CHAPTER-I

EVOLUTION OF ISLAMIC AND ARABIC LITERATURE IN INDIA
CHAPTER – I

EVOLUTION OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AND ARABIC LITERATURE IN INDIA

1.1: The Arabic Language and its Importance:

Arabic is fairly considered to be the head of the Semitic family of languages, which originated in the Arabian Peninsula on the eve of 6th century A.D. In this language, the Holy Qur’an was revealed during a period of 23 years from 610 to 632 A.D. It is believed that Allah himself has declared:

إِنَّا نَزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكًا عَرَبِيًّا لِعَلَمِكَ تَعْقُولُونَ

(Tran: Surely we have revealed it as an Arabic Qur’an, in order that you may learn wisdom.) ¹. It is further repeated in the same authority:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِعَلَمِكَ تَعْقُولُونَ

(Tran: Surely we have made it a Qur’an in Arabic so that you may be able to understand.) In another chapter of the Holy Qur’an Allah has declared again with the following Verses:

وَإِنَّهُ لْكُنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. نَزَّلَهُ بِالرُّوحِ الْآمِينِ. عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِيُكُونَ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ. بِلِسَانِ عَرَبِيٍّ مَبِينٍ.

(Tran: Verily this is a Revelation from the lord of the worlds: with it came down the Truthful spirit; to your heart that you may admonish; In the perspicuous Arabic tone.)

According to the Islamic faith, the Qur’an is the saying of the Almighty Allah as well as the Hadith are that of the holy prophet Mohammad (SAS) who was a native speaker of refined Arabic language. It is found the narration of Hakim and Al-Baihaqi that the holy Prophet (SAS) said:-

أَحْبَبَوْا اللَّهَ مَثَلًا ثَلَاثًا فَإِنَّى عَرَبِيٌّ وَالْقُرْآنِ عَرَبِيٌّ وَكِلَامَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ عَرَبِيٌّ.
(Tran: ‘You (the Muslims) love the Arabs for three reasons that I myself am an Arabian, the Qur’an is Arabic and the language of the people of Paradise is Arabic.’) It is a prophetic instruction to love not only the Arabs but the Arabic language also. It is, therefore, important for the Muslims all over the world to love the Arabs in terms of learning the language of the Qur’an and Hadith.

As the popularity of Islam had been able to touch the limit of the global horizon, Arabic language also became the religious language of the Muslims throughout the world. They believe that Arabic is the only appropriate language of approach to Allah. They practise their religious rites and rituals in the Arabic Language itself. They learn the speeches or the commandments of Islamic faith in original Text in Arabic. Whatever nation they may belong to, they use the Arabic version from ‘Azan’ to the performance of five time prayers every day. They deliver the ‘Khutba’ (religious sermon) before the Salat al juma (Friday Prayer) and ‘Salat al Eidaeen’ (Prayer of the two ‘Eids’) also in Arabic Language. In the similar way, many other deeds are done in the Arabic Language, which has become a part and parcel of every Muslim in the World, which is to learn the fundamentals of Islamic rituals in the Arabic Language.

Since the language of the Qur’an, the Hadith and the language of the Days here after, is Arabic, it is the main source of knowledge about Islam. Dr. Abdullah assumes that as more as 800 million of Muslims of the World recite the Holy Qur’an in its original language regardless of whether they understand it or not and a good number of them also try to comprehend the Qur’an without the help of translation. Besides the religious and legal sciences of the Muslims, Arabic was the language of all branches of Asia, Africa, Europe during the Middle Ages similar to
English at the present time. Most standard critical studies include under medieval Arabic Literature virtually all serious writings in Arabic from the late 6th Century AD, until the early 1500s. These studies deal not only with poetry and belles lettres but also with History, Geography, Classified biographies and Encyclopedia, Science and Medicine, Philosophy and Theology, Grammar and Textual exegesis, Law, Mystical speculation and many other disciplines.\(^7\)

A Cambridge scholar, R A Nicholson rightly asserts: During the early Middle Ages it (Arabic) was spoken and written by all cultivated Moslems of whatever nationality they might be, from the Indus to the Atlantic; it was the language of the court and the Church, of the Law and Commerce, of Diplomacy and Literature and Science\(^8\) Prof. Fariq added: In Europe, it was the common language of Spain, up to the 15th Century and of the Baleric Islands, Malta, Sicily, and Pantellaria (between Sicily and Tunis) up to the 18th Century.\(^9\) For many centuries in that period, it was the language of learning and culture and progressive thought throughout the civilized world.\(^10\)

Even today, Arabic has occupied the position of an important language as spoken by millions of people in Asia and Africa and is studied as a language of great Civilization and religion all over the world. In addition to Arabia, Al-Yemen, Oman, and the Persian Gulf-Arab states i.e. al-Bahrain, al-Kuwait, where Arabic language had held almost an undisputed supremacy since Pre Islamic days. Hitti says; Originally the humble dialect of tribes in the modern part of Arabian peninsula, Arabic is today the prevailing speech of the whole peninsula, of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, of the certain districts of Sudan, districts on the curve of the Niger, are in
Moreover, there are Syro-Lebanese Arab pockets, North and South Americas and France, West Africa, where also Arabic language is spoken. On the other hand, Arabic is spoken in 24 countries by as much as 256 million of people throughout the world and being used as the official language of not less than 21 member states of the Arab League, in addition to that of oil producing Arab countries, suffering from unemployment problems.

