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## **INFLUENCE OF PERSIAN ON BENGALI LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

Persian has influenced Bengali language and literature greatly both in respect of linguistic as well as literary Form and style. It has influenced the Bengali language in the formation of words in such a great manner that if we say that at least forty percent of Bengali words are loan words from Persian we shall be not incorrect. Many scholars in their reputed works have given such words e.g., Prof. Sunil Kumar Chatterji has mentioned a great number of such loan words in his famous origin and development of Benali language. Another scholar Prof. S. Kumar Sen in his history of Bengali literature has also enumerated a large number of such words.

On the other hand, Persian has influenced Bengali literature also. So far as Bengali literature is concerned, it had no acquaintance with the form of Ghazal or Ruba'I however, owing to acquiring religious knowledge, students had to learn Persian and Arabic. Moreover, learning Persian was a matter of prestige at learn upto 1837, therefore Bengali students, after acquiring proficiency in the Persian whenever they wrote their mother tongue Bengali – inadvertently they used copiously Persian vocabularies, even phraseology and idioms in their writings. So much so that some of the writers and poets emulated Persian forms and structures in their poem. In this section, perhaps Nazrul Islam, the revolutionary poet of Bengal may be cited, Nazrul Islam, a great school of Persian, not only made poetic translation of

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam but also has shown a critical approach in selecting Rubaiyis. If we go through the Preface of this verse-translation of his we can at once appreciate his scholarship in Persian. But the greatest contribution of Nazrul Islam is that he is the first man who emoluted Persian ghazal into Bengali poetry. For the lyrical value of these Bengali ghazals when they are sung, create the same atmosphere which is found while reciting Persian poetry. Although for citing others name like Raja Ram Mohan, Bhai girish Chandra Sen, etc. to show to what extent Persian had influenced Bengali but so far as adopting of Persian form and structure and bringing the sweetness of lyricality, the the credit goes to Nazrul Islam. Many of his such ghazals are sung in the melodious voice of the singers of Bengal.

Besides, Nazrul Islam then is another illustrious literary personality, Syed Mujtaba Ali, who has portrayed the Afghani as well as Irani life and culture is his lucid travelogue "Deshe - Bideshe". His elitistic novel, Shal nam' also given a clear picture of Irani culture in the life of the people of Bengal. Syed Mujtaba Ali a direct disciple of Rabindranath Tagore during his study from 1921 - 1926 in Biswa Bharati, had learnt Persian from distinguished scholar of Pahelvi and Persian - Bogdanove, who was originally a Russian diplomat, and after the Russian revolution in 1917 had taken shelter in Bombay working in the Cama Society for editing Pahelvi Zoroastrian MSS for the Parsees. As he was a great scholar of Persian he was asked by Rabindranath Tagore to join his newly built University. Therefore he joined Biswa Bharati.

Mujtaba Ali also studied Persian under pure Dawud and other Persian scholars in Shantiniketan so much so that he acquired full proficiency in that language; he even worked in Kabul Radio for sometime. For his sojourn in Kabul and travel to Iran, gave him ample chance to witness the life and culture of those people. Therefore his delineation is so true and attractive, that the readers

get a first hand knowledge of Persian speaking people through his books.

The cultural impact of Persian is so great and deep in the life of the people of Bengal that one can easily sense it in the Bengali marriage ceremony, domestic life even in the film and television and music.

Bengails contribution to Persian History writing with special reference to Khurshid's Jahan Nama

In medieval era a good number of Persian historical works were compiled in different parts of India and Bengal was no exception. Host of writers and scholars paid their attention to the compilations of history of the province, some times at their own initiative and sometimes, at the instance of the rulers of Bengal. As a result we have sufficient materials at our disposal relating to the social, cultural and political events or the province.

Bengal witnessed a long and chequered period of Muslim rule from 1202 to 1757 AD. but it is extremely surprising to note that not a single contemporary historical work, encapsulating the entire medieval era and especially focusing on Ilyas Shahi and Husain Shahi periods, has come down to us. Whatever historical references or records that we lay our hands upon come from the historical compendiums compiled at the courts of Sultans of Delhi of those of the Mughals. The historians and chroniclers or the court accommodated casual and cursory references to the events of the province and that, too. When the Delhi emperors came into contact with Bengal.

