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Indian contribution to Arabic language and literature

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Abstract

Arabic is youngest variety of Islamic group of language. It had been originated a few countries before the emergence of Islam. This language has always been considered the most sacred language by the Muslim, Simply because it is the language of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. In fact today, it had assumed the international status because of its wide application in trade, commerce, science, technology and cultural activities in the world.

The Indian Muslim scholars took attempt to establish Arabic and Islamic cultural learning centers across the country. They were able to give- birth a new spirit in cultural as well as modern studies to a considerable extent. Consequently, Arabic language and literature today has been one of the important subjects of learning.

In the sub-continent India, the Arabic language was first introduced by the Arab traders with the passage of time, Arab culture and traditions influenced the Indians in various ways. In the 1st century A.H, Indo-Arab relation took a special shape for the emergence and arrival of the great and bright religion Islam. The Indians started learning Arabic language not only to carry on the trade but also to know Islam. Thus Arabic spread and flourished in India.

In the 19th century, for the development of Arabic- Islamic literature, a number of institutions were established such as Darul Uloom (Deoband), Nadwatul Ulama(Lucknow), Madrasatul Islah, Al Jamia al –Salafia and also a number of Islamic Institutions known as Madrassas and Maktabas for the primary Arabic education.

Besides these, there are various numbers of Universities established in 19th century and 20th centuries which have been playing an important in the promotion and development of Arabic language and literature.

Arabic is belongs to the Semitic group of language. Ya'rib bin Qahtan is popularly known as the father of Semitic language. In this time, it is one of the official languages of the UNO.

Arabic, in India has been taught in different ways for more than fifteen centuries. The relations between India and the Arab World date back to very ancient times, and Arab Merchants appear to have played leading part in establishing as well as strengthening commercial and cultural links between the two nations, with the advent of Islam in the Indian subcontinent became stronger than ever before, particularly for cultural and political reasons. Several Muslim empires were established on the soil of India which lasted for more than eight centuries. India became enriched with their treasures of various sciences of knowledge, arts, culture and literature.

India has been one of the most well-known non Arab states where Arabic language grew and developed through the different periods; despite the fact it had never been an official language. The Indian history suggests that Indian's first substantial contact with the Arabic language came with the Arab Muslims settled in the western Indian province of Sind. Subsequently, the Arabic language continued to flourish further under the patronage of the Mughal rulers in India. In the Islamic epochs, the usage of Arabic was liturgical, but after the independence of India, non- sacred Arabic gained momentum.

It is to be remarked here that India has been one of the most well- known non-Arab states where Arabic language and literature grew, developed and flourished on a large Scale. During the period of Arab rule in the Indian Territory, Arabic continued to be an official language of the government and administration and the unrivalled medium of sacred knowledge and literary achievement. Moreover, various Arabic madrassa and cultural institutions of higher learning under the personal guidance and scholarly interest of the Sultans were set up which produced good number of poets, writers, Islamic thinkers, commentators of the holy Qur'an, scholars of the Hadith etc.

The Indian Muslim scholars therefore, took attempt to establish Arabic and Islamic cultural learning centers across the country, with a view to reviving the glorious position of Arab Islamic culture, and thus an oriental university in the Punjab, an oriental department at Aligarh, Darul Uloom Deoband , Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama etc, came into existence. Each of these institutions took great pains in countering the Christian challenges. Besides, they were able to give- birth a new spirit in cultural as well as modern studies to a considerable extent. Consequently, Arabic language and literature, today has been one of the important subjects of learning.

In the Twentieth century, India has produced a good number of literary figures and writers who got World Wide fame and their literary products are similar to that of a great Arab literature.

For instance, Abul Hassan Ali al Nadwi (1914-1999 AD), The author of the world famous book "Islam and World", Abdul Aziz Maimoni (1888-1978 AD) Who formerly held the chair of Arabic in the Universities of Aligarah and Karachi and since long has been recognized as one of the greatest living authorities on Arabic language and literature, Hamidud-din al-Farahi (1280-1349 AH), who has written the famous tafsir "*al Imaam fi Aqsamil Qur'an*" and so many others. These writers were greatly influenced by modern Arabic literature and its various art forms. Apart from that, they were impressed by western literatures. Some modern styles and themes like criticism, politics are visible in their popular writings. They are also followed by some later modern writers in these aspects to some extent.