For this worldwide popularity, the Arabic language has been given a glorious position in United Nations where it is employed as the 5th of the 6 (six) working languages with effect from 1973. Owing to this religious, commercial, economic and Political importance, a large number of people of the modern world cherish the desire of learning Arabic Language.

1.2: The Arabs in India and their settlement:

India had a good trade relation with the Arabs since a long before the advent of Islam. It is believed that the prophet Adam (A S) passed through the territory of India while he was traveling to Arabia after he had been sent down in Ceylon. In early Roman period, Arab traders imported cinnamon and pepper from India and exported to the western countries. In the Pre-Islamic Ages, the Arabs linked India with Africa by trade route, and the Arab traders frequented the costal region of Sind and Hind i.e. India. They used to buy and export Indian resources to Yemen where from these were sent to Syria and to the markets of Egypt and Europe. Arab traders bought spices like Cardamom, Cinnamon and Pepper; flora and fauna like Chandal, 'Saj or teak-wood and bamboo, camphor, ginger, coconut, elephant, peacock, ape, musk and muslin cloth
from Indian ports and carried to different markets of their own places as well as to some other countries from Egypt to the west, and from China to the East. There are many references, in Pre-Islamic Arabic poems, to these and other goods, imported from India, which was very popular among the Arabs. The application of pepper, musk and camphor in the poem of a celebrated Muḥallāqa poet Imrul Quis (500-540 A. D) may be brought forward in this regard:

ترئ بعبر الأرامل في عروضها 
و قبعاتها كأنها حبة فلفل.

Tran: You will see the droppings of white antelopes on her courtyards and enclosure, as if these are the seeds of black pepper.

إذا قامتا تَضَوَيَّعُ المسلكَةَ منهما
نسيم الصبا جاءت برييًا القرنفل

Tran: When the two women (Ummu Huwairith and Ummu Rubab) stood up, a sweet fragrance spread out from them; which was a soft breeze blowing with the smell of clove.

Moreover, Indian swords i.e. مهندس (Muhannad) had a reputation of being very supple and sharp, which were very famous among the Arab warriors. 21 A renowned poet of Medina, Kašaf bin Zuhair (R A) eulogized the holy Prophet and compared him with an Indian sword in his famous poem بَانَتُ سَعَادٍ in the following verse:

إن الرسول لسيف يستضاء به
مهدِّئٍ من سيف الله المسلول

Tran: Surely the Prophet (SAS) is a sword which is illuminated with an Indian sword of Allah.
During the time of the holy Prophet, also the Caravans of Arab traders continued their commercial trips from Arabian Peninsula to Malabar coast in the South-West India. Nicholson observed that Arab traders had carried out their business in India and imported bamboos also from this country for making: ‘Rumh’ i.e. lance or spear. From the ancient time the Arabs were accustomed in using some sorts of Indian articles. Dr. Mohyideen quoted a narration of an Arab chronicler, Baladuri that Asād bin Jaharah had sent to the holy Prophet a bed, made of ‘saj’ (teak wood) on which the prophet used to sleep and that was, at last, transferred to the house of Abu Ayub al-Ansari. He also added that the door of the chamber of Ayesha (RAA) was also made of teak wood. It is worth mentioning that this variety of wooden articles or logs of teak wood were commonly imported by the Arab merchants from India as well as Assam also. The author, referring to the source of an eminent scholar Athar Mobarakpuri, claims that Saj or the teak wood was a big tree which grew nowhere except in India. Dr. Mohyideen added from the same source that the Prophet (SAS) and his companions applied some herbal medicine like camphor, ginger etc. having bought from Arabian markets, which had been imported from India. Even after the demise of the Prophet (SAS), the Indo-Arab trade relation continued and after the foundation of Baghdad in 762 A.D., it seemed to have improved and lasted until the 16th century.

Although, Arab trade was restricted mainly to the costal regions and to the southern peninsula of the Indian Territory, it was extended into Sind, the Punjab, Bengal and Assam also. It is interesting to note that a large number of Arab merchants sailed their vessels straight for China and few others sailed northwards to Bengal and Assam. The Arabs were
very much fond of Chandal wood, Teak wood, Aloes wood, Sanchipat or Bhoja patra (bark of a tree used as paper), rhinoceros, peacock, jack fruits etc. which were found in large scale in the jungles of Assam.\textsuperscript{29} It may be true that the Arab merchants might have purchased these things from Assam also and sold in their country. In this way, Assam has its contacts with Arabs, long period ago.

