

Urdu is not a language

The leading Muslim classes of India were trying to ‘occupy’ Hindi, the language of North India which due to Muslim occupation of India and Persian as state language was lagging behind. It is interesting to note that it was happening when the Muslims had lost their supremacy in India to the British. The ‘occupation’ according to one explanation by the Urdu Party was their ‘owning and patronizing’ the language. "By the last two decades of the eighteenth century the elite of the imperial cities of Delhi and Agra had started owning and patronizing the language they still called Hindi and Rekhta’ in Persian instead of its real i.e. Devanagari script calling it “*Zubān-ē-Urdū-ē-Muallā* – the language of the Exalted city, i.e. Delhi. In time this long descriptive phrase shrank to Urdu.” [1] This is written by an Urdu ideologue in the Conclusion of his 456-page book ‘From Hindi to Urdu’ which seems to be some sort of final certificate of validation and a declaration with confidence that Urdu has found its permanent abode and has come to stay in Pakistan. But history has its own logic and truth finds its way somehow. And here we are with a very simple but truthful declaration that ‘Urdu is not a language’.

[1] Hindi to Urdu – A Social and Political History by Tariq Rahman Oxford University Press 2011. P. 390

Basically, the matter is very simple that Urdu is not a language. But it is for the reasonable, un-prejudiced and truthful. Those who have built ‘palaces’ on falsehood and have been living in them getting benefits for so long which they never deserved need much more than a simple and straight forward argument. They must get what they really deserve.

The most fundamental significance of Urdu never comes to anybody’s mind. The long historical process has safely parked it hidden from the eyes and minds of the people. And habits have developed accordingly. There is no exception, be it India, Pakistan or any other presence of South Asians anywhere in the world. And this most fundamental significance of Urdu is the partition of Hindi language. Urdu means partition of Hindi language. In other words, Urdu and Partition of Hindi language go together. In that sense we are living in a state of unawareness. We have a problem. The problem, I believe, was identified earlier also by those who, historically, struggled for Hindi but perhaps partially and tangentially. For example, those who struggled for Hindi and against Urdu during nineteenth century and onwards had given Urdu or rather it was a de-facto situation the status of a language which in fact was not the reality. That was the situation then and I understand that without doing that i.e. dealing with Urdu as a language, it was perhaps not possible for them to assemble and erect publically a platform for Hindi. This needs elaboration which seems not possible in one go. The overall discussion

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of the issue which this part of the manifesto is all about will I believe clear the matter.

But there is difficulty in explaining this matter which I would like to share with the reader to lessen my handicap. I believe that we all in South Asia and anywhere in the world have to have a new consciousness about Urdu which is that 'Urdu is not a language'. But historically things happened as if it was a language. For writers and researchers who understood the issue it has always been a problem. They managed it with explaining this way or that way but it was never possible for anyone to outrightly declare that Urdu was not a language. After Partition, what I declare as not a language became the 'national language' of Pakistan. What an irony! The falsehood got a fort for its protection. And there was no challenger. It was a sort of final victory for the falsehood.

For understanding historical perspective rightly, I quote Christopher R. King three times (pp. 53, 57, 59) here from his book '*One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India*', Ch. 3 Government Language Policy.

P. 53: The linguistic history of North India showed a remarkable continuity in the area of administration for several centuries before British rule. Muslim rule brought Persian as the official language and the chief vehicle of culture in Muslim courts. During the eighteenth century the prestige of Persian continued unabated despite the rapid decline of the Mughal Empire. As the British East India Company rose to power, Persian remained the official language of administration well into the nineteenth century. British dominion, however, eventually brought about significant linguistic changes. In the 1830s English took the place of Persian on the higher levels of administration, and Indian vernaculars on the lower. In much of north India, Hindustani (i.e., Urdu) in the Persian script became the official vernacular, while Hindi and Nagari script failed to reach a similar status, except for a few isolated instances, until late in the century.

In the 1870s and 1880s Hindi, in turn, began to replace Urdu in the Central Provinces and Bihar, and by 1900 in the North-Western provinces and Oudh. In the Punjab, however, which came under British control in the late 1840s, Urdu dominated the vernacular level of administration throughout the century and well into the next.

P. 57: In January of 1838, the Deputy-Governor General of Bengal ordered the substitution of the vernacular language for Persian in all those districts included in his jurisdiction, i.e., Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. The change was to take place gradually over the calendar year 1838. In the North-Western Provinces the process had started earlier. In November 1835 the Board had given permission to the Officiating Commissioner of the Saugor and Nerbudda territories, F.J. Shore, to introduce Hindustani (i.e. Urdu) in place of Persian and in Kumaun (Hill districts of NWP) officials were already conducting most of their business using Hindustani

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in the Nagari script by 1835. In July 1836 the Sadar (Chief) Board of Revenue issued a circular ordering the substitution of the ‘Hindoostany language’ (Urdu) in the Persian script for Persian as the medium of official transaction in the Revenue Department.

