arab traders first established contact with the region. This study examines the historical dynamics that have shaped the evolution of Arabic language and literature in India, while also addressing their transformation in the era of globalization. Through a historical and cultural analytical approach, this research offers a comprehensive perspective on how Arabic language and literature serve as a bridge, fostering dialogue between local Indian traditions and the global community.

Keywords: Arabic Language; Arabic Literature, India.

A. INTRODUCTION

India is a country in Asia with the second-largest population in the world, exceeding one billion people, and the seventh-largest by geographical area. Geographically, India is divided into three main regions. Northern India

spans three major mountain ranges the Hindu Kush, Karakoram, and the Himalayas. The eastern region stretches across the Sulaiman and Kirthar Mountains, while the southern region is bordered by the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengala. The name "India" originates

from the Sindhu River, also known as the Sind, one of the major rivers of the Indian subcontinent.

Arabic is one of the main languages of the Semitic language family and is regarded as one of the oldest historical languages. Consequently, it is closely related to several other Semitic languages, including Syriac, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Mahri-Scotri, and Ethiopian. The revelation of the Qur'an significantly increased interest in learning Arabic, driven primarily by religious motivations rather than economic or political factors. Indeed, the development of the Arabic language has closely mirrored the spread of Islam.

This article traces the historical development of the Arabic language in India, from its introduction alongside Islam to its current use in religious, educational, and cultural contexts. It explores the key factors that have shaped the presence of Arabic in India, including the establishment of Islamic rule, the contributions of scholars, the effects of socio-political changes, and the ongoing challenges and opportunities in preserving and teaching Arabic in India.

C. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method with a historical and analytical approach. Data are collected from various primary and secondary

sources, including relevant journal articles and books. The analysis focuses on the transformation of the Arabic language and literature in India from the classical period to the modern era.

D. DISCUSSION

1. History of the Arabic Language in India

India, known as Sind or Hind, had established connections with Arab kingdoms even before the advent of Islam, mainly through trade. These ties grew stronger after the arrival of Islam. Although efforts to spread Islam began during the Rashidun Khulafaur, they were not successful at that time due to various challenges, including logistical, political, geographical, and security issues. Nevertheless, these efforts persisted and were further pursued after the Umayyad dynasty assumed control of the Khalifah.

Islam entered India in the 7th century through various means, primarily through trade, the establishment of kingdoms, and the arrival of Islamic missionaries (da'i/muballigh) who spread the religion. As a result of this spread, the Muslim community in India at the time can be divided into two groups: those of foreign descent who brought Islam to India, and the indigenous population who converted to Islam through various forms of missionary work. In terms of

education, the development of knowledge in India grew significantly, particularly in fields such as agriculture, nutrition, medicine, and industry. Educators in India are recognized for their role in connecting education with modernization.

The emergence of the Arabic language in India is closely tied to the historical relationship between India and the Arab people. In the book *al-Syi'ri al-Arabi fi Hindi*, it is explained that India has had a close relationship with the Arabian Peninsula and the Arabic language for thousands of years. Other accounts suggest that the connection between the Arabs and India dates back for centuries, particularly through trade, which existed even before Islam spread to India. Additionally, it is noted that India was known as *Sind* or *Hind* to the Arabs, and they had established strong ties with the Arab kingdoms long before the advent of Islam, especially through trade.

According to historians, Islam entered the region of *Sind* and the southern part of *Punjab*, India, in 712 M, led by *Muhammad bin Qasim al-Thaqafi*, the military commander of the *Umayyad* during the reign of *Khalifah Walid bin 'Abd Malik* (88-101 H). He successfully established a powerful kingdom in what is now *Pakistan*, which lasted until the *Delhi Sultanate* in the 13th century.

In fact, during the reign of *Umar bin Khattab*, naval expeditions were launched to conquer India between 633 and 637 M. *Usman Sakifi*, the governor of *Bahrain* and *Oman*, sent troops across the *Tana Sea*. In the same year, the expedition continued to *Broach* and *Dabul*. Under the caliphate of *Uthman*, another expedition to India was led by *Commander Abdullah bin Amar*. However, it was not until 699 M, under the leadership of *al-Haris* and *al-Muhabbab*, that a successful expedition to the Indian subcontinent took place. Despite these early efforts, historical evidence shows that the most significant spread of Islam throughout India occurred through the efforts of the *Turks* in the late 10th century.

The golden age of the *Mughal Empire* began during the reign of *Akbar* (1556-1605 M), followed by his three successors: *Jahangir* (1605-1628 M), *Shah Jahan* (1628-1658 M), and *Aurangzeb* (1658-1707 M). After their rule, the *Mughal Empire's* progress could no longer be maintained by subsequent rulers. The *Mughal dynasty* also had a significant cultural influence in the 19th century, particularly in the fields of architecture, painting, music, and literature. The *Turkic-Mongol* culture brought by the *Mughal dynasty* gradually merged and blended with the local *Indian* culture. *Akbar* also played a crucial role in the adoption of the *Bengal calendar*, which was used to facilitate tax collection in

Bengal. This calendar was a fusion of the Islamic calendar and the Sanskrit calendar from the previous culture. Additionally, architectural art reached its peak during the Mughal dynasty. Some of Akbar's most famous architectural works include the structures in his capital, Fatehpur Sikri, the imperial court seat from 1569-1584, and two main forts in Agra and Lahore. In the subsequent period, Shah Jahan succeeded in building the Taj Mahal and the Pearl Mosque in Agra, the Red Fort and Jama Masjid in Delhi, among others.