However, we have traces of compilation of historical works in towards the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century. When the first historical work or significance the 'Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana' or 'Tarrikh-i-Shahi' compiled by Ahmad Yadgar at the instance of the last Afghan ruler or Bengal Daud Shah Karrani (1572-1576 AD.).

The Baharistan-i-Ghaibi of Mirza Nathan entitled Shitab Khan is yet another historical works of great merit and authenticity. It was completed during the reign of Jahangir. It is

designated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar as "the only oasis" in the barren desert of historical ignorance because it was first such historical work that delineates exclusively the events of Bengal from descriptions of wars to social functions and superstitious beliefs, of the people.

The *Tarikh-i-Shujai*, which was completed in 1659-60 by Mohammad Masum bin Hasan is an eyewitness account of Prince Shuja's war of succession with Mir Jumla and records the administrative system of Bengal under Shah Shuja's viceroyalty.

The *Waqā-i-Mahabat Jangi* or *Waqā-i-Fath-i-Bengala* was compiled in 1748 AD. by Shah Mohammad Wafa Azimabadi. It is a significant historical work shedding light on the events of Bengal during the rule of Alivardi Khan.

Munshi Salimullah has the credit of compiling the *Tarikh-i-Bangaia* in 1763 at the instance of Henri Vansittart, the then Governor of Bengal (1760-64 AD.). It contains the historical events of Bengal covering the account of the governorship of prince Azimush Shah in 1607 to the accession of Sirajuddaula in 1756.

Yusuf Ali Khan compiled a marvelous historical account of Bengal under the title the *Tarikh-i-Alivardi Khan* furnishing first hand information regarding the administration and governance of Ali Mardi Khan in Bengal with special reference to the Marathas invasions of Bengal.

Ghulam Husain Tabatabai compiled a significant historical compendium the *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* in 1782 at Murshidabad. It gives an authentic account of social, cultural and political life of Bengal from 1707 to 1780.

However, the credit for the compilation of a complete history of Bengal goes to Ghulam Husain Salim Zaidpuri, a resident of Maida. He compiled *Riyaz-us-salatin* in 1788 at the instance of Lord Udny whom he served as a munshi. The work furnishes a detailed history of Bengal' from the conquest of the province by Bakhtiyarrudin Khalji to the British paramountcy

besides enlightening us about the geography of the land as well as its Hindu rulers of the past.

The *Tarikh-i-Bangala* of Abdul Wahid Rauf is another work of significance and merits our attention.

The '*Mukhtasar dar Ahwal-i-Bangala*' or '*Risala dar Ahwal-i-Jahangir nagar*' is also an important historical work compiled by a renowned historian of Bengal Ali Qazwini which gives a brief history of Bengal and Decca, down to the middle of 13<sup>th</sup> century AH.

Besides the above historical works we have a number of other Persian works such as the *Khurshid-i-Jahan Numa* by Maulvi Syed Ilahi Bakhsh Husaini, the *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* and the *Wardat-i-Qasimi* by Maharaja Kalyan Singh, the *Swanih-i-Akbari* by Amir Ali Haider Bilgrami, the *Suhail-i-Yaman* by Mawlawi Nasiruddin Haidar, the *Fath-i-Ibriya* by Shihabuddin Ahmed Talish, the *Bairangnama* by Amir Ali Khan, etc. which needs detailed study for better understanding of the history of Bengal.

In brief, Persian historiography in Bengal is rich, substantial and informative. And scholars have ample scope for delving deep into the subject and tracing out interesting account of the medieval and British India. The present paper is a humble effort towards that gigantic task.

To proceed with the scientific investigation on propose topic "*Persian Historiography in Bengal*", we shall have to depend on all the above mentioned historical books apart from that a number of historical and other than historical books, booklets, encyclopedias, magazines, news-papers, published and unpublished research works, journals, dictionaries, field works, etc.