Chapter III

Politics of Language: Emergence of Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani in North Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh

Introduction

In the third decade of the nineteenth century the East India Company was turning around to introducing a new language of instruction. With the defeat of the Orientalists\(^1\) in the Anglicist-Orientalist controversy English came to be the language of instruction and patronage for Sanskrit and Persian declined.\(^2\) The language of the coloniser became the language of administration and education.\(^3\) Even though the language was introduced in the educational institutions in the urban areas and amongst the upper sections of society, this sudden and dramatic imposition encountered some resistance. The attempt was to achieve too many things in a short time; and reforms and counter reforms became the order of the day. This finally resulted in the emergence of a new educated class socialized into the idea that India lagged behind the modern developed states.

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\(^1\) Orientalists were that group of English officials who preferred the Indian classical and vernacular languages as the medium of effective administration. They thus supported and patronised the classical languages such as Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic, and recognized the importance of vernacular languages such as Urdu and Hindi.


The process of identity formation is a complex one. The newly formed middle class was seeking to represent the nation. Since they had not yet acquired the right to represent themselves politically, they required others to do so. A sense of national identity could be forged through a discourse and praxis about national transformation. The Hindi poet, Bhartendu Harishchandra tried his best through his works, speeches, and associations to create a place for Hindi as a national language during the national struggle. He said, ‘sab unnatiyom ka mul dharma hai’. Harishchandra’s main concern was the creation of informed public opinion and the constitution of self-identity in the Hindi region. Hindi was perceived as the symbolic instrument for fighting colonization and English.

Language, literature, religion and territorial allegiance were all aspects of being ‘Hindu’. All those who inhabited in the subcontinent called ‘Hindustan’ identified this word. Sections of this newly educated realized that Hindi and Urdu were really the same language that had evolved within India but was written in different scripts. The so called Hindi-Urdu controversy also revolved around the question of different scripts. And the subject of this study, Pandit Malaviya, was one of the main advocators for the Hindi language written in the Devanagari script. The term ‘Hindu’ was used to distinguish the inhabitants of the sub-continent. Thus Hindi, Hindavi, Hindi was the language spoken by the ‘Hindus’. ‘Hindu’ was later used as a religious denomination for a variety of closely inter-related faiths. But crystallization of Hindu as a single faith like Islam

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1 V. Dalmia 1997 The Nationalisation of Hindu Tradition;  
2 Krishna Kumar. 1991. Political Agenda of Education;  
3 E.Sachau Alberuni’s India(1198); ‘Hindustan was both religiously and territorially defined, and was used variously in different periods.
was a creation of British historiography.\textsuperscript{1} Further, the early nationalists used ‘Hindu’ to seek a larger unity as they invoked the common cultural and historical heritage of the colonised population.\textsuperscript{2}

Nineteenth century India exhibited internal linguistic diversity as a result of which the language of administration, religious affairs, literary activity, and ordinary communication varied from region to region. Sanskrit was the language employed by Hindus for ritualistic purposes, as well was the written language of the high literary tradition. Persian was the dominant language of administration.

In the nineteenth century regional languages like Marathi, Bengali and the precursors of modern Hindi, \textit{Khari boli} and \textit{Braj bhasha} were acquiring literary prominence. The language spoken in the market place and bazaars of Oudh was a variant of the latter. The commercial and artisan castes also used a special secret script, which helped them to protect their activities from outsiders.\textsuperscript{3}

The issue of language was indented to alienate the Muslims. There already existed a perception that they had lagged behind the Hindu upper castes in acquiring a modern education. There thus arose the pressing need to create institutional facilities for promoting modern Western education amongst them.

\textsuperscript{1} James Mill, 1817. \textit{History of British India}; Mill’s chronology of Indian history included three periods: Hindu,-Muslim and British periods. This chronology was later taken up by thinkers such as Savarkar, Gowalkar. Gowalkar defined Hindu \textit{rashtra}, arguing that ‘non-Hindus must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of Hindu nation...” For details see M. S. Gowalkar, 1980 (rpt). \textit{Bunch of Thoughts}; Bangalore: Jagarana Prakashan, p.52. For an analysis of the consolidation of the sense of Hindu community, see Tapan Basu et al., 1993. \textit{Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right}; Orient Longman: Delhi, pp.12-55.


Sir Syed Ahmad Khan took up this task in 1856. He attempted to promote the social, political, and linguistic interests of the Muslims. A scientific society was established for the dissemination of western knowledge in 1864.¹

A small section of the literate elite possessed the language of administration. But the internal linguistic diversity created a kind of polarization between the literates and the non-literate. Thus when English was installed as the official language, Persian gradually disappeared and the social importance of Sanskrit diminished. However, certain dominant castes groups amongst the Hindus and Muslims moved to acquire the new language of power and governance.² Thus by the late nineteenth century Brahmins as a caste moved rapidly to acquire a command of the English language. The Kayasthas adopted English as the new official language at the Kayasthas Mahasabha at Patna and continued handling the accounts by adapting themselves to the new language of power.³

The Relationship between Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani before 1870

Language is a medium of communication, that is dear to every individual and through which she/he relate to culture and the past. Language takes long to evolve and is a mirror of the socio-cultural assimilation of new communities and groups. As it acquires a literary character, language becomes one of the markers of civilisation. As British colonial intentions in India began to become clearer, the

¹ Yusuf Ahmad (ed.), Selected documents from the Aligarh Archives .pp.5-31.
³ R. P. Singh 1998. ibid, p. 107
need to acquire an understanding of local languages, culture and laws became more urgent. Officers of the East India Company and later the Imperial Government were required to know the classical languages of the land. Fort William became an institution where these languages were acquired and it is at this institution that the linguistic, socio-cultural, and literary distinctions between Hindi and Urdu began to be constructed. Hindu and Muslim writers were invited from distant places to write prose in two different scripts - Devanagari and Perso-Arabic. While Lallu Lal and Sadal Mishra were hired for writing *Khari boli* prose in the Devanagari script by using words of Sanskrit origin, Meer Amman, Haidar Baksh Haidari, and Sher Ali 'Afsos' were encouraged to write *Khari boli* prose in the Persio-Arabic script by using Persio-Arabic words. *Prem Sagar* and *Bagh-o-Bahar* are few of the most representative literary works of this project that emanated at Fort William College.

This chapter discusses the introduction of Nagari scripts and the amplification of the constructed differences between Hindi and Urdu in the Northern Provinces. Capitalising on the government's ostensible commitment to teach in the 'vernacular', Hindu intelligentsia came forward in the cause of Hindi and promoted it as the language of larger population. They initiated an anti-Urdu campaign and demanded that Hindi be the language of instruction in the schools. This was countered by the elites among the Muslim who were in support of Urdu. These struggles became bitter due to intermingling of linguistic and religious identities, and the struggle became bitter with the rise of nationalism. The language controversy led the two religiously inclined groups to

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1 Lallu Lall. 1810. *Prem Sagar* (The Ocean of Love) in Hindi, which was begun in 1804 and completed in 1810
2 Meer Amman. 1803. *Bagh-o-Bahar*
consolidate themselves around distinct religious identities that were instrumental in paving the path for separatism. On the other hand colonial officials guided by their administrative goals implemented and revised policies on a test and trial basis. These experiments polarised tensions between dominant communities seeking to access power through the instrumentality of language.

However, there were voices of dissent even amongst the British. Thus Frederick John Shore in March 1834 informed the British government of "the language and character best suited for the education of the people",¹ in sections entitled "On the use of Hindostanee Language"² and "On the Introduction of the English Language into the Courts of Justice."³ Shore thought it an injustice to coerce the people of India to adopt a foreign language and character.⁴

¹ John W. Parker, 1837. Notes on Indian Affairs: Vol. I., London, p.433, Sir John Shore showed his concern on the issue of the language which was to be chosen for instruction and intellectual advancement of the natives of India. He was concerned about the diversity of opinion between the Orientalists and Anglicists; and most importantly the script in which the language should be written was a matter of dispute. He stressed the use of the vernacular as their number and any attempt to introduce a foreign language would prove counter-productive. He gestured towards the foreign script of English or Persian. But he pointed out that the 'majority of the people of India have already a written character, well known almost over most of the continent; and its main features are the same, although some slight modification in the shape of some of the letters exist in different provinces...we shall find it nearly as a hard task to compel a whole nation to change their written character, as to make them adapt a new language.' Thus he proposed that colonial officials should learn the language of the natives and train a few youths from amongst them in both the languages to run the administration smoothly. For details see Court Characters: Appendix pp. 1-8.

