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Urdu as the Language of Employment in Court and Office in British India

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Abstract

Urdu became a language of lower-level employment during British rule in India and occupies that position in present-day Pakistan and, to a limited extent, in India as well. This article focuses on how this phenomenon occurred in the present-day Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. Although education, printing and publication, media and entertainment are the biggest domains of employment they have not been considered here as they need separate and detailed treatment. This article, therefore, focuses attention on judicial and administrative employment at the lower levels only. Other domains will however, be touched upon in passing.

Persian was replaced by English at the upper domains of power — judiciary, administration, police, army, revenue services, education, printing, entertainment etc—and the vernaculars of India at the lower ones during the first part of the nineteenth century. This article Books at the use of one of these vernacular languages, Urdu, in the lower bureaucracy in the present-day Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. The domains of education, printing, films, radio etc have not been touched upon in this article because they require detailed treatment and have been dealt with in detail in my forthcoming book.[1] The private job market—such as that of advertising[2]—have been touched upon in passing.

Going back in passing to the history of the revenue services in India, one finds that words we now recognize as Urdu and Hindi were used for a long time. Under the Pathan rulers, according to Momin

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1 Tariq Rahman, *From Hindi to Urdu: A Social and Political History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011).

2 Tej K. Bhatia & Robert J. Baumgardner. 'Language in Media and Advertising', in Braj B. Kachru; Yamuna Kachru & S.N. Sridhar (eds.), *Language in South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.337-94.

Mohiuddin, 'Hindi was recognized as a semi-official language under the Súrs and the chancellery receipts bore the transcription in the Dévanágarí Script of the Persian contents, a practice which is said to have been introduced by the Lódís'.[3] Indeed, it is said that 'the registers of all revenue accounts were kept in Hindi' under the Sultans and it has been mentioned earlier that it was Todar Mal who ordered that they should be kept in Persian during Akbar's reign (28th Regnal year)'.[4] But even then some offices and terms dealing with administration and revenue continued to be in Hindi. Thus the glossary of a book on the orders (*farmāns*) of the Mughals has words used even now by revenue officers in Pakistan such as: *Banjar* (barren); *chak* (consolidated area of land; village); *chaklā* (sub division of a district); *chaudhary* (headman); *chauth* (one-fourth); *chungī* (cess or octroi); *patvārī* (keeper of records) etc.[5]

Thus despite the official use of Persian by the Mughals in the business of the state, Urdu-Hindi diction permeated the lower levels of employment. The Hindu Kaesth class and the Muslims who knew Persian monopolized the bureaucracy and the judiciary not only under the Mughal emperors but also in the princely states scattered all over India. The story of how some of these princely states—especially the two large states of Hyderabad and Kashmir—switched over from Persian to Urdu in official domains has been narrated earlier.

The British created the modern bureaucratic structures which functioned in English at the higher level and several recognized vernacular languages at the lower ones. The higher courts of law functioned in English but when the Warren Hastings Judicial Plan of 1772 was put in place in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, 'the technical terms used in the courts were all in Urdu, such as *moffussil, faujdari*, and *dewani'*.[6] The *Adalat System* had courts of appeal called the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* and the *Sadar Diwani Adalat*. 'In 1780 another change as made in which *Dewani Adalat* was presided by an English judge, who was assisted by native law officers' (Bhatia & Sharma 2008: 365). These structures functioned in languages which, in another context, have been

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3 Momin Mohiuddin, *The Chancellery and Persian Epistolography under the Mughals: From Babur to Shah Jahan (1526-1658)* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1971), p.28.

4 *Ibid.*, p.38.

5 A.D. Khan. *Diplomatics of the Soyurghal Farman of the Great Mughals (1556-1707)* (Allahabad: Quemer Publications, 1994), pp.91-101.

6 Vijay K. Bhatia & Rajesh Sharma, 'Language and the Legal System', in Braj B. Kachru, *et. al*. *op.cit.*, p.365.

called the languages of the salariat.[7] As it happened, in British India these salariats—in[8] Hamza Alavi's terms—were the competing Hindu and Muslim educated elites who sought employment. Thus, except at the very highest level which functioned in English, the fact whether Urdu was the language of the workplace mattered significantly. If it was, certain pressure groups—mostly the Muslims and the Hindu Kaesths in north India—stood to gain. If it was not, these groups were forced out of jobs, unless they re-educated themselves, and their rivals found entry in the same positions.

