

**POETRY, POLITICS AND POPULACE: A STUDY
OF THE URDU LITERARY CULTURE IN PATNA
(C. 1870-1930)**

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Declaration

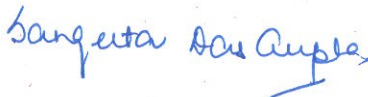
I, UFAQUE PAIKER, hereby declare that the Thesis titled “POETRY, POLITICS AND POPULACE: A STUDY OF THE URDU LITERARY CULTURE IN PATNA (c. 1870-1930)” submitted by me in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of the Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University is my original work. This thesis has not been previously submitted in part or full for the award of any other degree to this university or any other university.



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CERTIFICATE

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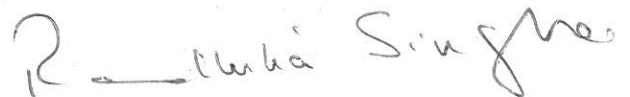


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Contents

Introduction	1-16
Chapter One: One Language, Many Identities	17-45
Urdu in Azimabad	
The ‘Other’ Urdu	
The <i>Khankah</i>	
Beyond ‘Elites’, ‘Urban’ and ‘Centre’	
‘Literary’ Urdu	
Colonial Encounter	
Triumph of Hindi	
Roadblocks	
‘Hindi’, ‘Hindustani’ and ‘Urdu’	
Chapter Two: <i>Ilm</i> and <i>Fan</i>: Ways of Learning	46-80
The Indigenous system of education	
Making of the School	
Limited Reach	
Politics of Textbooks	
Making of Urdu the Language of Muslims	
Resistance to the Colonial idea of Education	
The Category of Muhammadan Education	

Chapter Three: Urdu Public: *ecumene* to print

81-112

Urdu Ecumene

The Literati

Print in Bihar

Formation of the Urdu Public

The Birth and Nature of the Reading Public

Print and Identity

Chapter Four: Contested Terrains of Urdu

113-142

Life and Times of Shad Azimabadi

A Controversial Treatise

The Narrative of Decline

Shad in the Twentieth century

Contradiction in Shad's Works

Historicising Urdu: Writing *Tazkhira*

Conclusion

143-147

Bibliography

148-171

Appendices

172-179

Introduction

When I embarked on this PhD, on the history of Urdu in Bihar, I had to grapple with definitions of history, Urdu and Bihar. The meanings of each of these label or category, along with being subjected to populist impulses, have been defined and redefined by social scientists and public intellectuals.

What constitutes as ‘History’ has been a perennial and perpetual concern for researchers who undertake the task of ‘narrativising’ the past. Opinions are still sharply divided on the method of depicting the past. One strand of scholarship believes that history can told be as it was while another strand argues that histories are essentially subjective readings of the past.¹ The control over the ‘story’ of the past has been no less contentious and combative in the realm of politics.² ‘Urdu’ has also not escaped the warfare waged by meaning makers of varying hues. Political scientists, historians and linguistics perceive it as a symbol or marker of an identity, a tool for political mobilisation and even a means for communication.³ In the ‘popular’ realm, the idea of Urdu ranges from being perceived as a language of poetry, a requiem of the beleaguered Mughals to being associated with Muslims- the ‘other’. Like Urdu, the present weighs so heavily on the reconstruction of the past of Bihar that it has led to blurring of distinctions between the ‘popular’ and the ‘academic’. To a certain extent, scholarly works on Bihar have drawn from the popular imagination of a state torn by intense caste politics or distress migration.⁴ It is for this reason that a history of Urdu in Bihar is an aberration of a kind amongst the existing histories of linguistic cultures.

¹ Thomas N. Tyson and David Old Royd. 2016. “The Debate between Postmodernism and Historiography: An Accounting Historian’s Manifesto.” *Accounting History* 22 (1): 29–43.

² Romila Thapar. A. G Noorani and Sadanand Menon. 2016. *N on Nationalism*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.

³ Paul R Brass. 1974. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, London: Cambridge University Press; Christopher R King. 1994. *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in the Nineteenth Century in North India*. Delhi, Calcutta, Madras: Oxford University Press; Gyanendra Pandey. 2002. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. 2nd ed, New York: Oxford University Press.

⁴ For works on the ‘problems’ of Bihar see, Arvind Narayan Das. 1974. “BIHAR-Murder to Landlord Order.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 10, no. 24; Arvind Narayan Das. 1975. “BIHAR-Revolt in Slow Motion.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 9, no. 50; Ashwani Kumar. 2007. *Community Warriors: State, Peasants and Caste Armies in Bihar*. New Delhi: Anthem Press; Awanish Kumar. 2009. “A Class Analysis of the Bihar Menace.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 28.

