Chapter-(V)

INFLUENCE OF PERSO-ARABIC WORDS ON BENGALI LITERATURE AS A WHOLE.

Modern Bengali Language is highly developed and is one of the flourished and rich language of the world. It derived benefit from all foreign languages with which it came in contact. In course of its history of development, it has grown from strength to strength in respect of Phonology, Vocabulary, Morphology and Syntax. The superfine structure at present of its vocabulary was built up in many cases absorbing words and elements from other languages including Arabic and Persian on its original structure. It has been taken that all modern languages of Indian sub-continent, leaving Deccan, sprang out from Sanskrit at different stages of Prakrit. Prakrit was the vernacular language of the mass when Sanskrit was the polished language of the sophisticated upper class of literary circle in early stage. In a later time, a second literary language developed in North India and it was Pali which flourished as classical literary medium in the hand of Buddhists. But Prakrit remained in usage in North East India as Magadhi and in course of time this spoken variety continued to chang and developed to reach the stage of what was called Apabhramsa by Hemacandra and subsequent writers[1] Futher deviations and development of Apabhramsa caused the evolution of still more a spoken language Bengali during the reign of Pual Dynasty in 10th Century A.D.

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1) *M.A. Qayyum: A critical Study of Early Bengali Grammar, Page 6-7, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka. 1982.*

The coast line of sea shore in chattagram witnessed the arrival of Arabian tradesmen in the 4th and the 5th century A.D. It may be possible that some of them penetrated into the far interior places of Bengal in connection with their business and it may also be guessed that a few of them settled here permanently due to easy availability of food grains and other necessaries of livelihood.Their spoken language Arabic mixed up with local vernacular much before the emergence of Bengali as a language. It is hard to identify those foerign words today and they are used freely in Bengali literature by Hindus and Muslims alike.

"Going through the normal philological process of changes in words taken as loan from foreign language , Perso-Arabic words in Bengali lost more or less their own phonology to adopt themselves to the Phonology of the language, they enriched. In some cases, original meanings of these words were changed altogether; in most of the cases, they were modified or extended; and in a number of cases, they were retained intact. In the domain of philology, this kind of changes in loan-words is known as the 'Process of Naturalisation' and it is fully active in Bengali in the beginning of its formative period"[2].

History remembers that saints and sufis of different sects of Arabian origin visited Bengal before and after the take-over of ruling power by Muslims of Persian and Afgan origin during 11th and 12th century A.D. They, the saints and sufis bore along with them both the Arabian culture and tents of Islam. When they propagated Islamic equality and liberty, the oppressed caste-ridden inhabitants

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(2) Dr. Shaikh Gulam Maqsud Hilali Perso-Arabic Elements in Bengali Edited by Dr. Mohammad Enamul Haque, :Editor's preface, page(V) in first Reprint 2002, Bangala Academy, Dhaka.

of the land attracted towards it and most of them embraced Islam. As a rule, muslims compulsorily learn Arabic to perform their religious duties; so the converts became familar with many Arabic words to be used in their day to day life. And when Perso-Afgan rulers ruled the land with Persian as their official language and since Islamic tenets were explained mainly through Persian lnguage, there gave rise to massive use of Perso-Arabic word in spoken varities and the then prevailed Literary works called Puthi Literature. Thus Bengali Language was brought up in the hand of muslims by means of words and feelings and Islam established its Life. From the begining of Sultanaid period in 1206 A.D. to the advent of Britishers in 1757 A.D., Bengali language and literature flourished through Puthi literature. According to Dr. Abdul Gaffar Siddiquee, the number of Puthi Literature is not less than (50,000) fifty thousands, and readers become astonished at the use of mixed Prso-Arabic words in those Puthis.[2A.]