Arabic Language at present in India: Arabic language has developed very well in India. Many scholarly books, valuable research works have been produced and are being produced by Indian scholars from Madrassas and Universities alike which are not less important in quality than any work produced in the Arab World. Interestingly, Arabic language at present is no longer confined to the Madrassa or Islamic Seminaries and it is no longer considered to be the language of a religion. With the globalization of businesses and the world becoming more and more a global village, the need for transactional knowledge of languages has become very important in both private and government sectors. Keeping in view the demand of languages, Arabic language along with other

languages has been adopted in many universities and colleges as a foreign language where the focus of learning primarily is functional Arabic, translation and interpretation.

At present there are more than 40 Universities in India where Arabic language is being taught in addition to number of colleges in some states such as Kerela, West-Bengal, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir. Below are some Universities that are contributing to the Arabic Learning in India.

Central Universities:

1. Assam University, Assam. Course offered in Arabic are: M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D, & D.litt.
2. Aligarh Muslim University, U.P. Course offered in Arabic are- B.A, M.A, M.Phil, ph.D and Diploma courses.
3. Banaras Hindu Bishaw Viddalaya, Varanasi. Course offered in Arabic are- B.A, M.A, Ph.D, Diploma & PG Diploma courses.
4. University of Allahabad, UP course offered in Arabic are- B.A, M.A, M.Phil & D.litt.
5. The English & Foreign Languages University, A.P course offered in Arabic are- B.A, M.A, Ph.D, Diploma , Advanced Diploma & Diploma in Translation.
6. Moulana Azad National Urdu University, A.P, course offered in Arabic are- B.A, M.A, Ph.D, Diploma & Diploma in Translation.
7. Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi, course offered in Arabic are – Ph.D, certificate course.
8. Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, course offered in Arabic are-B.A, M.A, Ph.D, certificate course.
9. Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, course offered in Arabic are-B.A, M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D.
10. University of Delhi, Delhi, course offered in Arabic are-M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Arabic.
11. Pondichery University, Pondichery, course offered in Arabic is – Certificate of proficiency in Arabic.

State Universities:

1. Moulana Mazharl Haque Arabic & Persian University, Bihar, course offered in Arabic are- Certificate and Diploma in Arabic.
2. Patna University, Bihar, course offered in Arabic is M.A.
3. Calicut University, Kerela, course offered in Arabic are-M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D, Certificate in Spoken Arabic, Diploma in Commercial Arabic, and PG Diploma in translation and secretarial practice.
4. Kerela University, Kerela, course offered in Arabic are-B.A, M.A.
5. Lucknow University, U.P course offered in Arabic are: B.A, M.A, Proficiency and

Diploma:

6. Aliah University, Bengal, course offered in Arabic are-B.A, M.A, Ph.D.
7. Calcutta University, Bengal, course offered in Arabic are-M.A, and Ph.D.
8. Cotton College state University, Assam, course offered in Arabic are- B.A, M.A.
9. Gauhati University, Assam, course offered in Arabic are- M.A, Ph.D.
10. Islamic University of Science and Technology University, j&k, course offered in Arabic are-M.A, M.Phil., Ph.D, Certificate course in Modern standard Arabic.

11. Kashmir University, J&K, course offered in Arabic are-M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D, PG Diploma in modern spoken Arabic.
12. Karnataka University, Karnataka, course offered in Arabic is Certificate course in Arabic.
13. Madras University, Tamil Nadu, course offered in Arabic are-M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D.
14. Osmania University, Telengana, course offered in Arabic are-M.A, M.Phil, Ph.D, Certificate proficiency in Arabic, Junior Diploma in Arabic and PG Diploma in translation in Arabic.

Apart from these Universities, there are many more colleges spread over some states of India such as Kerala, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal and Tripura that have departments of Arabic. The scholars and writers who have been teaching in the modern colleges and Universities have taken part mainly in Translation. We noted that a number of valuable works have been translated from Sanskrit, English, Urdu & so on to Arabic by them. Likewise, they have been translated hundreds of short stories, play, novels as well as social, cultural, political and religious scholarly essays from English, Hindi and many other Indian languages into Arabic. In this way, the modern University teachers have played a great role in enriching Arabic literature and Islamic culture which can never be ignored.

