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Education

A CRITIQUE OF THE REVIEWS ON PERSIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA

KEY WORDS: Persian Language & Literature; Muslim Regime; Indian subcontinent

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ABSTRACT

Persian or Farsi is the language of Indo-Iranian family which is spoken mostly in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Iraq, Russia and Azerbaijan. It was developed in India during Muslim period. Persian was the official language of Delhi sultanate, Bengal sultanate, Bahamani sultanate and the Mughal empire. Not only Muslim people but also Hindus received education in Persian for securing higher official position as well as the governments jobs during those periods. Also, Persian had a great impact on society during that period. The researcher aims to critically review the history of Persian language and literature studies in India along with brief discussion of socio-cultural conditions, impact on Indian languages and different aspects of education. This paper will help the readers to know about the socio-cultural environment of those periods as well as will develop a deep insight on Persian language, literature art and culture of Indian subcontinent. Besides, it will describe the present academic condition of Persian studies in India basically in Assam and West-Bengal and several suggestions given by the researcher for its improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Most of the Indian languages belongs to two major language families which are Indo-European language and Dravidian language family. Indo-European language family is a major language family of South Asia. Indo-Iranian language family belongs from Indo-European language family. Persian or Farsi is the language of Indo-Iranian family. It is the official language of Iran and many people use the language in other countries like Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Russia and Azerbaijan etc. It has an unforgettable impact on Indian subcontinent during Muslim period in the context of language, literature, culture, education and economy. The following discussion will critically review and describe the development of the Persian language and literature through different aspects.

Impact of Persian language, literature and culture on the languages, literature, art & culture of Indian subcontinent

Abbas, D. M. (2016) mentioned in the study entitled as "Role of Persian Language before Independence in India" about the vital role of Persian language before the British colonized India. It was the second official language of India and the language of culture and science of Indian subcontinent. In 1832, this language was exchanged by English Language in India. Although, before 1832, it was spoken by people from Sind to Bengal. The Persian language was used among the Indian people as only the same language among them where as Indian languages differed from group to group and the people had the different dialects in every place of Subcontinent. The Persian was not a native language of India. Persian was used as a language of culture and education in several Muslim courts in India (Abbas, 2016).

Alam, M. (2010) pointed out in his study entitled as "Persian heritage in Bengal a study based upon manuscripts" that Peoples of Central Asia and the subcontinent speak three languages as Persian, Urdu and Bengali but their culture, religion, social values and traditions have similarities. From 13th to 19th century, a complex culture grown among various communities of India because of combination of different cultures. Though in early period there were conflict and clash between the Muslims and the Hindus but Persian and Hindu savants, saints, poets and statesmen encouraged co-existence and shared obligation and leading to a collaboration and integration, which is commonly known as the Indo-Iran complex culture (Alam, 2010).

Ali, M. B. (2011) described in his study entitled as "History of

Assam based on Persian sources an analytical study" that the Turks advent in India during the thirteenth century and the tradition of Persian Historiography was familiarized by the Ulemas. The science of historiography had already been established in the Muslim world and a large number of histories were written. There were two institutes of historiography among Muslims, that of Arab and Persian historiography. The procedure of history -writing grounded on Persian historiography in India. It was found a huge number of outstanding historical accounts during the 13th century (Ali, 2011).