² Ibid, p.25 as quoted in Court Characters: pp.15-16 as: 'The substitution of Nagree for Persian Characters in Courts" which was submitted on May 20, 1832. Sir John Shore expressed his opinion about the use of Persian character in the courts or Nagari. Further he suggested that Nagree should have been the written character in the courts and offices. According to him Hindostanee was the language of the country with its script and that it should be introduced in the court. He found that Hindostanee differed in different regions and these differences were marked amongst the poor and illiterate. He canvassed for, with illustrations, the use of Nagree that would facilitate the smooth functioning of the other courts in India. See also in Court Characters: Appendix pp.1-8.

³ John W. Parker, 1837. ibid, Vol. I., p. 211.

⁴ John W. Parker, 1837. ibid, Vol.I., London, p.1 and see also in Court Characters: pp. 8-11.
The most widely spoken dialect in the region under discussion was ‘Braj bhasha’ and ‘Khari boli’ that became popular during the medieval ages. Due to the interaction between Persian and Braj speaking populations a new language developed over a period of time which was called ‘Hindi’, ‘Hindui /Hindavi’, ‘Hindustani’. Hindi/ Hindavi or the language was very similar to the Khari boli

1 Braj Bhasha was the language of poetry. Poets such as Bhartendu Harishchandra, Pratap Narain Mishra, Maharaja Pratap Singh of Ayodhya, Raja Lakshman Singh, PremGhan, Radhacharan Goswami, Kishorilal Goswami, Ambika Dutta Vyas wrote in Braj bhasha and popularized it in the second half of the nineteenth century. But Hindi literati had emerged such as Ayodhya Prasad Khatri who called Braj bhasha as ‘Gawaaroo Bhasha’ (village language). See Sri Narayan Chaturvedi, 1973. Adhunik Hindi Ka Aadikal (1857-1908) [Past of the Modern Hindi (1857-1908)]; Allahabad: Hindustani Academy, pp. 143-183. See also p. 184. See Court Characters; Appendix p. 20.

2 Khari boli is a new name invented after Hindustani, since it is not found in the older texts. See Padma Singh Sharma, 1951. Hindi, Urdu aur Hindustani (Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani); Hindustani Academy: Allahabad, p. 28. It was the language spoken in the villages around the Meerut-Bijnar region. This language was christened ‘Vernacular Hindustani’ by Grierson. Lalluji Lal later wrote ‘Prem Sagar’ in 1860 in this language. There were internal conflicts between Khari Boli and Braj bhasha. Under the umbrella of Bhartendu and subsequently with the emergence of nationalism Khari Boli was given preference over Brajbhasa. See Dheerendra Verma, (ed.), 1957 (7th edition). Gramin Hindi Arthart Hindi Ki Janpadi Boliyon Tatha Mukhya Saahityik Roopon Ke Udasaran, Parichay, Maanchitra and Vyakaran Ki Taalikaayon Sahit (Examples of the village Hindi or the Hindi spoken in the Janpads and their literary forms); Saahitya Bhavan Private Limited: Allahabad; Alok Rai, 2001. Hindi Nationalism; p.14; Francesca Orsini. 2002. The Hindi Public Sphere: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism. Oxford University Press: Oxford, p. 3.

3 See Jagannath Prasad Sharma, 1960. Hindi Ki Gadhya Shaili Ka Vikaas (Growth of Hindi Literature); Nagari Pracharani Sabha: Kashi, pp.3-34, citation from p.3.


5 Dr. Hoernle’s grammar of the Gaudian languages recommended a classification of all the dialects of North India under two heads, which he called Eastern and Western Hindi. He asked for the insertion of ‘u’ in between ‘d’ and ‘i’, in an article that appeared in the Calcutta Review. Thus he proposed the word ‘Hindui’ for the Eastern and Western Hindi. He proposed to include Maithali as the language of Eastern Hindi which was to be used in government schools and government courts. For details see Court Characters; appendix p. 24.

6 A great deal has been written on the subject. A number of articls canvassing for Hindi and Urdu were published after 1857. Some of them are authored by Dr. Tarachand, ‘Bhasha Ka Sawal’ (Question of language); Rai Rajeshwar Bali, ‘Bhasha Ka Sawal: Angrezi Nahin’ (Question of language, not of English) as edited by Sri Laksmikant Verma (ed.), 1971. op.cit. See also Vasudha Dalmia, Nationalisation of Hindi Tradition, Chapter I; Alok Rai, 2001, 2002. Hindi Nationalism.
/Braj bhasha and was written in Devanagari script amongst others. The coins issued by Muslim rulers often carried inscriptions in the Nagari. Further a number of Muslim litterateurs wrote in Hindavi. Finally, Mughal rulers introduced Persian in the courts for administrative purpose but the language of the street and business was Hindavi.


The term Urdu used to designate the language was coined during the reign of Shah Jahan in the seventeenth century. Educated Muslims and those Hindus who came in contact with them like Punjabis, Desi Kashmiris and the old Kayasthas used the language and helped in its literary development. The Kayasthas and other Hindus employed in the Mughal court and were part of the administration had a working knowledge of the language and script. There are

1 There is no clear view among the scholars of the nineteenth century or twentieth century as to when actually Urdu acquired the status of language. One of the popular notion is related to the meaning of the word Urdu which is Bazaar. When the Muslims stayed in and around Delhi for long then with the interaction of the people, who spoke Persian, Turkish and Arabic with that of the common language of the people Hindavi, a new language was born and this was Urdu. This language was first of all used outside Delhi Fort and was spoken by the army—Afghans, Indians, and other Muslim Pathans etc; thus called Urdu-e Maula. This name was popular during Shah Jahan’s reign. It was the language naturally accepted by the Indians while interacting with the army. This was the language accepted by the rulers and thus spread in North India’s educated and elite class. Urdu was then part of the common mass language with the passage of time as for example in case of English even the rural people speak certain words of English as if they know English, but the truth is that they do not know English. For example today a person might say ‘Humko chance nahin mila’ (I did not get chance), and in that period it might have been said as ‘Humko Mauka nahin mila’ or Humko Avsar nahin mila’. It must have been that Urdu became the mass language in North India because of that. Khari boli/ Hindavi were the base for Urdu and was called as the language which was spoken in Daccani (language in the south India). The literary Urdu (seventeenth-eighteenth century) developed before literary Hindi (late nineteenth-early twentieth century). See Dr. Dheerendra Verma (ed.), Gramin Hindi; p. 12-13; See S. R. Faruqi, 2001. Early Urdu Literary Culture and History; Delhi: Oxford University Press. See also Court Characters; appendix p. 19.


3 The court language in the sultanate period and Mughal period was Persian and all those who worked in the court were to know the language and the script well. It was the Kayasthas and the Mahajans who intended to work learnt and internalised Persian for their livelihood, but that was the language for work.

4 As when the Muslims came to rule in North India by end of tenth century the languages used were Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali and others for the official use in different periods but the local dialects of the common mass was not disturbed. Similarly when Persian came to India it acquired a new form as ‘Hindavi’ which was the language developing in and around Delhi and later also spread to the areas where these writers and poets went. For example the language of Amir Khusro in the thirteenth century was ‘Hindavi’. He used to write in Khari boli and Persian both. His writings in Khari boli were for the masses and in Persian for the intellectuals during that period. This was also the language of the Sufis and Bhakti saints who always worked to reduce the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims. Most of the saints like Baba Farid, Ghezudaraz, Nizamuddin Awliya,
many perspectives and theories about the origins of Urdu. Thus **Dakhini** was considered a less Persianized dialect of Urdu spoken in the region of Hyderabad; where Urdu actually first acquired a literary character. Urdu literary works were similar to Hindi and began to be used during the period of colonial rule. In the court of Delhi-Agra, Persian was the language of literature. **Rekhta** was the highly Persianized variety of Urdu spoken and promoted by the Mughal court during the reign of Shah Jahan. The Urdu which was used in poetry and had many Persian words was **Rekhta** (mixed). The language used by women was called ‘**Rekhti**’. With the commencement of the decline of the Mughals, the Nawabs of Delhi, Lucknow, Punjab and other places in the Northern Provinces promoted the use of Urdu in their courts.

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Guru Nanak, Kabir and others used the language of the common masses. ‘Though scholars claim that Amir Khusro wrote in both the language a lot but this is part of oral tradition as not much of his works in **Khariboli** is available to authenticate this claim.’ This was said by Akhlaque Ahmad Ahan in an interview by me. He is a Persian Lecturer in Persian department JNU.