The story of the replacement of Persian by the vernaculars of India has been narrated several times[9] and need not detain us here. However, the shift to the indigenous languages of India had been going on since 1798 when an official 'Resolution of the Board' from Fort William declared that for the 'office of Judge or Registrar of any Court of Justice, in the Provinces of Bengal, Behar, Orissa or Benares, the Hindustanee and the Persian languages' will be required.[10]

The point to note about the final replacement of Persian is that it was not replaced by any one language but several of them. Whereas in the present-day U. P and the Punjab it was replaced by Urdu in the Perso-Arabic script, there were several areas in the Hindi belt where it was replaced by Hindi in the Devanagari and even in the Kaithi scripts. In the Saugur and Nerbudda Territories (mostly present-day MP) and in the hill districts of the NWP, for instance, it was replaced by Hindi in the Devanagari script. The person who took this initiative was F.J Shore who, in 1835, ordered his subordinate officials to learn the Devanagari script. He then ordered the use of the Devanagari script in the courts and other official business. Among his reasons for doing so was that the

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7 Tariq Rahman, 'The Language of the Salariat', in S.M. Naseem & Khalid Nadvi (eds.), *The Post-Colonial State and Social Transformation in India and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.97-128.

8 Hamza Alavi, 'Politics of Ethnicity in India and Pakistan', in H. Alavi & John Harrisss, (eds.), *Sociology of Developing Societies* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1989), p.68.

9 Christopher R King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India.* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.56-63; Tariq Rahman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.36-37, ed. used (Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2007); Tariq Rahman, *Language Ideology and Power: Language Learning Among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.148-51.

10 M. Atique Siddiqi, *Origins of Modern Hindustani Literature: Source Material: Gilchrist Letters* (Aligarh: Naya Ghar, 1963), p.72.

officials from the NWP, who now controlled the major share of government jobs, would be replaced by local officials.[11] However, the Persian-using subordinates of Shore resisted the change so much that petitions kept being written in the Perso-Arabic script. He then found out what had happened and describes this as follows:

> I discovered that the Amlah [court officials] & Petition Writers who were connected with the former had given out that although the Language might be Oordoo [Urdu] the character must be Persian, in order to preserve their monopoly (Sir John Shore's Letter to the Sadr Board of Revenue, 16 September 1836.[12]

Those wishing to preserve their monopoly over government jobs were not only Muslims. Indeed, in this part of India they were mostly educated Hindus of the Kaesth class. And, as the officers themselves came from Urdu-using areas, the pressure of this lobby increased so much that the use of Devanagari decreased and that of the Perso-Arabic script increased by the time the Central Provinces (CP) were created from these areas in 1861.

The battle for the language of employment did not end in CP in the 1860s, however. Gradually the demand for Hindi grew and in 1872 the Government of India allowed Hindi to be used in nine districts—the others used vernaculars anyway—in official business not only in the courts, the revenue and police offices. But this was merely a permissive order and the officials found ways of getting round it. Eventually they settled down for writing the same Persianized language which was used in the NWP but in the Devanagari script.[13]

Another attempt to use Hindi in the Devanagari script was in Bihar in 1871. Here, Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, heard a welcome address in his honour which was in such a flowery Persian style that he decided to abolish Urdu and, in 1873, permitted the use of the Devanagari script as well as the Kaithi scripts in the courts and other official business. However, this too was only a permissive order which did not ban Urdu or even its script altogether.[14] In 1880, however, Sir Ashley Eden ordered the exclusive use of the Devanagari or Kaithi scripts in Bihar to which Muslims objected vehemently. By this time, of course, the scripts of Urdu and Hindi were not only linked with jobs; they were also indexed to identities.

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11 R. Christopher King, *op.cit.*, p.60.
12 *Ibid.*, p.61.
13 *Ibid.*, p.71.
14 *Ibid.*, pp.72-73.

Let us now turn to the North Western Provinces where Urdu was the language of employment. In a letter from the secretary of the Local Committee of Public Instruction to W. Muir, secretary to the Government of the NWP dated 10 February 1854 the following conditions for government employment in the North Western Provinces were specified:

A person seeking government employment should be able to:

a. Read the ordinary *shakista* handwriting as the Urdu papers presented in the courts were in this.
b. To translate from English to Urdu.
c. To write an order if the heads are told verbally in Urdu.
d. To 'write a clear, good, quick *shikusta* hand'.[15]

These requirements facilitated the Muslim and the Kaesths in these areas.