How Not to Write the History of Urdu

The above mentioned themes under study require not only an awareness of one's subjectivity but also a methodological clarity making a historical reading of literature an arduous task. Historians of languages are confronted with methodological challenges because of underlying tensions between 'historical' and 'literary' methods. While historical methods entail contextualisation of events, ideas and processes; literature is a 'self-referential' entity with its own techniques of analysis and criticism'.⁵

It is for this reason that historians of Urdu instead of telling how to write the history of Urdu have rather given caveats of how not to write the history of Urdu. One such caveat was given by Ralph Russell, a British scholar of Urdu in his book titled, *How Not to Write the History of Urdu Literature: and Other Essays on Urdu and Islam* (1999).⁶ First, he appealed to historians of Urdu to be selective in their choices and then to be didactic in their accounts, in order to inform the readers what they should know about Urdu. The third and most significant advice was to describe the social and historical process in which literature was being produced. His forewarning was rooted not only in his understanding of the language but also his conviction in the values of learning Urdu and his compassion for the same. Russell in his autobiography, *Findings Keepings* explained the purpose of learning Urdu.

There have been three main strands of my life: the commitment to the fundamental values which made me a communist, the study of Urdu, and an awareness of love as the fundamental feature of true humanity. To me the three strands have always been inextricably intertwined, each informing the other.⁷

Russell's suggestions, almost patronising his readers, by telling them what exactly to know about literature may appear odd at first and his emphasis on textual context may

⁵ Javed Majeed. 2005. "Literary History: the Case Study of South Asia." *Review of Literary Cultures in History: Reconstruction from South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. *History Compass*. 2003.

⁶ Ralph Russell. 1999. *How Not to Write History of Urdu Literature and Other Essays on Islam*. USA: Oxford University Press.

⁷ Marion Malteno. 2009. "Ralph Russell, Teacher, Scholar, and Friend." *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 1, no. 2.

also be unsettling for scholars who advocate taking textual temporality into account. However, a brief review of works on the histories of Hindi and Urdu will provide some answers to Russell's discontent with the existing histories of Urdu literature.

Histories of Hindi

Amrit Rai in his book, *A House Divided: the Origin and Development of Hindi/Hindavi* (1984) has traced the long history of Hindi/Hindavi.⁸ He argues that this rich history began with the eleventh century demonstrate the contribution of various dialects in the making of Hindi/Hindavi. According to him, even Deccani is a form of Hindi/Hindavi and is infused with many Sanskrit words. However, the most problematic part of his analysis was to argue that Urdu was culled from Hindi/Hindavi by the declining Mughals by replacing Sanskrit words with Persian ones. Although Rai is critical of the Persianisation of Urdu and the Sanskritisation of Hindi as two separate self contained languages, he does not breakaway away from the misconception of perceiving Hindi as a language with an antiquarian past that was made into Urdu by the Mughals by purging Sanskrit words. This strand of scholarship has been questioned by Christopher R King in *One language, Two scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (1994). King understood the process of making of a modern standardised Hindi language through colonial official policies and voluntary associations.⁹ He has argued that script became the prime marker of difference between the two languages. Scholarship on the making of Hindi as the national language has been carried forward by Vasudha Dalmia and Francesca Orsini.¹⁰

In her book *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions. Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras* (1997), Dalmia furnishes a rich account of the processes

⁸ Amrit Rai. 1984. *A House Divided: The Origin and Development Of Hindi/Hindavi*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁹ Christopher R. King. 1994. *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth-Century North India*. Bombay: Oxford University Press.

¹⁰ Vasudha Dalmia. 1997. *The Nationalization of Hindu Tradition*. New Delhi: Permanent Black; Francesca Orsini. 2002. *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press;

that facilitated the making of Hindi. Employing a social history of the city of Banaras and the literary and life trajectory of Bharatendu Harischandra (1850-1855), she has demonstrated how a third idiom - a combination of 'traditionalist' and 'reformist' impulse - emerged out of an interaction between British colonialism and Aryan-Hindu worldview. In her work, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (2002), Orsini covers the second phase of the Hindi movement and argues that print culture and concomitant literary productions led to the formation of a 'modern' Hindi public sphere by the twentieth century.