1 As Muhammad Hasan Aazaad thinks about it. Mir Umman finds it to be the language of the market. Graham Bayley finds it to have originated from Lahore language in 1187 A.D. Grierson feels that the ‘**Thenth Hindustani**’ (local **Hindustani**) is its base. Bajmohan Dattatraye Shaursheni says that Prakrit mixed with the foreign words has given birth to Urdu. Dr. Chandrabali Pandey-whose view is widely accepted and is based scientifically and logically that Urdu has originated from **khariboli**. See also Arun Prakash Mishra, ‘Hindi, Urdu Hindustani’ in **Sammelan Patrika** (Journal of Sammelan), Paush-Margasheesh, shaka era 1899-1900, part 64; number1-4, pp.331-342.

2 But Tej Bahadur Sapru was not concerned with where Urdu was born in Hyderabad or Punjab as there was debate in nineteenth century on its place of birth. But he stressed on the fact that the Urdu which evolved from the language of **shayari** (poetry) to the literature was in Delhi and Lucknow in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Urdu for him developed into full fledged language with its literary treasure in course of time during the disintegration of Mughal empire and the period of nawabs. For details see Tej Bahadur Sapru, 1934, ‘Urdu, Hindi Hindustani’ in **Hindustani**—a quarterly magazine from Hindustani Academy, Vol. 4, Part 3, July 1934, pp. 187-194. (originally Urdu article published in Urdu version of **Hindustani**, but translated by Ramchandra Tandon and published in Hindi **Hindustani**). See Dheerendra Verma, (ed.), 1957 (7th edition). **op. cit**, p.14-15.

Now the term Hindustānī was the name given by the Turkish or Persian speaking settler population to Khari boli, which was the local form of Hindi at the capital, Delhi and nearby cities. Hindustani in the first half of nineteenth century was Hindi mixed with Urdu, with both Persian-Arabic and Sanskrit words. Hindustani origins are also traced to Khari boli. This form of Hindi and Urdu is understood to a large extent in most parts of Northern India. Babar’s autobiography alludes to “Hindustan zabaan” hindustani that was a form of khari.

Sir William Jones referred to it in 1786 and differentiated it from Braj bhasha. It was called ‘Indostan’ by Tomas Carlot in 1616 and he wrote that he was well versed in the language ‘Indostan’. Foyer in 1673 says that “the common language of that time was Indostan”. A Dutch priest in 1715 wrote ‘Hindustani Grammar’ and considered it an important language. Hindustani and its variants are found in literary genres such as stories, ghazals, and bhajans etc are written in this language and were popular among the literate public. Hindustani books were published both in Persian and Devanagari scripts. The language was transformed into a literary language with Insha’s ‘Rani Ketaki Ki Kahani’(story of Rani Ketaki) and Ayodhya Singh Upadhyaaya’s ‘Thenth Hindi Ka Thanth’ (the importance of local Hindi).
Nineteenth Century Litterateurs on Hindi and Urdu

Before the political agenda of colonialism began to give shape to the language question in the North Western Provinces, poets and writers did not have to make any conscious effort to construct the religious basis of language. Thus poets like 'Ghalib', 'Hali' did not feel offended in saying that they were writing poetry in 'Hindi'. Thus the Urdu poet 'Hali' wrote about the controversy in order to diagnose the cause of the conflict between the two languages. Thus he pointed out while Muslims had ruled in India for over a thousand years and they had not tried to turn to Sanskrit and Braj for words; the very same Sanskrit that had been praised by the Unani and European traditions could not be appreciated by Muslims because it was considered difficult. And if Sanskrit was difficult Braj was simple and its poetry was beautiful. The grammar of Urdu was quite similar to that of Braj. Thus there was not much difference between Hindi and Urdu as the grammar was same. He was also critical of those Muslims who did not wish to see the relationship between their language and Sanskrit and Braj. It was he felt wishing to live in a river without befriending the crocodile In fact the prerequisite for acquiring a command over Urdu was to have knowledge of Sanskrit or Hindi.

Mia Muhammad Abdul Kadir Sarvari said that the writers should not see Hindi and Urdu as separate languages. As he writes in the 'Deewan-e-Hindi'

1 Pandit Ambika Prasad Bajpai 2003: Hindi Par Pharsi Ka Prabahv (Impact of Persian on Hindi); Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, P-50.
2 Ibidem, p. 50
3 Ibidem, p. 50
“On the first page of Deewan there are words/ phrases in ‘Hindi’. It should be kept in mind that these writers basically wrote in Urdu, because they did not take Urdu and Hindi as two separate entities.” He further says: “Hindi or Hindavi is the name given to same thing. Even for Urdu and ‘Dakkini’ these words are used without any hesitation. It should be taken that ‘Urdu’, ‘Hindi’ and ‘Dakkini’ are the different names of same language. .. Poetry in this language was called as ‘Rekhta’.”

On the other hand, writers from the Hindi movement such as like Raja Shiv Prasad, Bal Krishna Bhatt, Pratap Narain Mishra wished to separate Hindi from Urdu and identify it with ancient Hindu culture, that was considered the foundation of Hindu civilisation. This was one of the founding premises of the Hindi movement in the late nineteenth century. The movement was committed to the propagation of Hindi all over India and the construction of the nation based on one language. In the twentieth century the project was mediated through Hindi curriculum and textbooks prepared for schools, colleges and universities. Benaras Hindu University (hereafter BHU) that was established in 1915 as a modern institution with a religio-cultural agenda with departments of Hindi in universities and colleges strengthened the self-image of the Hindi literati and contributed immensely towards the success of their cultural agenda. One of the teachers of BHU; Acharya Ramchandra Shukla, in his book Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas (‘History of Hindi Literature’), first published in 1929, gave a distinct Hindi identity to the Hindi heritage. He also created the Hindi curriculum and ‘defined the heritage of Hindi

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1 Risala, Urdu, April 1929; K.A.Nizami,1950. op. cit.
language and literature in a manner that few have dared to quarrel with'.

He wrote:

"It is my opinion that Hindi and Urdu are two very different languages. The Hindus of this country speak Hindi, while Muslims and those Hindus who have studied Persian speak Urdu. Sanskrit words abound in Hindi as Arabic and Persian words abound in Urdu. There is no necessity to use Arabic and Persian words in speaking Hindi, nor do I call that language Hindi, which is filled with Persian and Arabic words." 

This construction of Hindi-Hindu identity transgressed the mandate of the historian as Shukla went on to assert the irrelevance of the Urdu-Persian tradition for the development of modern Hindi. This he did by ignoring the major Urdu poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who had contributed so much to the language. It is interesting to note that Shukla’s social background was similar to that of the educated elite of the nineteenth century familiar with Persian and Urdu was used. In an autobiographical essay he writes about his father who had a good knowledge of Persian and employed a combination of Persian poetry with the lines composed by Hindi poets. Such eclecticism was absent in Ramchandra Shukla’s works, revealing the closure under the impact of colonial policies. Shukla played a fundamental role in shaping the cultural identity of college/educated men and women for generations by conferring on the Hindi heritage a distinct Hindu identity.

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1 Krishna Kumar 1990. ‘Hindi revivalism and education in North-Central India’; op. cit., p.180
2 Ramchandra Shukla, quoted in Christopher King 1994. One Language. Two Script: p. 23
3 Krishna Kumar. 1990. ‘Hindi revivalism and education in North-Central India’; op. cit., p.180
Even though he later appreciated the works of Muslim poets like Jaisi, recognised the achievements of Premchand, who symbolized the intrinsic bonding of Hindi and Urdu, it was too late by now and the curriculum he had initiated for the teaching of Hindi had created a generation he had envisioned. Thus, Ramchandra Shukla not only formalized the linguistic discussions but also strengthened the identification of linguistic with religious identity. At that very moment nationalist leaders had begun projecting were projecting Hindustani as the national language. This was an attempt to embed linguistic identities within a larger national identity.

The Tripartite Division of a Composite Language

Thus by the late nineteenth century one loosely defined language was now being pulled three ways by different social interests and forces.1 By 1837 onwards the colonial government moved to introduce English to replace Persian as the language of official communication between colonial officials and not as the language of communication with the colonized.2 The language of official communication with the ruled population continued to be Persian. On November 20, 1837,3 the law was passed substituting Urdu for Persian in the courts of all the provinces on the ground that it was the vernacular of

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1 Sri Arun Prakash Mishra, op. cit. p. 335.
2 For details on the discussions within the English government see Court Characters, pp.1-3. Court Character and Primary Education in the N-W.P and Oudh is a researched memorandum submitted under the leadership of Pandit Malaviya in 1897.
3 For details see Appendix II, quoted from Court Characters, Appendix p. 49.
Hindustan. By 1881, in Bihar and Central Provinces Hindi with the Devanagari script was accepted equally with Urdu.

