Chapter II
Support for Hindi by the Bengalis both inside and outside Bengal
Hindi in the Nineteenth Century

It has been claimed by Sri Chandravali Pandey in 'KACHARI KI BHĀṢĀ AUR LIPI', that along with Persian, East India Company accepted 'Hindi' language, (HINDUĪ ZABĀN) and 'Nagari Script' (NĀGARĪ AKṢAR). But in the first half of the nineteenth century the tables turned. Not only did the Muhammadans begin to label Hindi as a 'BHADDĪ BOLĪ' or 'GAWĀRĪ BOLĪ' (Vulgar speech), but a section of the Hindus also began to express disregard for the Hindi language. The attitude of the Mussalmans in this respect is quite understandable. They had been learning Persian in pre-British days for official purposes and using the 'Khariboli' in their domestic conversations. The three principal cities of India - Delhi, Lucknow and Calcutta - were the three principal centres of Urdu culture. The script of the Hindus could not be so attractive to the Mussalmans as the Perso-Arabic script, which was in use among them. Moreover, this language had received royal patronage in South India (1), and in the North a number of Mussalmans composed verses in this language in Perso-Arabic script. So, naturally, their choice fell on Urdu. The Europeans also preferred Urdu to Hindi. The reason is not far to seek. The Britishers would have to study Persian as the court language. The urdu script would offer no difficulty to those who had already picked up Persian in Persian script. Moreover, with their study of Urdu, they would know the lingua franca of India, Khariboli Hindi or Hindustani, without experiencing any difficulty in mastering an alien script, Nagari.

(1) For specimen see 'Urdu-Sahpare' by Mahiuddin Quadri. ('Haidarabad - Dakan', Part I, 1929.)

See also Linguistic Survey of India by Sir Abraham George Grierson; Vol IX, Part I.
Dr. Gilchrist was of opinion that in India the language Hindustani was available in three forms:

- 1) Court language
- 2) Munshi language
- 3) Popular language

He took the middle course, 'MADHYA MARG', the Munshi language, but was not in favour of totally cold-shouldering Khariboli and Brajabhasa (See: The Oriental Fabulist: 1803 p.7).

Very soon, the court language Persian was replaced by Urdu. Pt. Sukla in Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas writes:

From the side of the Mussalmans a strong move was made... After one year, i.e. in Samvat 1894 (1837 A.D.), Urdu was made the court language in our province. (H.S.I.: Sukla: p.430).

Pt. Sukla further tells us that, thanks to the grace of the Britishers, the language Urdu gained ground, and Hindi, as a language, began to dwindle into insignificance. For everyday purpose and for aristocracy, Urdu was used by all. In the name of the state-language, young students had to pick up Urdu and those, who had mastered Urdu, were considered literate. (Sukla: Ibid: p.430). In education also, Hindi had to give place to Urdu. When the rulers wanted to establish 'MADRASAS' or schools for the Mussalman students, their choice naturally fell on Urdu. But when the need for opening up Hindi schools for the Hindu students, a strong move by the interested Mahasabha nonplussed the Britishers, and they realised:

'In our opinion the study of such a language which
With the passage of time the Urdu-Hindi question grew in importance. The Muhammadans were becoming more and more anti-Hindi. After SAMvat 1911 (1854 A.D.), the Muhammadans, under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed, came forward with the audacious proposal of excluding Hindi, even from the syllabus of the vernacular Schools and wanted to replace it by Urdu.

It created considerable discontent among the Hindi-speaking Hindus. They found a champion in Raja Shivaprasad. But the defence of the Hindus was weakened by the champion himself. Though Raja Shivaprasad stood for Hindi, yet he made a compromise with the lovers of Urdu and stood against those who had been trying to purge off Perso-Arabic words from the vocabulary of Hindi.

Raja Shivaprasad spoke for the language MILI - JULI i.e., mixed Urdu and Hindi and the script 'DEVANAGARI'. From 1860 onwards, the language of the Raja Saheb drifted more towards Urdu.