It is worth mentioning that some of Arab traders started to settle in different places in India since Pre-Islamic days. Arab merchants passed along the Coromandal coast on their way to China, where remains of Pre-Muslim Arabs are still found at Canton.\textsuperscript{30} In the Gazetteer of the Bombay presidency, Khan Bahadur Fazl Ullah Lutfullah Faridi mentions the settlement of Pre-Muslim Arabs at Chaul, Kalyan and Supara\&and ãhere were so many Arabs on the Malabar Coast that the people had adopted the Arab religion.\textsuperscript{31}

After the advent of Islam, the process of Arab settlement in India took a large shape. Since the 7\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, Arab Muslims settled in such a large number at different ports on the western coast of India that they started to lead social lives, having married local girls.\textsuperscript{32} ãn Gujarat too, Arab merchants converted Hindu wives and brought up their children as Muslims.\textsuperscript{33}

1.3: Propagation of Islam:

In India Islamic propagation started more or less, during the life time of the Prophet Mohammad (SAS) himself. Dr. Veeran Mohyideen referred that the holy Prophet had sent letters to some of his contemporary Kings of South Indian kingdoms with an invitation for embracing Islam. One of such letters reached to a Chereman Perumal
King in Kerala, named Jankal Perumal or Shanku Farmal. This letter is an evidence of possibility of Islamic propagation in that kingdom during the period of the Prophet (SAS). Referring to a History of Muslims in Kerala, written in Malayalam by Syeed B A Mohammad, Dr. Mohi Uddin states that the ancient manuscripts of the Kings of Arakkal of Kerala indicated that a lifetime of the Prophet Mohammad (SAS). This King had heard some narration about the Prophet from some Arab merchants who came to his kingdom for the purpose of trade and commerce. The king was so much influenced with the narration that he went to Arabic and embraced Islam and then he stayed for seventeen days as an honourable guest of the Prophet (SAS).\textsuperscript{34} It is undoubtedly believed that many other people of that kingdom, specially the subjects of Cheraman Perumal might have accepted Islam, following the foot prints of their King.

During that time and after the demise of the Prophet Mohammad (SAS), Arab Muslims found a fertile environment in the Malawar coast to preach the message of Islam. They built Masjids for regular prayers and taught the fundamentals of Islam to the new converts. Some of the ancient Masjids are believed to have founded by Malik bin Dinar during the caliphate of Umar bin Khattab (R A A), on the Malabar Coast located at Pazhayangadi, Srikantapuram, Dharmadon and Kasaragod, in the modern state of Kerala.\textsuperscript{35}

It is interesting to note that one of such Masjids founded in 643 A D at Kasaragod is still bearing a doorplate in Arabic. We find that plate of 77 c.m x 14 c.m. that this Masjid is an accomplishment of Malik bin Dinar who hailed from Arabian Peninsula with his son Ī Saraf, nephew Ī Malik bin Habib, maternal uncle and many others for an Islamic mission. The team arrived at Kasaragod on the 13\textsuperscript{th} Rajab of 22 A H and built that
Jamō Masjid on the 7th June, 643 A D. It is also found from this plate that Ahmed bin Malik and his son was the Qazi of Kasaragod town where they lived generations together.

It is further, found that Malik bin Habib, the nephew of Malik bin Dinar built another Masjid at Cranganore, and Ismail, a grand son of Malik bin Dinar built at Koulam in the 7th century. Their descendents living around Kuilon in Kerala are still bearing the signs of the achievement of Malik bin Dinar. 36

In this way the warm welcome that the Muslim Arabs received in the coastal towns of India, where they had anchored, went a long way in strengthening their intercourse with the country which passed the way for conversion of the indigenous population and multiplication of Muslims.

1.4: Education under the Muslim rule in India:

During this long period of Indo-Arab relation, there was a direct lingo-culture exchange between the Arabs and the Indians in that places where the later tries to speak and understand Arabic language for their commercial interest, while the Arab also followed the same method of learning Indian languages. Those Indians specially, who had accepted Islam by marriage or otherwise, might have learnt Arabic language to know the Islamic rites and rituals or as a medium of communication in their families.

This process of learning Arabic Language by the Indians spread far and wide, after the conquest of Sindh by Mohammad bin Qasim in 712 A.D. 37 in the new political circumstances. According to the accounts of Maqbul Ahmed, Sind remains under the direct administration of the Arab
Muslims for two hundred years up to the end of 9th century. Tarachand also says: the advance of the Muslims was checked, and for the next three centuries they remained confined to this corner of India. Their sphere of influence thus extended during this period over the principalities of Sindh and Multan, over which they ruled, and the coastal towns of Sindh, kathiwar, Gujarat and Konkar where they settled as traders, and till the eleventh century they had no opportunity to reach beyond. In any case, Dabul, Somnath, Broach, Cam-bay, Sindan and Chawl became seats of small Muslim communities and nearly each one had its Mosque and Maktabs for primary education in Arabic.

The foundation stone of the Muslim rule in India, laid by Ibn-e-Qasim was confirmed by Mohammad Ghori with the victory in the second battle of Tarain in 1192 A.D. and established the Sultanate of Delhi. Tarachand observed: The thirteenth century had hardly begun when the conquest of Northern India was completed. Within a quarter of century, the Muslim armies had over run the country from the Punjab to Assam and from Kashmir to Vindhyas. It is needed to mention that, after the conquest of Mohammad Ghori, Muslim Sultans and Emperors of a series of dynasties, such as Slave dynasty (1206-1290 A. D), Khilji dynasty (1290-1320 A.D), Tughlag dynasty (1320-1414 A. D), Sayyid dynasty (1414-1451 A. D), Lodi dynasty (1451-1526 A. D) and Mughal dynasty (1526-1857 A.D) ruled over India up to the fall of Bahadur Shah Jafer.