Former Professor of Bengali Department of Dhaka University Dr. Ahmed Shorif collected 393 names of puthi writers in his book "Puthi Parichiti" some of the names are (1) Shah Md. Sogir (2) Joinul Uddin (3) Shaikh Foizullah (4) Daulat Uzir Bharam Khan (5) Soyeed Sultan (6) Kazi Daulat (7) Soyeed Alaol (8) Abdun Nabi (9) Soyeed Ain Uddin (10) Shaikh Mutlib (11) Noajish khan (12) Shaikh Chand (13) Tamiz Uddin (14) Garib Ullah (15) Shaikh Saadi Bengali (16) Soyeed joinul Abedin (17) Soyeed Hamza (18) Abdur Rahim (19) Shaikh Aij Uddin (20) Joinul Abdin (21) Muhammad Khoir (22) Mohammad Danesh. (23) Abdul Karim (24) Arkum Shah (25) Soyeed Ali (26) Janab Ali.

2A) Ahmed Ali Mulla: Bharat Tumi Kar: Page111, Published by Nilachal Press, Calcutta-9, 3rd edition 1995.

(27) Fakir Muhammad, (28) Md. Irphan Shah, (29) Mohammad yunus, (30) Nashir Ali, (31) Abdul Mazid Khan, (32) Jashim Uddin, (33) Foijullah, (34) Md. Ustagar, (35) Md. Monsoor Uddin, (36) Kazi Abdul Monnan, (37) Soyeed Majtaba Ali, (38) Reza-ul Karim, (39) Riza Ullah, (40) luqman Ali, (41) Shabirid Khan, (42) Hasan Hafizur Rahman, (43) Hazi Abdul Odud, (44) Abdus Sukur, (45) Nasheer Ali etc. etc. In Puthis, Persian and Arabic words were used very frequently but meaningfully and sweet-hearingly. Example-

(1) In "Kasasul Ambia" , Shaikh Taz Uddin narrates:-

" Tawba jodi kabul hoilo Adamer,
Kohilo Elahi Allah Adam Khoir.
Tumi wa tumar joru dujane milia,
Swarandwip mukamey bosot Korogiya."

Here, Tawba (Ar. repentence) Kabul (Ar. grant, accept), Adam(Ar. name of the first man on earth) Elahi, Allah (Ar. Lord, Supreme Being) Khoir (Ar. good) Mukam (Ar. Station , home) and swaran dwip (<swarna dwip, golden island, Ceylon-Sanskrit), and Joru(Per. < Zar, gold, golden ornament that shines in a body, here lady partner - Persian)

These lines means, 'As repentence of Adom was granted by Allah, the lord, He told him to live in ceylon with his lady partner Eve.'

(2) *In "Abu Shama", Joinal Abedin wrote,*
"Bolechilen Joinal Abdin murshider Paye
Neki jone bodi jeno na-korey Khodaye."

Here, murshid (Ar.Spiritual guide), Neki (Per. Virtur), Badi (Per. Vice), and Khoda (Per. supreme being). The meaning of the lines is, "Allah may not do that virtuous man does vice this was the prayer of joinal Abdin to his spritual guide."

(3) *In "Lalmon Kissa" Arif uddin preached,*

"Allah Allah bolo bhai yead Allah bolo

Hardam Allahr nam nitey Keno bhulo."

Here, Allah (Ar. Supreme Being), Yead (Per. remember), and hardam (Per. every breath). Meaning of these two lines is - " O brother, say Allah, Allah and always remember Allah. Why do you forget to take the name of Allah in every breath you take?"

(4) *In "Tafsir Puthi", Ain uddin described,*

"Islamer Kam kora jotek mumin

jahatey quaim thakey mohammadi din."

Here, Islam (Ar. name of the religion founded by Hazrat Mohammad, P.H.), Mumin (Ar. believers in Islam), Quaim (Ar. established), Mohammad (Ar. Name of the Prophet) and din (Ar. religion). The lines means- "Believers in Islam !do the works of Islam so much so that the religion founded by Mohammad (P.H) remain established."