Alquadri, S.M. (2015) carried out a study entitled as "Persian studies in West Bengal 1947-2000 A D" where he described about the history of Persian, emerging as a subject in West Bengal. He mentioned that Persian has a magnificent past and rich literary tradition. It continued as the official language of the country for centuries which has a great influence upon the society and culture of India. The role of Persian language is significant to save the past of India alive. It is necessary for the people and government of West Bengal to come forward and promote the Persian Studies in the state. For its upgradation the Government of West Bengal may be approached to introduce Persian in schools especially in Urdu mediums. The West Bengal Madrasah Board can include Persian in High and Senior Madrasah curriculum. The government of West Bengal may can give awards, scholarships and stipends to the students of Persian who are financially weak. The government of West Bengal and India must preserve the rare Persian books and manuscripts which are either under private possession or kept under various libraries. The Iran government can invite teachers and scholars of Persian from West Bengal to Iran every year for Innovative Persian Language Courses. West Bengal Board of secondary education can make Persian compulsory for the students who have Urdu as vernacular. The Iranian Embassy may publish Persian works produced by scholars of West Bengal. The Universities in West Bengal offering language courses can introduce Advanced Certificate and Diploma Courses in Persian. The department of Persian in colleges and universities be requested to hold seminars, symposiums and conferences especially on the importance of learning Persian. So that the general people may get aware of the need and importance of the subject and take interest to learn the same. The U.G.C may sponsor these programmes. The Iranian Embassies can send teachers from Iran to take special classes of Modern Persian at institutions imparting study of the subject in West Bengal. The

government of India and West Bengal may re-introduce Persian in competitive Examinations (Alquadri, 2015).

Begum, J. (2019) mentioned in her study entitled as "A critical study of the Persian poets migrated to India during the Mughal period" that the Mughal Period founded an important period in the expansion of Persian. During the Mughal period Persian poets and scholars from several parts of Iran and Central Asia started to assemble in India. The main reason was that from 1501 to 1722, the Safavi rulers of Iran did not reward and patronise the poets. On the opposing the powerful Mughal emperors were continuously welcome and patronised the poet who travelled to their courts. Severe centralisation of the Persian Government and the Shiite domination of rulers also the cause of it. A huge number of Persian writers emigrated to India. Although, Indo-Persian literature refined by the remarkable poets from Persia through the literary standard advanced (Begum, 2019).

Choudhury, M. A. (2011) carried out a study entitled as "Persian studies in Assam with special reference to the curriculum of Persian from secondary to university level" that the syllabus of Persian in present-day is enlightening and comprehensive and according to the requirement of the students. But still there are some gap which are to be appearance after. From the premature life of the students' career, students should be educated the modern Persian language. Students should be familiar with the most modern development history and culture of the Iranian community in the contemporary Persian language. They should be skilled to communicate through the medium of Persian language which will support them to discuss their thoughts with their Iranian complement in different aspects of their communal life. Well trained teachers should be engaged (Choudhury M.A., 2011).

Choudhury, M. N. (2011) indicated in the study entitled as "Influence of Persian culture in Assam a case study of the Barak valley" that Muslims of Assam mainly of the Barak Valley are the only mediators for introducing Persian culture, language and Persian influence in this province. Muslim people are the main factor of the population demography in the Barak valley who are responsible for entrance of Persian culture. The local Muslim culture and the local language of the Barak valley had been influenced mostly by Persian language. Huge number of Muslim cultural dialects are found current in the Barak valley from Persian and some other common Persian words are also found. Still Persian language is used by Muslims in their community and is being taught in the educational institutions of the valley as in secular institutions like schools and colleges and in Islamic institutions like Madrassas (Choudhury M.N., 2011).

Davud, P. (1927) pointed out in the book entitled as "Detail of The Hymns of The Holy Gathas" about the Persian language, writing systems & scripts. It was mentioned that Persian is the language of Indo-European family, specifically the Iranian (Iranic) branch along with such olden languages as Sanskrit and Latin and such living languages as English, French, Russian and Hindi. Persian is known by regional names such as "Farsi" in Iran, "Dari" in Afghanistan, and "Tajiki" in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Al though, in English it is called "Persian." Persian is the literary and cultural language of the Iran, also in Central & South Asia (Davud, 1927).