When the last Sultan was deposed and exiled by the British colonizers to Rangoon, where he died in 1862, the Mughal Empire found itself in a dilemma, forced to choose between two equally bitter paths: to fight alongside the Hindus to resist British colonial rule, or to collaborate with the British against the Hindu forces. In such a pressured situation, Indian Muslims began to realize their decline and weaknesses, which sparked a desire for revival. The decline of Mughal rule became clear after Aurangzeb's death, and this downfall was driven by three main factors: First, there was no strong or authoritative Sultan to succeed him. Second, Hindu power, led by the Marathas, grew stronger, with many Muslim territories breaking away from central rule. Third, the British colonizers increasingly

tightened their grip on India, consolidating their power.

2. Contributions of Indian Scholars

The first Muslim ruler in India was Muhammad Ibn Qasim, who was highly skilled in governance and followed the instructions of the Umayyad Amir, Hajjaj bin Yusuf, in the eastern provinces. Muhammad Ibn Qasim became a role model for the people of India, as he granted freedom of religion, allowing people to either convert to Islam or continue practicing their ancestral faith. Those who embraced Islam were required to pay zakat, while non-Muslims had to pay jizyah. After Muhammad Ibn Qasim's death, he was succeeded by Muhammad Ghazni in 1012 M, who established his base in Delhi. He was responsible for building the city of Delhi and contributing to the development of its culture. The next notable Islamic ruler in India was the Mongol Emperor in 1526. Significant advancements were also made in areas such as science, economy, art, literature, and culture. The beauty of painting and sculpture can be seen in structures such as the Quwwatul Islam Mosque, Qutub Minar, Qilal Qirwan, lecture halls, Shalimar Gardens, and the Taj Mahal. These are unparalleled in their beauty and unmatched in world history. Without the arrival of Islam in India, there may not have been any record of India's past. The daily spoken languages in India are diverse,

including Indian languages, Sanskrit, and Persian. Under the influence of the Arabs, another language emerged in India Urdu.

In addition, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, born in Delhi in 1817, was a prominent educational figure in India and the founder of the Aligarh Muslim University (Aligarh College, 1875). In 1889, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Edinburgh, and he passed away in 1899. His vision was to establish a modern Muslim society, using Turkey as a model. His motto was, "Help yourself, for only in this way can you advance." Some of his educational initiatives include: :

1) The establishment of Aligarh College (Islamic University), aimed at creating Muslim leaders and scholars capable of realizing a modern Muslim society. The university was divided into two sections: English and Eastern studies. All students were required to study Islam, and Hindus and Christians were also accepted as students..

2) In 1875, he founded the Muhammadan Educational Conference, which was held annually..

3) In 1888, he established a patriotic association aimed at balancing the efforts of the Indian Congress, which increasingly prioritized the interests of the Hindu community alone..

Misalnya In the twentieth century, India produced a number of writers, scholars, and authors who gained worldwide recognition, and their literary works were able to compete with those of great Arab writers. For example: :

a) Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (1914-1999), the author of the renowned book "Islam and the World.

b) Abdul Aziz Maimoni (1888-1978) who previously held the chair of Arabic at Aligarh and Karachi Universities and, over time, was recognized as one of the greatest living authorities on Arabic language and literature.

c) Hamīd al-Dīn al-Farahi (1280-1349 H), the author of the famous tafsir work "al-Imān fī Aqṣām al-Qur'an," among others.

3. Arabic Language in the Context of Modern India

The development of Arabic literature in India has progressed alongside the development of the Arabic language itself. India began making significant contributions to Arabic literature as early as the 10th century , during the Ghaznawi dynasty. This is supported by historical records that indicate the 10th century was a period of the establishment of the Islamic state, which spanned from Cordova in Spain to the Sultanates in Pakistan, and

witnessed advancements in various fields, especially in science, technology, and the arts. During the Ghaznawi rule, there was strong support for the development of knowledge, including the Arabic language and literature. Some of the policies that facilitated this growth included providing facilities and rewards to scholars, intellectuals, and educators to continue their work, establishing madrasas from primary schools to universities, and initiating the writing of Quranic exegesis based on Nahwu and Sharaf sciences, using sources derived from Sahih Hadith. Arabic language and literature gradually developed across various regions of the Indian subcontinent, particularly under Islamic dynasties.

Furthermore, modern universities have played a significant role in enriching Arabic literature and Islamic culture, a contribution that cannot be overlooked. It is important to note, in this context, that like all other non-Arab countries, India has also seen scholars regard the Quran as a key source for studying the Arabic language, which is considered one of the most significant factors in its development. These scholars have worked to broaden its scope and strengthen its foundation. For Muslims, studying Arabic is essential to fully understand and appreciate the divine teachings of the Quran.