The struggle for introduction of Nagari character in the courts of N-W P had commenced in 1837. Raja Shiv Prasad formally submitted a memorandum in 1868 for the introduction of the Nagari script in the courts of the Upper Provinces of North India. He argued that Hindi and Urdu were two distinct languages when written in Devanagari and Persian characters. Pointing out to the confusion created by the colonial officials in the name of 'vernacular', he asserted that the Urdu in the Persian script was difficult for the general masses to learn since it was as foreign a script as English. He thus rhetorically proposed that it would be good if the Indians were taught English if they had to learn a foreign language in the first place. Nevertheless, he reminded colonial officials that even the Muslim rulers did not impose Persian on the Indians for they were allowed to continue their local business, maintain accounts etc in Hindi, kaithi, Mahajani etc. Since most Indian languages belonged to the Indo-Aryan family, the translation of books on sciences from English to the vernacular would be simplified:

'It is very easy for the Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and Maharashtri books, to be translated from one into the other; the scientific and technical terms being just the same; but as soon as we come to Urdu we must call in the assistance of Arabic and open our Qamus and Burhani Qati. How easy it is to form the

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1 See Court Characters, p. 3. See also Appendix IV of this thesis quoted from Court Characters, Appendix p. 50.
2 For Details on this see Court Characters; Appendix pp.54-57.
3 For details see Appendix VI, quoted from Court Characters, Appendix pp.72-74.
4 For details see Appendix VIII, quoted from Court Characters, Appendix?? p.72-74
scientific and technical terms from Sanscrit roots, I refer to the works of Dr. Ballantyne; where as the Arabic does not afford the same facility.¹

Raja Shiv Prasad rejected arguments that the Hindi script was difficult and thus could not serve as the court language.² Despite his fervent campaign the memorandum was ignored. Nevertheless, a section of Muslims in the N-W P opposed these suggestions. While this section had social ties with the Hindu leadership;³ spoke both Urdu and Hindi fluently but had begun to safeguard what they considered to be in their community's interest.⁴ The section of community associated with the so called Hindi renaissance,⁵ belonged to the

¹ Quoted from Court Characters, Appendix p. 73. Though in a personal interview S. R. Faruqui suggested that Arabic had a rich collection of words and it was capable of being upgraded to a scientific language.

² There were long discussions among the British officials in the newspapers of the time like the Calcutta Review, Aryan, Pioneer etc. The style of writing Persian and its utility in the courts was discussed. In spite of most of the discussions and vies of British officers like J. D. Bate, John Dowson, Frederic Pincott and others were in favour of Hindi and the Devanagari script. But Raja Shiv Prasad and others pointed out that there was no doubt that Persian was written fast but was extremely difficult to read. There was always the possibility of reading the names of people and places incorrectly unless the reader had prior knowledge. Pandit Malaviya and many others later argued that there was no amla in the court who was very good in Urdu and Persian reading and writing and could read flawlessly. For details see Court Characters Appendix pp. 41-48; case studies on pp. 95 and 96. See Also Appendix XIII for some details on shikashta writing and how it is more prone to mistakes than Devanagari script, which was proposed by Pandit Malaviya and others.

³ Raja Shiv Prasad and Sir Syed were very good friends. For details see Veer Bharat Talwar, 2002 Rassa Kashi: 19ui Sadi Ka Navjagaran Aur Paschimottar Prant (Tug of War: Reawakening in North Western Province in the Nineteenth Century Saransh Prakashan: Delhi-Hyderabad, pp.57-134.

⁴ For details see Paul Brass. 1974. Op. cit, p.120. Brass points out that the Muslim nationalist movement was stronger in North India, particularly in the United Provinces where dominant elites wished to preserve their interests and self-consciousness. This section of the elites of Upper class Muslims produced leaders who then spread to different parts of India. See also Salil Mishra, 2001. A Narrative of Communal Politics: Uttar Pradesh (1937-1939); Sage Publication: Delhi.

⁵ The idea of a Hindi Renaissance must be viewed with some caution. However, in the Northern Provinces significant efforts were made to centre-stage the language and its literature into the political struggles of the twentieth century. For details see Sri Narayan Chaturvedi, 1973. Adhunik Hindi Ka Aadikal (1857-1908) (Past of the Modern Hindi (1857-1908)); Hindustani Academy: Allahabad.
upper castes that were competing with the Muslim elite. Colonial rule they felt provided them the opportunity to augment their power within government. The struggles over language and religion in the second half of nineteenth century have been seen as attempts by different social interests and elites to lodge themselves into positions of influence under the new colonial administration.

An awareness campaign was launched in the different regions of Northern Provinces even after Raja Shiv Prasad’s memorandum was rejected by the government. Another delegation of anti-Urdu campaigners from the North-Western Provinces of India visited to the Lieut.-Governor of the Provinces Sir William Muir requesting the restoration of the Nagari script in Courts and Public offices in the N-W P and Oudh. The delegation argued that the introduction of Hindi would help the progress of the mass education in the province. They also pointed out that Hindi was the common language and was often used by the people in spite of the long neglect of it due to the reign of Persian as the Court language.

The Muslims in the N-W P were not ready to accept the inclusion of Hindi and Nagari character along with Urdu and Persian. While the circular was implemented in the courts and offices of Bihar, the Muslims of the in N-W P

1 Most of the journals, magazines, books which were printed in the last quarter of nineteenth century stand out as a mirror of the mentality of the leaders from the upper castes. It is interesting to note that most of the leaders who were pleading for Hindi and Devanagari were possibly fluent in Urdu, English, Hindi and Sanskrit. Since they were capable of learning the language of the administration, they did it, used it as and when needed. The memorandums submitted to the British officials conveyed the concerns of the upper classes and castes.
2 For details see Appendix VII, quoted from Court Characters. Appendix pp. 74-75.
3 Many to the leaders of the Hindi movement came from the Allahabad and Benaras regions. An examination reveals that these leaders (both Hindus and Muslims of the N-W P and Oudh) were attempting to consolidate new linguistic and religious identities in order to maximize their opportunities under the colonial dispensation.
resisted. The question remained which language would provide access to government jobs and positions. The colonial government played the role of neutral mediator and tried to project themselves as introducing policies that were in the best interest of the Indian people. Several welfare policies were never implemented or were surrounded by controversy as they were challenged by one or the other community. Gradually in the colonial imagination languages themselves became markers of religious identities—Hindi with Hindu and Urdu with Muslims.

The Hindi-Urdu controversy was one that broke out amongst the Hindu and the Muslim educated elite of the N-W P, given that the stakes in the new colonial regime were high. The colonial government also realised that it stood to gain if the two dominant communities’ elites were opposed to each others claims. The Muslim elite class disempowered by colonial rule understandably perceived a loss of privilege and influence in government, and this feeling was exacerbated by the threat introduction of Hindi and the Devanagari script. This effectively meant that government employees would have to have a working knowledge of both Urdu and Hindi in the Persian and Devanagari scripts. The Muslims elite and the Kayastha bureaucratic class well versed in Urdu and Persian script were not ready to accept this change and opposed the move demanding the instatement of Hindi. The controversy took a serious turn in the late nineteenth century.

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2 A very good example was the introduction of education for the Indians for which Rs. 1 lakh was granted for a year but this granted was not released for a long time. See chapter I for details on this.

3 Act No. XXIX of 1837, see Appendix III in this thesis. For details see also Appendix VI in this work taken from *Court Characters*, Appendix pp. 72-74 the Memorandum of Raja Shiv Prasad.