P. 59: In the first half of the nineteenth century no organized Hindi-speaking elite existed to assert the worth of the Hindi language and the Nagari script as symbols of a Hindu community. Moreover, the Nagari script faced a rival in one of its own progeny, the Kaithi script. Finally, one can cogently argue that Hindi, in the sense of modern Khari Boli Hindi, had not yet come into existence. To differentiate Hindi from Urdu (and by implication Hindu from Muslim) meant among other things the deliberate creation of a new language style ‘*shuddh* [pure] Hindi’, or what one might call the ‘Sanskritization’ of Urdu. In other words, we can interpret the rise of modern Khari Boli Hindi as the creation of an objective characteristic.

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It is said that Urdu is the ‘national language’ of Pakistan. Before 1971, it was also the ‘national language’ of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, as it used to be a part of the nation i.e. the then Pakistan. Jinnah had categorically said that Urdu would be the national language of Pakistan: “But let me make it very clear to you that the State Language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language”. Presently, Urdu is one of the 22 languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Moreover English and Urdu are the official languages of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. Further, Telugu and Urdu are the official languages of recently formed Telangana – the 29th State of India. In the Union Territory of Delhi, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu are the official languages. And in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand Hindi and Urdu are the official languages.

In spite of all this presence of Urdu as a language, we began with the statement in the title of this manifesto that ‘Urdu is not a language’. Then, what is it? As said in the title, ‘it is in fact Hindi written in the Persian script’. And now here, once more, I reiterate that Urdu is not a language. It is in fact Hindi written in Persian script. This was the past. And the same is the present. Let us go through some simple facts to understand the reality and reorient our minds accordingly.

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Internationally, in the universities of the U.S. for example, although the teaching of Urdu seems to be at par with Hindi, there are hints of something abnormal which needs an explanation of the historical connection between the two. University of California, Berkeley, introduces its Hindi and Urdu curriculums with such an explanation:

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Institute for South Asia Studies UC Berkeley:

Urdu has been part of the South Asian language curriculum since the 1960s and language learning opportunities are offered both on campus as well in Pakistan as well as India. Berkeley does not combine Urdu and Hindi instruction. We offer Urdu at all levels, from beginning to advanced. Over sixty students annually enrol in Urdu courses. UC Berkeley's Urdu program is one of the largest and best in the country.

[2] [2] <http://southasia.berkeley.edu/urdu> Retrieved on 5-1-2014

Hindi is the official and link language of multilingual India. Its homeland is in the north of India, but it is the most widely spoken and understood language throughout India. Hindi is written in the Devanagari script, which is also used for Sanskrit, Marathi and Nepali. Hindi has a special relationship with Urdu because they have the same grammar and they share basic conversational vocabulary and expressions. On many college campuses in the US, Hindi and Urdu are taught as one language under the title Hindi-Urdu. The two languages, however, use different scripts and have different preferences when it comes to borrowing new formal and literary vocabulary. Although Hindi has many Perso-Arabic words, most of the recent borrowings are from Sanskrit in the written style and from English in the spoken style. [3]

[3] <http://southasia.berkeley.edu/hindi> Retrieved on 5-1-2014

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At the University of Texas at Austin the Hindi Urdu Flagship undergraduate program has also an explanation about Hindi and Urdu:

Hindi Urdu Flagship: HUF is an undergraduate program at the University of Texas at Austin designed for students who wish to achieve advanced proficiency in Hindi and Urdu while majoring in a [variety of programs](#), including Business, Government, Natural Sciences, and Liberal Arts. HUF was established in 2006 ... Other Flagship languages include: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Persian, Russian, Swahili, and Turkish.

Two languages or One?: Hindi and Urdu developed from the “khari boli” dialect spoken in the Delhi region of northern India. Along with this common origin, Hindi and Urdu also share the same grammar and most of the basic vocabulary of everyday speech; but they have developed as two separate languages in terms of script, higher vocabulary, and cultural ambiance. Urdu, written in a modified form of the Persian script, and rich in loanwords from Persian and Arabic, has a broadly Islamic orientation, especially in its rightly celebrated poetry. Hindi, on the other hand, written in the Devanagari script that it shares with Sanskrit, traces a long history through largely Hindu culture. Like siblings separated at birth in a Hindi

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movie (which might equally well be called an Urdu movie, incidentally), the two languages live parallel lives, sometimes closely aligned, sometimes standing at a distance from each other. The most graphic difference lies in the two scripts; students in the Hindi Urdu Flagship acquire a comfortable literacy in both.

Flagship students study Hindi and Urdu in parallel so that they can fully appreciate the full cultural range of both; an acquaintance with the rich and complementary literatures of these two languages gives the reader access to the breadth and depth of South Asian culture. [4]

[4] <http://hindiurduflagship.org/about/> Taken on 1-2-2014

Hindi/ Urdu conversation lessons on the Web at Syracuse University

Hindi is a modern Indo-Aryan language spoken in South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Nepal) and also in other countries outside Asia (Mauritius, Trinidad, Fiji, Surinam, Guyana, South Africa and other countries). ... Hindi, which is a descendant of the Sanskrit language, is not strictly the name of any chief dialect of the area but is an adjective, Persian in origin, meaning Indian. ... The terms Urdu and Hindustani are also employed to refer to this language. [5]

[5] <http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/jishnu/101/default.asp>

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Bollywood Hindi Films

The website <http://www.learning-hindi.com/about> teaches Hindi. The teacher is a British. According to him 'Bollywood is actually the biggest gift in the world to any learner of Hindi'. The Hindi teacher George says:

I want to briefly talk about the huge help that Bollywood can be in learning and practicing Hindi. For those of you who don't know, [Bollywood](#) is a huge global Hindi language film industry based in Mumbai, India. ... Bollywood is actually the biggest gift in the world to any learner of Hindi. Last weekend I watched a Bollywood film called [Paa](#) and I think this made me realize just how helpful watching films can be. Not only did I really enjoy the film, but I learnt so much while I watched it. With the English subtitles on you can really use the film to reinforce words you have learnt. ... I would recommend to anyone learning Hindi to watch as many Bollywood films as you can, honestly! And not only will it help you learn Hindi, but you'll learn all about Indian culture and customs through the films! To start you off here's a full film released this year called Raajneeti

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(ख़ख़ज ख़ख़ख़ - meaning politics) on YouTube with subtitles available. Enjoy watching!

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And we know that Pakistani TV watchers in Pakistan or abroad enjoy Bollywood movies and therefore they know Hindi very well. What would one call it - fortunate or unfortunate situation? Perhaps both; fortunate because they understand Hindi and unfortunate because they cannot read or write it. But they are not aware of this situation. If they speak the same dialogues which are spoken in a Hindi film, they will call it Urdu (in fact Hindi in Persian script). They do not connect. They need not connect. The minds have become conditioned. The Persian script which is used for writing Hindi and is called Urdu is the barrier which along with political factors sustains this conditioned state of minds. But thanks to History and Technology! Other than Bollywood movies, joint TV talk shows between Indian and Pakistani anchors/guests are not very frequent but have occurred occasionally. It is amusing to see them speaking to each other irrespective of the contents of a program. They speak the same language but at the same time Indians speak Hindi while Pakistanis believe they speak Urdu (in fact Hindi in Persian script)! This is the Partition of Hindi language. Understanding this linguistic mega-absurdity of the subcontinent should make us aware how in the process the paths of Hindi itself, Punjabi, and Sindhi languages continue to be blocked. How this absurdity has affected some other languages I cannot say. And the political consequences were so immense that practically every family of the subcontinent suffered materially and emotionally. And the region as a whole continue to invite foreign intervention. But how all this i.e. perpetuation of Urdu began? It has to be understood and explained how this transitory phenomenon of Urdu survived for so long. And why even today it is on nobody's agenda that this artificiality of Urdu being a language be closed? And why the damages being inflicted on so many due to this artificiality should not be brought finally to an end?

But before that I present some examples to throw more light on what has been explained above: 1) Counting from one to one hundred written in Hindi and Roman alphabet. Those who read and write Urdu will be able to pronounce rightly from the Roman alphabet. 2) Two stories written in Hindi from a Hindi-teaching website. I have converted them into Urdu. If you read these stories, whether written in Hindi or written in Urdu (Hindi in Persian script), they are the same for the listener.

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Hindi and Urdu Counting 1-100

That Urdu is not a language, it is Hindi written in Persian script is clearly depicted by the counting 1 to 100 in Urdu as well Hindi. Those who cannot read Hindi should read the equivalent of Hindi in Roman alphabet and should know that it is their Urdu. For example for (one) एक , the same pronunciation is written in Roman alphabet, in this case Ek. [6]

[6] By Nitin Kumar: <http://blogs.transparent.com/hindi/hindi-numbers-1-100/>

Two Hindi Stories

The first story 'The Clever Bird' is the story of a sparrow which gets buried under the cow-dung and she asks a dog to rescue her. The dog is unable to eat her because of her cleverness. The original in Hindi or Devanagari script has been taken from the net and I have transliterated it in Persian script or in Urdu. [7]

[7] <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/mideast/hindi/stories/bird.html>

The second story 'The Thirsty Crow' is the famous story of a thirsty crow who drops pebbles in a water pitcher to raise the water level in the pitcher so that he may be able to drink it. Its Urdu version follows the Hindi version. [8]

[8] <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/mideast/hindi/stories.html>

So, below are the counting from 1 to 100 and the two stories:

1	one	एक	Ek
2	two	दो	Do
3	three	तीन	Teen
4	four	चार	Char
5	five	पांच	Panch
6	six	छह	Cheh
7	seven	सात	Saat
8	eight	आठ	Aath
9	nine	नौ	Nao
10	ten	दस	Das
11	eleven	ग्यारह	Gyaarah
12	twelve	बारह	Baarah
13	thirteen	तेरह	Tehrah
14	fourteen	चौदह	Chaudah
15	fifteen	पंद्रह	Pandrah
16	sixteen	सोलह	Saulah
17	seventeen	सत्रह	Satrah
18	eighteen	अठारह	Atharah
19	nineteen	उन्नीस	Unnis
20	twenty	बीस	Bees
21	twenty one	इकीस	Ikis
22	twenty two	बाईस	Bais
23	twenty three	तेइस	Teis

