

## **EDITORIAL**

The culture features and complexes which the Kashmiri culture exhibits have grown over a period of time. Its cultural boundaries have contracted or expanded directly proportional to the political strength and commercial reach of the state in a particular period in its history. Thus the culture of Kashmir was not always on the receiving end. It helped change and develop the cultural scenario of its adjacent lands and states at different stages of its history. Buddhist monks went to far off places and introduced a kind of Buddhism with distinct Kashmiri features. These features are still evident in the practices and beliefs of the people adhering to the faith. In wall paintings and in the cover design of the books of the period concerned the hand of Kashmiri artists is more conspicuous. The Naw Vihar of Central Asia bears ample evidence about the popularity of Kashmiri brand of Shaivism there.

The Kashmiri culture shares many traits with other cultures. Some of the features are, of course, there, due nearly to co-incident but for most of such traits we have to look for historical basis. They are because of cumulative result of a long series of separate borrowings or because of the common ancestry and history.

A culture expresses itself not only through the material wealth it accumulates but also, and effectively so, through the language. Language is self contained, resistant to structural

changes and hence capable of preserving old connections and relations.

Persian language has a long antiquity in Kashmiri as there had been intimate contacts between Kashmir and Persia since times immemorial. The Neolithic sites of Kashmir, the Indo Parthian coins and the Harwan tiles bear eloquent testimony to this fact. The number of immigrating racial groups and Rulers who became de facto or de jure rulers at one or the other time in its history, is no less. The relationship grew more and more with the passage of time to the extent that we find Central Asian generals in the services of Kashmir Hindu Rajas, a colony of Muslims in Srinagar in thirteenth century and the consequent influences of Persian language. We find Kalhana the representative writer of eleventh century Kashmir making frequent use of Persian words like Ganjwara, after Persian Ganjwar and Davira after Persian Dabir etc. It has happened through diffusion. But Kashmiri language has in a effective and unique way wrought changes in the borrowed complex. From the 'borrowed complexes' it has received single traits. The individual vocabulary and other elements have frequently been incorporated from the Persian and prior to it from the Sanskrit language.

It was mostly because of the commercial and cultural relations between Kashmir and Iran that we find the presence of Turkish soldiers and early Islamic missionaries in Kashmir. With the establishment of Muslim Sultanats in Kashmir in 1339 A.D. , the Persian influence seems much more pronounced. This was obviously because of the continuous stream of Persian and Central Asian emigrants in the Valley. Perhaps in no phase of Kashmir history, there had been such a great influx of outsiders as we find during the Sultans. These emigrants settled there permanently. The mass conversions that took place during this period proved an additional factor in popularizing Persian in the Valley. This can be understood particularly when one bears it in mind that the Islam that spreads in the Valley was a handy work of Persian and Central

Asian preachers and teachers who preached not in Arabic but in their own language, that is Persian. It is because of this factor that many Central Asian elements, unknown to early Islam crept into the local practices.

The Persian language brought in not only new ideas, it also introduced Persian substitutes for standard Arabic religious terminology. Hence we find Khuda in place of Allah, Nimaz; in place of Salat, Mashid place of Masjid. It is popularized along with it, the Persian way of life, the dress and even the Persian recopies in place of one of the most important factors that accounted for the introduction of development of Persian language and literature in Kashmir was the patronage it received from the Sultans, nobles and the religious class.

Before we make a mention of the patronage, the Sultanate ruling class bestowed upon this language, it seems important to mention that the popularity of Persian language owes much to the Persian missionaries who simultaneously were great scholars in religious and linguistic fields which is abundantly clear from their works, we are fortunate to have them in different libraries of the world. And with their coming to the Valley we immediately find the opening up of Maktabas and Madrasas. For example the first clear evidence about the establishment of Maktabas and Madrasa's pertain to the reign of Sultan Shahabuddin, whose reign is also credited with the arrival of some missionaries like Sayed Tajuddin, Syed Husain Simnani and Syed Hassan Bahadur (RA).

