

INFLUENCE OF PERSO-ARABIC ELEMENTS ON THE LOCAL DIALECT AND CULTURE OF BARAK VALLEY.

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ABSTRACT

Barak valley is an important part of the state of the Assam having a separate geographical entity containing linguistic and cultural attributes distinctly different from that of Brahmaputra Valley and the hilly areas. It comprises three districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi.

The Valley has a distinct local language with a combination of Perso-Arabic compound words. It is to be said that Arabic came first in contact with Persian and influenced its vocabulary to a large extent. During the Muslim rule in Bengal, Persian was treated as the official language of Bengal and the medium of communications. And by the passage of time some Perso-Arabic words permanently entered in local dialect of the Valley.

When the Islamic culture entered in Barak Valley through Islamic Sufis and saints with their language and culture. The people in the Barak Valley more specially the Muslims were highly influenced by this culture and as a result a large number of Perso-Arabic words of Islamic cultural terminology have entered in the Valley and practiced by the Muslims of the Valley and hence it put a great influence in the local dialect of the Barak Valley. Here in this research paper, efforts will be made to highlight the influence of such words on the local dialect of the Valley; more specially the influence of Perso-Arabic elements in this respect.

Key words : *Dialect , Perso - Arabic , religious terminology , cultural dialect.*

Introduction:-

Present Barak Valley comprising three districts Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi of Assam has been the cradle of the Muslims as coming down from the 12th Century A.D. After having the study and knowledge of the history of Barak Valley or Surma Valley one can easily understand that the region was a fertile land for the religious people. It was the dwelling place of the Hindus and the *Kacharis* first and the Christians and Muslims thereafter.

The Valley has a unique and separate geographical entity with a distinct culture and a local dialect language of its own in the state of Assam. The most prevailing language of the Valley which is known as 'Cachari' language and in some part 'Sylheti language. And the language is used and practice in colloquial by all most people of the Valley. The Arabic and Persian elements entered in the Bengali language of Barak Valley after the advent of Islam in Assam and especially in this Valley. The first Muslim general who brought Islam in Bengal to which the Barak Valley is an inseparable part and conquered it and established Muslim reign here is Ikhtiyar Uddin Md. Bakhtiar Khailji, popularly known as Bakhtiar Khilji. He conquered Bengal in the year 1202 A.D. from when the Muslim rule started in Bengal and came to an end in the hand of last Muslim Nawab Sirajud-Dawla through dethroning him in the betle of plassy in the year 1557 AD.

It is worth mentioning here that the Muslim Sultans of Bengal were 'Turk' by race and by culture they were Persian and the followers of Islam. So the Arabic, the language of holy Quran and Tradition influenced the rulers to a large extent and played a pivotal role in their social and religious life.

During their rule, a large numbers of Islamic scholars, Sufis and saints came in Bengal and settled down in the region with a view to spread the Islamic knowledge and ideologies here in Bengal including Barak Valley and Brahmaputra Valley. As a result, the majority people of Bengal slowly attracted by the culture and ideologies of the Sufis and saints and started converting to Islam. In this respect *Hazrat* Shah Jalal's contribution is most important and influential as he came in Sylhet in 1303 AD along with 360 disciples with a view to preach Islam. He was 32 years old an energetic young who roamed here and there in Assam and Bangladesh giving the light of *Tawhid* to its people and gradually they were culturally influenced by Persian and Arabic. The influence of Arabic happened in Bengal through Persian because Arabic first came in contact with Persian and influenced its vocabulary in a rich manner which later became a part of Persian language and culture. when Persian ruler invaded Bengal, Persian was used as the official language of Bengal which was earlier influenced by Arabic language. The trend of using Persian as a medium of communication was very common here during the Mughals rule when Persian was declared as state language.

When the Mughals rule in Bengal was established and Persian was declared as official language of the country, due to necessity of the day the people of Bengal irrespective of Hindu and Muslims started and practiced to learn Persian. They exercised Persian in their everyday life and day to day transaction, and hence by the passage of time; Persian left a deep rooted influence in Bengal in culture, language and in literature; as a result a large numbers of Persian and Arabic words got their passage into Bengali, Dr. Enamul Haque, opined that Arabic words which came in current Bengali language are to be deemed as Persian because they became at first Persian and then entered here through Persian.