The case for Hindi had been so weakened that in 1868 A.D. Mr. M.S. Haveli from the office of the Director of Public Instruction, opined that 'it would have been better if the Hindu students learnt Urdu and were not taught to express themselves in a "dialect", which must admit the superiority of Urdu in the long run.'

So, we see, that in the middle of the nineteenth
century, Hindi was taught with the utmost disrespect. The non-Hindu Indians were against Hindi. The Europeans were not favourably disposed towards Hindi. The Hindi-speaking Hindus were more or less callous in different parts of India. In Bihar, (if we accept Bihar as a Hindi speaking province) silence was eloquent. In Banaras, Raja Shivaprasad was steering the middle course. Practically he was advocating for Hindustani in Nagari script. In the United provinces, the Education Directorate was not in favour of Hindi. In the Punjab, (if we accept that a portion of the Punjab was Hindi-speaking), popular enthusiasm was more for Urdu than for Hindi. Delhi was also a case in point. It was one of the three principal centres of Urdu culture, the other two being Calcutta and Lucknow. This state of affairs continued till the days of Bharatendu, and even after him, its ghost made its occasional visitations in the idle brains of busy politicians. Before the decision of the Congress Government to accept Hindi as the lingua franca of India, great political leaders inside the Congress spoke for the acceptance of Hindustani (a compromise language of Hindi and Urdu in both the scripts, Nagari and Urdu) as the lingua franca of India. So, it is quite evident how difficult this Urdu-Hindi question was and what amount of courage and intellectual acumen, not to speak of the power of organisation, were necessary for the solution of the problem in favour of Hindi. The contribution of the Hindi-speakers and the writers are undoubtedly there. But the importance of the Bengalis, whose untiring zeal and wonderful foresight, culminated in the present pre-eminence of Hindi, is, I think, not to be belittled in this connection. In
In those days, men from Bengal were holding important offices, executive or educational, in different provinces of Northern India, and they, by selfless devotion to the cause of Hindi, helped to fulfil the dreams of the Hindus for one language in Northern India.

Bengal for Hindi

Bengal recognised the importance of Hindi long before the advent of the British in India. Even before the attack of the Turks in the 10th century A.D. Bengal recognised the importance of the older form of Hindi, Sauraseni Apabhramsa, and composed poems in Western Apabhramsa along with Bengali (vide History of Bengal. Vol. I, p. 382). The Brajabuli literature also bears testimony to Bengal's love for Hindi forms and expressions. Alaol and a few other poets of medieval Bengal, translated from Hindi to enrich Bengali. Hindu poets of medieval Bengal borrowed Hindi expressions in a number of their original compositions in Bengali and also composed Hindi songs and lyrics according to their sweet will (See in this connection Prof. Manindra Mohan Basu's 'BENGAL SBHITYA' VOL. II). Some three hundred years ago, Hindi Bhaktamala was rendered in Bengali (See President's Address in the 34th All India Hindi Literary Conference at Karachi: p. 42). Bharat Chandra, the most celebrated poet of the 18th century Bengal, composed verses in Hindi. Under foreign rule Bengal's enthusiasm for Hindi did not wane. On the contrary, a number of eminent Bengalis came forward either to enrich Bengali with the help of Hindi, or to champion the cause of Hindi language and literature. From the college of Fort William Tarini Charan Mitra edited and revised 'BAITAL PACHST' in 1805 A.D.
It was he, who had already contributed to the trilingual rendering of "The Oriental Fabulist" in Bengali, Persian and Hindoostanee. (See Introduction: Oriental Fabulist: pp.XXIV-XXV).

This Polyglot translation of "The Oriental Fabulist" was first published in 1803 A.D. from the College of Fort William.

The names of the learned Natives who have generally been employed on this Polyglot Translation, are as follows:–

- Tarnee Churn Mitr, Bungla, Persian & Hindoostanee.
- Meer Buhadoor Ulee, Persian and Hindoostanee.
- Meer Sher Ulee Ufsos, Persian and Hindoostanee.