The great saint and missionary, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA), who was the main architect of islamization of Kashmir, was a prolific and crude scholar. A number of his scholarly works mainly written in Persian have survived to us. He has written about one hundred and twenty books (Rasala's), though a good number of them are extinct. The details about the available works of Syed, have been given in the following pages. Syed Ali Hamadani did not only write and preach on the pulpit. He did more fundamental than this. He opened Maktabas and Madrasas in

different necks and corners of the Valley and assigned the task of running these institutes to his hundreds of disciples who accompanied him. It may be mentioned here that Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA) was accompanied by a great number of scholars. We have the mention of such great personalities like Peer Haji Mohammad Qari, Syed Jalaluddin Attaie, Moulana Ahmad Syed Kamaluddin, Syed Jamaluddin Mohadith, Syed Kamaluddin thani, Syed Feroze, Syed Mohammad Kazim, Syed Ruknuddin and a host of others. The Syed had also brought his library with him which was kept under the charge of Syed Mohammad Kazim. Syed Mir Mohammad Hamadani, the illustrious son of Syed Ali Hamadani, while following in the foot steps of his father visited the valley during the reign of Sultan Sikandar (796/1451 A.D.) Syed Mohammad Hamadani was also a reputed scholar which is evident from his *Risala-e-Tassawuf* and *Sharj-e-Maniq*. Syed Mohammad Hamadani was also accompanied by about three hundred followers and a good number of them belonged to the worlds of scholarship. Because of the untiring efforts of Mir Mohammad Hamadani, not only Islam gained currency in the valley, but he also founded a large number of Makatabs and Madarasa's which were kept under the charge of Persian and Central Asian teachers who accompanied him to the valley.

Mention may also be made of another Zealous missionary Mir Shamasuddin Iraqi who wrote many works in prose and poetry. Besides, true to his zealous, he opened many Maktabas, Madarasa's and Khankah's where education was imparted in the Persian.

As already mentioned, the popularity of Persian language and literature was no less due to the nursing care and patronage of the Sultans and nobles, the majority of whom are credited to have achieved proficiency in the Persian language. Sultan Shahbuddin was a great lover of learning. He opened a large number of schools in different parts of the valley. Sultan Kutbudin was a great Persian poet, though a few couplets of his poetry have come

down to us, but they sufficiently prove his mastery over the language and the art. He is famous for establishing a Durul-Aloom in his newly founded capital Qutabuddin Pora in Srinagar which became the highest centre of Persian besides Islamic turnings. This centre of learning continued upon the period of Sikhs (1819-48) and had the credit of having such teachers as Mulla Mohsin Fani and others. Sultan Sikandar was a fan of learning. He bestowed patronage upon the Persian and Central Asian Teachers, the like of which we have hardly any precedence in the previous history of Sultanats. It was because of this patronage that Islamic learning in particular and Persian language in general made great strides in the Valley. However, Sultan Zainul-Abidin will always remain memorable in the history of Kashmir for his unprecedented patronage of education and learnings on account of this patronage, there was a great influx of Persian and Central Asian Scholars like Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri, Maulana Kabir, Mulla Parsa, Moulana Qadri Mulla Ziaeo, Mulla Nadeemi, Maulana Syed Mohammad Mantaqi, Moulana Qazi Majaluddin and others.

The greatest work done by Sultan Zainulabidin was to establish a translation bureau where Persian literature was translated into Sanskrit and vice versa. Equally important work done by the Sultan was to procure books from different libraries of Persian and Central Asia and in this way he built up a precious big library. The patronage he give to the poets can be imagined by the fact that he had given them equal position with his courtiers and there used to be what is known Malik-u-Shora (poet leurate). Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri was his Poet Leurate. Though some Persian histories were also written under his patronage but unfortunately none has survived to us. It may be probably incomplete without reffering to the fact that Sultan Zainalabidin had a mastery over the language as we come to know of one of his writings "Shikayat". It is no wonder that reign of Sultan Zainulabidin had obvious consequences upon the popularity and development of the language and its literature.