A *patvari* was supposed to know both Urdu and Hindi by the order of 10 August 1854 by the Saddar Board unless he served in Kamaun or the Saugar and Nerbudda territories.[16] A list of all *patvaris* who knew Urdu was maintained in the district office.[17] The Collector could order that *patvaris* and *numberdars*—the latter ordinarily knowing Hindi—learn Urdu.[18]

In 1872 the Government of India enquired into the conditions of employment of Muslims. The officers who sent in their reports invariably considered the language of public employment when reporting upon the issue. Even in Bengal, where the local language was predominantly Bengali, Hindustani was considered important in the early 1800s as the following letter suggests:

> Of three languages current on the Bengal side of India, the Persian and Hindustanee are necessary for the transaction of business in all offices.[19]

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15 *General Report on Public Instruction in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1853-54* (Agra: Printed at the Secundra Orphan Press, 1854, LXV of Appendix J).

16 *Ishtahār Tā'līm Yenī Government Ishtahār* (Advertisement about Education i.e. Government Advertisement). 10 August (Sidandra: Sahiban-e-Board, 1854a), p.6.

17 *Dar Bāb Tā 'līm Patvāriān ō Nambardārān* (Advertisement about the education of patvaris and nambardars) (Sikandra: Sahiban-e-Board, 1854b), p.11.

18 *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

19 *Public Disputation of the Students of the College of Fort William in Bengal before the Rt. Hon Lord Minto* (15 September 1810) (Calcutta: Printed. London: Black, Perry & Kingsbury, 1811), p.61.

Indeed, it was believed that Bengali was necessary only for the provincial collectors.[20] All officers, and even their wives, 'needed the common Hindustanee, or colloquial dialect'.[21] However, when Bengali did become the official language of the lower domains of government employment, Muslims did lose jobs.[22]

In the Bombay presidency the Muslims, either being uneducated or educated only in Muslim heritage languages, did not qualify for employment.[23] In the NWP & Oudh, however, the Muslims were preponderant (34.78 per cent) in official jobs as the public offices functioned in Urdu and in the Punjab too there was no disadvantage for them. However, their overall level of participation in education was lower than that of Hindus. Even so a member of the Punjab University Senate, a certain C. Boulnois, said that more respect should be given to 'Urdu and other Eastern languages in our courts and public offices by our offices both judicial and executive' where English is given too much importance.[24]

The Hunter's Commission entertained many memorials bringing out the significance of language for employment. For instance, a memorial about Muslim education claimed that the ousting of Persian as well as the order of 1864 that English alone should be the language of examination for the more coveted appointments in the subordinate civil service had ruined their chances of finding suitable employment.[25] That the order substituting Hindi in the Devanagari script in Bihar still rankled with them also found expression. However, the Lieutenant Governor did not withdraw that order but he did agree that the B.A examination—which required proficiency in English—could be substituted by some other means of evaluation.[26]

Education was invariably linked with employment as many education reports, some referred to in the chapter on education, have

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20 *Ibid.,* p.61.

21 *Ibid.,* p.60.

22 *Selections from the Records of the Govt. of India, Home Dept. No CCV. Serial No.2 Correspondence on the Subject of the Education of the Muhammaden Community in Britsh India and their Employment in the Public service Generally* (Calcutta: Printed by the Superintendent of Govt. Printing, 1886), p.239.

23 *Ibid.,* p.264.

24 *Ibid.,* p.212.

25 *Report by the North-Western Provinces and Oudh Provincial Committee with Evidence Taken Before the Committee and Memorials Addressed to the Education Commission.* (Calcutta: Supt'd. of Govt. Printing, 1884), p.497.

