

Arabic in India: Past, Present & Future

Mukhlesur Rahman, Ph.D. Research Scholar

=====

Abstract:

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. A thorough study of Indian history suggests that India's first substantial contact with the Arabic language came when 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. Departments of Arabic have been established in many central and state universities considering the demand of the language in different government as well as private sectors in today's globalized world. This paper has made an attempt to analyse the processes and extent of development of Arabic in India since its arrival, indicating career prospects in the days to come.

Key words: Arabic language, Arab Muslims, Sind, liturgical Arabic, development of Arabic, Mughal rulers

Arrival of Arabic in India and Its Development

Early Trade Relations and People Contacts

Though the political relations between India and the Arab world were first established in the seventh century after Christ, the trade relations between them date back to the ancient times or perhaps pre-historic times. Trade relations flourished and persisted between them because "two of the three routes by which trade was carried on in ancient times between India and the West, passed through Arabia. The first route ran from the mouth of the Indus and up to the Euphrates, at the point where the road branches off to Antioch and the Levantine ports. The second route, more important than the first, lay from the Indian coast to that of Yaman

and Hadramawt and from there, passing along the Red Sea coast, to Syria and thence to Europe, either directly from the Syrian coast or via Egypt and Alexandria'’. (Ahmad 1968, p. 3).

Thus the entire Arab world was strategically situated in terms of trade playing a vital role in strengthening relations between India and the Arab world. Though historians are not sure about the starting point of the contacts between India and Arab world, but it is certain that the trade relations between them had been well established in pre-Islamic times, perhaps as far in the past as 50 CE, before Arabic was attested as a distinct language in the Arabian Peninsula in the third century. Through Arab traders, Indians may have learned some words of the Arabic language during the early trade. But after birth of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in seventh century, and conquest of western Indian province of Sind in 711 CE by Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Thaqafi, India came in first substantial and sustained contact with both the religion of Islam and the Arabic language because Arabic had religious prestige being the language of Islamic scripture, and familiarity with the Arabic Qur'an was deemed necessary for the correct ritual practice of Islam. (Qutbuddin 2007, p.315-16) Subsequently, learning and teaching of Arabic started in substantial way under the patronage of Muslim rulers which continued to flourish further with the passage of time.

Arab Rule

The scanty information that has come down to us regarding the history of the Arab occupation of Sind and Multan, the first provinces of India to be conquered by the Arabs, is silent about any literary activities. But according to some authority, Abu Hafsa, the Muhaddis of Basra, went to Sind in the early days of the conquests. Being a tab‘tabi‘in (Companion of the companions of the Prophets’s Companians), he must have been the fountainhead of the narration of the Hadith. So, we may, with some probability assume that Mansurah, Daybul and Multan were the first towns in India to become seats of Islamic learning. (Ahmad 1968)

Ghaznawids

The Arabs were followed by the Ghaznawids (998-1186 AD). Their great leader Mahmud was a champion of learning and culture and extended his patronage to some of the most distinguished scholars from remote Asiatic countries which flocked to his Court. He was interested chiefly in Persian, but his knowledge of Arabic was by no means slight. He also

wrote a book on Fiqh entitled *Al-Farid fi'l-furu'*. It was during his reign that Al-Biruni came to India to study Hindu culture and learning and to collect material for his famous book, *Kitabul Hind*. During the short-lived Ghurid dynasty (1186-1206 AD), we find a number of great Arabic scholars. The most important of them are Fakhruddin al-Razi (d. 1210 AD), the author of *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir*, Muinuddin Chishti (d. 1236 AD) and his disciple Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. (d. 1235 AD) (Ahmad 1968).

Delhi Sultanate

The Arabic language continued to flourish further under the patronage of the Muslim rulers of the Mamluk dynasty (1206–90), the Khilji dynasty (1290–1320), the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414), the Sayyid dynasty (1414–51), and the Afghan Lodi dynasty (1451–1526) in Delhi, the Bahmanis (1347-1527) and Adil-Shahis (1490-1686) in the Deccan, the Shah-Mirs in Kashmir (1339-1561), the Sultans in Gujarat (1391-1583), and the Ilyas-Shahis in Bengal (1342-1415). The rulers of these dynasties continued to patronize scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies for religious purposes though the language of their court was one of the Indian languages or Persian.