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24	twenty four	चौबीस	Chaubis
25	twenty five	पच्चीस	Pachis
26	twenty six	छब्बीस	Chabis
27	twenty seven	सताइस	Satais
28	Twenty eight	अठ्ठाइस	Athais
29	twenty nine	उनतीस	Unatis
30	thirty	तीस	Tis
31	thirty one	इकतीस	Ikatis
32	thirty two	बतीस	Batis
33	thirty three	तैंतीस	Tentis
34	thirty four	चौतीस	Chautis
35	thirty five	पैंतीस	Pentis
36	thirty six	छतीस	Chatis
37	thirty seven	सैंतीस	Setis
38	thirty eight	अड़तीस	Adhtis
39	thirty nine	उनतालीस	Untaalis
40	forty	चालीस	Chalis
41	forty one	इकतालीस	Iktalis
42	forty two	बयालीस	Byalis
43	forty three	तैतालीस	Tetalis
44	forty four	चबालीस	Chavalis
45	forty five	पैंतालीस	Pentalis

46	forty six	छयालिस	Chyalis
47	forty seven	सैंतालीस	Setalis
48	forty eight	अड़तालीस	Adtalis
49	forty nine	उनचास	Unachas
50	fifty	पचास	Pachas
51	fifty one	इक्यावन	Ikyavan
52	fifty two	बावन	Baavan
53	fifty three	तिरपन	Tirepan
54	fifty four	चौवन	Chauvan
55	fifty five	पचपन	Pachpan
56	fifty six	छप्पन	Chappan
57	fifty seven	सतावन	Satavan
58	fifty eight	अठावन	Athaavan
59	fifty nine	उनसठ	Unsadh
60	sixty	साठ	Saadh
61	sixty one	इकसठ	Iksadh
62	sixty two	बासठ	Baasad
63	sixty three	तिरसठ	Tirsadh
64	sixty four	चौंसठ	Chausadh
65	sixty five	पैंसठ	Pensadh
66	sixty six	छियासठ	Chiyasadh
67	sixty seven	सड़सठ	Sadhsadh
68	sixty eight	अड़सठ	Asdhsadh
69	sixty nine	उनहतर	Unahtar

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70	seventy	सत्तर	Sattar
71	seventy one	इकहतर	Ikahtar
72	seventy two	बहतर	Bahatar
73	seventy three	तिहतर	Tihatar
74	seventy four	चौहतर	Chauhatar
75	seventy five	पचहतर	Pachhatar
76	seventy six	छिहतर	Chiyahatar
77	seventy seven	सतहतर	Satahatar
78	seventy eight	अठहतर	Adhahatar
79	seventy nine	उन्नासी	Unnasi
80	eighty	अस्सी	Assi
81	eighty one	इक्यासी	Ikyasi
82	eighty two	बयासी	Byaasi
83	eighty three	तिरासी	Tirasi
84	eighty four	चौरासी	Chaurasi
85	eighty five	पचासी	Pachasi
86	eighty six	छियासी	Chiyaasi
87	eighty seven	सतासी	Sataasi

88	eighty eight	अठ्ठासी	Athasi
89	eighty nine	नवासी	Nauasi
90	ninety	नब्बे	Nabbe
91	ninety one	इक्क्यानवे	Ikyaanave
92	ninety two	बानवे	Baanave
93	ninety three	तिरानवे	Tiranave
94	ninety four	चौरानवे	Chauraanave
95	ninety five	पचानवे	Pachaanave
96	ninety six	छियानवे	Chiyaanave
97	ninety seven	सतानवे	Sataanave
98	ninety eight	अठ्ठानवे	Adhaanave
99	ninety nine	निन्यानवे	Ninyaanave
100	one hundred	एक सौ	Ek Sau

चतुर चिड़िया

एक चिड़िया थी | उसका नाम चींची था | एक दिन की बात है |
चींची चिड़िया गाय के पास बैठी थी | वह दाने चुग-चुग कर खा
रही थी | गाय ने गोबर किया | चिड़िया गोबर में दब गई | वह उड़
न सकी | उधर से एक कुत्ता आया | चिड़िया ने कहा कि भाई कुत्ते
मुझे निकाल | कुत्ते ने कहा निकालूँगा तो खा लूँगा | चिड़िया ने
कहा कि हाँ खा लेना | कुत्ते ने चिड़िया को गोबर से बाहर निकाला
| अब चिड़िया ने कहा कि मुझे धो तो ले | कुत्ता चिड़िया को नल
पर ले गया | वह धोकर उसे चिड़िया को खाने लगा | चिड़िया ने
कहा कि सुखा तो ले | कुत्ते ने चिड़िया को धूप में रख दिया | थोड़ी
देर में चिड़िया के पंख सूख गये | वह फुर्र करके उड़ गई | कुत्ते मुँह
देखता रह गया

چتر چڑیا

ایک چڑیا تھی۔ اس کا نام چیں چی تھا۔ ایک دن کی بات ہے۔ چیں چی چڑیا گائے کے پاس بیٹھی تھی۔ وہ دانے چگ چک کر کھا رہی تھی۔ گائے نے گوبر کیا۔ چڑیا گوبر میں دب گئی۔ وہ اڑ نہ سکی۔ ادھر سے ایک کتا آیا۔ چڑیا نے کہا بھائی کتے مہجے نکال۔ کتے نے کہا نکالوں گا تو کھا لوں گا۔ چڑیا نے کہا ہاں کھا لینا۔ کتے نے چڑیا کو گوبر سے باہر نکالا۔ اب چڑیا نے کہا مہجے دھو تو لو۔ کتا چڑیا کو نل پر لے گیا۔ وہ دھو کر اسے چڑیا کو کھانے لگا۔ چڑیا نے کہا کہ سکھا تو لو۔ کتے نے چڑیا کو دھوپ میں رکھ دیا۔ تھوڑی دیر میں چڑیا کے پنکھ سوکھ گئے۔ وہ پھر کر کے اڑ گئی۔ کتے منہ دیکھتا رہ گیا۔