King, Dalmia and Orsini have departed from scholarships which uncritically examine the making of Hindi by contextualising the processes which went into the language's making. However, I argue that they did not move beyond the divide of Hindi and Urdu as they also primarily focused on Hindi. This oversight on their part has made their accounts a teleological history of Hindi and a negation of the history of Urdu. Thus, without context or any background of Urdu, a linear narrative of Hindi does not do much to dispel the colonial notion that Urdu was a language of 'foreign' origins spoken only by Muslims.¹¹ Urdu is not only slighted in the histories of language, but a good number of histories do not include Urdu sources in their accounts. While it is beyond the scope of the present discussion to provide a detailed picture of the negation of Urdu, an example will explain the problem with the existing scholarship. For instance, Ulrike Stark's *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (2009) provides a fascinating and compelling account of the Naval Kishore publishing house. However, in her introduction, Stark forewarns the readers about her selection of sources. She states,

The scholars of Urdu literature will immediately notice that it develops a special chapter to Hindi but does not contain a special chapter on the Urdu publication of NKP (Naval Kishore Publication). Given the firm's outstanding importance in Urdu publishing and the 'inestimable' service, it renders to Urdu literature, this calls for an

¹¹ For the colonial notions of Urdu see, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2003. "A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture." In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. London: University of California Press. 805-863

explanation. The reasons have mainly to do the genesis of this book ... As a result, this book, while concerned with both Hindi and Urdu, shows a certain bias for the former and may occasionally seem to falter when it comes to assessing the aspects of Urdu literature.¹²

By relying only on Hindi sources, scholars not only present a one sided account but do not adequately challenge the claim of Hindi as the national language. I argue that the kernel of the problem lies in the stranglehold of the idea of nation over language. A study of a national language such as Hindi will always run this risk as Javed Majeed pertinently points out, “the modern inception of the nation-state is projected backwards, so that ‘literary history’ manifests itself as national history.”¹³ Thus, if works on Hindi in India have been limited by the national framework the same can be said about studies on Urdu in Pakistan.¹⁴

Overarching frameworks of studies on ‘national’ language also obliterate regional and temporal contexts, specificity and histories. One can argue that works on Hindi have essentially been history of ‘Hindi’ in United Provinces and Banaras wherein other regions are studied in terms of its relation to these cities. For instance, the origins of Hindi in Bihar in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have mostly been studied through the role of the colonial state and efforts of allies and associates of Bharatendu Harishchandra which was later followed up by different caste and class groups.¹⁵

I argue the issue was far more complex, especially from the eighteenth till the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Modern standard ‘Hindi’ was in tension with different scripts,

¹² Ulrike Stark. 2009. *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black. 25-26

¹³ Javed Majeed. 2005. “Literary History: the Case Study of South Asia.” *Review of Literary Cultures in History: Reconstruction from South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. *History Compass*. 2003.

¹⁴ Tariq Rahman. 2002. “Language, Power and Ideology.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no.44/45.

¹⁵ One such example is Keshavram Bhatt- a close associate of Bharatendu Harishchandra. They were a part of the group who used to write plays for theatre and engaged in debates in journals to promote Hindi. *Bihar Bandhu* was one such enterprise undertaken by Keshavram Bhatt. *Bihar Bandhu* was mostly looked after by Keshavram Bhatt as a mission; he collected news, edited texts and did proof-reading and printing. His family members used to assist him in his endeavors. For the association between Bharatendu and Keshavram Bhatt see, Kathryn Hansen. 1992. “The Birth of Hindi Drama in Banaras, 1868–1885.” In *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800–1980*, edited by Sandra B. Freitag. London. Berkley. Oxford: University of California Press. 62-93; Hitendra Patel. 2011. *Communalism and Intelligentsia in Bihar, 1870-1930*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

‘dialects’ and literary traditions in Bihar. The tension between ‘standard’ Nagri Hindi and Kaithi, a script used in North India, has been the focus of King’s account. But this tension gets more complex if one takes other kinds of sources into account. Some accounts of ‘histories’ of Urdu in Bihar like *Tazkhira Shorish* written in the eighteenth century by the *sufi* poet, Ghulam Hussain Shorish mentions that *khariboli* came to Bihar through the Urdu poets who migrated from Delhi to Bihar in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ George Abraham Grierson, an Irish administrator and linguist in British India, in his collection of languages and dialects of Bihar included *maghi*, *maithali* and *bhojpuri* as the ‘main’ ‘dialects’ of Bihar.¹⁷ Although they were later brought within the overarching framework of Hindi, their classification and definition were not easy process even for colonial linguists and administrators.

Grierson even proposed classifying them as ‘Bihari’ language. Another colonial linguist and officer S. W. Fallon was also in favor of compiling the ‘language of Bihar’ through dictionaries and text books. Grierson collected spoken languages of people and compiled books like *Bihar Peasant Life; Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language spoken in the Province of Bihar, in the Eastern Portion of the North-western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion of the Central Provinces* in three parts, *Comparative Dictionary Of The Bihari Language, An introduction to the Maithili dialect of the Bihari language as Spoken in North Bihar*.¹⁸ Likewise, even S. W Fallon compiled dictionaries of Urdu proverbs, idioms, superstitions, songs, riddles, cultural nuances, regional/dialectic pronunciations and folklore. Some of the dictionaries that he produced were: *An English-Hindustani Law and Commercial Dictionary*, *A Hindustani-English Law and Commercial Dictionary*, *A New English-Hindustani Dictionary*: with illustrations from English literature and colloquial English’, *A Dictionary of Hindustani*

¹⁶ Gholam Husain Shorish. 2015. *Tazkhira-E-Shorish*. Translated by Mohd. Asim Aazmi. New Delhi: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language. 8.