So, we may find hundreds of renowned scholars who made considerable contribution to the Arabic language in different genres. The people whose names maybe mentioned here are: the eminent Muhaddith Hasan al-Saghani al-Lahuri (1181-1252) who wrote *al-Ubab al-Zakhir wa al-Lubab al-Fakhir* (an encyclopaedia of Arabic) in twenty volumes and *Mashareq al-Anwar al-Nabiwiya fi Sehad al-Akhbar al-Mustafawiya* (in hadith), Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325) who is famous for his valuable speech in Arabic, his renowned disciple Amir Khusru who used to compose poems in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hindi, Sheikh Safiyyuddin Hindi (d.1315) who went to Yamen and Egypt for higher studies and became a great scholar of theology and jurisprudence and has several books in Arabic to his credit including *al-Fayeq fi Usool al-Deen* and *Al-Risalat al-Tis'iniyah fi al-Usool al-Deeniah*, Husamuddin Dehlawi the author of *Biharuz zakhira*, Abdul Muqtadir the great poet who is famous for the poem entitled *Qasidah Lamiyah*, Ahmad Thanasari who composed his famous poem *Qasidah Daliyah*. These are some examples from the list of great scholars from the period of the Sultanate of Delhi.

Mughal Period

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 14:12 December 2014

Mukhlesur Rahman, Ph.D. Research Scholar
Arabic in India: Past, Present & Future

The rulers during the Mughal Empire (1526–1857) gave a new impetus to Arabic language by extending their patronage to authors, writers, theologians and learned men. It is worth mentioning here in this connection that the study of the literary activities in Arabic language increased in quality as well as quantity with the passage of time. “Mr. Madhavrao Scindhia, the then Minister of Human Resources Development (HRD) while addressing a Muslim education conference held in Delhi on May 7, 1995, stated that there were 1,25,000 Madrassas in India during the time of the Mughal reign in India. The report of an all India survey by Hamdarad education society published in June of 1996 confirmed the said figure” (Haque 2013, p.15). “Thus under the Mughal dynasty which represents the last epoch of Muslim rule in this country we find a larger number of Arabic authors than under any other dynasty which had ruled India. Some of the authors of this period have acquired name and fame even outside India and their works are greatly appreciated in the Arab world as well. Amongst such authors mention may be made here of Faydi (Abu al-Faiz ibn Mubarak of Agra), Abdul Haque of Delhi, Abdul Hakim of Siyalkot, Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi, Ghulam Ali Azad of Bilgram and Muhibbullah of Bihar’’. (Ahmad 1968, Introduction p. 50-51)

Influential Scholars During the Mughal Period

Below is a list of some famous and influential scholars with their distinct contribution to the Arabic language during this period. They are:

- Abu al-Faiz ibn Mubarak Faidi (1548-1595) - He is the poet laureate of Akbar's Court, who has written a number of books which include: *Sawati al-Ilham* and *Mawaridul Kalam* (written without dotted letters).
- Abdul Haque of Delhi (1551-1642) - He is credited with spread of Hadith in India and wrote the famous book *Lam'at al-Tanquih*.
- Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi (1564–1624) - He is known as Mujaddid-i-alf-i-thani (reviver of the second millennium) who has penned *al-Risala al-Tahliliya*.
- Ali ibn Husamuddin (d. 1480) - He has written the all-time famous book *Kanzul Ummal*.
- Muhammd ibn Tahir al-Hanafi (d. 1576) - He has written *Majma-u-Biharul Anwar*, *Tazkiratul Mauduat* and *Al-Mughni fi Asma al-Rijal*.
- Mulla Mahmud al-Jaunpuri (1585-1652) - He authored the famous books *al-Shamshul Bazighah* and *Suhatul Marjan*.

- Shaikh Zainuddeen ibn Abdul Aziz al-M‘abari (d.1579) - He is the author of the book *Tuhfat al-Mujahidin fi ba‘d Akhbar al-Burtughaliyin* (often shortened as *Tuhfat al-Mujahidin*).