समझदार कौआ

एक बार बड़ी गरमी पड़ रही थी | एक कौआ बड़ा प्यासा था |
उसने इधर उधर उड़कर पानी ढूँढा | पानी कहीं न मिला |
अचानक उसे एक घड़ा दिखाई दिया | कौआ बहुत खुश हुआ |
वह उड़कर घड़े के पास पहुँचा | लेकिन घड़े में पानी कम था |
इसलिए कौए की चोंच पानी तक न पहुँच सकी | कौए ने एक
उपाय सोचा | वह अपनी चोंच से कंकड़ उठाकर घड़े में डालने
लगा | एक - दो - तीन - चार - पाँच - छह - सात - आठ - नौ -
दस - इसी तरह कौआ घड़े में कंकड़ डालता गया - डालता गया
| धीरे-धीरे घड़े का पानी ऊपर चढ़ आया | कौआ घड़े पर जा बैठा
| लो उसकी चोंच पानी तक पहुँच गई | कौए ने खूब पानी पिया
| फिर वह पेड़ पर आराम करने चला गया |

سمجھدار کوا

ایک بار بڑی گرمی پڑ رہی تھی۔ ایک کوا بڑا پیاسا تھا۔ اس نے ادھر ادھر اڑ کر پانی ڈھونڈا۔ پانی کہیں نہ ملا۔ اچانک اسے ایک گھڑا دکھائی دیا۔ کوا بہت خوش ہوا۔ وہ اڑ کر گھڑے کے پاس پہنچا۔ لیکن گھڑے میں پانی کم تھا۔ اس لیے کوا کی چونچ پانی تک نہ پہنچ سکی۔ کوا نے ایک اوپائے سوچا۔ وہ اپنی چونچ سے کنکر اٹھا کر گھڑے میں ڈالنے لگا۔ ایک دو تین چار پانچ چھ سات آٹھ نو دس۔ اس طرح کوا گھڑے میں کنکر ڈالتا گیا ڈالتا گیا۔ دھیرے دھیرے گھڑے کا پانی اوپر چڑھ آیا۔ کوا گھڑے پر جا بیٹھا۔ لو اس کی چونچ پانی تک پہنچ گئی۔ کوا نے خوب پانی پیا۔ پھر وہ پیڑ پر آرام کرنے چلا گیا۔

Urdu is not a language

Mahatma Gandhi on National Language and Script

Who else was more enlightened, honest, truthful and futuristic than Mahatma Gandhi in these matters? He wrote in 1917, thirty years before the tragic Partition of India about Hindi and Urdu saying that they were not different languages. He explains how Hindi was to become the National Language for India giving space to Urdu what was humanly possible within the historically valid developments. But the Muslims rejected and history took its course. He wrote:

(1)

I call that language Hindi which Hindus and Mohammedans in the North speak and write, either in the Devanagari or the Urdu character. Exception has been taken to this definition. It seems to be argued that **Hindi and Urdu are different languages**. This is not a valid argument. In the Northern parts of India, Mussalmans and Hindus speak the same language.

I have lived in the North. I have freely mixed with Hindus and Mohammedans and although I have but a poor knowledge of Hindi, I have never found any difficulty in holding communion with them. Call the language of the North what you will, Urdu or Hindi, it is the same. **If you write it in the Urdu character you may know it as Urdu. Write the same thing in the Nagari character and it is Hindi.** (All emphases mine – mam)

There, therefore, remains a difference about the script. For the time being Mohammedan children will certainly write in the Urdu character, and Hindus will mostly write in the Devanagari. I say mostly, because thousands of Hindus use the Urdu character, and some do not even know the Nagari character. But when Hindus and Mohammedans come to regard one another without suspicion, when the causes begetting suspicion are removed, that script which has greater vitality will be more universally used, and therefore, become the national script. Meanwhile those Hindus and Mohammedans who desire to write their petitions in the Urdu character, should be free to do so and should have the right of having them accepted at the seat of the National Government.

Hindu preachers and Mohammedan Moulvis deliver their religious discourses throughout India in Hindi and Urdu and even the illiterate masses follow them.

It is worthy of note that Mohammedans throughout India speak Urdu and they are to be found in large numbers in every Province. Thus Hindi is destined to be the

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national language. We have made use of it as such in times gone by. The rise of Urdu itself is due to that fact. **The Mohammedan kings were unable to make Persian or Arabic the national language. They accepted the Hindi grammar, but employed the Urdu character and Persian words in their speeches. They could not, however, carry on their intercourse with the masses through a foreign tongue. All this is not unknown to the English.** Those who know anything of the sepoy, know that for them military terms have had to be prepared in Hindi or Urdu. Thus we see that Hindi alone can become the national language. [9]

[9] Excerpts from the 'Speeches and Writings' of Mahatma Gandhi, pp.395-99; 20-10-17

(2)