India has made significant contributions to the field of knowledge

that have influenced the development of Arabic language and literature, which are divided into three main branches: grammar (nahwu), lexicography (ma'ajim), and rhetoric (balaghah). Scholars in India have written many important works in these areas, such as the Nahwu al-Irsyad by Syihabuddin Ad-daulan, the Mu'tabar dictionary, the Addhudad dictionary, and the ad-Dzi'bu dictionary by Rhadhiyuddin al-Khamsin Ashighani Alhindy (1252). Additionally, Ghulam Ali Azad, known as Hasan Al-Hind, authored works in the field of balaghah, particularly focusing on the enhancement muhassinat kalam.

The most prominent madrasas and leading centers of Islamic learning that have played a crucial role in enriching the study of the Arabic language, Arabic literature, and Islamic culture throughout the country include:

1. Darul Uloom Deoband.
2. Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow.
3. Jamiah Salafiyah Benares.
4. Madrasatul Islah dan Madrasatul Falah, Azamgarh.
5. Jamiah Islamiyah, Mubarakpur.
6. Darul Uloom Baskandi

In addition to the aforementioned madrasas and institutions, there are many prominent universities in India that have also played a significant role in the development of the Arabic

language. Some of these universities include::

1) Calcutta University, founded in 1857. The study of Arabic at this university began in 1916. The Departments of Arabic and Persian have given special attention to teaching the Arabic language, with a focus on modern Arabic.

2) Madras University founded in 1857. Arabic language courses and studies related to Arabic, Persian, and Urdu began in 1927, taught under the Department of Islamic Studies. Today, Arabic is taught at various academic levels, including MA, M.Lit, Ph.D., and certificate programs..

3) Aligarh Muslim University founded by Sayed Ahmad Khan as a collage in 1875 and recognized as a university in 1920. It has been offering Arabic language and literature courses from its early days through orientalist. This university has made an outstanding contribution to the development of Arabic literature in the Indian subcontinent. In addition to teaching, faculty members have published numerous Arabic books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and more. Several of these publications have gained widespread popularity in the Arab world.

4) Bombay University founded in 1857. Arabic and its literature have also been taught at various levels of study,

including doctoral programs, at this university.

5) Jamiah Milliyyah Islamiyyah founded in 1920. Although Arabic was initially introduced only as part of the curriculum, the Department of Arabic was established in 1982. Various programs in Arabic language and literature are now offered, including BA, MA, M.Phil., and Ph.D., along with certificate and diploma courses in modern Arabic.

4. Challenges and Opportunities for the Development of Arabic Language in India

Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, with unique features and characteristics that distinguish it from other languages. Like most languages, it has its origins and a history of growth and development. Arabic originated, grew, and developed in the countries of the Middle East. The further development of Arabic has had a significant impact and expanded internationally, becoming an official language in 1973 and was officially recognized within the United Nations.

Arabic and religious sciences lost their esteemed status due to the aggressive educational policies implemented by the British government. The British authorities transformed the existing education system into a secular system, which led to the Muslims falling

behind in various aspects of life. This can be seen as a strategy deliberately designed to diminish the role of Muslim scholars in India. In response, Muslim scholars made efforts to establish centers of education focused on Arab culture and Islam throughout the country, with the aim of restoring the glory of Arab-Islamic culture. Thanks to the tireless efforts of these scholars, they succeeded in establishing universities in Punjab, the Oriental Department in Aligarh, as well as educational institutions such as Darul Uloom Deoband and Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama. Each of these institutions worked hard to counter the Christian challenges. Furthermore, they managed to foster a renewed spirit in cultural studies and modernity to a certain extent. As a result, Arabic language and literature have become an important subject of study today. It is worth mentioning here that the Nadwis (scholars trained at Nadwa) have worked hard to bring the Arabic language out of obscurity and stagnation.

Arabic literature has played a crucial role in the formation and development of both Islamic culture and religion. It serves not only as an aesthetic medium but also as a tool for spreading Islamic teachings and shaping religious identity. From the pre-Islamic period to the modern era, Arabic literature has consistently adapted to social and

political changes while maintaining the values of Islam.

E. CONCLUSION

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world, with a rich and kaleidoscopic cultural heritage. Arabic language and literature have grown and developed gradually across various parts of the Indian subcontinent, particularly under Islamic dynasties. Arabic language and literature gradually flourished in different regions of the subcontinent, especially during the rule of Islamic dynasties. Each period produced scholars and writers who had a significant impact on Arabic language and literature. In the 20th century, India produced a number of prominent Arabic writers and literary figures who were well-received in the Arab world, and their works made significant contributions to the Islamic world. To this day, universities in India continue to play an essential role in teaching Arabic language and literature..

The Arabic language and literature in India have evolved over time. Although there was a period when Arab culture did not thrive, there remained a region that became one of the centers of Arab Islam, allowing Arabic language and literature to continue in India. This development was influenced by Islamic dynasties and scholars who emerged in India. The support from the government, as

well as the enthusiasm of prominent writers and intellectual figures, contributed to the continued growth of Arabic language and literature in India.

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