These are some examples from the long list of renowned scholars of the Mughal period. There were hundreds of other scholars who had command over the Arabic language, being experts of Hadith or Fiqh or Quran commentary or any other subjects which were being taught in Arabic language. In addition, there were “various Arabic madrasahs and cultural institutions of learning under the personal guidance and scholarly interest of the Muslim rulers, which produced a good number of writers, poets, Islamic scholars, commentators of the holy Qur'an, scholars of the Hadith etc., and their works in Arabic language has equal importance and credibility as that of any great scholar of the Arab world”. (Hasanuzzaman 2012, p.17)

Arabic Language during the British Rule

However, we find that Arabic language witnessed some setbacks during the British period in India, due to educational policies adopted by the British government as English language was adopted as medium of instruction in the educational institutions, and the secular arts and sciences became the focus of learning. Subsequently, the Arabic language and Islamic studies lost its patronage it used to have from the rulers during the Muslim epochs. As a result, Muslim youth tended to fall behind in their access to formal education and jobs due to lack of knowledge in modern education and English language. This compelled the scholars and thinkers to ponder upon it. So, some far-sighted intelligentsia came out with plans to establish educational institutions of higher learning for study of Arabic and Islamic studies.

So, the most famous educational institution of Islamic and Arabic studies that came into being during this period is Darul Uloom Deoband where the Deobandi Islamic movement was started. It was founded in 1866 in Saharanpur of Uttar Pradesh state by some prominent Islamic scholars (Ulema) including Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi, Maulana Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi and Haji Saiyyid 'Abid Husaiyn. It has produced since then hundreds of scholars who have earned name and fame in Arabic language and Islamic studies and authored many books in those connected subjects.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) was one of the early far-sighted personalities who recognized the critical role of modern education for Muslim youth. So, he began to prepare the road map for the formation of a Muslim University by establishing various schools including Madarsatul Uloom in Aligarh which later became Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College (MAO College) which later came to be known as the Aligarh Muslim University.

Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama is one of those important institutions which were established during British rule with the objective of reaching a middle path between classical Islam and modernity. It was founded at Kanpur in 1894 in the first annual convention of Nadwatul Ulema (Organisation of Scholars) attended by Muhammad Ali Mongiri, Shibli Nomani, Ashraf Ali Thanwi and Mahmud-ul-Hasan. Mention may also be made of Madrasah Islah ul Muslimin that was to develop as Madrast ul Islah, founded in 1908 AD in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh province and Al Jamiatul Ashrafia which started off as a madrasa called Misbah al-Ulum (now known as Dar al-Ulum Ahl-i Sunnat or Misbah al-Ulum) in 1898 in the town of Mubarakpur, Azamgarh, UP.

However, the British government could not ignore the Arabic language in toto. So, departments for Arabic language were opened in some Indian universities separately or combined with Urdu or Persian. Such as Madras University which was established in 1857 and it had instituted an Oriental Faculty for the study of classical languages like Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian in 1911, the Calcutta University which was founded in 1857, where the Department of Arabic & Persian was started as early as 1919, the Allahabad University where the Department of Arabic & Persian was started when it was founded as Muir Central College in 1873 by His Excellency Lord Northbrook, Banaras Hindu University where the teaching of Arabic was started in 1917, the University of Lucknow where the Department of Arabic was established along with other departments when the University was founded in 1921, the University of Delhi where the Department of Arabic dates back to 1922, the year of the inception of the University of Delhi, classes being held at St. Stephen College, and the University of Kerala where the Department of Arabic was started in 1942 . Mention may also be made of Aliah University which was the first educational institution set up in India in 1780 by Warren Hastings, the then Governor General of India.

Arabic Language in Independent India

After the independence of India in 1947, the Arabic language continued to receive some renewed attention from the Indian Government just as it did in the British period as it received some attention from the Indian Government as well, apart from the freedom of establishing Madrasas and Institutions of higher learning by the Muslims themselves. So, we can notice that Departments of Arabic language have been established in many central universities, state universities and colleges in additions to the establishment of many famous madrasas throughout the length and breadth of the country, which have produced many scholars of Arabic language and Islamic studies who, in turn, have made considerable contribution to the Arabic language and literature in India at par with any scholar in the Arab World.

Below are the names of some universities where the Arabic Departments were established after independence:

- 1- Guwahati University - The department of Arabic was ewstablished in September 1969.
- 2- The English and Foreign Language University - set up in 1958. In April 1972, the Institute broadened its scope to include the major foreign languages.
- 3- University of Calicut - The Department of Arabic was setup in 1974 to promote higher studies and research in Arabic language and literature in Kerala.
- 4- Jawaharlal Nehru University – The Arabic department was established in 1969 along + with the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies.
- 5- Barkatullah University - The Department of Arabic was established in the year 1977.
- 6- University of Kashmir - The Department of Arabic was established in 1980.
- 7- Assam University - The Department of Arabic was established in 1997.