Mahatma Gandhi said that it was not a valid argument that Hindi and Urdu were different languages. Did it not mean that Hindi was given another name and another way of writing and thereby claiming it another language? Mahatma Gandhi said, "If you write it in the Urdu character you may know it as Urdu. Write the same thing in the Nagari character and it is Hindi." By creating this problem, what mischief had been done, was perfectly understood by him. But he was ready to compromise and accommodate Urdu. He wrote: 'If I could have my way, I would make the learning of Devanagari script and Urdu script, in addition to the established provincial script, compulsory in all the provinces.' [10]

[10] [Young India, 27-8-1925]

[http://www.mkgandhi.org/towrds_edu/chap15.htm Taken on 30-1-2014]

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Many have accused him for appeasing Muslims and this also became the reason of his assassination on 30 January, 1948. On the issue of Urdu, was he appeasing the Muslims? In fact he was stating the reality openly and honestly and the civilized way forward. As always a civilized approach to any human problem is the least damaging, Urdu was to get a new lease of life in all over united India including future Bangladesh from where it was expelled disgracefully in 1971 soon after Partition. And his stand on Urdu fitted perfectly in his overall struggle to solve the problem which he had recognized quiet early. Being honest and brave, he could never turn his face away from the problem, he knew it was his duty to face. He wrote under the title 'Passion for Unity':

'I had realized early in South Africa (1893-1915) that there was no genuine friendship between the Hindus and the Musalmans. I never missed a single opportunity to remove obstacles in the way of unity. It was not in my nature to placate anyone by adulation, or at the cost of self-respect. But my South African experiences had convinced me that it would be on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity that my *ahimsa* would be put on its severest test, and that the question presented the widest field for my experiments in *ahimsa*. The conviction is still

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there. Every moment of my life I realize that God is putting me on trial.’ P. 398 [11]

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And, a few pages further on, about a joint meeting of Hindus and Musalmans in Delhi on the *Khilafat Question* in November 1919, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his ‘An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth’ (pp. 432-433):

(1)

I was handicapped for want of suitable Hindi or Urdu words. This was my first occasion for delivering an argumentative speech before an audience especially composed of Musalmans of the North. I had spoken in Urdu at the Muslim League at Calcutta (30 December 1917 to 1 January 1918), but it was only for a few minutes, and the speech was intended only to be a feeling appeal to the audience. Here, on the contrary, I was faced with a critical, if not hostile, audience, to whom I had to explain and bring home my view-point. But I had cast aside all shyness. I was not there to deliver an address in the faultless, polished Urdu of the Delhi Muslims, but to place before the gathering my view in such broken Hindi as I could command. And in this I was successful. This meeting afforded me a direct proof of the fact that Hindi-Urdu alone could become the *lingua franca* of India. Had I spoken in English, I could not have produced the impression that I did on the audience, ... I could not hit upon a suitable Hindi or Urdu word for the new idea, and that put me out somewhat. At last I described it by the word ‘non-co-operation’. An expression that I used for the first time in this meeting. Pp. 432-33

(2)

He wrote earlier in the same book (p.397): Now a crisis had arrived, and the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford had invited various leaders to a war conference in Delhi. I had also been urged to attend the conference (27 April, 1918 – mam) ... I had, however, objections to taking part in the conference, the principal one being the exclusion from it of leaders like Ali brothers. They were then in jail. I had met them only once or twice, though I had heard much about them. Everybody had spoken highly of their services and their courage. I had not then come in close touch with Hakim Saheb ... I had met Shoaib Qureshi and Mr. Khawaja at the Muslim League in Calcutta. I had also come in contact with Drs Ansari and Abdur Rahman. I was seeking the friendship of good Musalmans, and was eager to understand the Musalman mind through contact with their purest and most patriotic representatives. I therefore never needed any pressure to go with them, wherever they took me, in order to get into intimate touch with them. P. 397

[11] M.K. Gandhi: An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth, Penguin Books, 1982; written between 1920-1925.

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<http://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/gandhiexperiments.pdf>

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Only a modern, cultured and futuristic Muslim leadership aware of problems of civilization would have responded positively to Mahatma Gandhi's initiatives. There was every opportunity for Muslims to participate and build India and they I believe would have done this had the British not decided for an alternate course. And Mahatma's saying that **"the Mohammedan kings ... accepted the Hindi grammar ... they could not, however, carry on their intercourse with the masses through a foreign tongue. All this is not unknown to the English."** should be an eye-opener which I feel is, apart from his statement of facts, manifestation of his pain and anguish over British behaviour. The British had the considered policy of embracing Muslims and creating division in India.

Here perhaps entering a step or two deliberately in the political arena is necessary. When Hindu-Muslim unity was the faith and the foundation of Mahatma Gandhi's politics, what justification was there to judge his actions disregarding his faith and foundation of his politics? Can any one of those who do not agree with his faith and the foundation of his politics tell us as to what was the way forward for any honest Indian, Hindu or Muslim, at that time? And then if Hindu-Muslim unity was proving elusive, could he change course mid-stream? Was Hindu-Muslim unity only an expedient for him for expelling the British from the subcontinent? And what after that? Mahatma Gandhi's actions were consistent even in very testing times. What else an individual can do for his people that they are not ungrateful? Anyone who is not genuinely grateful to Mahatma Gandhi does not understand history. And is it difficult to understand that one is blind without understanding History?