Hassan Shah (880 AH/ 1532 AD) the son and successor was also a great lover for learning. His mother Gul Khatoon established a big Madrasa in Srinagar for whose maintenance many villages were bestowed. This Madrasa had the credit of having the credit of Baba Ismail- Qubravi as its principal. Hassan Shah also patronized the scholars who came to Kashmir during his period; mention may be made of Beihaqi Syed who came from Subzwar of Khurasan. Malik Ahmad Yattoo the Vizir of Hassan Shah had a great taste for learning. His wife also built a Madrasa. Hassan Shah's wives also showed keen interest of learning.

Mirza Hyder Dughlat, a Central Asian invader ruled Kashmir for about ten year ( 905 – 957AH ). He was a great Scholar who wrote the famous "Tarikh-e-Rashidi". Being himself of great scholar, it is no wonder to find scholarship thriving by the whole hearted patronage of the ruler. During his period too, the Kashmir witnessed one more rare of emigrations of Persian and Central Asian people, proficient in Persian language.

Politically Chak period (1556 to 1586 AD) presents a dismal picture, but paradoxically enough, the education and learning thrived more than one knows about it during the period of Shahmirs. The simple reason for this seems that Persian language and scholarship in the field has so much deeply entrenched itself in the fertile soil of the valley that political changes and visissitudes hardly effected the healthy trend of education and learning. Persian literature was also fortunate to have got such patrons like Sufis, and Sultans, especially Sultan Hasain Shah Chak ( 971 AH/ 1563 AD) and Yousuf Shah Chak ( 987 AH/ 1579 AD). During this period profuse hagiological literature was produced by the famous Sufies like Baba Daud-e-Khaki, Mulla Ali Raina, Sheikh Ahmad Chagli, Baba Naseebuddin, Khwaja Hassan Qari and others. It goes to the credit of this period that produced such a world famous. Yousuf Shah Chak was a great lover of art and literature. His court patronized the scholars,

His more illustrious queen Habba Khatoon introduced her own rags into sufiana music and is known for her poetic excellences.

Scholar poet Sheikh Yaqoob-e-Surfi who rubs shoulders with the greatest Persian scholar of mediawal world. Two other famous poets: Ghani Kashmiri and Hubbi also spent a part of their adolsant age during this period. It is also during the Chaks that Kashmir produced three famous historians whose works have come down to us. These are Syed Ali, Malik Hyder Chak and the author of Baharistance Shahi. We also find mention of some more Persian poets during the reign of Hassain Shah Chak like Mulla Nami First. Mulla Nami Thani, Mulla Mehdi, Baba Talib Isfahani etc.. Husain Shah Chak was not only a patron of Persian poets and literature but he was himself a good poet, which is borne out by some of the Couplets of his poetry present in contemporary literature. Yousuf Shah Chak is famous in Kashmir history not as much a ruler but a poet and singer. The top priority that he gave to any filed during his reign was organizing concerts where poets and singers were especially invited to display their talent, unfortunately only a few couplets of Yousuf Shah Chaks poetry have survived to posterity. We find the mention of some famous poets who flourished during his period because of Sultans patronage of them, mention may be made of Moulana Ahmad, Mohammad Amin Mustaghni and Baba Talib Isfahani.

With the loss of independence of Kashmir, there was loss of Kashmir's age old prosperity. With this over all fall, the education and learning declined beyond repairs. Saint Xavier, who accompanied, Emperor Akbar records the moral decline and monitory losses of Kashmiris which followed the Akbar's Kashmir campaign and subsequent occupation. This was the result of the policy of "exploit and drain" of non local rulers, a fact which has been revealed by Ghani Kashmiri the, famous poet. Who spent a part of his life after the Mughal occupation in Kashmir. The Mughals and the successive rulers of Kashmir, Afghans, Sikhs and

Dorgras were exclusively interested in optimum exploitation of the people of Kashmir to develop their capitals. No wonder then, one hardly finds any educational activity and least of all patronage to the scholarship it received through independent rulers one, no more finds the scholars like Sheikh Yaqoob-e-Sarfi Ghani Kashmiri, Baba Daud-e-Khaki and the like who were the products of independent Sultans. Nor does one find the out siders coming to Kashmir to learn at the feet of the local scholars, a fact of independent Kashmir.