Hindu Puthi-writers also used Persian and Arabic words in their composition very frequently. Example, Radhacharan Gup narrated in his "Kissa Imam" in this way-

"Radha Charan Gupe bhun-e shabut rakho kam

Akeboter Kandari pir Hazrat Imam"

Here, shabut (Ar. testimony, proof), Akebot (Ar. ending), Hazrat (Ar. & Per. lordship) Pir (Per. spiritual guide), and Imam (Ar. leader). Meaning of these lines is -

"Radha Charan Gup says, keep alright testimony of your deeds, for his highness the lordship Imam will guide (us) in the day of judgement."

In fact, both Hindus and Muslims in those days followed the same style of Bengali language using abundant of perso-Arabic words very meaningfully and nicely while.composing their Puthis. This trend continues till to day as one finds frequent use of these words in the hands of folk - based rural poets and Aul-baul-Sufi-darbeshes-Fakirs of all Bengali communities in their Murshidi-Marifoti-Dehotatta-Nurtatta etc. songs. For example, in very recent time, Hazrat Sufi Shah Arkum Ali (R) sings in his "Hakikate Sitara" (Published by his Majar committee from Sylhet, Bangladesh)as under-

"Alif-e ishara jar, mim dost aponar,
paida kailo nij kudrate mashuk banaiya hat-e,
ashik hoiya tate, habib boliya kohe tar."

Here, Alif (first alphabet of both Arabic and Persian), Ishara (Ar. signal), Mim (an alphabet of both Arabic and Persian), Dost (Per. friend), Paida (Per. create), Kudrat (Ar. power), Mashuk (Ar. beloved), Ashik (Ar. lover) and Habib (Ar. intimate friend). The lines mean like this- "Alif is the signal or indication of Himself, Mim is the indication of His friend whom He created with His power. Making His beloved with His hand and becoming lover to him, He calls him His intimate friend."

Another example, it is incurrency at present time in West Bengal (Munsi Ajhar Ali : Sunar Khoni : Page 20: 40th edition 1412 Bs.: Published by Tazmahal Book Depot, 11/C Mcleod st. Calcutta-16)

"Aponar Kalame, Nabir Salame, tagid koren Bari,
Qalbete jan, kohite joban, je tok thakey gujari.
Je beshe je bheshe, je deshete jao re,
Gao gao sobe, Salli-ala gao re."

Here, Kalam (Ar. word), Salam (Ar. salution, greetings), Tagid (Ar. re-mind, demand), Bari (Ar. creator, God), Qalb (Ar. heart), Jan (Ar. soul, life)

Joban(Per. tongue, language) Gujari (Per. living) and Salli-ala (Ar. Prayer for peace upon) The stanza means- 'Almighty God demanded in his word (Quran) to salute his prophet (Mohammad P.H.) so long as there activates life in your heart and language in your tongue. So, wherever you are and whichever you dressed on, enchant greeting terms (Prayer for peace) to him (prophet)'.

One more example, it was frequently enchanted by Late Shaikhul Hadith Hazrat Moulana Ahmed Ali of Banshkandi, Barak Valley at his Dua (Prayer) in various congregations. It is a long poem. Only four lines are quoted-

"Koro Kina koro daya dharechi daman,

Jibon-e morone Allah na hobe charhan.

Papi boli paye theli na korio bar,

Khotai jaimu firia aimu darbare moular."

Here, Damon (Per. skirt of a garment), Allah (Ar. almighty, creator), Darbar (Per. Court) and Moula (Ar. lord, God).

Meaning of these lines is "Bestow to me your kindness or not, I caught hold tightly your hand and shall not leave it in life or death. Considering me a sinner, do not drive me out by your feet. For I have no place to go and shall return to the court of the Lord."