26 *Ibid.,* pp.498-99.

brought out. Even as late as 1873-74 an education report comments on the Persian schools as follows:

> The Persian schools owed their existence, in the first instance, to the wants of the Mahomedan regime, and they serve the same practical purpose now in supplying scribes acquainted with the style and technicalities of the British Kachahri language.[27]

The whole Hindi-Urdu controversy, sometimes referred to as the 'Language Question' by British officers, is attributed—as by Kempson, DPI of the NWP in 1874—as 'an agitation [of the Hindus] against the use of Urdu in courts and districts'.[28]

This was, as the officers pointed out repeatedly, because Urdu is used 'in the transaction of official business' in the present-day U.P (and the Punjab) area.[29] The reason most aspiring young men took the vernacular Middle Examination in Urdu rather than Hindi was the same. As a report puts it:

> Hindi being of very little use in the Government Courts, and Urdu being quite indispensable, no doubt could arise as to which form of the vernacular was likely to gain upon the other in an examination which is declared to be the test for Government employment.[30]

The report of 1893-94 not only repeats this but adds that the preference for Urdu will remain 'so long as the cause of this circumstance remains' (i.e. as long as it is used in public offices).[31]

It was primarily to this privileged position of Urdu that the Hindi movement objected. Madan Mohan Malaviya's collection of documents called *Court Character and Primary Education in the N.W. Provinces and Oudh* (1897) demonstrates what everybody already knew—that the Urdu of the courts was almost like Persian which was the monopoly of Muslims and Hindu Kaesths. And indeed, as convincingly argued by

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27 *Report of the North-Western Provinces for 1873-74 Part-I 1873-74* by M. Kempson, (Allahabad: Printed at the North-Western Provinces Govt. Press, 1874), p.23.

28 *Ibid.*, p.137.

29 *General Report on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the Year 1885-86* (Allahabad: North-Western Provinces and Oudh Govt. Press, 1886), p.18.

30 *General Report on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the Year 1891-92* (Allahabad: North-Western Provinces and Oudh Govt. Press, 1892), p.29.

31 *General Report on Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the Year 1893-94* (Allahabad: North-Western Provinces and Oudh Govt. Press, 1894), p.48.

Paul Brass, the Muslims of these areas were represented much more than their numbers warranted in all professions: army, police, public administration, law, education etc.[32] This, indeed, was one of the reasons Sir Antony Macdonnell, Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces, allowed petitions in the Devanagari script to be received by official bodies. In his letter of 22 August 1897 to the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, he writes:

> Out of 240 Tehsildars 140 are Mahommedans. There are 2570 Mahommedan Police officers to 2120 Hindus. Have for the last 18 months been endeavouring to correct this preponderance and to establish a proportion of 5 Hindus to 3 Mahommedans (as the general population of the Hindus are to the Mahommedans as 7 to 1).[33]

In order to enable his officials to process documents in the Devanagari script he wrote in a STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL 'Minute' to the Viceroy.

> I have recently recast the Departmental Examination… insisting on a better knowledge of both the Urdu and the Hindi language. This is for young ICS officers.[34]

He goes on to add that though the Muslims and the Kaesths resent his order—the optional use of Devanagari in official documents—it had 'already given a stimulus to Vernacular education'.[35]

However, though much reviled by the Muslim press as an enemy of Urdu and the Muslims, Sir Antony Macdonnell had not thrown Muslims completely out of employment. The *Pioneer* of 01 August 1900 sums up his record of giving employment as follows:

> …out of 359 appointments he had made 177 have been Muslims and 182 Hindus in Deputy Collectors, Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars & inspectors of police. In District Boards and Municipal Committees he appointed 122 Muslims against 141 Hindus.

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32 Paul R. Brass. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp.150-56.

33 A.P. Macdonnell. 'Letter to Lord Eligin dated 22 August 1897; Papers of Antony Patrick Macdonnells, 1st Baron Mac Donnell of Swinford, 1859-1925, Radcliffe Science Library, Special Collections Ms. Eng. Hist.c.353, Bodlean Library, University of Oxford.

34 A.P. Macdonnell, 'Minute of 1901', Naini Tal, October Papers of Antony Patrick Mac Donnell, 1st Baron Mac Donnell of Swinford, 1859-1925, Radcliffe Science Library, Special Collections, Ms. Eng. Hist.c.353, Bodlean Library, University of Oxford, p.38.

35 *Ibid.,* p.40.

However, the Muslims were highly incensed at Macdonnell's actions and complained of being squeezed out of public service (*The Muslim Chronicle* [Calcutta] 01 May 1897).