We also find that some famous madrasas and institutions of Arabic and Islamic Studies have been founded after independence, which have contributed to the development of Arabic language and literature. This is in addition to hundreds of other less known madrasas or madrasas of primary and secondary levels. The some important ones among them are as below:

- 1- Jamiatul Falah - It was started as Islamic Maktab (primary school to standard 2nd) which later became Jamiatul Falah. It is located in Bilariyaganj, Uttar Pradesh.
- 2- Al-Jamia al-Salafia - It was founded in 1963. It is located in Banaras, Uttar Pradesh.
- 3- Jamia Islamia Sanabil - It was initially established as the Institute of Islamic Education, at Joga Bai, New Delhi in 1980.
- 4- Darul Uloom - It's located in Umrabad, Maharashtra.
- 5- Al-Madrasa Al-Islamia - It is located in Shahi Muradabad, UP.

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 madrasas 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 madrasas or Islamic seminaries and/or 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 a number of colleges in some states such as Kerala, West Bengal, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir. Below are some universities that are contributing to the Arabic learning in India.

Central Universities

- 1- Assam University, Assam - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., and D.Litt.
- 2- Aligarh Muslim University, U.P. - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Certificate and Diploma courses.
- 3- Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Certificate, Diploma and PG Diploma courses.

- 4- University of Allahabad, U.P. - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., M.Phil. and D.Litt.
- 5- The English and Foreign Languages University, A.P. - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma and Diploma in Translation.
- 6- Maulana Azad National Urdu University, A.P. - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Certificate, Diploma and Diploma in Translation.
- 7- Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi - Courses offered in Arabic are: Ph.D., Certificate course.
- 8- Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma.
- 9- Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D.
- 10- University of Delhi, Delhi - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Arabic.
- 11- Pondicherry University, Pondicherry - Course offered in Arabic is: Certificate of Proficiency in Arabic.

State Universities

- 1- Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic & Persian University, Bihar - Courses offered in Arabic are: Certificate & Diploma in Arabic.
- 2- Patna University, Bihar - Course offered in Arabic is: M.A.
- 3- Calicut University, Kerala - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Certificate in spoken Arabic, Diploma in commercial Arabic, and P.G. diploma in translation and secretarial practice.
- 4- Kerala University, Kerala - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A..
- 5- Barkatullaah University, M.P. - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil., Certificate & Diploma in Modern Arabic.
- 6- Lucknow University, U.P. - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., Proficiency and Diploma.
- 7- Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu, Arabi~Farsi University, U.P. - Course offered in Arabic is: B.A..
- 8- Aliah University, Bengal - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A. and Ph.D..

- 9- Burdwan University, Bengal - Course offered in Arabic is: B.A.
- 10- Calcutta University, Bengal - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A. and Ph.D..
- 11- Cotton College State University, Assam - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A..
- 12- Gauhati University, Assam - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A. and Ph.D..
- 13- Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, J&K - Courses offered in Arabic are: B.A., M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D..
- 14- Islamic University of Sciences & Technology University, J&K - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil and Ph.D., Certificate Course in Modern Standard Arabic.
- 15- Kashmir University, J&K - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D., Certificate & PG Diploma in modern spoken Arabic.
- 16- Bangalore University, Karnataka - Courses offered in Arabic is: Certificate course in Arabic of 8 months.
- 17- Karnataka University, Karnataka - Courses offered in Arabic is: Certificate course in Arabic.
- 18- Mysore University, Karnataka - Courses offered in Arabic are: Certificate & Diploma courses in Arabic.
- 19- Mumbai University, Maharashtra - Courses offered in Arabic are: Certificate, Diploma & Advanced Diploma courses in Arabic.
- 20- The Rashtasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Maharashtra - Course offered in Arabic is: M.A..
- 21- Madaras University, Tamil Nadu - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D.
- 22- Osmania University, Telangana - Courses offered in Arabic are: M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D., Certificate Proficiency in Arabic, Junior Diploma in Modern Arabic, Senior Diploma in Modern Arabic & P.G. Diploma in Translation in Arabic.