Persian, the so-called medium of Islamic culture in eastern India covering the valley has had a strong affinity from its entrance in Bengal and later on in Barak Valley down to present day. It is beyond any suspicion that Shah Jalal played the most dominant role in the Islamisation of the people of Barak Valley and Islamic education started in Barak Valley almost along the spread of Islam here by *Hazrat* Shah Jalal. The medium of education was basically Persian and Arabic based, and through this process of practices the language and various *Perso-Arabic* terms have entered in the dialect language of the common masses of the Valley.

It is observed in the study that the local dialect of the Valley has appropriated some particular type of Perso-Arabic vocabulary used in different forms. Muslim community of the Valley are mainly descendants of Muslim living in Sylhet, Dacca, Camilla and Mymansingh where Islamic culture entered in earlier time in compare to the Barak Valley. And the Muslim community of the valley are highly influenced by this culture and by this act; a huge numbers of Arabic and Persian and some Perso-Arabic compound words of cultural terminology have entered in the valley and paved a position in the local dialect of the Valley and through the passage of time, these words became a part and parcel of the local language.

Here in this paper effort is made to chalk-out some *Perso-Arabic* compound words which are largely used and practiced to a great extent in the local dialect of the Muslim community people. Some important *Perso-Arabic* compound terms and expression are enumerated here basically in the following category.

(a) Words basically related with religious terminology: -

i) ***Shab-e-Qadar*** – (شب قدر) Here in this compound word '*Shab*' is Persian word means night '*Qadar*' means fate and jointly it means 'the night of fate; Particularly in 27th night of the month of *Ramzan*, this night is observed by every Muslim religious people.

ii) ***Shab-e-Barat*** – (شب برات) It is also in the same way a mixture of Persian & Arabic word. Here '*Shab*' is used for night and *Barat* is an Arabic word means salvation. And the night is observed as night of fortune or salvation.

iii) ***Shab-e-Mi'raj*** : (شب معراج) This word also a combination of both *persion* and Arabic words. It is said in this particular night our prophet (SA) was taken through seven heavens even to the sublime throne.

iv) ***Khatam-e-Shabina*** – (ختم شبینه) Here Persian word '*shab*' added with '*Khatam*' is an Arabic word it means completion, and here in the combine context, it means complete recitation of Quran within a night. In Barak Valley this time of religious custom is very commonly celebrated.

v) ***Fateha-e-Duazdaham*** – (فاتحه دوازدهم) Here '*fateha*' is an Arabic word means 'reading of the Holy Quran' on the death anniversary of a person and '*Duazdaham*' is a Persian word means twelfth. Hence it means recitation of the Holy Quran for a dead person of the day of 'Twelfth' and this day is observed as the death anniversary of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) all over the world.

vi) ***Masjid-e-Panjegana*** – (مسجد پنجگانه) like the above it also a combine word, where '*masjid*' is Arabic. '*Panjegana*' is Persian. And the expression means the place where prayer for five times in a day is performed regularly.

vii) ***Namaj-e-Janajah*** – (نمازے جنازه) This expression is used widely in the local dialect of the Valley here the word '*Namaj*' is Persian means prayer and '*Janajah*' is an Arabic word means dead body and jointly this term means a prayer done on a deceased Muslim person before his burial.

viii) ***Khuda Hafiz*** : (خدا حافظ) It is a *Perso-Arabic* which is very commonly used to express good safety to anybody. It is used by Muslim of the Barak Valley to pay valedictory address to anybody.

ix) ***Eidgah*** :- (عید گاہ) Here the word *Eid* is Arabic and '*Gah*' is Persian word means a place. Hence, this word means the place where Muslim religious function is done.

x) ***Shadi Mubarak*** – (شادی مبارک) Here *Shadi* or '*Shudi*' is a Persian expression means glad or merry making and '*Mubarak*' is an Arabic word means blessed or auspicious and the term is widely used in local language of the valley as a greeting expression on the occasion of wedding ceremony.

xi) **Durood Sharif** – (دورود شریف) *Durood* is a Persian word or phrase and '*Sharif*' is an Arabic word which means chest and this dialect is very widely used in Muslim cultural world.