It is found in the historical works of different authors that the Muslims rules paid a special attention for the spreading of knowledge. They founded a large number of educational institutions where Arabic was also studied. During the rule of Slave dynasty (1206-1290 A.D),
different institutions were established for imparting education. Kutub-ud-Din (1206-1210 A.D), the founder of this dynasty established a number of Masjids and Maktabs. Sultana Razia (1236-1242) was an educated lady and able administrator as well. She was the founder of Muijji Madrasa in Delhi. Sultan Nasiruddin (1246-1265) was a great lover of education, who used to copy down the holy Qur’an. He established the Madrasa-e-Nasiria in Delhi under the principalship of Maulana Minhaj-ud-Din Siraj, which was later, developed to a college after the name of the Sultan. Many good books were written during the rule of Nasiruddin. ‘Tabaqati Nasiri’, a famous historical document was written by Minhaj-ud-Din Siraj, the Principal of Nasiria college. Sultan Ghyasuddin Balvan (1266-1286) was an ardent lover of education and literature. He encouraged education and patronized a number of scholars in his court. Amir Khusro, a disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin was the most prominent and influential scholar among them. In Khalji dynasty, Jalaluddin (1290-1296 AD) was the best lover of education, who encourages and honoured men. He founded a big library at Kiluguri near Delhi and Amir Khusro, the famous scholar of the time of Ghyasuddin Balban was the head of this library. Similarly, Alauddin Khalji established a number of Madrasas in Delhi where he appointed a host of forty renowned teachers.

After the fall of Khalji Dynasty, Ghyasuddin Tughlaq founded the Tughlaq Dynasty, who ruled over India from 1320 to 1414 A.D. Among the sultans of his Tughlaq dynasty, three were found the best lover of education. They were Ghyasuddin Tughlaq, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and Firoj Tughlaq. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (1325-1351) was a great scholar who unprecedentedly assembled learned parsons and appointed them in his court. He built a number of Maktabs and Madrasas. Maulana
Moinuddin Imrani, a great theologian of Delhi flourished in his time. Similarly, Firoj Tuglaq (1359-89 A D) was also an erudite lover of education who established a large number of educational institutions of which there were 30 Madrasas, in edition to repairing the old ones. The Royal College, established in Firojabad was very famous. Syyid Yusuf, son of Sayyid Jamaluddin Husayni, great scholar of Multan, was attached to this college.

After the Tughlaqs, some Sultan of the Sayyad dynasty ruled over the countries, from (1414 to 1451 A D), which were succeeded by the Lodi dynasty (1451-1526 A D). Among the Lodi Sultans Bahlol Lodi (1451-1481) was interested in education and opened several Madrasas. Sikandar Lodi (1481-1571) himself was a great writer. He composed poems, which were compiled into a Diwan (Anthology of poems). He respected scholars, rewarded and encouraged those for new writings. Rawat added that Sikandar Lodi had founded the city of Agra, around which he instituted hundreds of Madrasas where the Arabic and Persian languages were the main subjects.

It is worth mentioning here that Babar established the historic dynasty of Mughal (1526-1857 A D), having defeated Ibrahim Lodi in the battle of Panipath in 1526 A D. Most of the days of his (Babar) short tenure (1526-1530 A D.) he had to spend on the horse back, despite, he opened some new Maktabs and Madrasas and wrote his own biography. Humayun, son and successor of Babar was to pass his tenure through wars and battle but his loved for education did not diminish. He opened many Maktabs, Madrasa and Libraries in and around Delhi and Sheikh Hussain was appointed Principal in one of them.
Humayun was succeeded by his son Akbar who ruled over the greater India from 1556 to 1605 A.D. He himself was illiterate but was interested in education. Rawat states that he was a secular ruler who established a number of Madrasas for the Muslims and secular institutions for the non Muslim students in Agra and Fatepur, in addition to the existing ones. But the Hindus had begun to study Arabic and Persian in order to avail the state service. He adds that Akbar brought many colleges into being at Delhi. After the death of Akbar, the reign of administration was hold by his father and opened many Maktabs and Madrasas in Agra, in addition to sanctioning grants to the existing ones. Moreover, he got repaired some old and deserted Madrasas of Delhi. Likewise Sahajahan also (1627-53 A.D.) had a great interest for education. He established some Madrasas in Agra, a college in Delhi, near Jamâ Masjid and got ‘Darul Baqi’ repaired. Likewise, his son Aurangzeb (1657-1707) was an erudite scholar in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, having knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith on the tip of his tongue. He established many Maktabs and Madrasas in the expanded area of his empire.

From this accounts it is found that commendable efforts for the spreading of knowledge and imparting education, were made in the country during this long period of Muslim rule, right from the time of Mohammad Ghori to that of Bahadur Shah Jafar (1192 to 1857 A.D.). They built Masjids, Maktabs, Madrasas and Colleges in every nook and corner of their empire where the students were taught the Qur'an, the Hadith and other Islamic subjects and the children were given their Primary education in these Maktabs. According to Dr. Chaube, Hindu children also went to these Maktabs for their education and they too, had
to read Arabic and Persian. In this Maktabs the students were taught the reading, reciting and memorization of complete 30 chapters of the Qur’an, while much attention was paid to the correctness of its pronunciation. After the completion of Maktab education, one could go to a Madrasa for higher education, which can be put under two categories: Secular and Religious.