(Ibid. pp. XXIV-XXV)

After the death of the head Munshi of the Hindustani department, Meer Sher Ulee Ufsos, Tarini Charan was appointed head Munshi of the department in 1809 A.D.

(At a Council held on 1 Feb. 1810 Meer Sher Ulee Ufsos, head Munshi in the Hindoostanee Dept. having departed this life on the 19th December 1809 - Resolved that the following promotions and appointments in that Dept. take effect from the 21 December, viz.

Tarnee Churn appointed Head Munshi on the 21st December in the room of Meer Ulee deceased ..........(Home Mis. No.561, p.186).

Tarini Charan, remained as the departmental head till June 1, 1830, when he had to retire in his fifty-eight year.

(The following situation to cease from 1 June
1830 ... Tarnee Churn, Head Moonshee in the Hindooatone Department of the College of Fort William, to whom a pension of Rs.100 per mensem ... is fifty eight years of age.


During the long tenure of service extending over a quarter of a century, Tarini Charan Mitra of Bengal, undoubtedly did his best for the development of the Hindustani prose literature from Fort William College. But unfortunately, I have not come across any mention of his name in any history of Hindi literature.

Raja Rammohan Roy

Raja Rammohan Roy, was a great man. His wonderful mastery of different languages is still remembered by all scholars of India. From Arabic to Hebrew, a vast linguistic world was under his sway.

Historians of Hindi literature remember Raja Rammohan Roy as one of the earliest contributors to modern Hindi prose at a time when Hindi prose was still in the nebular stage. Rammohan recognised the importance of Hindi as a language of growing eminence and translated his books on Vedanta (VEDANTASAR, VEDANTA GRANTHA, 1815 A.D.) in Hindi and distributed the books free (See: Rammohan Roy : Brajendra Nath Bandyopadhyay; pp.82/83).

Discussing the importance of Rammohan in the field of Hindi prose literature Pt. Sukla writes :-

(RAJA SAHAB KI BHASA ME EK ADH JAGAH KUCH BANGLA PAN ZARUR MILTA HAI, PAR USKA KHP ADHIKARSHA ME MAHT HAI JO SASTRAJNA VIDHANO KE VYAVHAR ME ATA THA.)

'In the language of Raja Sahab, there is undoubtedly the stamp of Bengali in a few places, but in most cases the languages followed by him is that which is in use among the scholars of the Hindu Sastras ...'
Though his Hindi was not remarkable, yet we must not forget the fact that the works were of a serious nature where the language of an erudite scholar is bound to be scholastic. Moreover, similar books in Hindi by any Hindi-speaking writer had not yet appeared. So, the importance of these works in the history of Hindi literature is twofold; firstly, in subject-matter these were the precursors of Hindi Essay literature, and secondly, these Hindi works were not written with the intention of providing the civilians with easy, cheap and conversational Hindi. It was the employment of Hindi for a high serious subject for the first time in modern Hindi period, that must not be lost sight of.