Some scholars like Professor Sarwari and others give an imposing picture about the development of Persian literature during Mughal period. But when one reads the account between the lines, one finds that the poets he mentions belonged either to Indian Sub-containant or to other parts of the world. More so that Kashmiri Persian poets and scholars which he counts among the galaxy of the scholars of Mughal period actually belong to independent Sultans as they thrived during the period and what they produced was the fruit of what they learned and the patronage they received during their adolescence in the Sultanate period. For example, Ghani Kashmiri, Habibullah Hubbi Nowsheri, Practically belonged to sultanate period. A few poets and scholars say Mohsine Fani were the products of the rich Persian cultural heritage of Kashmir rather than the atmosphere of the Mughal period.

However, since Persian was the court language of the Mughals and the mother language of the governors to Kashmir was Persian, the language flourished without any serious disruption. Moreover, thrugh the Mughals exploited the common masses and drained out the wealth but the fact remains that the traditional educated families continued to enjoy some meddlesome grants which helped them to carry forward the tradition of scholarship, they had entrusted from their fore fathers. It is in the light of this fact that we can reconcile the exploitation on the one hand, continuation of the rich Persian heritage on the other. The poets



and scholars about whom we find a mention during the Mughal period where Muhsin Fani, Mohammad Sadiq Kashmiri, Abdul Gani Bigh Qabool, Abdul Wahab Noori, Pandit Narian Koul Ajiz, Khuaja Mohammad Azam Deda Mari, etc. the details will be given in the following pages.

An interesting development that one finds with regard to Persian language is the emergence of great Hindu Persian Scholars. In fact it is during the sultanate period that we find the Hindu learning Persian but unfortunately no independent work of any Hindu of the period has survived. During the Afghans, Sikhs and Dogas, the contribute of Hindus towards development of the language, increased dramatically.

**After Afghans:**

Kashmir was thrown from a frying pane into the fire once it passed into the hands of the Sikhs as they broke all the records of rackrenting. Yet Persian language and literature did not witness a domes day. Interestingly, enough though not less curiously one finds mushroom growth of Persian Poets and Scholars. This can be understood only when it is borne in mind that Persian continued to be court language of Kashmir during the period of the Sikhs and they did not withdraw the rent free grants from the educated families. We find a large number for Hindu poets during the period in the logical conclousion of the maximum appropriation of land grants by the Hindus. The famous Persian poets and scholars were Hamidullah Shah Abadi (a product of Afghan period) Mulla Bahauddin Matto, Mirza Hehdi Mujrim, Birbal Kachroo, Pandit Bhawani Dass, Pandit mukand Ram, Pandit Tabe Ram Turki, Shankar Joo Adkoon Gharami, Narian Dass Kashmiri, Lachman Ram Saroor, Mufti Sadurddin Wafaie, Pandit Kashmiri Lachman, Sheikh Tayab Rafiqi, Mustafa Khan Bakhtawar, Murad Beign, Roop Bhawani, Sheikh Ahmad Tarabali, Sheikh Mohammad Tarabali, Khwaja Ameruddin Pakhliwal, Anand Ram Baikhud and other flourished during the Sikh period an interesting trend developed in Persian literature during the period and it was the

satirical literature produced by a famous poet, Hamidullah Shah-  
abadi.

In 1846 A.D. Kashmir passed into the hands of the Dogras. Persian continued to be official language for a pretty long time. However, in 1920 A.D. the Persian was replaced by Urdu and subsequently by English which naturally adversely effected the growth and development of Persian in Kashmir. Yet, for a long time, Persian was taught as a subject in schools and colleges. Besides, in Maktabs and Madrasa's, Persian and Arabic continue to be important subjects. Because of the long tradition of Persian in Kashmir and also because of patronage, though feeble, of the Dogra Maharajas, Persian was cherished both by the Muslims and Hindus.

