

# Development Of Arabic Language And Literature In India

Woazedul Hassan

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## Abstract

India has a golden history of development of Arabic language and literature despite being a non- Arabic country. It is also the result of good relation between Indian and Arab countries. It is the state where Arabic language and literature grew, developed and flourished on a large scale during the period of Arab rule in the Indian territory, and Arabic enjoyed as a official language during Arab rule in India.

India always remained a fertile land for developing of Arabic language. There are various Madrasas in every part of the country which follow Arabic and Islam curriculum, as well as there are more than thirty universities who offer the course of Arabic language and research, and produced a good number of poets, writers, Islamic thinkers of the Holy Quran and scholars of the Hadith etc, for example Murtada Al Zabidi Bilgrami, Abdul Aziz Al Maimani, Abu Mahfuz Masoomi and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi etc.

They gave very significant contribution which got appreciation in both Arab and non-Arab world such as Hujjatullahi Al Balighah, Abul ala Al- Ma'arri Wama Ilaih, etc.

I will focus in the paper on a short history of the development of Arabic language in India as well as the personalities who gave their contribution in this field.

## Introduction:

The development of Arabic language and literature the immigrant Muslim scholars who were the torch-bearers of Islamic civilization in India, endeavored their utmost to make the Muslim populace familiar with the study of the Holy Quran and the Hadith and having been influenced. They needed further religio-literary works for getting the clear knowledge of Islam. As such a good number of theological, philosophical, and secular literary works were produced even in Arabic language right from the period of conquest of sind and continued onwards until the modern period, in this connection Prof. Gibb a renowned historian has not left to mention the credit of India in the field of Arabic language and literature who states with Islam came the Arabic koran and Arabic theological literature. Arabic outposts were thus founded in the new territories and especially where there was no existing literature language supplied the medium of learned communications. In India although Persian was the official language of the Muhammadan courts there appeared from time a few non-theological works and even poetry

written in Arabic language. Here an attempt has been made to study the scenario of Arabic prose literature produced in Medieval India which includes the works Tafseer, fiqh, tajweed, philosophy and sufi literature.

### **Literature in India:**

Arabic language has occupied an important place through the Muslim world by virtue of its being the language of the Quran and prayer of Islam. It has also served as the vehicle of literature extending from pre-Islamic period up to the modern times. Arabic as language of trade and Islamic culture and religion which has wide spread influence in all over the world. Teaching and learning of Arabic language and literature in India also played an important role for the promotion and development of Arab culture among Indians. A chain of Madrasahs have been established throughout the ages, had not only provided religious teachings to the Muslims but they had produced a large number of scholars in Quran and Hadith and other branches of Islamic learning. These Madrasahs have also produced experts of Arabic language and literature in India. Arabic language is not only taught in Indian Madrasahs. India attaches a great importance to Arabic because the language plays an important role in strengthening bilateral relations. Arabic language is being taught almost in most of the Indian universities and colleges throughout the country. These universities and colleges are playing an important role in strengthening the cultural bonds of age old relations in the contemporary times. Arabic language, literature and Islamic studies flourished in Indian sub-continent subsequently throughout the period. India had produced and still producing well known scholars of Islamic studies and experts of Quran and Hadith. It had contributed a lot in preserving and promoting Islamic culture and civilization in the region. It has not only produced eminent scholars in different fields of Arab History and Islamic studies but also in Arabic language, and literature who had immensely enriched the Arabic literature in both forms of prose and poetry.

### **Some works on Indo-Arab Relations:**

This is a significant topic for discussion in the present context. We are all aware of the history of India since it is our motherland, but we are not fully aware of the history and culture of our neighboring West Asian countries and the Arab world in particular. India's political and cultural relation with South East Asia is old, important and well known, it needs a revisit and study of Arab history and culture through the ages.

One of the most valuable fruits of Indo Islamic fusion is the Urdu language, mentioned may be made here some of the outstanding works on Indo Arab relation and thus Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadavi was the first scholar to publish "Arab wa Hind ke Ta'alluqat" in Urdu in 1930. It has been translated into English and Hindi as well. Dr. Tara Chanda wrote "influence of Islam on Indian culture" published in 1936. Maulana Syed Abdul Hayy Hasani book entitled "Ath Thaqaafat al Islamiyah fil Hind" or Islamic Culture. Dr. Md. Yusuf al Hindi published two papers on the beginning of cultural and commercial relation between India and Arab countries. Prof. Maqbool Ahmed's books entitled "Indo Arab relations" gives a short account of India's relation with the Arab world from ancient up to modern times. Shaikh Zainuddin book entitled

“Tuhfatul Mujahideen” deals with the conflict of the Portuguese with the Muslim of Malabar in the Indian Ocean in 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In pre Islamic period, it was the Persian Gulf and mainly the Arabian side- that formed probably the first major international maritime communications system in history in the third millennium B.C when it became a channel between two of the world’s earliest civilizations, the Sumerian of Mesopotamia and Harappan of the Indus valley. We learn from reliable Arabic & Persian sources that there existed commercial contacts between India and the Western countries mainly Arabian, Palestine and Egypt since ancient times. They would obtain from India rice, ginger and cinnamon from Malabar coast.