¹⁷ George Abraham Grierson. 1886. *Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language: Spoken in the Province of Bihar the Eastern Portion of the North-Western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion of the Central Provinces Volume-3 in Three Parts*, Calcutta: Secretariat Press.

¹⁸ George Abraham Grierson. 1885. *Bihar Peasant Life, Being a Discursive Catalogue of the Surroundings of the People Of That Province*. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press; George Abraham Grierson. 1886. *Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language: Spoken in the Province of Bihar the Eastern Portion of the North-Western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion of the Central Provinces Volume-3 in Three Parts*, Calcutta: Secretariat Press; George Abraham Grierson. 1885. *Comparative Dictionary of the Bihari Language*. Calcutta: Secretariat Press.

Proverbs’ and *‘A New Hindustani-English Dictionary’*.¹⁹ Although both Grierson and Fallon later supported a ‘modern, standard, Sanskritised Hindi’, the above account underlines the limitations of binaries such as ‘high and low literature’, ‘standard and colloquial’ and ‘Hindi’ and ‘Urdu’.

I argue these specificities can only be captured if literature and texts are read and analysed along with colonial sources. One of the reasons behind such oversight and neglect is the limited scope of sources used to construct histories. While King has mostly relied on colonial sources, Dalmia and Orsini primarily limited their sources to ‘literature’ that shaped and defined the Hindi language. Thus, while King’s account could not capture the social aspect of language making, the role of the colonial state has not been adequately dealt with in Orsini and Dalmia’s account. I argue that a ‘history’ of literature has to be accommodative of the methods of both ‘history’ and ‘literature’. To trace the process of language evolution one has to deploy colonial sources to understand the context in which languages evolve and this context needs to be in dialogue with temporality of texts. A dialogic relationship between these two kinds of sources will capture the construction of Urdu from the point view of the colonial state without discounting the ‘narrative’ of poets, writers, linguists and lexicographers.

Histories of Urdu

The gap in existing scholarship that has mostly employed Hindi sources to reconstruct histories of languages has been filled by works on Urdu such as *Nets of Awareness Urdu Poetry and its Critics* (1994) written by Frances Pritchett and *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* (2001) written by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi.. Pritchett has traced the history of Urdu and *ghazal* in the context of the decline of Mughals and Faruqi has historicised the evolution of Urdu and dispelled the prevalent notion that Urdu meant camp i.e, the language of ‘foreigners’. These works not only fill the lacunae in the current scholarship on the subject but also breaks away from the convention of assessing Urdu literature within the colonial framework. ‘Histories’ of Urdu written before Faruqi

¹⁹ Rauf Parekh. 2014. “Literary Notes: Fallon’s Urdu-English Dictionary: A Remarkable Feat of Lexicography.” *Dawn*. April 14th. 2014. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1099696/literary-notes-fallons-urdu-english-dictionary-a-remarkable-feat-of-lexicography>

and Pritchett such as those by Muhammad Sadiq and T. G Bailey's dismissed Urdu *ghazal* and literature in general for not depicting 'reality'.²⁰ Farqui and Pritchett's works study Urdu literature and poetry by situating them in the context they were produced thus providing new frameworks of academic engagement.

The colonial construction of Urdu as the language of Muslims has also been countered by Kavita Datla and Jennifer Dubrow. Datla in her book *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India*, (2013) has demonstrated how Urdu in the Osmania University became a means to imagine and construct 'common secular future' and Dubrow in her book *Cosmopolitan Dreams: The Making of Modern Urdu Literary Cultures in South Asia* (2019) has argued that Urdu was a 'cosmopolitan' language that transcended regional, religious, caste and class boundaries.²¹

One of the major limitations of works on Urdu is their inability to move beyond the Mughal imagination of Urdu. Pritchett traces the genesis of Urdu in the backdrop of Mughal decline and Faruqi mostly included the voice of Delhi writers and poets. However, both their work show that the reach of Urdu was not limited to the courtly circles of Delhi. Farqui in fact has argued that the notion of Urdu was subjected to the parochial claims of the poets of Delhi. Even Pritchett has demonstrated that along with elites and nobles, people from the 'lower order' like soldiers and potters were also Urdu poets.²² Nevertheless, these aspects of Urdu remain understudied and underdeveloped.

While studies on Hindi remained confined within national frameworks, works on Urdu have not adequately presented the diverse traditions of Urdu literary culture. It is in this vein that Russell's moving observations on studying Urdu gains prominence. As historians attempting to study literature and language in order to extrapolate a nuanced explorative study of a society in constant flux, the methodological complexities plaguing

²⁰ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2001. *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; Frances W. Pritchett. 1994. *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Muhammad Sadiq. 1984. *A History of Urdu Literature*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; T. Grahame Bailey. 1932. *A History of Urdu Literature*. London.