The Hindi movement not only objected to the script of Urdu but also to the diction of the official language. The proceedings of the British lower courts were recorded in Urdu and the settlement papers were written in the Urdu script, but in such a highly Persianized style that even educated people had to hire court officials to help them with the documents. Of course it was in the interest of the landowner (*zamīndār*) to learn the language so as to be less dependent on the professionals as many stories in Urdu promoted by the British pointed out. However, on the whole the system was very complex as the lowest rung of the land revenue system (the *patvārī*) recorded transactions in Hindi. Moreover, they also used the Kayethi, Sarrafi or Mahajani script for it rather than the Devanagari one which the British wanted to promote.

But Persian had acquired great cultural capital in the nearly six hundred years of its ascendancy. This cultural capital remained even after the British substituted Urdu for Persian as the language of the lower courts, the police and the revenue service in a major part of north India. Thus, anyone who knew this language—the language of the courts or *kutcherī*—carried not only social prestige but also a saleable skill which was the monopoly of Muslim clerks, priests and the Kaesths. Let us now discuss this special register which consists almost entirely of words of Persian and Arabic origin which do have Hindi-Urdu equivalents but which, nevertheless, continues to be used in official documents and which some British officials and members of the Hindi movement found so objectionable.

Babu Siva Prasad, a moderate member of the Hindi movement, said that when Persian was substituted by Urdu as the language of the court the Kaesths put in only Hindi verbs while retaining the nouns and other terms of Perso-Arabic.[36] Babu Haris Chandra, another supporter of Hindi, made a forceful complaint against the pedantry of the legal terminology. Some of his examples are as follows:

Indivisible:	*ghair mumkin ul taqsīm*
One fourth:	*rub'ā*
Declaration of occupancy:	*Istiqrār-ē-haq-ē-muqābizāt-ē-kāshtkārānā*

He wanted them to be removed from the lexicon of the courts.[37]

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36 Babu Siva Prasad, *Our Vernaculars: A Lecture Before the Benares Institute* (Benares: Printed at the Medical Hall Press, 1868), pp.18-9.

37 Edn. Com NWP & O 1884, *op.cit.*, pp.200-02.

It appears though, that the Perso-Arabic diction was seen as being iconic of Muslim identity and, like the Sanskritic diction in Hindu discourse, it drew the boundaries of the 'self' and the 'other'. For instance when a certain Perkins, an assistant commissioner of Delhi, sent a manual for using easy Urdu in the courts the Anjuman-i Punjab decided not to use it. Among other reasons, the Anjuman said that the identity of Urdu was based upon the use of Arabic and Persian words 'otherwise how could Urdu be distinguished from Hindi…' (*varnā Hindī ō Urdū mẽ kyā farq ō īmtiāz hō sakē gā*).[38]

Javed Majeed, after a study of the legal petitions of the 1860s points out that there 'is a predilection for using Persian plurals for human beings rather than Urdu plurals'. The examples he gives are '*Sakinān* (inhabitants), *bandegān* (servants), *gavāhān* (witnesses), *namāziyan* (those who pray), *dokhterān* (daughters), *mālikān* (owners), *Pesarān* (sons) and *vārisān* (heirs)'.[39] He also points out other Persian usages, both grammatical and discursive, which entered the so-called 'Urdu' of the courts.[40]

The subject of the register of the courts of law was debated among British officials as well as the proponents of Arabo-Persianized Urdu and Sanskritized Hindi.J. Beames, for instance, defended the Urdu of the courts on the grounds that the Perso-Arabic diction is exact, rich, intelligible through usage in proportion to one's level of education and that this process is parallel to that which has made English such a rich language. On the contrary, he claims, borrowings from Sanskrit which would replace the 'Arabic element' would be unintelligible.[41] He was refuted by F.S. Growse who argued that the objection was to Perso-Arabic diction for which there were intelligible and commonly used Hindi (i.e. Hindi-Urdu) equivalents and not to all terms from these sources. On the whole his plea was for moderation and intelligibility and in the end he warned against the use of a language which 'robs the

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38 *Report of the Anjuman-i-Panjab or the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1865* (Lahore: Punjabee Press, 1866), p.7.

39 Javed Majeed, 'The Jargon of Indostan' An Exploration of Jargon in Urdu and East India Company English', in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds.), *Language and Jargons: Contributions to a Social History of Language* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp.182-205.

40 *Ibid.,* pp.189-99.

