

EXPANSION OF URDU LANGUAGE UNDER THE DOGRAS

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Abstract: This article pronounces the development of Urdu language under the patronage of the Dogras. Already well established language in British India searched its roots in the State and it was the Dogras who finally changed the course officialdom language into Urdu. The paper is an attempt to depict the introduction of Urdu in the State and the promulgation of the language. The educated emigre Kashmiris settled outside the State provide a great impetus to the Urdu and wield many newspapers of their own in Urdu which make a way in the state and was soon adopted by the educated masses. Moreover many writers, poets and journalists ushered under the Dogras patronage and the Maharaja Hari Singh himself boosted the Urdu during his reign. An era of fresh poets, scholars, authors, and writers breathed a fresh life into the literature of the land bringing forth the importance of new themes such as poverty, social inequality, corruption, unemployment and peace. The study portrays the expansion of Urdu literature through various means and approaches like newspapers, weeklies, books, novels, poetry and stories etc. and in a very short spell was grasped by the masses of the State which later on became the official State language.

Key Words: Urdu, Dogras, poets, writers, weekly and Kashmiris.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Dogra period (1846-1947) witnessed the emergence of most Kashmiri authors and poets who wrote in Persian, Sanskrit, Urdu, English and Kashmiri and thus created a taste for literature. It is noteworthy that Persian, which was the official language of Kashmir for over four centuries, influenced and enlarged Kashmiri vocabulary to a large extent. Persian, however, slowly ceased to be the language of the court and of the elite with the eclipse of the Mughals. Urdu took its place steadily and step by step. The part that Kashmiris played in its development and enrichment has again been historic and all-important. In point of that fact Kashmiris, whether Hindu or Muslims, who migrated to various parts of India from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards and settled down in Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan, Central India, U.P. and even Eastern India, slowly forgot their mother tongue, Kashmiri and used Urdu as such. They ultimately, came to regard Urdu as their mother-tongue. In Jammu and Kashmir State itself, with the accession of Maharaja Pratap Singh and with the efforts of British Resident C. Plowden Persian the court language was replaced by Urdu. The fact behind this change was that Urdu was used regularly and popularly outside the state. Urdu had already been popular in the rest of India and the educated elite comprised mostly by Kashmiri Pandits grasped it easily and took mastery over it. It would be no exaggeration to say that the very foundations of the Urdu novel and of its fiction were laid by that great genius, Ratan Nath Dhar 'Sarshar' (Title). His classic "Fasana-i-Azad" (Book) was universally applauded as a great work of art and charted new paths in virgin soil. These included Prem Nath Sadhu 'Pardesi' (Title), and, Prem Nath Dhar who wrote "Kagaz-Ka-Vasudeva" (Book) and many among others. In the field of Urdu prose stalwarts like Tribhuvan Nath 'Hajar' (Title), Shiv Narain 'Shamim' (Title), Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to name only a few, rendered yeomen's service. Again in the development of Urdu journalism Kashmiris have played a significant role. In the Kashmir State itself the legendary Har Gopal Kaul 'Khasta' (Title), was beckoned the father of Urdu journalism. In Lahore and in others parts, the name of Gopinath Gurtu of "Akhbar-i-Aam" (Newspaper) fame was one to conjure with to be followed, with passage of time, by Dina Nath Chikan 'Mast's' "Subeh-i-Kashmir" and "Kashmir Darpan" (newspapers) of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, "Murasala-i-Kashmir" (newspaper) and "Subeh-i-Umed" (newspaper) of Brij Narain 'Chakbast' and "Bahar-i-Kashmir" (Book) work is exemplary. The "Masnavi" (Collection of poems) of Daya Shankar Tikku, 'Nasim' (Title), holds its relevance till now. Brij Narain Chakbast - a great poet touched the very elevations of poetic genius. His "Khak-i-Hind" (Work on Poetry) poems of the same genre should be read with Iqbal's "Mera Wattan Wohi Hai" (poetry) and "Naya Shawab" (poetry) written very much later. His mastery of Urdu prose was equally splendid. The diction, and thrust of "Maarika-i-Chakbast-o-Sharar" (prose) was a brilliant work and Pandit Brij Mohan Dattatriya, 'Kaifi' (Title), - a venerable label in Urdu literary and cultural spheres all over India is notable. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru once proudly declared: "Urdu is my mother-tongue and I am proud of it". Almost every town in India had minor Kashmiri poets, especially in Indian States where they enjoyed royal patronage. The four Kashmiris who have earned for themselves a niche in the history of Urdu literature are Mohammad Iqbal, Ratan Nath Dhar 'Sarshar', Daya Shankar Kaul 'Nasim', and Brij Narain 'Chakbast'. Ratan Nath Dhar was the celebrated author of "Fasana-i-Azad" (Book), which is regarded as the forerunner of the Urdu novel. The story of his coming to literary prominence is as fascinating as his works. He was a school teacher and wrote a piece for the famous Urdu paper "Oudh Punch" (newspaper). Pandit Jagmohan Nath Raina, "Shauk" (Book), resulted in the publication finally by 1932 of two excellently brought out volumes of a classic in

Urdu, "*Bahar-i-Gulshan-i-Kashmir*" (Book). It is a monumental work and received a most enthusiastic reception. These all literary genius promoted Urdu as such that soon they were been imitated by majority of the scholars latterly.