The secular education included some subjects in its set of courses like Arabic Grammar, Prose, Literature, Philosophy, History, Arithmetic, Geography, Medicine etc. However, the medium of instruction was mainly Arabic, although Aurangzeb emphasized the use of mother tongue in place of Arabic as medium of education. On the other hand, the religious education included study of the Holy Qur’an and its commentary, the tradition of the Prophet Mohammad (SAS), Islamic laws etc., which were not compulsory for the non Muslims. However, the knowledge of Arabic and Persian was essential for the Government jobs and high position in the administration. A good number of Hindu youth, desirous of Government job, used to join these Madrasas and study Arabic and Persian, in spite of having separate institution for them.

It is worth mentioning that the facility for woman education was also provided during these times. Sultana Razia (1236-42 A D) and Empress Noor Jahan were very learning women and well carried to administration, as Zubun Nissa, the daughter of Aurangzeb, who was also an erudite scholar and poetess in Arabic and Persian literatures.

Although, the studies of Arabic have been introduced in India from the conquest of Sindh, developed by the victory of Mohammad Ghori who established a number of Madrasas during his short rule and the development reached its Zenith from the time of Babar who, himself, was
a profound scholar of Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages and
drama. During the rule of Muslim Sultans and emperors, some Muslim
colonies were established at different places all over the country, which
eventually developed into big towns. In course of time, these towns
became the important centers of Arabic and Islamic studies. It may be
noted that Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Jounpur, Lahore, Ajmer, Bedar,
Lucknow, Jalandar, Multan, Bejapur, Golconda, Sialkot, Bengal etc. were
the most remarkable centers of Islamic and Arabic studies in different
times of Muslim rule.

1.5: Arabic and Islamic Studies in India:

Arabic in India carries an almost absolute Islamic identity, to the
extent that even the study of pre-Islamic pagan poetry is ascribed to a
spiritual impetus. This is not surprising, for it is generally acknowledged
that the Arabic language has a predominantly sacred character out-side
the Arabic speaking Middle East. However, the functional manifestation
of the language in the subcontinent has great historical significance and
has not been systematically explored.

The first acquaintance of the residents of the Indian subcontinent
with the Arab people came about when Arab sailor first docked at Indian
ports in order to acquire spice in pre-Islamic times, perhaps as far in the
past as 50 C.E.

In the seventh century, the Arabian Peninsula witnessed the birth of
Islam, and majority of Arabs became Muslim. One century later, in 711,
the Arab-Muslim Umayyad commander Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-
Thaqafi invaded and conquered the western Indian province of Sind.
Arab Muslims settled there, and with their colonization of Sind came
India’s first substantial and sustained contact with both the region of Islam and the Arabic language. At this time, Indians began to convert to Islam.

In India, in the decades following Independence, Arabic usage was also modified in minor ways, but its Islamic identity was preserved and continues to be preserved today. Considering the future of Arabic usage in India, among the factors inhibiting it is the decline of Persian and Urdu and with it the decline of the Arabic-script reading populace. Some positive influences are India’s growing economic prosperity (and subsequent rise in education) combined with Islamic revivalist trends.

One of the most common uses of Arabic in India is liturgical. This includes Qur'anic recitation, litanies (tasbih), prose prayers (du’a’), formulaic expressions connected with the ritual prayer (salah), Sufi chants (dhikh), and the chanting of religious poetry (qasida, na’t, munajat, and marthiya).

The recitation of the Arabic Qur’an is considered by meritorious act and forms an important part of their religiosity. In India, Muslims recite the Qur’an avidly, but generally without understanding the literal meaning. Nevertheless, they still see it as an act that brings the reciter closer to Allah and wins him or her divine grace (baraka) and light (nur). Qur’anic recitation in India takes place in homes, masjids, madrasas and other venues, at different times of the day or night, individually or communally, at religious and social gathering or as part of a daily religious routine, throughout the year, but most especially during the month of ‘Ramadan’, audibly or inaudibly, in sophisticated and melodious recitation (tartil or tajwid), or in plain, elementary recital. Since a significant number speak Urdu (in 2003, roughly 25 million) or
other Indian languages written in the Arabic script, they can, if they are literate—thus, roughly half of all Indian Muslims⁶⁹—de facto read and write the Arabic script. Since Qur'anic recitation in the original Arabic is an integral part of the mandatory ritual prayer (salah), those who can read and those who cannot all consider it a religious obligation to memorize *suras* (*Quranic chapters*). They most commonly learn by heart the shorter *suras*, including *al-fatiha*, *al-nas*, *al-falaq*, *al-ikhlas*, *al-kawthar*, *al-nasar*, and *al-qadr*. They also recite *al-fatiha* for the benefit of a deceased soul and upon visits to the shrine of a saint.