41 John Beames, 'Outlines of a Plea for the Arabic Element in Official Hidustani', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of the Bengal,* XXXV: 1 (1866), pp.1-13.

Hindus of their most glorious literary inheritance'.[42] But the strange '*Kutcherry* jargon' remained as the prized cultural capital of service elite.

This is not true only of the 1860s but even of the documents in Urdu in courts, police and revenue departments of present-day Pakistan where the Arabic *walad* or the Persian *pisar* is used for the Urdu *bētā* (son) and half is still the Persian *nisf* rather than the Urdu *ādhā* and so on. Indeed, even in Rajputana, although the script of all the court documents in the 1940s was Devanagari, the diction was the same Perso-Arabic one which one finds in other areas.[43] The Punjab samples of courts documents from the 1860s are in the same language and, in this case, in the Perso-Arabic script.[44] Such documents also exist in such far-flung areas of the empire as Baluchistan.[45] And the heart of the empire—present-day U.P and the city of Delhi—was the citadel of Persianized court language. It had penetrated these domains so much that even in modern India, where Sanskritised Hindi holds sway; the courts use a special jargon which, according to Bhatia and Sharma, still includes the following leftovers from history:

> These expressions are part of the mixed code, which is illustrated in items such as the following: *Dafa* 302 (Section 302), *Taje Rate Hind* (Indian Pernal Code), *muwakkil* (client), *vakilatnamah* (lawyer's form), *halafnama* (affidavit), *banam* (versus), *vald* (son of), *muddaiya* (plaintiff), *muddailaya* (defendant), and *patwari muharrir* (government officers).[46]

All of these terms are used in Pakistan as mentioned above. The point, therefore, is that the lower officials never stopped using the Persian they were familiar with to ensure continuity of their traditional monopoly, their pride in a jargon they understood best and to remain inscrutable and pompous as all bureaucracies tend to do. With this kind of cultural capital available in Persian and Urdu schools, it is little wonder that it was only after partition some part of this diction was dropped in India in favour of even more esoteric Sanskritic diction but in Pakistan no change was made at all.

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42 F.S. Growse. 'Some Objections to the Modern Style of Official Hindustani', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of the Bengal*, XXXV: 3 (1866), pp.172-81.

43 *Jāēzā Zubān-e-Urdū* Vol.1: *Riāsathāē Rājputānā* (Survey of Urdu in the Rajputana states) (Delhi: Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, 1940).

44 Mian Muhammad Aslam, *Urdū ke Qadīm Adalatī Namune*: *Dastāvezāt Punjab kī Rōshnī Mẽ* [Ancient samples of court documents of the Punjab in Urdu] (Islamabad: NLA, 1991).

45 Inam ul Haq Kausar, *Balochistan Mẽ Urdu* [Urdu in Balochistan] (Islamabad: NLA, 1986b), 1994 repr. ed.

46 Tej K. Bhatia & Robert J Sharma, *op.cit.*, p.369.

In India, as foretold by the more prescient British officers—such as John C. Nesfield, the DPI of Oudh—in the 1870's that if the court language were changed 'Urdu and Persian would gradually die out' (J. Sparks the Officiating Secretary of the Government to the DPI in his letter of 30 November 1874 in),[47] the script yielded to the Devanagari one. Surprising, however, despite Sanskritization of the official language a few conventional legal terms continue to be throwbacks to the past as illustrated by the examples given above.

Apart from the judiciary, police and the administration, the British Indian army also used Hindustani but in the Roman script. However, during 1857 the East India Company's soldiers and their comrades opposing the British also used Urdu. At the highest level—that of the King or the princes—Persian was used. But otherwise the constitution was in Urdu,[48] commanders and even Bakht Khan, the commander-in-chief of the Indian troops, passed orders in it.[49] Even the seal of Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi carried her name in Urdu.[50]

But this was a matter of a little more than a year. When the British regained control of India, they continued using Urdu in the Roman script as before. For instance, Frank Lugard Brayne (1882-1952) Adviser on Indian Affairs, Indian Army (1941-46), says:

> Armies must have a common language and the Indian Army uses Urdu for all enlisted men whatever their home language.[51]

He advocates the use of the Roman script but Indian, and not British, pronunciation of Urdu.