The enthusiasm of Raja Rammohan for Hindi did not and with these translations. He took upon himself the task of rebuilding India and did his best by publishing a number of papers in different languages: English, Persian, Bengali and Hindi. (Ref. to Bengal Herald, Mirat-Ul-Akhbar, Bangadut Bengali, and Bangadut Hindi). "In Samvat 1886 (i.e. 1829 A.D.) he published a newspaper in Hindi" (SAMVAT 1886 MÊ UNHÖNE 'BANGADût' NÄM KÄ EK SAMVÄLPATRA BHI HINDI MÊ NIKALÁ---Pt. Sukla : H.S.I.); and, though considering its date of publication, it was the second journal in Hindi (See HINDI Kï PATRA PATRIKÄ: AKHIL VINAYA & CONHÅRM VARMÄ, 'CAÇGAL'?--), the first being 'UDANT MÁRTAÇD' of Jugol Kishore (published from Calcutta in 1826 A.D.), yet it was second to none, in intrinsic worth. In the formative period of modern Indian culture during the first few decades of the 19th century, the journals played the most important role of spreading national consciousness in India. In this respect
the journal of Rammohan Ray was better than the journal of one Jugol Kishore. It is quite imaginable that a views-paper like 'Bangadut', which embodied the views of a great intellectual like Rammohan, could give more incentive to serious thinking, than an ordinary news-paper of the type of 'Udent Martand'. Moreover, the language of 'Bangadut' was less scholastic (%) than the Hindi translations of Rammohan mentioned before, and this also served the purpose of symbolising the preference of the Hindus for the simple Sanskritic Hindi to Urdu. The question, whether, Urdu or Hindustani, the Mussalmani complexion of Khariboli or the Hindu counterpart of the same language, should be the language par excellence in Northern India, had been worrying the scholars from a pretty long time, and the choice of language by a Persian scholar like Rammohan in the shape of Simple Sanskritic Hindi must not go unnoticed.

Pt. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was well versed in Hindi. He translated 'BAITAL PACTIS' into Bengali.

Pt. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was also an examiner in Hindi of the newly established University of Calcutta (vide President's address in the 34th session of the All India Hindi literary conference at Karachi p.42).

Bharatendu's magazine in Hindi, 'KAVI-VACAN-SUDHA', sometimes received letters from the pen of Pt. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (vide 'HINDI KAT PATRA PATRIKA': VINAY and VARMA: p.12).

Keshab Chandra Sen realised the importance of Hindi in the unification of India, and in 1878 he boldly announced:

'Y'ADI BHARAT BHARATVARSE BHARAT NAI NAY, TABRE

(%) Historians of Hindi literature like Pt. Sukla, Shrija Raine Das, Dr. L. Barsnaya, Viney and Varma have paid homage to 'Bangadut'. But, as none of them has offered extracts from the journal in their works, many a scholar in Bengal is still dubious about the existence of the journal ('Bangadut') in Hindi.
If unification of India is not possible without one language, then what is to be done? The solution of the problem is possible if we use only one language in India. Of all the languages current in India, Hindi is used almost all over India. If Hindi is made the lingua franca of India, then it can be effected easily and in no time.

Keshab Ch. Sen. in India, Hindi is in use almost all over India.

'Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, the great educationist and social reformer of Bengal, also realised the importance of Hindi and wrote:

'Bhudev Chandra Mukhopadhyaya

Among the languages current among Indians, it is Hindi-Hindustani which is the premier one, and thanks to the Mussalmans it has spread over the entire continent (of India). So it may be surmised that in some distant future time, the speeches of the whole of India will remain united by leaning on that only.'

(Translated by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji: p. 144; footnotes: Indo-Aryan and Hindi).

A Bengali Brahmo Samajist to champion Hindi in the Punjab. Among those who helped to spread Hindi in the Punjab, the name of Babu Nabin Chandra Roy should be written in gold. This honorary Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, Deputy Accountant General, Fellow-Examiner and Deputy Registrar of the University of
Punjab, was the life force of the Punjab Brahma samaj. (For a fuller history of Nabin Chandra Roy's career the readers may see 'BANGER BAHNE BANGALI': PUNJAB: pp. 414/16 : Jnanendra Mohan Das). And not only did he bring about wonderful changes in the religious history of the Punjab, but also raised his organ voice to silence the oppositionists in the demand for making Urdu, the only language of the Punjab, to the exclusion of Hindi.

Pt. Sukla writes:

'Like Shivaprasad, he had to fight the opponents, for Hindi. For the propagation of learning, a society was established in Lahore. In Samvat 1923 (1886 A.D.) in a meeting of the society one Syed Hadi Hussain stressed on the adoption of Urdu as the only language for the country. In another meeting of the society, Nabin Babu, while refuting Khan Sahib's argument, said, 'The adoption of Urdu will not be beneficial to our countrymen, because, it is the language of the Muhammadans alone. The Muhammadans have for nothing loaded the language Urdu with innumerable Persian and Arabic words, and it is not suitable for verses of all types. It is the duty of the Hindus, that they devote themselves for enriching the language, handed down to them, from generation to generation. Urdu is found weak for any serious composition and it is suitable only for love-lyrics.'