Thousands of similar examples can be cited from both the Bengals and other places wherever Bengali people reside. The actual fact is that there exists a difference between the language of mass people and literary language. The polished literary Bengali language is not very much easier than Sanskrit to general Bengali people who are called uneducated as they could not afford to attend modern Schools or Colleges to learn literary language. As a result two parallel

Bengali literature are continuing to floourish till this days since the 15th century A.D. when Bengali language developed as a literary language for the first time. This is why so large a number of Puthi literature exist in Bengali language. And these Puthis are rich with Persian and Arabic words. Dr. A.M. Bhuiya, Head of the Department of Arabic, Assam University, Silchar, found out 920 Persian and Arabic words from only three Puthis namely, Halatun Nabi, Mahabbat Nama and Janganama. And most of these words availed several frequencies.

Now if one turns to modern literature, one finds that most famous literary Person used words of Perso-Arabic origin in their writings. For example, Rabindranath Tagore writes in his "Balmiki Pratibha"

"Ai moroder murodkhana dekheo kire bharhkali na,

Bahba shabash tore, shabash re tor bharasa dekhi."

Here, Morod (Per. male Person), murod (Ar. power, energy) Bahba (Per. bravo !), shabash (Per. excellent) Meaning, "Don't you fear noticing the might of this man? Bravo! excellent you have done! I praise you for your courage." [3]. In "Polatoka", Rabindra Nath narrates,

"Oikhane mor pusha harin charta apon mone,

Hena-berhar Kune."

Here Hena (Ar. hinna, a kind of flowering shrub)

Meaning, "My domestic deer would graze there alone in the corner of henna-partition."[4].

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3) *Dr. Harendra Chandra Paul : Bangla Sahitye Arbi-persi Shabda' : Page 311, Bengali and Sanskrit Department, Dhaka University : 1st edition, 1967.*

4) *Ibid page 404.*

Hundreds of such examples can be cited from Rabindra-Literature.

Bankim Chandra Chottopadhyay in his "Bibidha Prabandha" writes, *"Taharpar gomastar hisabana-taha takai do paisa."*

Here, gomasta (Per. revenue collector), hisabana (Ar. commission for accounting). The sentence means, "And then, the commission of the revenue collector for accounting is (at the rate of) two paisa per rupee." [5]

Also, Bankim Chandra wrote in his "Kamala kanter Daptor,"

"Sakaler-i ekmatra uddeshya- Khariddarer

"Chokhe dhula dia radimal pachar karibe."

Here, Khariddar (Per. purchaser), raddi (Per. rejected) , mal (Ar. goods). The mening of the line is, "Sole intention of everybody is to sale the rejected goods to purchasers by bewildering (them)."[6]

Many of the similar examples can be cited from the titles of Bankim Chnadra.

Again, Syed Majtaba Ali writes in his "Abishyashwa,"

"Prothom darshanei tini bujhe gelen, mem saheb tank-e nek-nojore dekhechen."

Here, Saheb (Ar. master, here mistress), nek (Per. good) najor (Ar. look). The meaning of the sentence is-

"He understood at the very first sight that the mistress cast on him good look". [7]

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5) *Dr. Harendra Chandra Paul : Bangla Sahitye Arbi-persi Shabda, Page 401, Bengali and Sanskrit Department, Dhaka University : 1st edition, 1967.*

6) *Ibid, Page- 328*

7) *Ibid. Page 212.*

Or, Shaktipada Brahmachari of Barak Valley sings in his "Manasa Mangal"-

".....Saer jhiari jai ananta bhasane."

Here, Saer (Ar. touring fellow). The line means,

"The touring daughter goes on her endless voyage." [8]

Or, Dr. Tapadhir Bhattacharjee writes

....."A Chharha aro akti joruri kotha bole neya proyujan"

Here, joruri (Ar. & Per.-essential):

"Besides, another essential word is necessary to be expressed" [8A]

Or, ..."Isharar probonota boro hoye othe"

Here, Ishara (Per. hints).

Hints tend to be widened. [8b]

Or, Anandashankar Roy describe in his "Aposoron", "A meye baire parda manena, bhitore ghor pardanashin." Here, parda (Per. veil), Pardanashin (Per. remaining behined the veil) The sentence means, "This girl does not observe veil out side, but in interior, she is astaunch observer of veil." [9]

Or, Tarashankar uses in "Mati",

" Meherbani kore goribke bole dao to gorib porobor."

