

Week 3-‘A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part I: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture,’

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- Average Hindi Speakers believe that Hindi is very old and that its literature started with a person named Amir Khusrau who lived a long time ago
- Hindi or "Hindvi" became Urdu in eighteenth century when Muslims decided to swing away from Hindi and **adopted a heavy, Persianized style of language**. This change in language style became a noticeable difference between Hindus and Muslims in India.
- The **positing of Hindi against Urdu** has had far-reaching effects on the literary culture of Urdu
- There are two claimants to a single linguistic and literary tradition, and that the whole **issue is more political than academic**
- Early names for the language now called Urdu were (more or less in chronological order) **“Hindvi,” “Hindi,” “Dihlavi,” “Gujri,” “Dakani,” and “Rekhtah.”**
- In the **north, both “Rekhtah” and “Hindi” were popular** as names for the same language from sometime before the eighteenth century and the name “Hindi” was used, in preference to “Rekhtah,” from about the mid-nineteenth century.
- In fact, the spoken language was almost always referred to as “Hindi.”
- In the early twentieth century, the name **“Hindvi” could be used—as it was by Iqbal**, for example—to refer to Urdu
- **1785 - Urdu referred as Hindvi in Mushafi first diwan**
- **1780 - “Urdu” as a name for the language seems to have occurred**
- **“Urdu” here may mean the city (of Shahjahanabad, that is, Delhi) rather than the language.**
- **zaban-e urdu-e mualla, then to zaban-e urdu, and then to urdu.**
- **The word urdu came to India with Babur (1526), that his camp was called urdu-e mualla**
- **There were plenty of Turks in India before Babur;**
- **Babur never had an extended stay in Delhi**
- **Hindi/ Hindvi/Dihlavi was already in use in and around Delhi before Babur**
- No new language grew up in northern India as a result of the advent of the Mughals there
- **Eighteenth century, the word urdu meant the city of Delhi**
- **Residents of Murshidabad and Azmabad [Patna], in their own estimation, are competent Urdu speakers and regard their own city as the urdu”**
- **Around 1747–1752, Siraj ud-Din Ali Khan-e Arzu Persian lexicographer of his time, composed Navadir ul-alfaZ , in which he constantly uses both urdu and urdu-e mualla to mean Delhi**
- **Chhinel (woman of easy virtue, harlot)**
- **Back in the 1750s, when people talked about "urdu," "urdu-e mualla," or "zaban-e urdu-e mualla," they weren't referring to the language we now know as Urdu. It meant something else, especially among the higher class or educated people.**
- **1790-1795 name zaban-e urdu-e mualla probably began to refer to Hindi**
- Many Mughal royals, including Babur knew Hindi in some measure
- **Urdu became the language used around the court only in January 1772, when Shah Allam II (r. 1759–1806) moved to Delhi**
- But the court's official language remained Persian
- Shah Allam II spoke Hindi on informal occasions
- Shah Allam really liked languages, especially Sanskrit. He also supported and liked Hindi a lot, and he enjoyed reading and writing in Hindi. Because of this, people started to take Hindi more seriously and give it more importance.
- **Edward Terry, companion to Thomas Roe at Jahangir’s court, described the language in his A Voyage to East India as “Indostan,” saying that it was a powerful language that could say much in a few words;**
- **the name that the British most favored for Hindvi/Hindi was “Hindustani.” This was perhaps because it seemed orderly and logical for the main language of “Hindustan” to be called “Hindustani,” just as the language of England was English, and so on**
- **The British identified what they called “Hindustani” as largely a Muslim language, though they also granted that it was spoken, or at least understood**
- **It is also called Oordoo, i.e., the language of the Urdu (‘Horde’) or Camp**
- **1993 - Oxford Dictionary defines Hindustani as language of Muslim conquerors of Hindustan**
- **There are two languages— Hindustani for the Muslims, Hindi for the Hindus**
- **John Gilchrist published a grammar of the “Hindoostanee Language,” - Nauman quoted**
- **He used examples from best poets who used this language**
- **Gilchrist observed that “Hindoostan is a compound word, equivalent to Hindoo-land or Negro-land.**
- **Word "Hindoostanee" is used to describe this language and the people who speak it, in a friendly and inclusive way.**
- **In Persian hindu means “Negro.”**
- Definitions of the words “Urdu” and “Hindustani” that we find from Fallon (1866) through Platts (1884) and the Hobson-Jobson (1886) to the Oxford English Dictionary (1993)
- **Fallon declared Urdu to mean: camp, market, royal camp**
- In a dictionary from 1790, Gilchrist suggests that Sanskrit came from a language called "Hinduwee" that was spoken in India before the Muslim invasion.
- Gilchrist also says that repeated Muslim invasions led to the creation of "Hindustani." Muslims called this language "Oorduwer" in military settings, "Rekhtu" in poetry, and "Hindee" in everyday life.