Small wonder that we find a number of Persian poets and scholars who left a great treasure of Persian literature. Among the famous poets and scholars of the period and Pandit Rajkak Dhar, Sheikh Noorud-din Rafiqi, Pandit Sat Ram Baqaya, Mirza Ahad, Mirza Saifuddin, Pandit Gopal Koul, Hushair Diwan Kirpa Ram, pandit Ramu Dhar Trisul Saadat, Pandit Iachan Pla Chalah, Habibullah Kamili, Tata Ram Bhat, Mulla Ahmad Suhrawardi, Pandit Tika Ram Koul, Sheikh Ahmad Trali, Pandit wasdev, Pandit Kalash Koul, Haviz Ghulam Rasool Shora, the father of famous historian of the period Peer Ghulam Hassan and a host of others flourished during the Dogra period.

It is very unfortunate that with the Europeanization of Kashmiri Culture. Persian received a serious setback. Since English became the medium of instruction and science Subject as a channel to reach the higher scholars of the society, Persian along with other oriental languages are least preferred though provisions are made of teaching of Persian not only in schools but also in colleges and universities. The net result of this trend in growing materialistic bent of mind among the educated sections of the society with obvious consequences.

For some time after 1947, Persian lingered on simply on the basis of rich Persian heritage of the Valley and we find some poets and scholars well versed in the language and its different forms. Peer Shamsuddin Hairut Kamili, Mohammad Amin Darab, Peer Abdul Qadir Asim, Mir Ghulam Rasool Nazki, Prof. Nand Lal Koul Taalib, Mirza Kamaluddin Shaida, Tayub Shah Seddiqi, Syed Mubarak Shah Fitrat, Khan Lassa Khan Fida, Syed Shamusddin Ghamgheen, Surkhush Kashmiri, Hakim Ahmad Zahri, Hakim Mohiuddin Sopori and others belong to post 1947 A.D. Kashmiri.

Among the contemporary personalities proficient in the language are a few College and University teachers of the discipline. Given the present declining trend of the discipline we are afraid that the subject will extinct if not provided a fresh boost by the government with the death of the subject, there will be the death of rich cultural heritage as it is preserved in Persian language and literature which had the privilege of being the official language of Kashmir for a pretty long time from 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

After the special Assistance programme (DRS-SAP) sponsored by the University Grants Commission, a three – day seminar on “The Advent of Islam and Spread of Persian in Kashmir” was conducted from 5<sup>th</sup> October to 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2004 by the Persian Department of Kashmir, University. The seminar was inaugurated by acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Abdul Wahid, Prof. S.H. Qasami, the president All Indian eminent Persian Scholars Association presided over the function.

Professor M.S. Niazmand of the department of Persian welcoming the distinguished guests said, the Persian department of Kashmir university is organizing this three day seminar sponsored by the University Grants Commission. The purpose is to highlight the achievements and contribution of those personalities who lent their flesh and blood to the development of the Persian language and literature in Kashmir. Master experts have been invited to

participate so that the pearls of their quest and research can fill the void”.

In his inaugural address Professor Abdul Wahid Qureshi, The Vice-Chancellor emphasized the need to revive Persian language and culture which, he said, have suffered a setback. His brief impressive speech reminded the audience of the deep-rooted heritage of the Persian language. Its origin in Kashmir, which dates-back as many as six centuries, its role in the Islamisation of Kashmir and its being the primary source language for the study of history and culture were the main points of his speech. Persian poetry, he observed, had been hailed as an outstanding achievement of Persian literature where as its prose reflected itself in medicine, philosophy, theology, mysticism and other scholastic domains. In the Indian subcontinent, from 1000 A.D. to 1886 A.D.. historical narratives were treated as the most popular subject as they enjoyed support from Indian kings and administrators in general and locals in particular. The enormous medieval historical literature of the Indian subcontinent was written in Persian and was supplemented by bibliographical and geographical research in Kashmir. Here Persian was introduced as a source language for preaching Islam and retained as official language for centuries.

Professor S.H. Qasemi, in his presidential address, shared similar views and gave a detailed account of the historicity of events which led to the introduction and later on adoption of Persian as official language during the reign of Sultan Zainul Abidin 1320 to 1370 A.D. The Sultan, however, showed a serious concern for studying language to boost science and technology, which eroded interest in the study of classical languages in general and Persian in particular. Professor S.H.Qasimi, to the contrary, held that the Persian language should be considered as a mirror to our immediate past. The teachers and scholars in the Persian Department could, according to him, play a vital role in this.