Apart from these universities, there are many more colleges spread over some states of India such as Kerala, 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 note that a number of valuable works have been translated from Sanskrit, English, Urdu, and so on into Arabic by them. Likewise, they have translated hundreds of short stories, plays, 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. Some of the writers who have earned high popularity in contemporary universities through their erudite treatises are Dr. Abdul Halim Nadwi, Dr. Zubair Ahmad Faruqi, Dr. Masud Rahman Khan, Dr. Md. Rashid Nadwi, Dr. Shafiq Ahmad Khan Nadwi and Dr. Aslam al-Islahi". (Hasanuzzaman 2012, p. 19) Mention also may be made of Dr. S.A. Rahman, Dr. Mujeebur Rahman, Dr. Habibullah Khan, Dr. S. Kafeel Ahmad Qasmi, Dr. Mohammad Salahuddin Umari, Dr. Mohd. Sanaullah, and Dr. Mohammad Nauman Khan.

Prominent Madrasas and Institutions of Higher Learning

The prominent madrasas and institutions of higher learning which, at present, have been playing a vital role in disseminating Arabic language & 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 Nadvatul Ulema, Lucknow, UP.
3. Al-Jamiatus Salafiah (Markazi Darul Uloom), Varanasi, UP.
4. Madrasa Mazahirul Uloom, Saharanpur, UP
5. Jamia Islamia Sanabil, New Delhi.
6. Madarsatul Islah, Saraimir, Azamgarh, UP.
7. Jamiatul Falah, Bilariaganj, Azamgarh, UP.
8. Jamiatur Rashad, Azamgarh, UP.
9. Jamia Darus Salam, Omerabad (Tamil Nadu).
10. Jamia Islamia Kashiful Uloom, Aurangabad, Maharashtra
11. Jamia Alia Arabia, Mau Nath Bhanjan , UP.
12. Al-Jamiatul Islamia, Tilkhana, Siddharth Nagar, Basti, UP.
13. Madrasa Riyazul Uloom, Urdu Bazar, Jama Masjid, Delhi
14. Jamitus Salehat, Rampur , UP.
15. Jamia Mohammadia, Malegaon, Maharashtra.
16. Darul Uloom Ashrafia Misbahul Uloom, Azamgarh, UP.
17. Jamia Ibn Taimiya, Champaran-12 , Bihar.
18. Tauheed Education Trust, Kishanaganj, Bihar.
19. Jamia Misbahul Uloom, Siddharth Nagar, U.P.

20. Darul Uloom Al-Islamia, Basti, U.P.
21. Darul Uloom Ahmadia Salafia, Darbhanga, Bihar.
22. Al-Mahadul Aali Al-Islami, Hyderabad.
23. Al-Jamia Al-Islmia Darul-Uloom, Maunath Bhanjan, UP.
24. Al-Madrasatul Islamia, Raghonagar, Bhavara, Madhubani, Bihar.
25. Markazu Ssaquafthi Ssunniyya, Karanthur., Khozhikode, Kerala.
26. Jamia Syed Ahmad Shaheed, Malihabad, Lucknow, UP.
27. Darul Uloom Alimia, Jamda Shahi, Basti , UP.
28. Darul Hoda Islamic Academy, Kerala.
29. Al-Mahadul Islamia As-Salafi, Richa, Bareilly, UP.
30. Darul Uloom Warsia, Vishal Khand-4, Lucknow, UP.
31. Hado Jamia Islahul Muslemeen, Malda, West Bengal.
32. Jamiatulbanat Almuslimat, Sambhal Road, Moradabad, UP.
33. Jamia Islamia, Muzaffarnagar, Azamgarh, UP.
34. Jamea-tul-Hidaya, Ramgarh Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan.
35. Jamiatul Banat Al-Islamia, New Delhi.
36. Madrasa -i- Alia Fatepuri, Delhi
37. Madrasatul Uloom Hussain Baksh, Delhi
38. Jame -ul- Uloom Furqania, Rampur, U.P.
39. Madrasa Aminia, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi
40. Kashafia Educational & Preaching Centre, Banihal, Kashmir.
41. Madrasa Riyazul Uloom, Jama Masjid, Delhi
42. Jamia Asaria, Darul Hadees, Mau Nath Bhanjan, U.P.
43. Jamia Arabic Shamsul Uloom, Shahdara, Delhi-32
44. Jamiatul- Taiyebat, Kanpur, U.P.
45. Jamia Sirajul Uloom, Bondihar, Gonda, U.P.
46. Al-Jamiah-Al-Islamia Khairul Uloom, Siddharth Nagar, U.P.
47. Jamiatul Banat, Gaya, Bihar.
48. Jamia Ahsanul Banat, Muradabad, U.P.
49. Jamia Mohammadia, Malegaon, Nasik, Maharashtra.
50. Jamia Husainia Arabia, Raigad, Maharashtra. (JMI 2014).