- Gilchrist makes a mistake in understanding the term "urdu-e muall a," and he wrongly classifies the language into military, literary, and Hindu categories.
- Gilchrist predicts that Hindus would prefer Hinduwee, while Muslims would lean towards Arabic and Persian, leading to two different styles of language. This prediction is based on incorrect historical and moral assumptions.
- **Shahjahanabad was gradually called urdu-e muall a, and the language spoken there became known as "the language of the urdu-e muall a a."**
- **Hindi, under the patronage of Shah Alam II, started being called "the language of the urdu-e muall a a" instead of Persian.**
- **In 1803, an Indian author named Mir Amman Dihlavi wrote a story called "Bagh o bahar" (Garden and Spring). It was created for teaching Urdu/Hindustani to British civil servants at the College of Fort William.**
- Mir Amman wrote the story in a language he called "urdu-e muall a a." He was asked by Gilchrist, a teacher, to translate it into a more common Indian speech used by people of different backgrounds (Urdu, Hindu, or Muslim) - men, women, children, and young people.
- Despite these historical inaccuracies, Bagh o bahar became very popular as a school text, and Mir Amman's version of the story became widely accepted.
- Even as late as December 1858, famous poet Ghalib was uncomfortable with calling it "Urdu" and used it as a masculine word, which is unusual for language names in Urdu (they are typically feminine).
- Another scholar, Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi, preferred using "Hindustani" for similar reasons. "Hindi" was not an option for him at that time.
- **Ahad Ali Khan Yakta was a poet and doctor from Lucknow who wrote a small book called "Dastur fasahat" about how to speak properly in a language he referred to as both "Hindi" and "Urdu," before or in 1798.**
- Yakta's understanding of Urdu's origin likely came from the common beliefs of educated native speakers at that time. These beliefs didn't fit with stories that painted Urdu as a language of "Muslim conquerors" that only Hindus working for Muslim rulers were forced to adopt.
- Yakta wasn't a language expert in history or comparison. He didn't know that the dialect now known as Khari Boli, which eventually became Urdu, existed before Muslims arrived. Muslims played a crucial role in transforming this dialect into a full-fledged language.
- Yakta's account of Urdu's birth and development is generally accurate and differs significantly from Mir Amman's British-approved version
- Bharatendu Harishchandra, considered the father of modern standard Hindi, transitioned from using Urdu to Hindi and wrote harsh satires mocking Urdu's decline.
- He originally began his career in Urdu and even stated in 1871 that he and the women of his community spoke Urdu.
- Bharatendu Harishchandra had a preference for the western branch of his clan and looked down upon the eastern branch.
- **The British also shifted away from using "Hindustani" once "Urdu" became widely accepted.**
- **By 1884, the name "Urdu" was firmly established, as seen in Platts' dictionary titled "A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English."**
- **Muhammad Husain Azad, in his popular history of Urdu poetry called "Ab-e hayat," overlooked many Hindu poets of the eighteenth century and only briefly mentioned a few closer to his time.**
- **Azad only gave substantial attention to one Hindu poet, Daya Shankar Nasim, discussing him alongside Mir Hasan in a somewhat confusing manner.**
- Towards the end of the 19th century, some people in northern India were starting to prefer Hindi over Urdu, and there were efforts to promote the Nagari script (used in Hindi) and modern Hindi.
- In 1939, All India Radio in Delhi aired a series of talks called "Hindustani kya hai" (What is Hindustani?). The discussions about Urdu were emotionally charged. Tara Chand provided the most concise historical perspective.
- Tara Chand believed that British political motives were involved. He later wrote a monograph called "The Problem of Hindustani," blaming some college professors for creating a modified form of Urdu that replaced Persian and Arabic words with Sanskrit ones. This was intended to give Hindus their own language, but it led to significant consequences.
- Some historians, like Tara Chand, tried to provide balanced and rational accounts of the situation. However, suspicions and doubts persisted, especially when fueled by biased perspectives.
- **In the late 19th century, there was a movement called the Hindi-Nagari movement.**
- **This movement made Urdu speakers feel bad and inferior about using the Urdu script and writing system.**
- Some influential people, like Harishchandra and Rajendralal Mitra, believed that Urdu's script was not good enough.
- A long time ago, a person named Gilchrist published something called the Oriental Fabulist in 1803. He said that languages like Hindoostanee, Persian, Arabic, and others could be written using the Roman script easily and correctly.
- Premchand, not a historian but knowledgeable, advocated for "Hindustani" as a simplified form of Urdu/Hindi. He believed Hindi and Urdu were essentially the same language.
- He pointed out that the term "Hindi" was historically used by Muslims, and Urdu was referred to as Hindi in the past.
- However, Premchand's remarks weren't strong enough to dispel misconceptions about Urdu's character.
- SOMEONE DO REST READING