In his philosophical keynote address Prof. A.R. Rahi, Professor emirates and poet, highlighted the theme of the seminar.

He divided them into three categories: Persian language, Persian literature and Persian culture. Kashmir, he maintained, was honoured as Iran Minor (Iran-e-saghir). In order to achieve this honour, the Kashmiris had to undergo tremendous hardships. Persian was a strange language for us. This however did not prevent us from learning and understanding Persian poetry and its norms of evaluation. As a result, Kashmir produced a number of great poets. Ghani Kashmiri, Fani and Sarfi were in no way less recognized than some well-known poets of Iran itself. Thinkers and historians like Haider Malik, Birbal Kachroo, Mohiuddin Miskeen, Azam Dedmari and Hassan Shah Khohihami significantly contributed to Persian literature.

Prof. Rahi impressed upon the audience that our cultural relations with Iran, Afghanistan and the Central Asia are multi-dimensional. We adopted this culture not only for the Islamisation of Kashmir but also in our day to day life. Our religious places, educational institutions and homes reflect the influence of Persian culture.

Prof. Rahi said that Persian was our official language for a considerable period of time and affected Kashmiri, our mother tongue, in entirety. We cannot therefore afford to ignore this hard fact. Our culture and language owe a lot to Persian. Yet there is something amiss. We have been organizing seminars, conferences and workshops only to throw light on the influence of Persian on our culture and lifestyle and nobody thought in terms of evaluating our contribution to Persian language and literature, which is of course of great significance in itself and for which the people of Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan feel indebted to us. Our endeavour should be to identify this contribution to Persian literature rather than rest content with the influence of Persian on Kashmiri culture. The contribution of Bedil, Iqbal and Ghalib to Persian literature lies in their experimentation with the Persian language and the way they exploit it as a medium of expression in their poetry.

Despite being a non-Iranian, Ghani Kashmiri as a poet found his place among the towering poets of Iran, a privilege for us to cherish. But this is not enough. The need of the hour is to explore and evaluate the poetry of those poets who can be said to rub shoulders with Firdousi, Saidi, Hafiz, Anwari and Romi. In this consists our real contributions to Persian literature.

Prof. Rahi concluded his speech by suggesting that a translation cell should be set up to translate modern Kashmiri literature into Persian. He extolled Prof. M. M. Masoodi, Co-ordinator, DRS-SAP scheme, for his attempts to provide modern facilities for the revival of interest in research in Persian. It is mainly due to his pains-taking efforts that the Persian Department can now boast of having a language lab, a rich library, microfilm materials and a computer equipped with Persian – Urdu – Arabic software. The Department of Special Assistance sanctioned by the UGC has absolute confidence in Prof. Masoodi. He has been working hard to revive the Persian language. Of late, the introduction of the PG Diploma course in Modern Spoken Persian is a step in the right direction. Infact, the recently concluded seminar organized by him under DRS –SAP scheme shows that he can work successfully even in adverse conditions. The seminar was attended by hundreds of intellectuals, academicians and writers. The proceedings generated great interest among them. The seminar lasted for three days and a good number of eminent scholars participated in technical sessions. This only constitutes the first phase of the seminar and there is another scheduled to be held in June 2009 in which scholars of national and international repute are expected to participate. Since then the department has been regularly organizing seminar at the national level every year and three weeks Refresher courses in the language sponsored by I.R. Iran have also held till at present.

The Kashmiri Department subsequently conducted a three-day annual seminar on “Impact of Persian on Kashmiri language and literature” as an aftermath of the seminar under review and has

helped to a great extent in reviving the notion. We hope these endeavours help enrich the academic atmosphere of the University.

Our special thanks are due to the University Grants Commission and University authorities especially to our Vice-Chancellor Prof.(Dr.) Reyaz Punjabi for being generous in providing funds and all kinds of support and encouragement of help for the publication of this very important issue of the department. In the end I must thank all the participants and distinguished colleagues for their help and guidance to make this seminar a success.

*Professor M. M. Maoodi*