The religious need of Indian Muslims to learn Arabic gave the centuries to a large number of religious schools catering only to Muslim students, called Maktab and Madrasa. (The terms are somewhat fluid, the word madrasa sometimes being used to denote a maktab; other terms used are hifz-khana for Qur'anic memorization schools, and jami‘a or dar al-‘ulum for higher education institutions. In pre modern times, the madrasa was also used for secular schools with both Muslim and Hindu students.) Maktabs imparted primary learning, focusing on Qur'anic recitation and memorization of *suras*, and by extension, a basic knowledge of the Arabic language, particularly the script. They also taught Shari‘a precepts, particularly those relating to the ritual prayer (salah), the ritual purification (wudu’), the two calls to prayer (adhan and iqama), and formally recited within the ritual prayer. At more advanced levels, they taught some Qur’anic interpretation and prophetic Traditions (Hadith). Maktabs continue to flourish in India today, in masjids or independent institutions, with the inclusion in modern times of a rudimentary secular component, comprising basic arithmetic and elementary literacy in the local vernacular.⁷¹ In addition, today many
Muslim children who otherwise go to secular school or do not go to school at all also receive part-time religious education at home by professional *mullas/maulvis* or parents, or at after part-time *maktabs*. This home instruction is entirely focused on religious, the Qur'an, and Arabic.

*Madrasas* have generally been for more advanced religious learning and has been an important component of their curriculum. Many have ðArabic madrased as part of their name, such as the Madrasa ðArabiyya Jami in Zaydpur, and *Madrasa ðArabiyya Dar al-Taðim* in Muhallapura Sufipur, both in Uttar Pradesh. By the tenth century, the first ad hoc *madrasas* in India were established in Sind in the towns of Mansura and Multan, and were associated with the local masjids. In the last decade of the twelfth century, the Turk invader Muhammad Ghuri (d.1206, founder of real Muslim dominion in India) established formal *madrasa* in the town of Ajmer in North India. Soon thereafter, his successor Sultan Illutmish (d.1236) established the first *madrasa* in Delhi and one in Badaun, and in the following decades, madrasas sprang up all over northern India. Then, over the next seven centuries of partial or full Muslim rule, until the deposition of the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar in 1857 by the British, *madrasas* proliferated in all parts into the hundreds, either associated with, or independent of, masjids. In the nineteenth century, the new colonial power promoted Western-style secular education, particularly English and the Arabic language (and Persian) diminished in importance. Many *madrasas* were adversely affected, but several new ones such as Deobandh and then Nadwa were instituted by Islamic *salafi* revivalists deliberately to counter the colonial approach and bolster traditional religious education. Paradoxically, most of the important *madrasas*
existing today were established during the British Raj. In these institutions, in the words of a modern scholar, Arabic, being the language of the original sources of Islam, was to be the major focus of study. It was, so to speak, not only a language but the major linguistic symbol of Islamic identity and Muslim resistance to modernity.\textsuperscript{73}

The curriculum followed in these madrasas through the focused on Islam as a subject and Arabic as a tool. Until the fifteenth century, the principal subjects of study in madrasas were the religious sciences (in Arabic) of Qur\textsuperscript{an} exegesis, Hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism, theology, history, the related subjects of Arabic grammar and literature, and some logic and philosophy, also in Arabic. Approximately the same curriculum was following all over India. The course was on Arabic texts from the classical (Middle Eastern) canon being studied, such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Zamakhshri’s Kashshaf, Tafsir al-Baydawee, al-Muwatta’, al-Sahihayan, al-Hidayat fi al-furu, Talkhis al-miftah, ‘Awarifal-ma‘arif, Fusus al-hikam, Hidayat al-nahw, Sharh mi‘at ‘amil, and al-Kafiya. A few modifications to this curriculum were made in the fifteenth century, when a couple of medieval Arabic science texts were added, and again in the eighteenth century by Shah Wali Allah (d. 1760). Some years later, Mulla Nizam al-Din (of Sihali near Lucknow, d. 1748) proposed a new Arabic curriculum, later to become famous the Dars-i- Nizami. He confirmed several Arabic religious and grammatical texts already in use, and for the first time in Indian madrasa history, added Arabic texts on jurisprudence, logic and philosophy composed by Indian savants, such as Mulla Jiwan of Amethi (d.1718), Mir Muhammad Zahid al-Harawi (d.17000), and Mulla Mahmud jawnpuri. This curriculum was adopted almost immediately all over India and continues to be used to this day.
with some amendments, including the addition of non-religious subjects such as mathematics and English. In the late eighteenth century, *salafi madrasas* purged the syllabus of Sufi texts (Arabic and Persian). *Shi’ite madrasas* follow different curricula with regard to religious texts, but usually the texts used for the study of Arabic grammar and rhetoric, perhaps even some literature and philosophy, are the same as those prescribed by the *Dars-i- Nizami*.