Yet another letter tells us that Urdu, sometimes also called Hindustani in the same papers, written in the Roman script had been in use in the army since 1914 i.e. World War I. Indeed, it was supposed to be the lingua franca of the Army. However, the way Roman Urdu was written was not accurate despite the fact that Gilchrist had written in the *Oriental Fabulist* (1803) that Indian languages could be written in the Roman script and had made a 'Hindi-Roman Orthographical Chart' for

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47 *Report upon the Progress of Education in the Provinces of Oudh 1873* (Lucknow: Printed at the Oudh Government Press, 1874), p.3.

48 Atiq Siddiqi (Comp), *Atthārā Saō Sattāvan: Akhbār aōr Dastāvēzẽ* [1857: newspapers and documents] (Delhi: Maktaba Shahab, 1966), p.282.

49 *Ibid.,* pp.298 & 317.

50 *Ibid.,* p.388.

51 F.L. Brayne, 'Use of a Common Language for the Indian Army' with several letters from the office of the Adviser of the Welfare General. MSS. Eur.F 152/90 Sept-October 1945, Oriental and India Office Collection, the British Library, London (OIOC in subsequent references).

accuracy.[52] Roman Urdu was 'the language of command in the Indian Army' in 1942 when Ralph Russell, later a pioneer and champion of teaching Urdu in the U. K, arrived in India as an army officer.[53] The Indian Army Lower examination at this time was entirely in this script though higher examinations were not.[54] In order to create accuracy changes were introduced several times. During this period Brigadier F.L. Brayne was the moving spirit behind introducing the new changes. He first conceded that there were imperfections and then suggested changes.

> Roman Urdu used by the Army is only 65% accurate. By a few small changes it could be made 99% accurate, and still could be typed and printed without any alterations or additions to the type fonts and typewriters.[55]

These changes were circulated both to military and civilian officers (Brayne NO. 100677/WD. (Advsr). He wanted the army to adopt them and felt that the civilian bureaucracy would follow:
On 24 October1945 he says:

> The Army should go its own way, as it has hitherto. If the revised system is good enough the civil will begin to nibble.[56]

Roman Urdu was also taught and used in the Pakistan Army at least till the fifties because officers commissioned in the sixties say that it had been discontinued during their time.[57]

However, the use of Urdu in the Perso-Arabic script has increased in the armed forces of Pakistan although the officer corps still operates in English. For instance, instead of English words of command, Urdu and Bengali terms were introduced in the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) in 1970 (Personal observation). After the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Bengali words were removed and only the Urdu part (albeit Persianized) remained. In his book on the use of Urdu in the Pakistan Army, Colonel Ghulam Jilani Khan gives several suggestions to increase this usage: improvement in the already published military dictionary which provides equivalents of military terms; translation of training manuals in Urdu; courses in military Urdu; publication of journals, or parts of them in Urdu; the provision of Urdu typing facilities;

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52 M. Atique Siddiqi, *op.cit.,* pp.39-40.
53 Ralph Russell, 'Urdu & I', *Annual of Urdu Studies,* 1996, No.11, pp.5-70.
54 *Ibid.,* p.6.
55 F.L. Brayne, *op.cit.,* (OIOC).
56 *Ibid.,* No. 100672/WG (Advsr/.Z), (OIOC).
57 Asad Durrani, 'Personal Communication from Lt General (Retd.) Asad Durrani', Ex Director General Military Training, Islamabad, 3 August 2010.

teaching of Urdu in PMA and so on.[58] If all of these suggestions are accepted there will be many more jobs for people with skills in Urdu than ever before.

As for the use of Urdu in the civilian government, in addition to being used at the lower levels in the revenue and judicial services in most of Pakistan—only in parts of Sindh the Sindhi language is used in these domains—and also serves as the official language of the former Jammu and Kashmir state now indirectly administered by Pakistan (Azad Jammu and Kashmir). The Government of Pakistan has promised to make it the official language of the country several times. The 1973 Constitution states:

> The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day (Article 251, a).

The National Language Authority, created to facilitate the above, now possesses an adequate stock of terms in Urdu which, according to two of its recent chairman—Fateh Mohammad Malik and Iftikhar Arif—will enable it to be used in the bureaucracy, education and other domains of employment.[59] As neologism—the creation of new terms—has already been discussed in the context of the major languages of Pakistan,[60] it will not be dealt with here. Suffice it to say that accounts of the process and the ideology behind these efforts is adequately described by Saleem[61] for the pre-1947 period and by Durrani[62] for the present era in Pakistan.