²¹ Kavita Datla. 2013. *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press; Jennifer Dubrow. 2019. *Cosmopolitan Dreams: The Making of Modern Literary Culture in Colonial South Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press

²² See chapter one for details

us can be diverse. Caught at the cusp of disciplines and conflicting methodological apparatuses, historians of language and literature have to chart unique ways of telling ‘stories’ of languages.

A history of Hindi/Urdu thus has to narrate a history which traces the evolution of language firmly rooted in their temporal and spatial specificities, accounting for both the text and context. Such a method would successfully dismantle colonial notions of standardised language and its association to specific identities - in the case of Hindi and Urdu as Hindi/Hindu, Urdu/Muslims. Sheldon Pollock in his edited volume, *Literary Cultures in South Asia: Reconstruction from South Asia* (2003) demonstrates the significance of studying literature in its cultural and social location rather than employing overarching frameworks.²³ Even recent works like Orsini’s *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture* (2012) have focused upon the shared history of Hindi and Urdu.²⁴

The thesis intends to move beyond the narrative divide between Hindi and Urdu with an understanding that religious ascription to languages was a colonial construct. It draws upon Bernard S. Cohn’s essay *Command of Language and Language of Command* in which he underlines the processes through which the colonial state enforced a European framework to comprehend the workings, function and nature of languages of the Indian subcontinent. Within this framework, this research studies the myriad associations that disparate communities had with language that was castigated as ‘communal’ by the colonial state.²⁵

Additionally, this thesis understands the making of Urdu, as a language of ‘elite’ Muslims and as a language ascribed to a particular religion, the result of the interaction between ‘indigenous’ and colonial knowledge systems. Such forms of interaction have been studied by C. A Bayly in *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and*

²³ Sheldon Pollock. 2003. “Introduction.” In *Literary Cultures in History Reconstructions from South Asia*, edited by Sheldon Pollock. London: University of California Press. 1-39

²⁴ Francesca Orsini. 2010. “Introduction.” In *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture*, edited by Francesca Orsini. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan; Francesca Orsini, “The Multilingual Local in World Literature.” *Comparative Literature* 67, no. 4 (June 5, 2016): 345-374.

²⁵ Bernard S Cohn. 1928. *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton N.J: Princeton University Press; Gyanendra Pandey. 2002. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press

Social Communication in India, 1780-1870 (1999). Bayly has argued that colonial knowledge of indigenous societies was also a product of complex interactions between lower level officers and indigenous informants or agents.²⁶ Within this framework I take into account the role of laureates, writers, poets and activists -who were close allies of the colonial, state, especially in the middle of the nineteenth century – and were instrumental in giving religious ascription to languages.

Histories on Bihar

It could be argued that the categorisation of regions and the discourses that surround and define these regions have been standardised and even histories have been confined to limiting or rigid categories. For instance, United Province, ‘modern’ Uttar Pradesh, has been associated with national, ‘communal’ and ‘Muslim’ politics of the twentieth century, Bengal has been studied to understand the impact of colonial ‘modernity’ and the Bengal ‘renaissance’ and Delhi’s identity has been inextricably linked to its Mughal past.²⁷ Similarly, histories of Bihar have mostly been on early colonial history and twentieth national politics. Only recently have scholars paid attention to the socio-cultural aspects of Bihar.

Kumkum Chatterjee's *Merchants, Politics, and Society in Early Modern India: Bihar, 1733-1820* (1996) focuses on the history of ‘indigenous’ merchants and bankers in a

²⁶ C. A Bayly. 1999. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. London: Cambridge University Press.

²⁷ For works on the United Provinces see, Francis Robinson. 2007. *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860–1923*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; David Lelyveld. 1978. *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; Barbara. D Metcalf. *Islamic Revival in British India Deoband, 1860-1900*. Princeton N.J: Princeton University Press; for works on Bengal see Sumit Sarkar. 1985. *A Critique of Colonial India*. Calcutta: Papyrus; Asok Sen. 1977. *Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and His Elusive Milestones*. Calcutta: Ridhi-India; Sumanta Banerjee. 1989. *The Parlour and the Streets: Elite and Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Calcutta*. Calcutta: Seagull; Tanika Sarkar. 1987. “Nationalist Iconography: Image of Women in 19th Century Bengali Literature.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 22, no. 4: 2011-2015 ; J H Broomfield. 1968. *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; For works on Delhi see, Satish Chandra. 1986. “Cultural and Political Role of Delhi 1675-1725” In *Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Indian History, Culture and Society* edited by R E Frykenberg. New Delhi: Oxford University; William Irvin. 1989. *Later Mughals*, Reprint . New Delhi: New Taj Office Publishers; Ralph Russell and Khurshid Alam. 1968. *Three Mughal Poets Mir Sauda Mir Hasan*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. This is not a comprehensive list of the books but it is furnished to depict the broad patterns of studies on different cities.