Prominent Madrassas and Institutions of Higher learning: The prominent Madrassas and Institutions of higher learning which at present, have been playing a vital role in disseminating Arabic language and literature throughout the country and taking active part in contributing to the diversity and pluralism which India is known for are as follow:

1. Darul Uloom, Deoband, UP.
2. Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, UP.
3. Al- Jamiatus Salafiah, Varanasi, UP.
4. Madrassa Mazahirul Uloom, Saharanpur, UP.
5. Jamia Islamia Sanabil, New Delh.
6. Madrasatul Islah, Saraimir, Azamarh, UP.
7. Jamiatur Rashad, Azamarh, UP.
8. Jamia Darus Salam, Omerabad, Tamil Nadu.
9. Jamia Islamia Kashiful Uloom, Aurangabad, Maharastra.
10. Jamia Alia Arabia, UP.
11. Jamiatus Salehat, Rampur, UP.
12. Jamia Mohammadia, Malegaon, Maharastra.
13. Darul Uloom Ashrafia Misbahul Uloom, UP.
14. Tauheed Education Trust, Kishanganj, Bihar.
15. Jamia Misbahul Uloom, Siddarth Nagar, UP.
16. Darul Uloom al-Islamia, Basti, UP.
17. Darul Uloom Ahmadia Salafia, Darbhanga, Bihar.
18. Al- Mahadul Aali al-mIslami, Hyderabad.
19. Darul Hoda Islamic Academy, Kerala.
20. Al- Mahadul Islamia As-Salafi, Richa, Bareilly, UP.
21. Darul Uloom Warisa, Vishal Khand 4, Lucknow, UP.
22. Jamiatul Banat Almulimat, Sambhal Road, UP.
23. Jamia Shirajul Uloom , Bondihar, Gonda, UP.

24. Jamiatul Banat, Gaya, Bihar.

25. Jamia Mohammadia, Malegaon, Nasik, Maharashtra.

These are some prominent Madrassas which offered courses up to Alimiat and Fazeelat after completing which a person becomes an Islamic Scholar (Moulvi/ Maulana). There are hundreds of other less known Madrassa, hundreds of Secondary level Madrassas, and thousands of elementary and primary level Madrassas spread all over the country which contribute to the development of Arabic language directly or indirectly. They also contribute to the literacy rate in India as they give basic knowledge of Hindi, Urdu and English along with Arabic language and Islamic Sciences.

In the field of Arabic and Islamic literature, the writings of Indians attracted the attention of even the prominent Arab scholars such as- Abul Hasan Mas'udi, Abu Raihan Beruni, Ibn Batuta. There are good numbers of Indians who have produced very valuable works in the field of Arabic Islamic literature like Mohd Murtaza Zubaidi, Waliullah Dehlawi, Mohibullah Bihari, Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Abul Hasan Ali Hasni Nadwi, Mohd-Rabe Hasani, Prof. Ijtaba Nadwi and so on.

In the 20th century AD, India has indeed produced a number of prominent Arabic writers have been received well by the Arabs and these works have been playing a great role across the Islamic world in the development and understanding the Islamic and Arabic philosophies and teachings. The following writers are considered to be amongst the best: Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi, Abdul Aziz Maimani, Masud Alam Nadwi, Rabe Hasani Nadwi, Zubair Ahmad Faruqi, Ijtaba Nadwi, Hamid Uddin Farahi, Zulfiqar Ali Deobandi, Shafiq A Khan Nadwi, Sayed Al Azmi, Wade Rashid Nadwi and so on.

Apart from this, some other Arabic writers at present have produced valuable works in the different fields of Arabic Islamic literature. Amongst them, Mohd Rabe Hasani Nadwi, Rector of Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow can be placed at the top of all the present writers. He has so far produced a good number of books which have received well even by Arab writers. Some of his works have been included in the Syllabi of a number of Indian and foreign institutes.

In addition to his academic activities, he is seriously engaged in other fields and holding important posts as on 20 March 2010, he was re-elected unanimously as the president of all India Muslim personal law Board in its 21st annual convention held at Nadwatul Ulama and it is his third term as the president of the AIMPLB.

In summing up, it can safely be asserted that the future of Arabic language in India is very bright. In fact, its study is going to be raised to a desirable status in various religions of the country. Significantly enough that in the 20th and the 21st centuries, the literary as well as scholarly products of the Indian literary figures and writers have increased in such a degree that it is not possible for one to take all these works into account despite its being restricted in modern literary genres like drama, novel and short story.

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