However, English still remains the language of the higher domains of power in Pakistan and, while letters from the offices of institutions specifically devoted to Urdu may be in that language, English is used by most other high offices. Parliamentary publications are, however, increasingly in Urdu in addition to English. Thus employment for translators has increased. The National Language Authority has recommended the use of Urdu in the examinations for recruitment to the civil service, has trained government functionaries in the use of Urdu and

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58 Ghulam Jilani Khan, *Pāk Fauj Mẽ Nifaz-ē-Urdū* [The imposition of Urdu in the Pakistan Army] (Islamabad: Muqtadra Qaumi Zuban, 1989), pp.76-7.

59 *Daftarī Istilahāt: English-Urdu* [Official Terminology] (Islamabad: NLA, 2006).

60 Tariq Rahman, *Language, Education and Culture* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.265-67.

61 Waheed Uddin Saleem, *Vaz'ē Islāhāt* [The creation of neologism] (Karachi: Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu. 1994, 1921).

62 Atash Durrani, *Urdū Istlāhāt Sāzi* [Neologism in Urdu] (Islamabad: Anjuman Sharaia Ilmia, 1993).

reports that the language is being used in many domains—oath-taking, functions and receptions, parliament, certain offices—through its efforts even now.[63] Otherwise, a study like S. Dwivedi's study of the use of Hindi in India entitled *Hindi on Trial* (1981) will show that while contracts, agreements, licenses, tender notices, tender forms and letters might have increased in Urdu—as they have for Hindi in India[64]—the main language for lucrative and powerful employment in both countries remains English. The tendency in both countries is for the elite to find employment through skills in English while other languages—including Urdu in the case of Pakistan—follow behind as far as lower middle-class and some middle class jobs are concerned.

In the private sector Urdu is used, apart from the domains of education, printing and the media which will be dealt with later, in advertising, marketing, wall-chalking, calligraphy, writing decorative inscriptions and epigraphs. As in India, wall advertising is in multiple languages and mixed scripts.[65] While in India the Lipton advertisement is in Hindi, Urdu and English and in three scripts–Devanagari, Perso-Arabic and Roman—in Pakistan it is in Urdu and English. However, there are a few advertisements which mix lines in Sindhi, Pashto and Punjabi along with Urdu and English. While in India the socio psychological motivations for multiple mixing in the case of Persian-Urdu are their association with luxury, royal and medieval romance and Islamic culture,[66] in Pakistan the language is associated with indigenousness, intimacy and, if some high-flown Urdu verse is on display, with medieval romance and tradition. Urdu is also the major language on inscriptions on Pakistani trucks which are highly decorated and transport goods from one end of the country to another. Urdu is the language of 75 per cent of these inscriptions.[67] Urdu is also the main language of inscriptions on gravestones even in non-Urdu-speaking areas and even graffiti in toilets. This means that artists, calligraphers, painters

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63 *Recommendations for Adoption of Urdu as Official Language* (Islamabad: NLA, 2005).

64 S. Dwivedi, *Hindi on Trial* New (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1981), p.131.

65 Tej K. Bhatia & Robert J. Baumgardner, *op.cit.,* p.388.

66 *Ibid.,* p.392.

67 Tariq Rahman. 'Language on Wheels: Inscriptions on Pakistani Trucks as a Window into Popular Worldview', In Tariq Rahman, *Language Policy, Identity, and Religion: Aspects of the Civilization of the Muslims of Pakistan and North India* (Islamabad: Chair on Quaid-i-Azam & Freedom Movement, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2010), pp.256-303.

and purveyors of quotable quotes and popular inscriptions find employment of some kind for this kind of writing.

In short, because of its use in the lower domains of power, Urdu became a commodity in much demand in a major part of north India in its own script. In these domains this demand remains to this day in Pakistan though it has shrunk considerable in India. As for writing in the Roman script it became the desiderated language of the army and nowadays functions in modern means of communication.

However, because it was the passport for lower level public sector employment, it was resisted by the supporters of Hindi in the Devanagari script who competed for the same jobs. Thus, the British policy of promoting Urdu as the language of employment in Hindu dominated areas fed into the consolidation of the competing communal identities in British India which resulted in antagonism which lives on till date.