4 Many reasons were offered by members of the Hindi movement as to why Hindus could not adopt Urdu. See Appendix IX in this thesis, quoted from *Court Characters*, Appendix pp. 85-95.
century and early twentieth century with the conflation of religious and linguistic identities, a conflation that was reinforced by the rise of Hindi as a literary movement.\(^1\) This was also period of rise of nationalism, formation of denominational and linguistic associations and groups. These socio-religious organisations with reform as an important objective on their agenda began gaining strength through the associations and their journals that were effectively employed to strengthen communal ties.\(^2\)

Colonial language policy towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century played an important role in stoking the raging conflict. A circular was passed in the N-W P announcing that any person appointed to the public service with a salary greater than Rs. 10/- was bound to pass a middle class Anglo-vernacular departmental examination with Urdu or Persian as a second language.\(^3\) These leaders of the Hindi movement were provoked and they submitted a petition to the Education Commission where the causes and cure for the backward condition of primary education in the N-W P of Agra and Oudh was stated. They petition pinpointed the hot-spots in the government’s language policy and its possible action of “national education”. The adherents of Urdu were naturally satisfied with the circular and the Education Commission pleaded its inability to reform its policy. Thus any hope of revoking the policy was lost by August 1882.\(^4\)

\(^2\) The discussion has been taken up by Jyotindra Das Gupta, Paul Brass, Vasudha Dalmia, Salil. ...
\(^3\) For details see Appendix VII, quoted from *Court Characters*, Appendix pp. 78-79.
\(^4\) Appendix X in this thesis quoted from *Court Characters*, Appendix pp. 93-95. This petition argued that Devanagari was more suitable for the Northern Provinces courts and offices and why it should be introduced along with Urdu and Persian. This was justified by citing examples where mistaken readings of *shikashta* resulted in many blunders: misconstruals of dates of court hearings, or the name of the plaintiffs.
The colonial administration was concerned about the provision of primary education in the vernacular in North India. At the time the Hindi speaking regions excluded Bengal, Orissa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Sindh and Punjab, all of which had their own language.1 Budden tried to explain the differences among the different languages that characterized North India of the 1830s. He pointed out the four views concerning the language of Hindus in North India: those acquiring the tract under consideration spoke a number of heterogeneous languages; others consider that if they have any language in common then it is Urdu or Hindostanee used in the government courts and which is admitted to have originated in the intercourse of the Muhammadan invaders with the Hindu population; according to the third view the true vernacular of the Hindus is Hindi, which is written in the Nagari character, Deva or Kaithi, and is spoken slightly by others, as it is the written language of the pundits and pedants which is unknown to the general masses; there was a zealous fourth party who asserted that Urdu and Hindi were the same language.2 Budden’s search for a common language of the Hindus of North India led him to account for the variations in the speech as evidence of provincial dialects of one common language called ‘khari-boli’ or ‘thenth boli’.3 As for the common script, which was

1 Revd, F. H. Budden’s article on “Primary Education among the Hindus in North India with reference chiefly to Language” described the Hindu race which was ‘most conservative, unchangeable, caste-bound, excusive, inaccessible, incomprehensible, impassive race under the sun’. But he admitted that the Hindus had an aversion for foreigners and things foreign especially in religious matters. See Court Characters; pp. 16-17. There were colonial officials who believed that Hindi was the language of the people and that Urdu was the language of the few educated in the cities. They also agreed that in the schools in rural areas Hindi was the language taught as the vernacular and in the courts and offices the language used was Urdu. Thus it was ideally not possible for a person educated in rural areas to understand any proceedings of the court or read any notice from a public office. For details see also Appendix in ibid, pp. 37-48.

2 Court Characters; pp. 17-18.

3 Ibid, p.18-19.
different from Bengali and other languages, viz. the ‘Deva Nagri’, the source of all was the original Sanskrit script.¹

The Governor of N-W P, J. Thompson, who introduced the system of primary education throughout the region, also participated in the preparation of patwari’s accounts and school books in Hindi: ‘which he well knew to be the genuine vernacular of the people’.² Thompson’s successors did not pursue his efforts. However, gradually government discouraged the spontaneous study of Urdu and supported the national system of primary education in North India, which turned out to be beneficial for the vernacular Hindi.³

Colonial officials were themselves at a loss as to which was the ‘mother tongue’ of the people of the N-W P and Oudh. According to the Education Report of the province in 1873-74, nearly 71% of the boys spontaneously chose Hindi in preference to Urdu, which contradicted “an assumption lately put forward that Hindustani or Urdu is the ‘mother tongue’ of upper India”.⁴ The language employed in the court of law in the nineteenth century was very difficult since it contained words from Arabic revealing that it was an acquired language. Hindi was presented as the new language of the literary world even though it was

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¹ Most of the Hindu periodicals were printed in the Davangere script though there were few exceptions like the ‘Arya Dharma Pracharak’ from Monghyr- Hindi and Bengali printed in parallel columns; and ‘Arya Darpan’ in Hindi-Nagari and Urdu-Arabic from Benaras. The language was given the name as Arya Bhasha by Arya Samaj. Even the government of North West Provinces, decided that Urdu and Hindi were distinct language with so much difference visible and thus the public Gazette used Hindi and Urdu; in public works and prepared for the use of the vernacular schools. Court Characters: p. 19.


³ See Court Characters: Appendix, p. 24. As early as 1810 Gilchrist and Lockett.’ invented a language which never existed before and which they called Hindi and suggested that it was the language of the Hindus. when ‘

⁴ See Court Characters: appendix, p. 21-22. See also for details p. 88 of same appendix.
considered the vulgar vernacular of the people of the region.\textsuperscript{1} Persian was the language of the rulers which became the language of law and likewise of society when hybridised with the common language--Urdu. Urdu was the language of the educated and the language of public discourse. Within the home the language of conversation was the local patois. Amongst the Hindus it was seen that women would not speak in Urdu\textsuperscript{2}—there is a story from the nineteenth century when the wife of the Nawab of Lucknow refused to speak Urdu when she left her mahal, for she remarked that the language Urdu was not reputed and it was the language of the Bazar, the language of women in the bazaar or the zananas.\textsuperscript{3}

The opposition to the introduction of Hindi by the Muslim elite of the Central Provinces and Bihar and mostly from N-W P was reflected in the establishment of associations like Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Urdu.\textsuperscript{4} Sir Syed too demanded the use of Urdu in the N-W P and was against its replacement by Hindi.\textsuperscript{5} The decade beginning 1870 was the most intense in the conflict between the supporters of Hindi and Urdu in the N-W P and Oudh.\textsuperscript{6} Pandit Malaviya joined the battle in the 1880’s was active but was a late entrant in the field. His predecessors had demanded that the use of the Devanagari script be permitted alongside the Persian-Arabic script to make it easier for the Hindus of the region. Pandit Malaviya, leaders of the Hindi speaking region actively involved in the Hindi

\textsuperscript{4} Sir Syed played a central role in founding this organization after the announcement of Sir Campbell in 1872. Its role was to safeguard the interest of Urdu speaking people.
\textsuperscript{5} Lala Dwarka Das, Hindi Versus Urdu; p.2.
movement from Allahabad and Benaras prepared a memorandum on the introduction of the Devanagari script. They memorandum was submitted to Sir Anthony Mc Donell; the then governor general of N-W P and Oudh (who was sympathetic towards the cause of Hindi and was with Campbell when he has introduced Hindi in Bihar in 1881). When Hindi and the Nagari script were finally introduced along side the Persian-Arabic script in the courts, Muslims and the Kayastha community from the N-W P and Oudh saw it as a blow to their professions and protested against the decision. Though the Kayasthas later accepted the new policy as part of change in the regime they had to become familiar with the language introduced by the new rulers.1

The implementation of the new policy was a severe blow to the Muslim professional class. The reaction was expressed in the form of a counter petition filed to the Governor General and suggested that the policy was sentimental, and not based on research and evidence that justified the removal of Persian virtually and the introduction of Nagari. The petition further equated the grant of permission for the use of the Devanagari script as a chance given to the Hindus to get government jobs that had been hitherto awarded to those who knew Persian-Arabic. Muslim children were taught Arabic in childhood to enable them read the Quran as a result no additional effort was needed to get jobs in the courts and government offices. The introduction of Devanagari imposed an additional burden on them. And since a religious dimension had been incorporated into the debate the matter became all the more complex. Sections of the educated Muslim elite maintained that Hindi was the vulgar and village language spoken by the uneducated sections and was lacking in a literary

1 In 1895 the Kayastha Mahasabha in Patna announced that they were ready to accept and learn the language of the administration.
tradition, whereas Urdu which was the language of the elite, cultivated and educated. Since it was the language of the administration it had the power and support of the government and thus had developed and acquired a formidable literary tradition. Muslim advocates of Urdu believed that it was the language endowed with dignity and power, as a vernacular it was on par with English, and it was the language of both Hindus and Muslims.