Khansir, A. A., & Mozafari, N. (2014) described in their study entitled as "The Impact of Persian Language on Indian Languages" that the major Indian languages (Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Telugu, and Hindi) are mostly associated to Persian language. They are some other popular languages in India which have been more influenced by Persian during that time of the communication between two nations. Bengali was also under the impact of the Persian. In the early 13th century, Bengal was occupied by Muslim leader namely

Ikhtiyaruddin bin Mohammad Bakhtiar Khilji. Indian people has hired a great number the Persian words and phrases and idioms in Urdu language. Urdu language was generated of the collaboration between Persian and Hindi and Arabic languages. Hindi language has mostly been affected by Persian language. Hindi language (Hindu language) one of the significant languages among Indian languages which was assumed by the government of India as an official language along with English language (Khansir & Mozafari, 2014).

Rahman, T. (1999) pointed out in his study entitled as "Decline of Persian in British India" that later the war of Pallas, British government established the territory in India and for their official work felt trouble in Persian. They desired to progress English language for their comfort. Afterwards Urdu grabbed the place of Persian slowly but Persian was still taught to the sixth class, and Arabic (or Sanskrit for Hindus) in the seventh up to 1877. Al though declination of Persian was started in overall after that time. It is not for Urdu; it is for English which can give most profitable and powerful jobs. The evidence of the members of the Punjab University Senate is tightfitting in the context of Persian. The members decided that in the Punjab that the government threw away its money on Persian which looked only to increase a sizeable class of indigent munshis, instead of practically engaging it on the distribution of English (Rahman, 1999).

Sarwar, G. (1994) indicated in his study entitled as "Persian studies in Bengali under the Turko Afghans 1201 to 1576 A D" that the Turko-Afghan period was extremely fruitful and productive for the promotion of Persian language and literature. Both prose and poetry got a shining victory and acceptance during this period. Works on several subjects such as mystical sciences, jurisprudence, archery, lexicography, epistolography, history etc. were the witness of growth & development of Persian studies in Bengal. The Turko-Afghan period was not only the evidence of extraordinary evolution in the history of Persian studies but also shined the path for its more improvement in Bengal for future days (Sarwar, 1994).

Sharma, S. (2017) mentioned in the study entitled as "Persian Literature in an Indian Court" that Mughal Arcadia has a vital influence to initial modern South Asian history and to the history of Persian literature. Sharma claimed that The Mughal court produced a new type of literature in Persian that involved at the seventeenth century in the kingdom of Jahangir (1605-27) and Shahjahan (1628-58). In Shahjahan's reign, Mughal courtly elites and the poets moved beyond urban centres. Akbar combined Kashmir into the Mughal Empire in 1586 which was the famous place that attracted the Mughal royal family to India in the seventeenth century. Later, the unfamiliar land became their home and territory (Sharma, 2017).

CONCLUSION

Language, arts & culture has not been restricted in a specific boundary. Gradually, it changes the boundary at the time of evolution and devolution. Earlier, Persian was not the native language of India, later on, it was introduced and developed in India. If we look at the history of Persian studies in India, we can see the vital role of the Persian on the language, literature, arts & culture of Indian subcontinent. Persian language is known by regional names such as "Farsi" in Iran, "Dari" in Afghanistan, and "Tajiki" in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Persian and Sanskrit were two main languages which was used by both Hindus and Muslims before 1832. Persian was used as a language of culture and education in several Muslim courts in India. The major Indian languages (Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Telugu, and Hindi) are mostly associated and influenced by the Persian language. Persian language and literature came in connection with Bengal and grip an important place in Indian history till early 19th century A.D.

Muslims of Assam mainly of the Bark Valley are the only mediators for introducing Persian culture, language and Persian influence in this province. After 'the war of Pallas', British government established their territory in India and for their official work they felt troubled in Persian language and gradually started for the declination of Persian language. Although, Islamic Education system and Libraries of Bengal were the centre of academic excellence for female from the early period. Persian has a glorious history and rich literary tradition. It was the official language of the country for centuries which has a great influence upon the society and culture of India. The role of Persian language is quite significant to preserve the glorious past of India. It is necessary for the people and government to come forward and promote the Persian Studies. Several suggestions have been discussed earlier for its advancement of the Persian Studies (Alquadri, 2015). We have to work for the development of Persian studies and will expect such kind of suggestions from the future researchers.

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