Here, meherbani (Per. compassion), gorib (Ar. poor), porbor (Per. Pro tector). The meaning of the sentence is,

"On compassion, tell the poor, O protector of indigents." [10]

Or, *Narayan Deb, in "Padma Puran,"-*

"Dui lakka paik ailo koria sajan,

Tarkash loia ailo joto rautgon,"

Here, paik (Per. messenger), sajan <saj (equipment-Persian), tarkash (Per. quiver), The line means, Two lakh messenger came fully equipped and all tenants came with quivers."[11]

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8) Samoyeek Prasanga, dtd. 18/02/07 : Page- 6 (Reprint of the poem of the author)

8A) Dr. Tapodhir Bhattacharjee : Kobitar Rupantor, Page- 473 1st adition Sahityalook Calcutta- 6

8B) Ibid : Purbalekh.

9) Dr. H.C. Paul : Bangla Sahitya Arbi-Farsi Shabda : Page- 216

10) Dr. H.C. Paul : Bangla Sahitye Arbi-Farsi Shabda : Page- 217, Dhaka University 1st edition, 1967.

11) Ibid, Page- 157.

Again, Kashiram Das, in "Mahabharat",-

"Narad Kohila asi daitya borabore"

Here, borabor (Per, face to face, before). The line means,

"Narod told before the dragon"[12]

or Krittibas, in "Ramayana"-

"Nanir puttali Sita atoshe milijai....."

Here, atosh (Per. fire). The line means,

"Sita, as if very soft doll, mingles with fire....." [13]

Hundreds of thousands of similar examples can be produced from modern and current Bengali Literature in both Puthi language and polished language. Although Halhed-Carrey-Haughton earnestly attempted to Sanskritise Bengali and even Sanskrit words and elements have already been deeply rooted in Bengali Language, the use of Perso-Arabic words and elements could not be removed from Bengali literature altogether. Sophisticated upper Class of writers use less Perso-Arabic words, while mass people use them abundantly.

Perso-Arabic words and elements influenced Bengali literature very much. Extensive usage of these words started in the middle age. From the 14th century to the benginning of 20th Century, very frequent use of these words speedily enriched Bengali literature. In the ending of 19th Century, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Satyendra Nath Dutta, Mohit lal Majumdar and others used Perso-Arabic words. In twenties and thirtees of 20th Century, Kazi Nazrul Islam extensively used words of Perso-Arabic origin. According to Abdus Sattar, Nazrul Islam alone

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12) Dr. H.C. Paul : Bangla Sahitye Arbi-Farsi Shabda, Page- 250, Dhaka University 1st edition, 1967.
13) Ibid, Page- 15.

used almost 3000. Perso-Arabic words [14]. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chottopadhya says that more than 2500 Perso-Arabic words are there in Bengali language [15]. Dr. Gulam Maqsud Hilali records that there are 5186 words and expressions of Perso-Arabic origin in Bengali language excluding the words with orthographic variation which number more than 3934. [16] Dr. Harendra Chandra Paul collected 3320 Perso-Arabic words in Bengali usage.[17]

From above, it is evident that Bengali language is highly influenced by Perso-Arabic words and elements, pershaps more than by any other foreign language.

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14) *Abdus Sattar : Nazrul Kaibye Arbi-Parsi Shabda; Page- 11 Nazrul Institute, Dhaka, 1992.*

15) *Dr. Harendra Chnadra Paul : Bangla Sahitye Arbi-Parsi Shabda (in the introduction) Dhaka University, 1st edition, 1967.*

16) *Dr. Shaikh Gulam Maqsud Hilali : Perso-Arabic Elements in Bengali, Bangla Academy Dhaka : First Reprint, 2002. (Editors noted).*

17) *Dr. H.C. Paul : Bangla Sahitye Arbi-Parsi Shabda Page- 1-408, Dhaka University 1st edition 1967 : Dhaka.*