The Urdu Defence Association issued a pamphlet on the “Persio-Nagari question” in 1900 soon after Hindi and Devanagari was introduced alongside with Urdu and Persian in the Courts and Public offices even in the N-W P and Oudh. The fear was that this order would abolish Persian from the Courts – this it was felt was the primary objective of the professional agitators drawn from a section of the Congress. Thus the association appealed to the vast community of the conscious Muslims to assert themselves in support of the intrinsic superiority of the Persian character. The resolution read:

“.... The promulgation of the resolution accompanying rules aroused it will be remembered, a storm of feeling throughout the provinces and the cause of this was not far to seek. The rules were not so much a blow at the Urdu as a sop to

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1 "...the ambiguity of the meaning in the word ‘Hindi’. To an ordinary native of India the word is synonymous with gawari—i.e., the language of the villagers. The meaning attached to it by the philologists and the grammarians is explained by an ardent student of the vernacular dialects..." quoted from A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character (Being a reply to the Pamphlet called Court Characters and Primary Education in the N-W P and Oudh); Allahabad: Printed at Liddell’s N-W P Printing works- 1900.


3 See A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character (Being a reply to the Pamphlet called “Court Characters and Primary Education in the N-W P and Oudh); Allahabad: Printed at Liddell’s N-W P Printing works- 1900.

4 From A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character; ibid.
the advocates of Nagari. It was however, the tendency of the government as evidenced by the unease, to undermine in the interest of a small class the position now occupied by Urdu and the Persian character, which filled the most lamentable features of this controversy is that the attempts have been made to excite the racial feeling by identifying the advocates of Nagari with the Hindu population and the advocates of Urdu with the Muhammadans. This is most unjustifiable assumption, Urdu or Hindustani—call it with your will—has been the lingua franca of these provinces from some hundreds of years, and it has been written in a character which no doubt is imported in the first instance from Persia, but the fact remains that the language as well as the character in which it has been shared alike by the educated Hindus and the Muhammadans of these Provinces”.  

The counter report contradicted the arguments in favour of Hindi and the Nagari script. Further, it was pointed out that the recommendations were not based on a ‘detailed and technical’ analysis. It further criticised the basis of Court ruling on primary education, denying that the Muhammadans had little to do with the backwardness of the Hindu children. The charge was that it was difficult to learn the Persian script, and much wasted that could be fruitfully devoted to learning Nagari that required less labour and if need be English. The Deeni Council argued that ‘due to the Muhammadan education at least the Hindu children were able to find some employment in the public services.’

1 See A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character: Introduction.
2 Ibid. Introduction
The language controversy was at heart not a religious one but of the educated and the uneducated; the rich and the poor; the urban and the rural; the powerful and the powerless. The controversy turned into a sentimental issue dealing with religious identities with both sides presenting their argument in favour of their language. The Deeni Talimi memorandum was not well researched though "Court Characters" is a good piece of research that discloses the advantages of Urdu and Persian and why it was not suitable for Indian condition – the argument is logically substantiated, illustrated with examples with few loopholes. The counter report comprises arguments in favour of Urdu and Persian and ignores the others. Thus Rev. J. D. Bates writes about Standard Hindi in Allahabad:

"The so-called 'Standard Hindi' of the English writers on Hindi grammar is a thing unknown to the native people: it is not in truth the lingua spoken by any of them. The expression is commonly held to be a translation of the term 'Khari boli'; natives themselves are not agreed whether the letter 'r' here is really a point on which even the natives are not at all clear as to what the expression means as applied to the Hindi language. English writers apply it to that stiff, straight-laced type of language which is framed on the model of the Muhammadan Urdu. I do not blame the English writers, for I have never yet been able to see how else the thing is to be done. For when one constructs a work purporting to be a grammar of a language which is made up of a congeries of dialects having no particular and universal form which can be regarded the type common to all of them. He must fix upon some type for himself, otherwise his grammar is a grammar of a dialect and not a grammar of the language in its entirety."¹

¹ Census of India, 1891, vol. XVI, p.268; Also quoted in A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character, p. vi.
The objections raised to Hindi were that a standard form and literature of its own were lacking. The language lacked a standard spelling, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and anyone could use any word at their own sweet will, whereas 'the Hindustani of the Courts written in the Persian Character possess not only a standard form but a settled spelling, vocabulary and pronunciation.'1 The members of the 'Deeni Talimi Council' were educated Muslims from Aligarh who had been mobilising support masses for the propagation of Urdu and played the card of religious identity just as the Hindus did. Gradually two staunch camps formed around the language question. Thus one side insisted that the Persian script was foreign and difficult to learn.2

"....Urdu is not more than a highly developed Hindi, the language of the educated, while the language of uneducated villager is Hindi. Nor must we forget that Urdu, like English has a fixed literary standard, while Hindi, in the absence of any recognised type, varies in form from place to place, just as the various dialects of England."

The council further argued that Hindi language was not an established language as was French, German or English. They criticised the demand of the partisans of Hindi that since the language was spoken in some form all over the province and therefore it should be accorded the status of the official language. They asked: 'because Italian, Spanish and French are Romance languages' should the official language of these countries should be Romance.3 They supported Hindustani or Urdu by saying that it was not a foreign language, but the language of the

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1 Ibid. p. vi.
2 See the appendix IX, which deals with the Primary education, quoted in the Court Characters
3 A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character
country and 'one of the dialects of Hindi in fact adapted to the exigencies of literature. It is written in a character admittedly non-indigenous partly because Sanskrit-Nagari alphabet is inadequate for the purpose of expressing all the sounds in common use and partly because that character is cumbersome and cannot either be read or written with ease.' The council thus emphasised the importance of Urdu by equating its status as a language with that of English. Secondly, the debate had now settled around the understanding that the script of Hindi was Devanagari.

The Hindi-Urdu controversy in the early twentieth century was more or less conditioned by certain socio-political developments of the last decades of the nineteenth century – the rise of a new middle class and nationalism, and the formation of denominational associations. The Indian National Congress managed to momentarily influence the promoters of Hindi propagators who were critical of Urdu language. But in the 1880s there were a few who were members of the Congress. Members of the Congress were not opposed to Urdu, and wrote articles canvassing for Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Social Roots of the Hindi Movement

In this age of burgeoning nationalism social groups sought to enlist support on the basis of language and religion. A new literary class emerged seeking to give Hindi an identity in terms of developing the genres of — prose, poetry, drama,

1 A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character. For details on see Court Characters, Appendix p. 45
2 See Appendix XII Quoted from Court Characters, Appendix p. 100, Raja Shiv Prasad is sorry for the misleading demand of the Hindi representatives. The defence council's reply reveals that the language issue was chosen and the main objection to the Persian script was the difficulty involved in reading it. See the Appendix XIII on Shikashta and Persian character.
and literary criticism. The press provided this literary class with a forum for discussion and an avenue to mobilise literary support. Several of the new generation of Hindi writers owned newspapers or journals or were working as editors with the vernacular press. As a movement they enlisted the support of sections of the Bengali literati.\(^1\) This new literary class came from upper caste Brahmin families and were patronized by local rajas and landlords committed to reinventing their historical past. The movement was also supported by the business communities such as the *Mahajans* and *Mahants* etc.\(^2\)

Initially a section of the Congress sympathised with the movement dedicated to raising Hindi to the status of a literary language and subsequently realizing its claim for the status of the national language of India. On of the associations of the movement in Benaras was Bhartendu Mandal which also started the magazine Harishchandra.\(^3\) Similarly, Bal Krishna Bhatt canvassed for Hindi in his newspaper ‘Hindi Pradeep’. The language was promoted as the medium of Hindu culture.\(^4\) Pandit Malaviya and Purshottam Das Tandon were followers of Bhatt in Allahabad and Benaras where the movement was run by the Bhartendu Mandal.

Pandit Malaviya led the movement from the last decade of the nineteenth century attracting like minded people from Allahabad and Malaviya had been very active in the local politics of Allahabad since 1880 and was involved in the

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\(^1\) For example Surendranath Bannerjea supported pro-Hindi movement organised by Babu Fateh Narain Singh of Benaras through his influential newspaper *Bengalee*.

\(^2\) See V. Dalmia, *Nationalisation*; pp. 225-226

\(^3\) The magazine was established at the initiative of Bhartendu to help in creating an awareness of the importance of Hindi. He also tried to reach out to the Hindu community through Hindi. The magazine was thus a forum for consolidating the identity of the community. For details see v V. Dalmia, *Nationalisation*; pp. 225-226.