social and political context of commercial activity in early modern Bihar.²⁸ Anand. A Yang's *Bazaar India Markets, Society, and the Colonial State in Bihar* (1999) focuses on the spatial and cultural history of the market by linking it with commerce, culture and political power in early colonial Bihar. Apart from trade and market, Bihar's agrarian history and various tenancy acts have been studied by Peter Robb and Anand Yang.²⁹ Along with these themes, the history of transport, space and circulation has been worked upon by Nitin Sinha in his book *Communication and Colonialism in Eastern India: Bihar 1760-1880* (2015).³⁰

Bihar's state politics has been studied by Papiya Ghosh and Mohammad Sajjad.³¹ Through her essays and articles, Ghosh has traced the processes of identity, nation and community construction. Sajjad in his book titled *Muslim Politics in Bihar: Changing Contours* (2014) has explained the specific context in which Muslims in Bihar responded differently-compared to Muslims of United Provinces and Bengal- to the 'communal' politics of the Muslim League. Apart from Sajjad and Ghosh, political events such as mass participation in the Non- Cooperation movement in Bihar have been studied by Lata Singh in her book *Popular Translations of Nationalism in Bihar (1920-22)*.³²

This brief review of literature on Bihar shows that while the politics of trade, space and transport of the early colonial period and national politics of the late political period have been studied, a social history of Bihar of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has largely been an under studied area. This latter trajectory has changed only recently and is evidenced in the articles by Mohammad Sajjad on the movement for recognition of

²⁸ Kumkum Chatterjee. 1996. *Merchants, Politics and Society in Early Modern India, Bihar: 1733-1820*. Leiden, New York and Koln: E. J Brill. 205-206; Anand A Yang. 1998. *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and the Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar*. London: University of California Press. 69-77. This is not a comprehensive list but it illustrates the board patterns of studies on different cities.

²⁹ Peter Robb. 1988. "Law and Agrarian Society in India: The Case of Bihar and the Nineteenth-Century Tenancy Debate." *Modern Asian Studies*, 22, no. 2: 319-354; Anand Yang. *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793-1920*. Berkley and Los Angles: University of California Press

³⁰ Nitin Sinha. 2015. *Communication and Colonialism in Eastern India: Bihar 1760-1880*. London: Anthem Press.

³¹ Papiya Ghosh. 2008. *Community and Nation: Essays on Identity and Politics in Eastern India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; Mohammad Sajjad. 2014. *Muslim Politics in Bihar: Changing Contours*. New Delhi: Routledge.

³² Lata Singh. 2012. *Popular Translations of Nationalism: Bihar, 1920-1922*. Delhi: Primus Books.

Urdu as the second official language in the twentieth century,³³ Aishwaraj Kumar on ‘Bihari language’ and its marginalisation by modern standard Hindi,³⁴ and Nitin Sinha on the social mobility of ‘non-migrant’ women who have addressed this gap.³⁵

A Study of Urdu Literary Culture in Patna

A comprehensive history of the Urdu language in Bihar would be a significant value addition to available scholarship on regional and language histories. However, it is pertinent to qualify that the idea is to not look for regional histories of language but study the specificity of languages within a region. Recent studies have shown that Bihar has historically had a contentious relationship with both Hindi and Urdu. Modern standardised Hindi obliterated the identities of multiple ‘local’ ‘dialects’ while celebrated Urdu laureates have dismissed the role and contribution of Bihari Urdu authors, and condescendingly referred to them as ‘rustics’.³⁶ I intend to unearth the histories of the ‘other’ languages, dialect and literary traditions which remain marginalised and under the shadow of Persianised Urdu and Sanskritised Hindi while questioning the notion that one region or city was the ‘centre’ determining the trajectories of a language.³⁷ These binaries and categories were further cemented by the second half of the twentieth century.³⁸

The thesis traces the early history of ‘Urdu’ in Bihar to capture its multiple identities and articulations. It argues that contrary to the dominant perception, Urdu was not just the language of poetry or of Muslim ‘elites’, sustained through patronage, but that the

³³ Mohammad Sajjad. 2014. “Language as a Tool of Minority Politics: Urdu in Bihar, India, 1951-1989.” *Journal of Minority Affairs*. No.34: 174-190.

³⁴ Aishwaraj Kumar. 2013 “A Marginalized Voice in the History of ‘Hindi’.” *Modern Asia Studies* 47, no. 5: 1706–1746.