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

Madrassa Curricula

The curricula of these madrasas include the subjects of Hadith, Commentary on Qur'an, Jurisprudence, Arabic literature, composition, history of Arabic literature, Arabic grammar, Hindi, Urdu & English languages, rhetoric and so on. Most of the books on these subjects excluding languages are being taught in Arabic language after secondary level. These madrasas produce hundreds of scholars of Arabic language and Islamic studies every year who settle down throughout the length and breadth of the country with considerable command over Arabic language in terms of reading, writing and speaking.

Some of the products of these madrasas have international reputation thanks to their valuable work in Arabic language. Mention may be made of Mohammad Rabey Hasan Nadwi (born 1929), a writer of nearly 30 books in Arabic and Urdu and present rector of Darul-uloom Nadwatul Ulama, and Maulana Syed Salman Husaini Nadwi (b. 1954), a fluent & eloquent Arabic orator and a successful author of several books in Arabic and Urdu, and Dr Muqtada Hasan al-Azhari who has more than 40 books to his credit in Arabic and Urdu (I have compiled a book about him in Arabic with title "Dr Muqtada Hasan Al-Azhari: His life and contribution to the Arabic and Islamic Studies"), and Maulana Abdur Rahman Fariwayi who has written around 17 books in Arabic and edited around 40 books, and Maulana Luqman Salafi, an author of more than 10 books in Arabic and Urdu.

Arabic Is No Longer Limited to the Muslims

"Indian exposure to the Arabic language was primarily through the medium of religion, and Arabic came to India as the language of Islam" (Qutbuddin 2007, p.316). But in today's globalized world, the Arabic language no longer appears to be confined to the Muslim community. Due to globalization of trade and increasing importance of foreign languages

including Arabic, non-Muslims are getting attracted to the Arabic language as it nowadays opens options to work abroad, in oil-rich Arab countries, multi-national companies, tourism, hospitality, defence, diplomatic services and so on.

So, today, we can see that many non-Muslims are learning Arabic language from universities, colleges, and many private institutions of languages. The most suitable example in this regard is the Jawaharlal Nehru University where a considerable number of non-Muslims/Hindus are graduating every year.

In West Bengal, nearly 600 government-recognised madrasas have introduced a mainstream school curriculum along with Islamic studies and the Arabic language, and non-Muslims are studying in almost all of them. Currently, about 15 percent of the students in the state's modernised madrasas are non-Muslims. Examples of Muslim students who attended the madrasas and are now successful in their careers have spurred many non-Muslim families to send their children to the madrasas. (AzizurRahman 2013)

The results of the Bihar State Madrasa Education Board (BSMEB) — which oversees 1,129 state-funded and 3,000 non-aided madrasas in Bihar — examinations speak for themselves: 177 Hindu students cleared the wastania (Class VIII) examination, while another 110 Hindu students passed the fauqania (Class X) and moulvi (Class XII) examinations in 38 districts in the state in the year 2009. (The Telegraph 2009) The madrasas where the non-Muslim (Hindu) students passed include Madrasa Islamia at Sandalpur in Araria district, Madrasa Rahmania at Jaktia in West Champaran, Madrasa Faiyyazul Uloom in Chhapra and others. (The Milli Gazette 2009)

With the Nitish Kumar government recognising madrasa degrees and certificates for government jobs and college and university admissions in 2006, Hindu students are increasingly embracing the Islamic seminaries in many Bihar villages, where madrasas are often the only option that students have in the absence of government schools. (The Telegraph 2009) So, the madrasas are not only contributing to the Arabic language or serving the Muslim community, but they are also helping to minimize illiteracy in India.