(I)
It has been wrongly supposed by some that the popularisation of Hindi in the Punjab was the outcome of Maharshi Dayananda's activities. Undoubtedly Swami Dayananda's untiring zeal saw the spread of Hindi in the Punjab, but his case had been made easier by the earlier social reformer, Babu Nabin Chandra Roy.

According to Pt. Sukla, the Arya Samaj was founded in (Samvat 1932) \(1875\) A.D. by Swami Dayananda; and he made the study of Hindi compulsory for all the Arya Samajists. (Sukla: p.445).

And Babu Nabin Chandra of Punjab, himself prepared books in Hindi and caused others to write books in Hindi between \(1863\) and \(1880\) A.D. (Samvats 1920 and 1937) (p.443, Ibid).

According to Pt. Sukla, Babu Nabin Chandra holds an equally important position with Raja Shiva Prasad as the saviour of Hindi from the questionable move of the champions of Urdu. (H.S.I. p.443).

Babu Nabin Chandra’s contributions in this field of activity are discussed below:

(1) Babu Nabin Chandra stood for Hindi from the Punjab Education Department and either himself wrote books or caused others to write books in Hindi from Samvat 1920 to 1937 and

vyarthabahutenarbipmarsikesabdbhairdehai/padyayahanchandobaddharaacanakehbihurdupayuktanahin/hinduokayah. kartavyahaikeapniparamparagatbhagakounmatikarte
calē/urdumezāšikikavitākeatiyiktkisīgambhīrviṣayko
vyaktikarnekīsaktihinahīhai/"(hi--sā--iti:sukla:pp.443/4). (2/2)
these books were recommended by the D.P.I., Punjab, as text books.

(ii) From the Punjab Brahma Samaj, Nabin Chandra brought forth magazines like Hindu Bandhab and Jnan Pradayini (1868 A.P.) in Hindi.

(iii) The language supported by Babu Nabin Chandra and accepted by the Education Department, Punjab, was Hindi leaning towards Sanskrit, i.e., the Hindi later accepted by Swami Dayananda and in recent times by the Congress Government as the lingua franca of India.

(iv) Babu Nabin Chandra devoted his life for the spread of female education in the Punjab. His daughter, Hemanta Kumari Devi, brought out Sugrhiini (1888), the first Hindi magazine for the ladies and by the ladies.

Hindi in Bihar: Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya.

To every scholar of Hindi it is well known that in the first half of the 19th century Hindi received cold treatment from the Government of Bihar and that, due to the untiring zeal of Bhudev Chandra, Hindi in Bihar totally ousted Persian from its aristocracy.

An inspector of schools in Bihar circle, Bhudev, did his best for the abolition of Persian from the court and for the acceptance of Hindi as the court language instead. Moreover, he founded a number of standard Hindi schools in Bihar in addition to his normal duties as the inspector of schools. A number of Bengali works were under his able guidance and inspiration translated into Hindi. In a letter to Pt. Ramgati Nyayaratna dated Bankipur the 2nd September, 1880 he wrote in Bengali:
'Since my arrival in Bihar I have been trying for the abolition of Persian. The vernacular schools (Hindi) were utterly neglected before my arrival in this place. I have helped them to regain their prestige and now their number has swollen ten to fifteen-fold. There had been the permission of the Government to use Nagari script in place of Persian but that was not popular. I spoke for the acceptance of Nagari script and did my best to have it accepted by the Government.'

(Translated from BHUDEV CARIT, Part II, pp. 132/33).