The number of full-time Arabic madrasas in 1996 was 757. The best known madrasas of India today are in the northern part of the country in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Deoband in this state is the home of the famous madrasa named Dar al-Ulum (founded 1866), which has around two thousand students from India and other countries of South and East Asia, a large library (133,070 printed books and 1,563 manuscripts), and focuses almost completely on religious education. A modern Indian scholar calls it a “mother institution” for Indian Muslim educational centers. Another well-known madrasa in this state is the Dar al-Ulum Nadwat al-Ulama (founded 1893), with 1,500 students, seventy professors, and a strong research orientation. It focuses on religious learning, particularly Arabic, but includes some secular as well. Its focus is on subjects, as opposed to the text-based approach of other, traditional madrasas. Both the above are Sunni institutions, the Deobandh madrasa a strongly *salafi* one. Two important Twelver *Shi’ite madrasas* are also in the same town of Lucknow, the Madrasat al-Wa’izin (founded 1919) and the Jami’at Nazimiyya (founded 1890). In Western India, the leading Muslim education institution is in Surat, the Jami’at Safiyya (founded 1813) of the Da’udi Bohra Tayyibi Shi’a de-nomination, with 149 professors and 717 students.
(440 men, 277 women) from India and outside India in 2006, and a large Library. In Central India, the foremost madrasa is the Dar al-Ulum Taj al-Masjid \(^8\) (founded 1948) in Bhopal. South India, especially the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh, also contain several important madrasas.

The method of teaching Arabic in these madrasas is grammar-centered and text-oriented. The focus is on reading and understanding classical Arabic texts. Speaking skills are not emphasized, but stylized prose writing skills (\textit{insha'}) are given some attention. Generally, modern proficiency-based techniques are not used, although there is a slow move towards their utilization. Rote memorization is favored over analysis.

1.6: Development of Arabic Literature in India During 20\textsuperscript{th} century:-

Arabic is one of the important languages among Semitic group of languages. Ya\textsuperscript{q}rib bin Qahtan is popularly known as the father of this language. Today, it is one of the official languages of the UNO (United Nations Organization) and is spoken by a large group of masses in Asia and Africa. During the heyday of Islamic civilization, it was the lingua franca of a vast Islamic empire and its universal language of learning. It has left much influence over the European as well as Indian languages. Besides, it is the holy language of Islam and as such it has been studied in every nook and corner of the globe as a language of a great religion and civilization.

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 the 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, these ties of friendship 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 enrich with their treasures of various
sciences of knowledge, arts culture and literatures.  

It is to be discussed here that India has been one of the most-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 the official language of the
government and administration and the unrivalled medium of sacred
knowledge and literary achievement. Moreover, various Arabic madrasa
and cultural institutions of higher learning under the personal guidance
and scholarly interest of the Sultans were set up which produced a good
number of poets, writers, Islamic thinkers, commentators of the holy
Qur’an, scholars of the Hadith etc. Their noble works can be compared to
any work of any great Arab scholar. Mention may be made here in this
regard about the following scholars. Allamah Sighani Lahori (d.1252),
the author of the great book al-“’Ubabuz-Zakhir wa al-Lubabul-Fakhir”
on grammar and lexicography. Gulam Ali Azad Bilgrami (1116-
1200A.H.), who has penned many outstanding Arabic books on history
and literature like “Subhatul-Marjan”. Besides he is regarded to be the
greatest Indian Arabic poet and is well known as Hassanul-Hind. About
11,000 verse composed by him are the living proof of his extraordinary
poetic talent. Shah Waliullah Dihlawi (1114-1176 A.H.), who has
produced the great book “Hujjatullahil-Balighah” on the science of

The Indian Muslim scholars, therefore, took farsighted 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, and 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 culture as well as modern studies to a considerable extent. Consequently, Arabic language and literature, today, has been one of the important subjects of learning.
It is to be mentioned here that the Nadwis (scholars produced by Nadwa) took utmost care in order to bringing out the Arabic language from the corner of obscurity and stagnation and proved with potency and lively activity that Arabic is a living language having bright prospects. They are still on their noble efforts in enriching and developing Arabic language and Islamic culture in India.

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 the great Arab literatures. For instance, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (1914-1999 A.D), the author of the world famous book *Islam and the World*, Abdul Aziz Maimoni (1888-1978A.D.) who formerly held the chair of Arabic in the universities of Alighar and Karachi and since long has been recognized as one of the greatest living authorities on Arabic language and literature, Hamidud-din al-Farahi (1280-1349AA.H), who has written the famous tafsir “*al-Imaan Fi Aqsamil-Quran*” 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, etc., therefore, are visible in their popular writings. They are also followed by some later modern writers in these aspects to some extent.

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, etc. into Arabic by them. Likewise, they have translated hundreds of shorts stories, plays, and 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 in present days 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.

On the other hand, the scholars of the religious institutions have occupied leading position in compiling and producing books purely in Arabic on Islamic as well as various literary topics. Here mention may be made the names of Anowar Shah Kashmiri (1292-1352 A.H), the author of the most authentic book on Hadith literature “Faidul Bari”, Wahiduzzaman Kairanwi (1929-1996 A.D), the writer of the book “al-Qira-atul – Wadihah”, Rabi Hasan Nadwi (b. 1929 A.D), the present Rector of Nadwa and the author of the outstanding book “al-Adabul Arabi Baina Ardin wa Naqdin” and so on. In reality, they have devoted themselves exclusively to the study of religious sciences and to the cultivation of high standard Arabic.