It is notable to comment here that till 1932 A.D, there was ban on printing press and newspapers in Jammu and Kashmir State. The only sort of political activity that was allowed was the formation of societies for social and religious reforms. Prior, to their formation they had to declare that they would not engage in any type of Political activity. Since newspaper publication was not allowed in the State until 1932 A.D, newspapers, periodicals, and Gazette were published from Lahore found their way in the State. The civil and military Gazette and the tribune of Lahore and a number of Urdu weekly magazines circulated in the State. The *Khair-Khawa-i-Kashmir*, an (Urdu weekly), published from Lahore and edited by Pandit Hargopal Khasta during 1882-83A.D, was critical of Maharaja Ranbir Singh Government. The *Kashmir Prakash*, a (monthly magazine) of Lahore, edited by Pandit Manka Maghar during 1898-1901A.D, worked for the social upliftment of Kashmiri Pandits. Pandit Mukand Ram Gurtoo, the founder of *Akhbar-i-am*, (Newspaper) published from Lahore, Ratan Nath Dhar Sarshar, Editor "*Avadh Akhbar*" (Newspaper), Pandit Hargopal Kaul Khasta founder editor of "*Ravi Benazir*" (Newspaper) published from Lahore, Pandit Laxmi Narain Kaul edited "*Bahar-i-Kashmir*" (Book) published from Lahore, Pandit Tarachand Bulbul who later earned the name and fame as Kashyap Bandhu was an Arya Samajists activist in Lahore. He was on the editorial staff of a widely read Urdu daily "*Vir Bharat*" (Newspaper) all published from Lahore entered the State indirectly by various means and reflects political and economic events of the State. The Kashmir Gazette, Lahore an Urdu monthly edited by Munshi Mohammed Din Fauq during 1901-04 A.D, was published for the social and political awakening of Kashmiri Muslims. The *Kashmir Makhzen*, Lahore an (Urdu monthly) during 1905 A.D, dealt with the social upliftment of the Kashmiris. Among the other paper must be mentioned the *Akhbar-i-Kashmir*, *the Safir*, *The Subhi-i-Kashmir*, *The Bahar-i-Kashmir*, *The Hamdard-i-Hind*, *The Kashmir*, *the Mazlum Kashmir*, *Kuktab-i-Kashmir* and the *Kashmir Musalman* (All Newspapers) etc. The promotion of Urdu through these papers outside the State had a deep impact in the minds of intellectuals of the State. Infact the Dogras too read these papers and that influence was visible with the birth of Press in Jammu and Kashmir in 1924 A.D, when "*Ranbir*" (Newspaper) was started by Lala Mulk Raj Saraf and that too published in Urdu. The Dogras promoted Urdu literatures and provided scholarship for the initial aid of the work. When Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the throne he promoted Urdu and English literature both. Maharaja Hari Singh was willing to give legitimate freedom to the Press because he could know the pulse of the people. He read the foreign and Indian papers and magazines with interest. He did not believe in choking the freedom of the Press as it was his belief that healthy criticism of the government policies would serve as feedback to his administration to redress the grievances of his subjects. There are series of events which promulgate the elevation of Urdu through novels, poetry, press, writers and literature during the Dogras reign. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz holds the distinction of being the first to start an Urdu weekly namely the *Vitasta* (Newspaper) in Srinagar in 1932A.D. The Daily *Vitasta*, used to popularize the ideal of secular politics and fight for the establishment of responsible government in the State. The *Kesari*, an (Urdu weekly) edited by Kashyap Bandhu floated his own paper in 1936A.D, due to differences with the management of the *Martand* (newspaper). Kashyap Bandhu changed his mind from social reforms towards political reforms by writing an editorial captioned: "*Tabdil- Iqulab*" i.e., (*changes of heart*). The paper lampooned corrupt official in the heading of the "*challant*" captioned, "*Banami Shukar Divta Wazarati Shumali*" means "(A Dig Was Made On The then District Commissioner for his policy of extortion and oppression)". The weekly *Hamdard* (Newspaper) was started by P.N.Bazaz in collaboration with Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah on Ist August.1935A.D, with the purpose of re-orientating Kashmir politics on secular lines. The Urdu weekly popularizes the ideology of progressive Nationalism in the State. The illustrated weekly issues of the *Hamdard* (Newspaper) contained a lot of information with regard to the history, sociology and literature of Kashmir. The *Hamdard* (Newspaper) had sections for womens, children, literature, science, cinema, health etc. this indicates the variety of information to which a reader was interested. Another English paper "*Qaumi Dard*" (Newspaper) started by Jia Lal Kilam in 1935A.D was first published in Urdu and later in English. The sole function of the paper was to educate on healthy non-communal lines and to inculcate in them a sense of common citizenship. The paper wrote about need of the hour to foster constitutional reforms and people participation in political reforms. There are dozens of newspapers edited and owned by Kashmiris during the 1930's and 1940's A.D under the Dogras patronage for the promotion of Urdu such as:

- 1). Pandit Shamboo Nath Kaul started (Urdu weekly) '*Vakil*' and this turned into daily by Poshka Nath Kaul.
- 2). Pandit Dina Nath Chikan was founder editor of '*Rahbar*' an (Urdu weekly).
- 3). Lambodar Nath Tickoo owned (Urdu daily) '*Navyug*' edited by Nand Lal Wattal.
- 4). Prem Nath Kanawa launched his own (Urdu weekly) '*Kukroon Koon*' devoted to comic and Humour.
- 5). Ram Chand Kaul Abhay of Motiyar, Rainawari used to edit '*Jyoti*' a (Urdu daily).
- 6). Amar Nath Kak, elder brother of Pt. R.C.Kak, launched (Urdu weekly) '*Vichar*'.
- 7). Shiv Narain Fotedhar, former president of Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha founded an (Urdu Weekly) namely '*Young Kashmir*'.

- 8). Radha Krishan Purbi launched an (Urdu weekly) ‘*Sudhar*’, the official organ of Bohra Biiiradari (community) of Kashmir valley. Later he shifted to Moradabad where he set up his own printing Press and started an (Urdu daily) ‘*Naya Sansar*’.
- 9). Pandit Shyam Lal Razdan started an (Urdu weekly), ‘*Sharda*’.
- 10). After meeting a major success in his mission for change of dress of Kashmiri womenfolk,

Kashyap Bandhu took to editing a weekly under the title of ‘*Sandesh*’ (Weekly).

These newspapers, weeklies etc. helped in the elevation of Urdu language and led to stretch the masses who clutched it easily because of its pacifying expertise. Some of the Kashmiri Urdu poets and story writers of the Dogra period may be mentioned like Khushi Mohammad Nazir, famous for his “*Naghmai Firdous*”(Book). Master Zinda Lal Koul and Nand Lal Talib who authored “*Rushhat-ul-Takhayyul*”(Book) and Ghulam Rasul Naziki, known for his (collection of poems) “*Nazaakat*”. Among the prose writers in Urdu the notable ones were: Abdul Ahad Azad, Prem Nath Pardesi and Pitambar Dhar Faani. Azad’s famous book “*Kashmiri Zuban Aur Shairi*” (Book) deals with the history of Kashmiri literature, whereas Pardesi's short stories depict the social evils of Kashmiri society. In addition, there were also some prominent Urdu journalists such as Mir Abdul Aziz, Moulavi Mohammad Sayyid Masudi, Janki Nath Zutshi, Ghulam Ahmad Kashfi, Nand Lal Watal, Kashyap Bhandu, Jagan Nath Sathu and Prem Nath Bazaz. Prem Nath Bazaz wrote a book in Urdu named “*Kashmir Ka Gandhi*” (Book). Under these developments poets felt that Kashmiri poetry needed radical change. They composed verses which touched upon the socio-economic and political life of the people of Kashmir. The poets infused a new spirit into artisans, peasants, labourers and other toiling classes who pitted themselves against feudal and imperial forces. The most prominent among them were Ghulam Ahmad ‘Mahjoor’ (Title), Abdul Ahad ‘Azad’ (Title), Mirza Ghulam Hasan Beigh 'Arif, Abdul Sataar ‘Aaseej, Zinda Lai Koul, Dina Nath Nadim, Pir Ghulam Qadir and Pithamber Nath Dhar ‘Faani’(Title). They have been considered the main contributors to the modern Kashmiri literature, since they discarded mostly traditional forms and themes expressed the vehement desire for a just society.

2. CONCLUSION:

The brief review of the development of Urdu under the Dogras depicts that the ruler directly or indirectly was benevolent in the progress of Urdu medium of instruction. It was the time of Pratap Singh that Urdu replaced Persian as the court language. Consequently the educated and well-to-do classes gradually ceased to have any interest in the latter and devoted their energies to acquire scholarship in the new medium of communication in the officialdom. It was therefore no wonder that Urdu poets and writers have far excelled in Urdu both in respect of numbers as well as popularity and fame. With the proficiency in the Urdu language, they began to articulate their grievances through press and literature. Many poets, writers, scholars and journalist used Urdu as a source of themes of contemporary issues like, the plural veracities of the state, economic divergence, social intricacies, and literati assertions within the state and multiple lexes of Distinctiveness Politics in Jammu and Kashmir. Thus Urdu reached the zenith under the reign of Dogra rulers and became the official language of the State.

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