### **Shah Waliullah Dehlawi:**

He was an Islamic Scholar, Muhaddith, Renewer, Historiographer, Theologian and Philosopher. He was born on 21 February 1703, He was known as Shah Waliullah because of his piety. He memorized the Quran by the age of seven. Soon thereafter he mastered Arabic and Persian, he was married at fourteen. His father Shah Abdur Rahim was the founder of the Madrasah I Rahimiyah.

Shah Waliullah defined Sunni Islam in broad terms, rather than confining it to a specific school of theology. He criticized those people who downplayed the necessity of following Sharia (Islamic Law). Some people think that there is no usefulness involved in the injunct of Islamic law and that in actions and rewards as prescribed by Allah there is no beneficial purpose. They think that the commandments of Islamic law are similar to a master ordering his servant to lift a stone or touch a tree in order to test his obedience and that in this there is no purpose except to impose a test so that if the servant obeys.

### **Contribution of Shah Waliullah:**

**Hujjat Allah al-Balighah** (The Conclusive Argument of God) Shaikh Ghulam Ali and his Sons considered to be his most important work. First published in the Bareilly, India in 1286 hijr. The book explain how Islam was found suitable for all races, cultures and people of the world and how successfully it solves social, moral, economic and political problems of human beings. It Seems that Shah Waliullah had realized that the world was passing through a rapid change and the period of dogmatism and fanaticism is soon to come to an end, and people will not accept anything that does not appeal to reason that their heart and mind. Rationalism was the only answer to this change of attitude of the people towards every religion. If Islam was to survive under these conditions the ground for the rule of reason had to be prepared for the purpose. In this context it will not be an exaggeration to say that Shah Waliullah’s Hujjatullah al Balighah is to a God given gift for that period of the history of human life when rationalism is to reign supreme in our religious thinking. There can be no doubt that this book has been written under inspiration from God and should be considered a gift of God whose love for his created beings is boundless. Shah Waliullah mentions in the introduction to this book the circumstances and the compulsions under which he produced this work.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with seven topics which are divided into seventy heads, all interrelated, they are connected in such a way that the reader can follow the contents of the second part only after fully understanding the theme of the first part. The second part of Hujjat Allah al-Balighah is concerned with different topics such as the meaning of the hadith as he could comprehend in his individual capacity as Muhaddith. He explains the problems of Fiqh as a jurist and also the problems of human self, heart and mind as a sufi elaborating their secrets.

Al-khayr al-kathir (the Abundant Good).

Sata'at (Manifestations), translation in to Urdu by S.M. Hashimi and translate in to English by G.Jalbani, Sufism and the Islamic tradition.

Lamhat (flashes of lighting), Hyderabad, Shah Waliullah Academy, 1963, trans G. Jalbani, Sufism and the Islamic Tradition, the Lamhaat and Sata'at of Shah Waliullah, London, 1980. One of the most important writings on Sufism.

Fuyud al-haramayn (Emanations or Spiritual Visions of Mecca and Medina).

Al-tafhimat (instructions or clear understanding) Dabhail 1963. One of the most comprehensive metaphysical works.

Al-Budur al-bazighah (The full Moons rising in splendor)

Besides these he is also credited being the first to translate the Quran into Persian in the Indian subcontinent. Shah Waliullah worked hard to ensure that he was a role model for other Muslims. His deep understanding of the Quran, Hadith, fiqh and tasawwuf made him a highly knowledgeable scholar at an early age. Since he believed that an emphasis on the Quranic teachings was made vital to Muslims, he translated Arabic Quran into Persian. Few Muslims spoke Arabic and so the Quran had not been widely studied previously. Some Ulama criticized Shah Waliullah, But his work proved very popular. In addition to translating the Quran, He wrote 51 books in Persian and Arabic, among the most famous were Hujjat Allah al-Baligha and Izalah al khifa.

He died on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> of Muharram 1176 AH/20 August 1762 at Zuhr prayer in Old Delhi, aged 59. He was buried beside his father Shah Abdur Rahman at Mehdiyan.

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