³⁵ Nitin Sinha. 2018. “The Idea of Home in a World of Circulation: Steam, Women, and Migration through Bhojpuri Folksongs.” *International Review of Social History* 63, no. 2 : 203–237

³⁶ For dismissal of Bihar by Urdu laureates see, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2003. “A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture.” In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock, 807; For contestation between Hindi and ‘Bihari language’ see Aishwaraj Kumar. 2013. “A Marginalized Voice in the History of ‘Hindi’.” *Modern Asia Studies* 47, no. 5: 1706–1746.

³⁷ For the limitation of the idea of ‘centre’ of literary tradition see C. M. Naim and Carla Petievich. 1997. “Urdu in Lucknow/Lucknow in Urdu” In *Lucknow Memories of the City* edited by Violette Graff. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 165-180.

³⁸ Apart from Aishwaraj Kumar, Asha Singh has studied the tension between Hindi and Bhojpuri. See, Asha Singh. 2018. “Conceptualizing Bhojpuri for a National Hindi Elite: A Critical Reading of Folklorist Krishna Deva Upadhyaya.” *Prabuddha: Journal of Social Equality* 1, no.1: 33-44,

‘populace’ was also a part of the Urdu literary tradition since the Urdu *ecumene* accommodated people from diverse backgrounds.³⁹ It traces the multiple identities, locations and temporalities associated with Urdu. It reads it as a language of the ‘elite’ as well as the general ‘populace’, as a language of poetry and prose, as ‘spoken’ and ‘literary’, spread through the court and the *khankhas*, as a language of the ‘city’ and the ‘villages’, as it traces its genesis from an ‘early’ to a ‘modern’ period. The thesis argues that the genesis of Urdu was rooted in the form of learning that was different from the colonial perception of utilitarian learning. It highlights the changes brought in the ways of learning through print and education policy- the two most significant factors that led to changes in language. It argues that till the late nineteenth century, the colonial idea of education was still resisted and print was not crucial in perpetuating religious divide. This transition of Urdu is mapped through the dilemma that exists between the life and the oeuvre of a famous Urdu poet of the late nineteenth century, Shad Azimabadi. This dilemma is between writing the history of Urdu (*tazkhira*) and his own lived experiences (*bayaz*). While the history assiduously confirms to colonial notion of Urdu, Shad’s own repertoire defies it. When the *tazkhiras* delineated the boundaries of Urdu, his composition often trespassed it. Thus by the late nineteenth century though these boundaries strived to acquire fixity the lived realities of the same poets challenged it.

The thesis has relied upon colonial sources that include debates amongst colonial officers and education records that shows how conflicts and tension that existed in the process of making Hindi the official language. It reads these sources along with *tazkhira*, Urdu poems and autobiographies that show how people were defining the language when the colonial states were defining the language. Thus, it takes into account the context as well as the temporality of the texts. Along with these sources the thesis also draws upon the contemporary works of Urdu laureates and lexicographers of Bihar who offer different theoretical frameworks within which varied trajectories of languages can be studied.

³⁹ I have drawn on C.A Bayly’s formulation of *ecumene* for this purpose. Bayly argues that a culture of political debates existed in north India before the emergence of newspapers and public associations. The guardians of these *ecumene*, the Hindustani writing literati, presented the view of the *bazaar* people and artisans and their connections transcended religious, caste and sectarian boundaries without necessarily dissolving them. See C.A Bayly. 1999. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. London: Cambridge University Press. 180-212

One language, Many Identities

This chapter traces the early history of ‘Urdu’ in Bihar. It argues that along with *Ashrafs*’ Urdu, poetry was performed and practiced by a wide array of people and *khankah* played a significant role in expanding the reach of Urdu.⁴⁰ *Khankah* did just make the language inclusive but it also widened the geographical reach of Urdu. These *khankahs* were located in various ‘pockets’ of Bihar where Urdu replaced Persian in the late eighteenth century and poets started reciting poetry in Urdu. This wide reach of Urdu led to the intermixing of Persian, *khariboli* with the ‘dialect’ of Bihar that could not be categorized as Sanskritised Hindi of Hindus and Persianised Urdu of Muslims. This fluidity has been conceptualized as *Bihari Rekhta* by the linguists and lexicographers of Bihar.⁴¹ Thus when the colonial officers encountered these intermixtures they attempted to categorise them primarily on the basis of religious identity. However, there was no unanimity amongst the officers regarding the nomenclature of the language and led to difficulties in replacing Urdu with Hindi. I have used Urdu sources such as *tazkhira* and Urdu poetry and read it along with official policy to trace the history from the perspective of colonial state along with the perspective of writers and poets of Urdu.