xii) **A'mal namah** :- (عمل نامه) Here '*A'mol*' is an Arabic word and '*namah*' is a Persian expression means deeds or acts. And the expression. This '*A'malnamah*' means the record of day to day activities which will be given to everybody on the day of Judgment.

xiii) **Pesh-Imam** (پیش امام) It is also an expression which is widely used in Barak Valley as a Muslim terminology. Here '*pesh*' is the Persian word means to forward' and 'Imam' means who leads the mass prayer in a mosque or elsewhere; and '*pesh-Imam*' means the imam who holds a leading position in the Prayer in mosques is first on priority.

xiv) **Kitab-Quaran** :- (کتاب - قرآن) Both the words are Arabic in origin but most commonly used in Persian and as well as in the local dialect of Barak valley.

xv) **Safbandi** (صف بندی) (means arranging of line by people in raw. Here '*saf*' is Arabic and '*bandi*' is Persian word.

xvi) **Duniadari** : (دنیداری) Here '*dunia*' also an Arabic word '*dari*' is a Persian suffix means a person engaged in worldly affairs.

xvii) **Gur-Sawal**: (گور سوال) In this compound word '*gur*' is Persian and '*sawal*' is Arabic, which means asking for a person in his grave. The term is more commonly used by the Muslims of Barak Valley.

xviii) **Ruj-E-Mahshar**: (روز محشر) Here the word '*Mahshar*' is Arabic and '*ruj*' is a Persian word means the day of resurrection.

Besides these, above mentioned words; there are enormous Arabic words which are presiged by adding suffixes and prefixes evolved new words of fresh meanings and connotations like in the following table:-

Sl. No.	Words	Meanings
1	Daulat Khana (دولت خانه)	Ironically mean dwelling laws
2	Kitab Quran (کتاب قرآن)	Books & Quran
3	Tariqa-E- Naqshbandia (طریقه نقشبندی)	Naqshbandi Methods
4	Ahle Kitab (اہل کتاب)	People having Devine scriptures
5	Bad Surat (بد صورت)	Ugly
6	Bad Mash (بد معاش)	Rascal
7	Arz Guzar (عرض گزار)	Petition
8	Badtamiz (بد تمیز)	Wicked / Rascal
9	Bad Duwa (بد دعاء)	Imprecation
10	Na –Makul (نا معقول)	Indecent
11	Na - Balig (نا بالغ)	Mior
12	Na –Raj (نا راض)	Disagree
13	Na -Haqq (نا حق)	Unjust.

(b) Words Related to land revenue, laws and administration:

It is observed in the survey that in whole of the Barak Valley, all most all the words which are prevalent in the matter of land revenue and laws are in Arabic in origin and later it took place in Persian; without changing its shape and form and these terms are widely used in Persian language and later in the local dialect of Barak Valley. Some important and widely used words are:-

Sl. No.	Words	Meanings
1	Dalil (دليل)	Document
2	Kebala (قال)	Deed
3	Dakhal (دخل)	Possession
4	Naqal (نقل)	Copy
5	Naq'd (نقد)	Cash
6	Baqi (باقي)	Credit
7	Qabul (قبول)	Acceptance
8	Zurmana (جرمانه)	Fine
9	Zirat (جرات)	Cultivated land
10	Kittah (خطه)	A portion of law
11	Bakijai (باقی جائ)	Office of credited tax
12	Inteqali (انتقالی)	Deed of transfer
13	Adalat (عدالت)	Court of justice
14	Mukhtar (مختار)	Client attendant
15	Munshi (منشی)	Writer
16	Mukaddama (مقدم)	Suit / Case
17	Muharrir (محرر)	Attorney

In fact, it is to be observed that Persian in the Barak Valley and its influence on the local dialect has been widely cultured. Though it is said Persian influence but it is rampantly Arabic words basically worked as based root in creating some Persian words and some time it stand alone in Persian language giving independent meanings as enumerated in the land revenues, laws and administrative sphere.

To conclude it's worth mentioning here that without the domination of any Persian and Arabic ruler in this particular Valley, Arabic and Persian words are pre-dominantly prevailing in the local dialect of Barak Valley and having a close affinity with the Valley. Both Hindu & Muslims sometimes commonly use these terms without any discrimination on the basis of language and religion. It's a unique sign & prestige of the language as enumerated so long.

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