Therefore, there is the often-asked question in my mind too. Could it be otherwise? The answer is, 'No' because the work done for that was not sufficient. The Indian Freedom Movement lacked the capability to defeat the British. They rightly sought to fill this gap with the goodwill of Jinnah which was not available because of his British connection. But the right investment made by the Freedom Movement and in particular by Mahatma Gandhi with their right and principled approach and endeavours upto the last moment and even after 1947 will definitely bear fruit at the appropriate time.

We end this on a hopeful note that if the struggle of the Hindi Party for Hindi ended on 15 August 1947 and they had no further claims on the territories of Hindi occupied by Urdu, the history continued to claim that space from Urdu for Hindi and had never stopped its work. It is like for example that when apparently there was no freedom movement in India, history did not stop its work. History is a silent worker. Whenever Man's eyes open, he finds lot of work in front of him. And

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when he looks back, he finds history has already accomplished so much that he can build on that. Anyhow, there is the light note ahead.

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From Loralai to Colombo with love for old melodies

Under the above title Frances Bulathsinghala wrote from Colombo (Dawn 10-6-2014) about a rare event. Naik Muhammad Kakar of Loralai, Baluchistan went to Colombo along with his daughter to thank and pay tribute to the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) for keeping alive old Indian film songs in the face of a relentless onslaught of cacophony currently emanating from Bollywood. Kakar came with several kilos of gifts for the announcers and other staffers of SLBC's **Hindi** service. "The gifts were from a number of regular listeners of the SLBC's **Hindi** service in Pakistan," said Daud Ehtisham of the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo. According to Kakar, there are over 3,000 regular listeners of the SLBC's **Hindi** service in Pakistan. Kakar gave medals and certificates for "excellence" to each of the ten **Hindi** announcers at SLBC, with the citation saying: "Thanks for the continued commitment required for **Hindi** section of the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation. You made the difference." ... Radio Ceylone recruited many competent **Hindi** announcers from India. ... Over time, Radio Ceylone and its successor, SLBC became the foremost repository of **Hindi** film music in the world. "There is a craving for pre-1960s songs both in Pakistan and India," the producer of the **Hindi** service, Jyoti Parmar, said. "It was on the verge of closure when the present chairman Hudson Samarasinghe, took over. Being a lover of **Hindi** (emphases mine – mam) film music; he was determined to keep the show going," Parmar said.

It is very interesting and there is much food for thought for those of our region who feel concerned for their language, be it Punjabi, Hindi or Sindhi. Naik Muhammad belongs to Baluchistan (Pakistan) and the national language of his country is Urdu, goes to Sri Lanka with gifts for the announcers and other staffers of Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation's Hindi service. The event is reported in a Pakistani newspaper and there is no mention of Urdu anywhere. And in this piece, Hindi is mentioned nine times!

To a question "How did you develop an interest in Urdu?" a Turkish professor on a visit to Pakistan replied: "I used to watch Indian films such as *Awara* and movies of Amitabh Bachchan, and that sparked my initial interest in the language. Also, while we were growing up, our parents and other older people would tell us stories about Hindustani Muslims who played a prominent role during the Khilafat movement. Hence, I was curious about Pakistan and its language." [12]

[12] DAWN Books & Authors 25-1-2015

Imagine how comfortably the professor, unknowingly, shifts himself from Indian films such as *Awara* and movies of Amitabh Bachchan to Pakistan and its language. This is how cultures develop prejudices and attitudes which prevail that one cannot see otherwise. He cannot connect to the reality that Hindi of *Awara* and Amitabh Bachchan is what he thinks is Urdu. On the contrary, he will convince himself, more so because of Pakistani connection, that Amitabh Bachchan speaks Urdu in Indian films. What is the need to know what the language of India and Indian cinema is?

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Quoting again R. King: Ch. 3 Government Language Policy:

An Analysis of Language Policy

P. 75-79: In 1874 F. S. Growse, a British civil servant and language scholar, wrote a perceptive analysis of the language biases of his countrymen in India. British officials, he noted, had become so used to communicating with their subordinates in Urdu, that most of them regarded Urdu as the vernacular of the country. This familiarity with the speech of the Muslim minority rather than that of the Hindu majority, meant that Arabic and Persian received a great deal of attention while Sanskrit received little. ... Several 76 years later while giving evidence before the Hunter Commission, Growse adduced another reason for the prejudice of the Englishmen for Urdu and against Hindi. Many district officers, unacquainted with Hindi literature, though having a fair knowledge of Urdu literature, on encountering Hindi textbooks and their highly pedantic style, naturally concluded that such a language must be 'a grotesque unreality'. ... Had Persianised Khari Boli in the Persian script (i.e. Urdu) not existed, then British officials would almost certainly have replaced Persian in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Bihar, the Central Provinces and elsewhere in North India with some form of Hindi in the Nagari script, just as they replaced Persian with Bengali and the Bengali script in Bengal. The convenient existence of Urdu, ideally suited for continuing the hegemony of Persian in North India, goes far to explain British language policy. We need to add another equally necessary factor, however, for a fuller explanation: the presence of Muslims as a large or politically important element of society. Wherever we find these two factors co-joined, British policy generally favoured Urdu; wherever we find one or the other missing, policy favoured other languages. From this admittedly oversimplified perspective North India forms a spectrum of the increasing importance of Urdu from east to west. In Bengal, neither Urdu nor an analogous form of Persianised Bengali existed, though Muslims made up a large percentage of the population. As a result, the government never seriously considered using Urdu as the official vernacular. In Bihar and the Central Provinces, while Urdu existed, the Muslim element of the population lacked size