The people of Bihar could not remain silent over such a piece of work and Pt. Ambika Dutt Vyas has lavished supreme praise on Bhudev Chandra:

(a) DHANYA DHANYA GAVARNMEN'T PARJA SUKHDAYI /
    JAMANI KE DUR KARI NAGARI CALAI/ (2/3)
    'BHUVAN DEV' KARI PUKAR LAT NIKA TE JAI/
    PARJA DUKH DUR KARHA JAMANI DURAI/ (2/3)
    etc etc ...

'Many thanks to the Govt., which for the benefit of the people has introduced Nagari in place of (Jamani the Mussalmani) Persian 'Bhuvan Deva' (literally 'the lord of the universe') i.e. 'BHUVAN DEV' went to the Governor and asked him to redress the grievances of the people by abolishing the Mussalmani language (JAMANI) Persian'.

In another poem also Pt. Ambika Datta Vyas has spoken highly of the achievements of Bhudev (see SAHITYA SADHAK CARITMALA NO.43 : BHUDEV MUKHOPADHYAY : pp 36/38). Thus Bhudev did one great thing. He made the Government recognise the claims of the people of Bihar. Hindi took the place of Persian and 'KAITHI' the place of the foreign script.
In between two border lands of Hindi language (Bihar and the Punjab) lay the vast tract of land, including two very important centres of Hindu culture: Banaras and Allahabad. Banaras is not only a sacred land to the Hindu pilgrims for its ancient temples and holy relics but is also the home-land of Kabir, Tulsi, Bharatendu, Prasadhand and 'Prasad'. Moreover, Banaras had been one of the principal centres of Sanskrit culture from time immemorial. So, naturally from Banaras came the movement for Hindi. But unfortunately the prime mover of the resolution, Raja Shiva Prasad, very soon recognised the importance of a mixed language ("MILIJULI BHASA") like Urdu (see Chapter III: see also in this connection H.S.I. by Pt. Sukla). But Babu Taramohan Mitra of Banaras never gave away the cause of Hindi. His mother tongue was not Hindi. Moreover, he served quite a considerable time under Raja Shiva Prasad as the editor of BANARAS AKHBAR. So, he could have remained as a mere sight-seer in those eventful days of the Hindi language. But he showed unflinching devotion to Sanskritic Hindi, and in SUDHAKAR, which in later time was edited by him in Hindi from Banaras, the Hindi which he followed was not very far off from the Hindi accepted later by the Congress Government as the lingua franca of India. It was pure, simple, Sanskritic Hindi, characterised by balance and precision (see in this connection Chapter III).
At about the same time a number of forgotten heroes from Allahabad raised their voice for Hindi. Among these heroes who tried to shout down Urdu were also some Bengali settlers at Allahabad, and as some of the Bengali settlers occupied very high position as Government officers, their voice was considered by the Government along with the anti-Hindi slogans of Sir Syed Ahmad and his followers (see in this connection BANGER BAHIRE BANGALI by Jnanendra Mohan Das : pp 72/74.) (See also Aligarh Institute Gazette of Friday, December 25, 1868.) Jnanendra Mohan in his book writes:

"Many of you will be astonished to hear that the movement which continued for years for making Hindi the court language and for which several books and pamphlets were published from the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, originated with Babu Sarada Prasad Sanyal, the Supdt., A.G., Allahabad. (Ibid p.72).

But even a greater amount of zeal for Hindi was evinced by the Bengalis from Allahabad. The Indian Press occupies an important place in the history of Bengal's cultural contribution to modern India. It was from this Indian Press that came books of paramount importance like Hindi Sabdasagar and Ram Charit Manas. The greatest Bengali magazine 'Pravasi' came out from this press in 1901. The greatest Hindi magazine 'Saraswati' followed its model from the same press. In my chapter on Hindi periodicals, I have dwelt at length on Saraswati's inheritance from Bengali Pravasi. It cannot be gainsaid that through the Indian Press of Allahabad, the Bengalis helped Hindi literature in two ways: firstly, by modernising Hindi literature through Saraswati, and secondly, by raising the standard of Hindi publications by printing books like those mentioned above."