\(^4\) For details see V. Dalmia, *ibid*; p. 226
establishment of several organisations devoted to the cause of the upliftment of his co-religionists and their language. The objective of these associations was to disseminate Hindu religious values amongst the youth and instil in them a sense of patriotism. These objectives guided his support for the establishment of Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal and later also of the Hindu Dharma Sabha.¹

As an orthodox Brahmin he was associated with many Hindu religious organisations. Consequently, his entry into the Hindi-Urdu controversy created more unrest among the Muslims of the region. Leaders like him who were associated with Hindu religious organizations and who later joined the Congress were eyed with suspicion by Sir Syed and his associates as they feared this dimension of possible majoritarian rule. Consequently, Muslims were not supportive to the Congress’ demand for representative government.

Thus by the late nineteenth century the Muslims of NWP and Oudh faced a threat perception and found the need to resist change. The Hindi-Urdu controversy no longer remained a controversy over language. Sections of the Muslim community felt that their religious identity and language would be erased by the political and linguistic ascent of the Hindu majority. These fears were already being amplified by the number of Hindus taking to modern education and acquiring prize positions in the colonial administration. The

¹ Pandit Malaviya’s association with Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha was a part of his agenda to help in the revival of the Hindu society. This identity was based a religious one, though some apologists suggest that he wished no ill to members of other religions. This sectarianism that prevailed in the late nineteenth and early decades of twentieth century did not target other religious communities but sought to equip themselves in the future of the nation. Bipan Chandra has categorised such communalists as liberal communalists as they did not target or harm any group but their ideology of mobilisation of masses was based on religion. For details see Bipan Chandra et al, 1987. *India’s Struggle for Independence*, pp. 398-427.
diminution of the status of Urdu and Persian as a language of court was an ominous threat to their professional and occupational existence.

The cultural battle was a mask for a much deeper social turmoil. For this reason, it has been argued that the seeds of separatism were sown in the last quarter of nineteenth century. The seeds remained dormant for a few years before germinating into antagonistic organisations such as the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. The language controversy that originated in the NWP of Agra and Oudh over the next decades spread to other parts of India. The supporters of Hindi were naturally imagined as Hindus with a few exceptions and those of Urdu were the Muslims. As the twentieth century rolled in the leadership of the Congress became increasingly preoccupied with the idea of the nation and its identity. The controversy had to be brought to a close so that Hindu-Muslim unity could be maintained in the fight against imperialism. ‘Hindustani’ was proposed as the compromise formula that would uniquely represent the identity of the nation.

By the end of 19th century Benaras already had a Central Hindu College established by Mrs. Annie Besant in 1896. This college later provided the platform for the founding of the Hindu University at Benaras. Modern education had produced a new middle class that was an agent of change and worked

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1 Scholars are of the opinion the separatist tendencies expanded in the twentieth century. These developments culminated in the emergence of separate parties. Since their demands were difficult to fulfil, the ensuing tension manifested itself in riots and finally the partition of the country. For details see Bipin Chandra. India’s Struggle for Independence pp. 398-456
2 To be discussed in detail in chapter IV.
3 Some countries have more than one national language, such as Canada which uses both French and English. A national language is not to be confused with the predominant language, which is spoken by the majority of people from within a country’s borders.
4 Details in chapter VI of this thesis
through modern associations by re-creating community on the basis of language and religious symbols. The traditionalists working within these modern associations participated in the spread of Hindu religion and culture, by insisting that education was the primary instrument for creating the sense of religious identity. The patterns of mobilisation of religious support and the creation of associations were quite similar amongst the two camps.

One National Language

The first decade of twentieth century was witness to several political events in the Northern India that catalyzed the widening of the rift between the two communities. This included the Division of Bengal in 1905, the creation of separate electorates in 1909 etc. These widening fractures were evident even within the Congress where opinion was divided between the moderates and the extremists in 1907 at the Surat Session of the Congress. The impact on religious politics was more fervent. In 1905 Pandit Malaviya announced at a Bharat Dharma Mahamandal held in Benaras, the establishment of an Indian University which would impart a Sanskrit and Vedic education on the one hand and a scientific education on the other. This institution was meant basically for Hindu students to revive their culture and tradition and to impart to them the knowledge of modern science which could be used in nation building. Similarly, Muslim leaders of the Northern Provinces formed the Muslim League in 1906 devoted to the cause of Muslims so that they could define and protect their interests in a Hindu dominated country. It was also designed to equip Muslim youth with a modern education and inculcate Islamic culture and values. They also supported the cause of Urdu and the use of the Persian script.
The politicisation of the language controversy pressurised the leadership of the Congress to arrive at reconciliation between the Hindu and the Muslim camps. Thus 'Hindustani' was proposed as the national language. Most leaders in different parts of India supported the idea of one national language. Leaders like Gandhiji wished to bring some understanding between Hindi and Urdu so that the national language could be made out of it. According to him the issue of language was not between Hindi and Urdu as they were sisters but between Hindi and Urdu with English. He was against English as he felt if English was not an easy language to learn and it was a kind of suicide to ignore own country's language. He wished to raise Hindi to the status of Rashtrabhasha.

However, Hindustani had many supporters amongst politically motivated peace loving writers who felt it was the language which everyone. It was called Hindustani because it could in all the Subas of India. Furthermore, it was not associated with a single religious community. Thus the use of Hindustani was proposed in government offices. Books from foreign languages would be translated into it so that people could learn in their own language; all religions could communicate in Hindustani and any tourist coming could learn it and get familiar with the language of the country.

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1 See Mahatma Gandhi, 'Angrezi Moh se Badi Murkhta Koi Nahin' (There is no bigger foolishness than love for English), in Kamrendu Shishir (ed.), Hamari Bhasha; Kathyaroop Pustika: Patna (date of publishing not available), pp.9-19.
2 Ibid, p.18.
3 Mahatma Bhagwandeen, 'Hindustani' in Hindustani: 1946, pp. 251-258
Thus some of its proponents argued that Hindustani was the language of Arya and so was Persian the language of the Arya. *Braj bhasha* which was a very sweet language, when mixed with Persian became sweeter and formed Hindustani. Hindustani not only contained one or two languages but Arabic, Persian, Turki, Portuguese and recently English. This was the language of the common masses and which was called Hindustani and was being asked to make the national language of India. Amir Khusro was the Pundit of this Hindi and Maulvi of this Persian. He wrote a lot in this Hindi. Akbar promoted this Hindi. There were poets like Khan-e Khana, Raskhan, and Jaisi who improved its status. The language that has travelled in all *subas* of India was being proposed as the national language.¹ Hindiwallas and Urduwallas who had sanskritized and persianized their Hindi and Urdu respectively in such a way that such Hindi could be understood only by the Pundits of Kashi and such Urdu by the Moulvis of Deoband were criticised.²

Since in the twentieth century there was not much consensus among the leaders national language had become one of the main issues as the south India states had also joined in.³ Leaders from all fields cultural, literary, political, extremists all came forward to appeal to the masses to let the languages of their own region flourish and have much literary growth in it but the national language status was to be given to Hindi or Hindustani. They emphasised that India would be united only if one language was promoted as the national language by all the regions.⁴

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² Mahatma Bhagwandeen, *op. cit.* p.255.
⁴ For a glance of these leaders views see Kamrendu Shishir (ed.), *Hamari Bhasha*; Patna: Kathyaroop Pustika, (date of publishing not available), pp.20-48.
Associations blossomed, each one them espousing a different version of the language, such as the ‘Nagri Pracharini Sabha’ at Benaras committed to the literary and political development of Hindi written in the Devanagari script. Later the ‘Hindi Sahitya Sammelan’ and ‘Hindustani Academy’ were established to promote the cause of Hindi and Urdu. Nothing substantial was achieved by these organisations since the writers and literary class were influenced by the same politics or played a role in shaping these linguistic movements.

**Education in the Mother-Tongue**

During the late nineteenth and twentieth century there were many leaders who supported vernacular education and were critical about the spread of English education as it was considered unsuitable for the Indians. They wanted Indians to acquire a modern education but if this education was not provided in their own language then further growth and creativity would not be ensured. Most of the leaders had received a modern education in English and had decided that as a medium of instruction for Indians, English was not the best. The vernacular was the natural medium of their thoughts and feelings and if a foreign dialect substituted their vernacular then he natural expression would be suppressed.