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or importance. Here the Nagari script took root before the end of the century, though not without difficulty. In the North-Western Provinces and especially in Oudh, where Urdu thrived and Muslims had political importance far out of proportion to their numbers, British policy inclined strongly towards Urdu, though without actively suppressing Hindi and Nagari. Here conditions were ripe for a long and protracted struggle as the Urdu-speaking elite faced an increasing challenge from Hindi and Nagari partisans intent on differentiating themselves. By the end of the century Nagari had won an inconclusive and largely symbolic victory. In the Punjab, where Urdu flourished and Muslims formed the largest and most politically powerful part of the population, British policy unequivocally supported Urdu. Here Urdu remained the official vernacular right up to independence, while Hindi and Nagari remained in a very subordinate position. So complete was the dominance of Urdu, that Hindi was not even a medium of instruction in primary schools. The existence of other contenders, Punjabi and for Sikhs the Gurmukhi script, further complicated the language situation in the Punjab.

British language policy often clearly reflected the wish of the government not to antagonize Muslims where they were politically powerful through any change of language or script which could be interpreted as an attack on their faith or their livelihood. For example, in 1875 an Oudh official warned the government that to support Hindi against Urdu would be 'very hazardous' and that 'political danger' could be expected from the disaffection of Muslims thereby ousted from the public service. In 1898 Sir Anthony Macdonnell, Lieutenant-Governor of the NWP&O, cautioned a delegation in support of the Nagari script not to expect rapid change. He knew from personal experience, he told them, the difficulties which had attended the introduction of Kaithi in Bihar, where Muslims exercised far less influence and composed a far smaller proportion of those in government service than in their own province. Therefore the delegation could well imagine the greater difficulties of effecting a similar change in the North-Western Provinces & Oudh. ... British language policy both resulted from and contributed to the larger political processes which eventually led to the partition of British India into India and Pakistan, an outcome almost exactly paralleled by the linguistic partition of the Hindi-Urdu continuum into highly Sanskritized Hindi and highly Persianised Urdu. ... In an 1873 issue of the Aligarh Institute Gazette, for example, a Muslim commenting on the recent government language decisions in Bihar insisted that Muslims had a 'natural antipathy' to studying Hindi which they considered 'quite alien' to them. ... In 1882 *The Calcutta Review* carried an article by Babu Syamacharan Ganguli who asked Muslims to accept the fact that Urdu 'is Hindi in its basis, just as they themselves are largely Hindu by race.' He urged Muslims to merge into the Hindu mainstream of Indian culture, for the Hindus would never consider the reverse. ... Muslims and some Hindus, then, each offered assimilation to the other ... A. W. Croft, an Inspector of Schools in Bihar, eloquently summed up this approach when he wrote in 1875: To call Hindi and Urdu two languages, is to perpetuate a vicious error, originally due to the antagonism of Pandits and Maulavis. They have the same accidence and syntax, and the same stock of words

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for most simple objects and conceptions; they only diverge when it is necessary to express the language of compliment, of Science, or of complex ideas in general. **This is not to have two languages, but to have a language capable of being enriched from two different sources** (emphasis mine – mam); and I conceive that it is the object of Government to destroy or to diminish this antagonism. ... Such an object was doomed to failure, however, for no government could counteract the powerful social forces reflected in the growing differentiation between Hindi and Urdu. Hindus willing to include both traditions found themselves in an increasingly difficult position as the forces of Hindi became more powerful. Muslims found themselves falling behind as larger and larger numbers of a socially mobilizing population assimilated to the equation of Hindi = Hindu equation rather than that of Urdu = Muslim + Hindu. Differentiation into two separate linguistic and religious traditions outpaced assimilation into one joint Hindu-Muslim Hindi-Urdu tradition.

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I feel I must intervene to save R. King from straying into unscholarly terrain here. Saying that ‘Such an object was doomed to failure, however, for no government could counteract the powerful social forces reflected in the growing differentiation between Hindi and Urdu’ is not true because British themselves were a party. Their strategic decision after the 1857 mutiny to permanently befriend Muslims and make their loyalty the bed rock of their empire in India disqualified Muslims to think rightly. And the British were successful in achieving this goal. As they were doing this who else except the British could have led the Muslims to a civilized behaviour? For that the British themselves had to prepare India with the help of local social and political forces for unity and independence. Does this not seem a ‘non-sense’ for those who were never prepared to leave India unless expelled? R. King’s saying that ‘Muslims found themselves falling behind as larger and larger numbers of a socially mobilizing population assimilated to the equation of Hindi = Hindu equation rather than that of Urdu = Muslim + Hindu’ would be nearer to historical truth if the second equation is changed to Hindi = Hindu + Muslim. It is strange that even as late as 1994, the year of publication of R. King’s book, the benefit of inertia went to Urdu! Urdu had to be included in Hindi not the other way around!

What has been said above should suffice but as the reasonable people are not the problem, we have to move forward. There is a hard and difficult struggle ahead. ■