Future of Arabic in India

Arabic language will be part of the Indian mosaic since for a significant part of the Indian population (Muslims) it is the language of the religious (Islamic) scripture and carries with it religious approval and sanction. Arabic is the language of the Qur'an which is the central religious text of Islam and learning of Qur'an is necessary for practicing correct rituals of Islam. So, at least liturgical use of Arabic language such as recitation of Qur'an, litanies (tasbeeh), ritual prayer (salah) and such will lead to learning the language. The religious need of Indian Muslims to learn the Arabic language will continue to lead to the establishment, maintenance and running of madrasas and Islamic seminaries in India. So, the religious need of Indian Muslims to learn the Arabic language will remain one of the greatest factors for the development of the language in India in the future also.

As far as the prospects of the non-sacred usage of Arabic language is concerned, it has a great future ahead as we see in modern times in economic activities around the world: it is one of the significant languages in the world for business, technology and labour market. There are more than 20 countries where Arabic is an official language. It is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. The Arabic language gained more importance after the economic boom of the oil producing Arab countries in the global market. Furthermore, after the economic globalization, the importance of Arabic language has increased manifold opening up of many employment opportunities. It was bolstered further by the opening up of the Indian market to the global business. There are many scopes for Arabic learners in both private and government sectors. The government sector may include, but is not limited to, Foreign Service, embassies, cultural attaches' and diplomatic services, intelligence, tourism and so on. The private sector may include jobs in international organisations, mass communication, publishing, entertainment, education, interpretation and translation, business and industry, finance and banking and such others.

These days, the Arabic language is becoming an important language when it comes to operating an international business that is trying to break into foreign markets. Some businesses want Arabic speakers on-board specifically to contact local Arabic people and to obtain an edge when running a business that might otherwise end up being missed, using only English interpretation and discussions. Arabic speakers have also been in high demand by the CIA and FBI for those on-going conflicts in Iraq as well as Afghanistan. With this level of

high demand they are prepared to pay a lot of money to individuals who utilize this particular important ability. (importanceoflanguages, n.d., para 7-8)

Apart from this, knowledge of Arabic can also augment career prospects in various other fields as a result of the expansion of markets and business outsourcing. When I started learning the Arabic language in 2004, the demand of Arabic language was not as high as today. The demand of Arabic language has increased many times in these 10 years, particularly in the private sectors such as BPOs, KPOs, International Organizations, and Supply Chain Services and so on. This is the reason why the new generation, including non-Muslims in India are opting for Arabic language as their career options. Considering this high demand of Arabic in the market, it can be asserted that study of Arabic language will be further raised in India.

To Conclude

In brief, Arabic language had reached India in the seventh century as a sacred language of the religion of Islam which was mainly studied and used by Muslims only. It developed and flourished under the patronage of Muslim rulers during Mughal rule in India. Previously, the usage of Arabic was liturgical. But after the independence of India, more precisely, after liberalization of the Indian economy, non-sacred usage of Arabic gained momentum. So, the Indian Government paid considerable attention towards the study and research of Arabic language by including it in the universities as a foreign language. By the inception of 21st century, the demand of Arabic language has increased manifold augmenting career prospects in various fields in the days to come.

References

- 1- Ahmad, Zubaid (1968). *The contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic literature*. Lahore: Ashraf press.
- 2- Azizur Rahman, Shaikh (2013, December 2). Madrassas in India attract Hindu students. *Al-Jazeera*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/indiaonline/2013/11/madrassas-india-attract-hindu-students-2013111814457229891.html> .

- 3- Haque, A.H. Monjurul (2013). Status of Islamic Studies & Madrasa Education in India: An Over View. *An Journal of Humanities & Social Science* 1 (4).
- 4- Hasanuzzaman, Hazrat (2012). Development of Arabic Studies in India. *A Journal of Humanities and Social Science*.1 (2).
- 5- Hindu students in Bihar madrasas (2009, October 15). *The Milli Gazette*. p.19
- 6- Importanceoflanguages. (n.d.), Importance of Arabic Language. Retrieved from <http://www.importanceoflanguages.com/LearnArabic/>
- 7- Madarsas the Hindu connection (2009, December 20). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from http://www.telegraphindia.com/1091220/jsp/7days/story_11888436.jsp
- 8- Qutbuddin, Tahera (2007). Arabic in India: A survey and classification of its uses, compared with Persian. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127.3.

Mukhlesur Rahman, Ph.D. Research Scholar
Centre of Arabic and African Studies
SLL & CS, Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110067
India
mukhles1@gmail.com

Complete address

124, Chandrabhaga Hostel
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110067
India