It is significant to note here in this context that like all other non-Arab states, in India too, the holy Qurʾān has been one of the greatest factors which participated in developing the Arabic language, widening its scopes and strengthening its basic elements. The Muslims assumed the study of Arabic with great importance in order to appreciating the teachings of the divinely messages of the Qurʾān. 84

The most prominent Madrasas and Islamic learning centers which have been playing leading part in enriching Arabic literature and Islamic culture throughout the country are (a) Darul Uloom Deoband, (b) Darul
Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, (c) Jamiah Salafiyyah Benares, (d) Madrasatul Islah and madrasatul Falah, Azamgarh, e) Jamiah Islamiyyah, Mubarakpur, (f) Darul Uloom Baskandi, (g) Al- Jamiatul Arabiatul Islamia; Badarpur, etc.

The most famous colleges in which Arabic language and literature have been taught are numerous in number located in various parts of the country.

Now let's cast a glance in the leading Indian universities which have been contributing much in various ways in the development of the Arabic language and literature to a large extent. Calcutta University established in 1857 A.D. Arabic study in this university was started from its very inception and it got new impetus since 1916 A.D. presently, the Department of Arabic and Persian has been taking utmost care in teaching Arabic with special attention in modern and functional Arabic.

Madras University established in 1857 A.D. Arabic was included in its offering courses in 1927 A.D. and was taught under the Department of Islamic studies which contained Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages. In these days, Here, Arabic is being taught in various levels of learning like M.A., M.Lit., Ph.D. and certificate courses.

Aligarh Muslim University which was founded by Sayed Ahmad Khan as a college in 1875 A.D. and was recognized as a university in 1920 A.D.; It has been offering courses on Arabic language and literature since its very inception through the orientalists. This university has a remarkable contribution in the development of Arabic literature in the Indian subcontinent. In addition to teaching, its concerned Department has been publishing a large number of Arabic books, journals,
newspapers, magazines, etc. Some of them have already gained much popularity in the Arab world.

Bombay University established in 1857 A.D. In this university too, Arabic language and literature has been taught in different stages of learning including doctorate.

Jamiah Milliyyah Islamiah established in 1920. Although Arabic was introduced in its course list at the very beginning yet the Department of Arabic came into existence in 1982 A.D. Here, different courses on Arabic language and literature are offered in different standards of education including B.A., M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D along with certificate and diploma courses in modern Arabic.  

Besides the above-mentioning universities, in this connection, it needs mention of Delhi University, Lucknow University, Usmaniyyah University, Benares Hindu University, Allahabad University, Kerala University, Kasmir University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Gauhati University, Assam University etc.

History of Arabic studies in Assam dates back to the pre-colonial period. It is significant to note that Arabic, in this region, has been taught in almost all stages of formal education, in addition to the private madrasa of higher Islamic learning. The number of Arabic learners especially, in schools, colleges and universities, is the highest in comparison to other states of the country. But unfortunately, due to the prevalent defective syllabi in north-east India has not been satisfactory at all. Modern facilities of language teaching and modernization of the syllabi, therefore, are the urgent need of the hour.

After the discovery of oil in most of the Arab states, Arabic studies throughout the world got a new impetus because of the political, culture,
strategic and economic importance of this region. India, too, did not lag behind in this respect. Besides the government, tens of thousands of the people irrespective of caste and creed devoted their attention in gaining knowledge in Arabic. At the same time, Arabic was included as one of the important curricular subjects in the syllabi of various educational institutions including universities. Above all, some special Arabic learning centers were set up across the country with a view to preparing students for availing the growing job opportunity in the Arab world. In fact, millions of Indians are working in different field in various Arab states and are sending a huge amount of money to their motherland. Significantly enough that these people have been playing an important role in the growth of India economic, culture and foreign policy and thus in bringing the two nations closer to each other.

So far as the prospects of Arabic language are concerned, now-a-days, in addition to the Arab land, there are many job opportunities in non Arab countries as well. In India, for example, an increasing number of scopes for the Arabic learners have been created in various private and government educational institutions, radio, television, internet, journalism, tourism, translation, different multinational companies and in the offices of the intelligence bureaus in addition to the Arab embassies situated in New Delhi.

In summing up, it can safely be asserted that the future of the Arabic language in India is very bright. In fact, its study is going to be raised to a desirable status in various regions of the country. Significantly enough that, in the 20th and the current centuries, the literary as well as scholarly products of the Indian literary figures and writes 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.
1. *The Holy Qur’an*, Ch-12:2,
2. *The Holy Qur’an*, Ch-43:3,
22. Kaš bin Zuhir, Line î 52 of *Qaside Banatul-Suṣd*.


69 Literacy among Indians in general is 75.3% male, 53.7% female (2003 estimate);
Muslim literacy rates are lower, at 67.6% male, 50.1% female. *Census of India 2001*. Until the twentieth century, literacy rates were some-times as low as 10-20%.
72 S.M. Yusuf, ḤArabic Language and Literature in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent,Ô
73 Qamar al-Din, *Hindustan ki dini darsgahen*. 70.
75 Ibid., 63-65.
78 Ibid., 61
81 Deshai, Ziyauddin A : Centres of Islamic Learning in India, New Delhi, 1978.
82 Ibid.
Ahmad, Dr. Ashaf : Musahamatul-Hind Fi al-Nathr al-Arabi Khilala al-Qarn al-Ishreen, New Delhi, Makoff printers, 2000.