Tej Bahadur Sapru had expressed his concern over education in a foreign language, since he was of the opinion that no person could master a foreign language. He similarly wished that Indians should not even be educated in Persian or Arabic as that was also foreign language for them and they could not

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1 J. D. Gupta, *Language Conflict* p.84
2 For details see *Court Characters*; Appendix p. 22.
master it as Iranians and other Arabs could do.¹ Pandit Malaviya was of a similar opinion and desired that national education be in the language of the people. He clearly said that the expression of the people is not substantial if they are not thinking and expressing themselves in the same language.² As Sapru cited the example of the English poet Milton who was well educated in Latin but while writing ‘Paradise Lost’ he realised that English was better suited for his verse.³ Sapru insisted that Urdu was the language of Indian society as it was born in India due to the interaction of Persian and Arabic with Indian languages. Indians could not excel in Persian as in Iran there was no Indian scholar of Persian given that much respect as Amir Khusro.⁴ Sapru tried to clarify his support for Urdu by saying that he was educated in Urdu since childhood; that in the Delhi region where his family lived, it was very normal to educate even a Hindu child in Urdu. He emphasised that every Indian must know about the cultural heritage of the Hindus and Muslims, and be familiar with each other’s language.⁵

The Seeds of Separatism

The feature of colonial education was that it was socially divisive since it portrayed the medieval Muslim rulers as ravaging Hindu society.⁶ Thus Abdul Halim Sharar Lakhnavi wrote an article after the communal riots in 1927 with the

² See Awadhesh Pradhan, 2007. op.cit, Convocation address at BHU in 1929. p. 64-65.
³ Tej Bahadur Sapru, 1934. Ibid, p. 188-189.
⁴ See Tej Bahadur Sapru, 1934, op.cit, p. 189. Sapru narrates his experience at Cambridge. He asked Professor Brown as to whom the Indian Persian scholars recognized in Iran, the answer was only Amir Khusro. Sapru was an ardent admirer of Urdu literature: its doyines included poets such as Mir, Sauda, Zaik, Ghilbi, Maumin, Aatas, Naasikh, Anis and Dabeer.
⁵ See Tej Bahadur Sapru, 1934, p. 191. Sapru was very critical of Muslims who were alienated from the culture and tradition of the Hindus and do not know much about it the Hindus.
title 'Hindu Muslim Itihaad' emphasising the need for imparting a sound historical education to children. He felt that the old education pattern where the spiritual values constituted an integral part of education would provide the basis for the feeling of unity among all. Such an education created men of culture who had respect and love for their own religion as well as the religion of others, inculcating humanitarian feeling among future citizens. But modern education removed all such spiritual education on the pretext that India had many religions and so it was not possible for the state to impart religious instruction relating to all religions. Ideas of religion thus entered the history text books.1 Lakhnavi even indicated what kind of history should be taught to the new generation and stressed the need to separate historical teaching from colonial politics.2 Many political leaders had by then inferred that the politics of religion, caste and language were part of the legacy of colonial rule.

Even education did not fall outside the ambit of colonial manipulation; in fact it was the most powerful instrument of control in the hands of the colonial administration. However, the leadership also understood that it in order to progress and develop a modern scientific education was essential for all sections

1 Sir Syed, Mrs. Annie Besant, Pandit Malaviya and others who supported national education in the vernacular felt the need for religious education to make a better India. Central Hindu College and later BHU was the elaboration of Malaviya’s thought. Similarly, Abdul Sharar was making a case for religious education in the Madrasa. He found that the colonial rulers had altered history syllabus and used it as an instrument to spread differences among the religious groups. Colonial officials such as Elphinsotne produced these history textbooks that played up ethnic conflict in the course of Indian history. For details see Abdul Halim Sharar in Ali Ahmad Fatmi (ed.), 1990. op. cit. pp.116-123.

2 See also Ali Ahmad Fatmi (ed.), 1990. Op. cit. pp.116-123. Fatimi points out the stranglehold of casteism and religious orthodoxy in the nineteenth century. Despite which Bahadur Shah Zafar was accepted as the leader in the revolt of 1857. During this period communal identity had a totally different meaning than it did in the late nineteenth century. There were people like Sai Baba, a Muslim who was the cook of Rani Laksmsi Bai and after she died he left the palace and went to Maharashtra. Today he has a large Hindu following. (I am thankful to Akhlaque Ahamd Ahan for his insights in chapters II and III and also helping me in reading the Urdu texts).
of Indian society. Thus initially the attempt was to ensure the modernisation of specific communities, but with the expansion of nationalism the programme was to extend the benefits of modern education to all communities, for only that would ensure liberation from the yoke of colonialism. Despite the rise of nationalism, separatism continued to prove a troublesome sore in the side of nationalism.

The language issue became a rallying point amongst the separatists of the two camps, and was an effective weapon with those mobilising support on religious lines. The controversy was triggered off by a disagreement over which should be the language and script for official communication in the NWP and provinces of Oudh and Agra. But by the early decades of the twentieth century the fire had spread throughout the sub-continent. There were attempts that sought to bridge the divide such as the compromise formula proposed wherein ‘Hindustani’ would be introduced as a third. The controversy gradually snowballed into what was becoming an intractable problem.

In the meanwhile English had become the de facto language of the educated in India by the 1930s. English was the primary medium of instruction in colleges and universities throughout the country. Osmania University, Hyderabad, managed to retain Urdu as the medium of instruction. But it was the exception rather than the rule.¹ The movement for a national language was one of the important movements from the pre-independence period. The central issue was what kind of Hindi should be spoken in the country? What

would be the form of Hindi, Urdu or Hindustani? The languages shared a
common base; and the controversy was then over the script.¹

Naturally, the terms of the debate had changed since the end of the
nineteenth century. In 1941 an article belligerently stated that Hindi was a
very rich language and did not need the help of Hindustani (a language
which has no stature of its own) to become the national language. It was the
very language spoken by Khan Abdul Gafar Khan and Ramchandra Shukla.
If Indians needed any language to communicate their views it was Hindi and
not Hindustani. Hindustani was a name given to Hindi to mend fences with
those who were not ready to accept Hindi on account of its alleged Hindu
past. The article went out to rhetorically suggest that according to the science
of languages, Hindustani was underdeveloped and it doesn’t have a base,
need or importance.²

Another article appeared in the journal 'Dharmyug' in 1945 entitled 'Hindi aur
Saahitya' where the Hindi language and Devanagari script were praised and
it was categorically suggested that there was no space for any other language
to acquire the status of the national struggle. The article boasted in an
exclusivist language that Hindi had a rich literature and that it was
understood all over India. This justified its becoming the national language.³

In this polemic the spokespersons for Hindi projected the language as part of

¹ Shivpoojan Sahay, 1989. Rashtrabhasha aur Hindi (National language and Hindi) Allahabad:
Kathya Roop, pp.1-11.
³ Shivpoojan Sahay, 1989. op. cit, p. 6-8
the Indian and Hindu heritage that offended the sensibilities of sections of Muslim community. On the other hand the nationalist leadership such as Lokmanya Tilak and Gandhiji were of the opinion that Hindi-Hindustani was a language that would facilitate communication between regions and that could serve as the common language. Bal Krishna Rao was of the opinion that the number of Hindi speaking people was nearly double the number of non-Hindi speakers.

The controversy spread confusion as to what actually comprised Hindi. But over a period of time, "the discursive space of the people's vernacular Hindi . . . was progressively usurped by Sanskrit 'Hindi'." (Rai 2000, 108) What remained common in this transformation is only the continuity in the name. The internal linguistic forms underwent radical change. "Sanskritized Hindi" came into existence. This Rashtrabhasha Hindi was elevated to the status of a pan-India language which was supposedly understood in every nook and

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2 Alok Rai has also discussed that there was no consensus during this period on the issue of national language and Hindi-Hindustani was considered as 'the language in which the citizens of the future nation could speak to each other . . . (that is for) inter-regional communication' For details see Alok Rai 2000. Hindi Nationalism, p. 107.
4 Many discussions, seminars and articles were held in support of the 'vernacular' Hindi as the national language. Most Hindi writers associated with the movement came forward to write and speak up for Hindi. Organisations like Nagari Pracharani Sabha, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Hindustani Academy were in favour of Hindi in the name of 'Hindustani '. They promoted Hindi and Hindustani through publications and printing of the existing materials. See articles on this topic by Dr. Brijeshwar Verma, 'Bhasha, Boli aur Hindi-Bhashi Kshetra' (Language, dialect and Hindi Speaking Region), Hindustani, 38, part 3-4, pp.76-82; Bal Krishna Rao, 'Bhavatamk Ekta aur Hindi ', Hindustani, pp. 317; Dr. Rai Rajeshwar Bali, 'Bhasha Ka Sawal', Hindustani, pp109-112.
corner. It then served as a language of the prospective nation projected in the anti-colonial struggle.¹

¹ According to Krishna Kumar the movement for a national language was an ambitious program that sought to unite an independent India with one language. For details see Krishna Kumar, 1990. *op. cit.,* p. 176.