Ilm and Fan: Ways of Learning

Studies on Hindi and Urdu focusing on the divide between the two languages have concentrated upon the scramble for official status and demands for making Hindi/Urdu the medium for imparting education. This chapter argues that linking education with employment was a colonial construct. The education reports and survey shows Urdu and Hindi was not taught and learnt to gain employment. The indigenous education system was divided into *ilm* and *fan*: *ilm* constituted knowledge of grammar and philosophy and *fan* entailed acquiring skill. This system was altered by introducing well defined spaces termed as ‘schools’, textbooks and by replacing the community teachers. However, the process of transformation was not smooth as the colonial state constantly faced roadblocks in defining the ‘real’ and ‘natural’ language of the people that was to be

⁴⁰ For the idea of *Ashraf* in this chapter see David Lelyveld. 2016. “Ashraf.” In *Keywords in South Asian Studies*. SOAS South Asia Institute.

⁴¹ Akhter Oranvi. 1957. *Bihar Mein Urdu Zaban O Adab Ka Irteqa 1857 Tak* (The History of Urdu Language and Culture in Bihar Till 1857). Patna: Albel Litho Press. 81-14

taught in schools. This chapter argues that the process of making Urdu the language of Muslims was a way through which the colonial state wanted to establish colonial system of education. However, contrary to the dominant perception of understanding the divide between Hindi and Urdu to make it the language of schools, the colonial idea of education was resisted till the late nineteenth century.

Urdu Public: *Ecumene* to Print

The chapter departs from two strands of scholarships on print: one that argues that a ‘Hindi Public Sphere’ was formed through the print medium, the other strand that assumes print medium brought in ‘modernity’ or ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘urbanity’ through dissolved boundaries.⁴² It argues that print reinstated new boundaries by restricting its access to the larger public and brought in new notions of morality that was absent in the Urdu *ecumene*. The chapter reads these transformations against the backdrop of the formation of new ‘elites’ after 1793 Permanent Settlements Act -- an Act through which the landholders were given complete control of the land and ryots -- the 1857 rebellion and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 that reinstated the rights of the ryots after the brewing tension between the landed class and the peasants.

The Contested Terrain of Urdu

The chapter traces the transition in Urdu by a famous Urdu poet Syed Ali Muhammad, pen name Shad Azimabadi (1846–1927). It analyses the conflict between his opinions on Urdu expressed through a *tazkhira*, *Nawa E Watan* (Call of the Native Land, 1880) and his compositions.⁴³ According to him the dialect spoken in Delhi and Lucknow was the ‘standard’ that had to be adhered to. However, Shad’s oeuvre in itself fell short of the ‘standard’ he had set for Urdu. Some of Shad’s compositions were in *Hindavi*. These compositions had borrowed from diverse literary repertoires that included various ‘dialects’, and themes and motifs belonging to different religions and culture. I argue that

⁴² Francesca Orsini. 2002. *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; Jennifer Dubrow. 2019. *Cosmopolitan Dreams: the Making of Modern Literary Culture in Colonial South Asia*. New Delhi: Permanent Black; David Boyk. 2018. “Collaborative Wit.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1): 89–106.

⁴³ Maulvi Syed Ali Mohammad Shad. 1888. *Nawa E Watan* (Call of the Native Land). Patna: Mutba Qaisri.

these interactions of ‘Urdu’ with diverse literary traditions unsettled the perspective of Urdu as the language of the Urban elites or in other words these borrowing did not fit squarely with an *Asharf* idea of Urdu. The chapter understands the role of the late nineteenth century *tazkhira* - histories of Urdu- in this context, *Nawa E Watan*’s role in shaping the ‘dominant’ notion of Urdu. The chapter argues that the late nineteenth century *tazkhira* were deeply steeped in subjectivities of poets caught in a seismic change brought about the colonial state. Along with it being an emotional response to the drastic changes they witnessed in the society it was also a means through which they negotiated with the colonial state to retain power by conforming to the colonial notions of Urdu. However, the chapter also takes note of the ‘marginal’ and ‘peripheral’ version of Urdu found in Shad’s *Hindavi* compositions. It reads these supposedly tangential perceptions of Urdu as continuities in the multifarious identities of Urdu.

Chapter One

One Language, Many Identities

“Residents of Azimabad and Murshidabad also considered their city as Urdu”⁴⁴

These remarks were made by two of Delhi’s famous poets and linguists, Sayyid Insha Allah Khan Insha (c. 1756–1817) and Mirza Muhammad Husain Qatil (d.1832.AD) in an Urdu grammar book, *Darya-e-Latafat* (River of Lightness and Subtlety, 1807), mocking the residents of Azimabad and Murshidabad for being so presumptuous as to consider theirs the cities of Urdu speakers.⁴⁵ By the nineteenth century, Insha and Qatil’s parochial viewpoint became the dominant perception and Urdu was primarily considered a Persianised ‘urban’ language of the Muslim ‘elites’.⁴⁶ Even scholarly works on Urdu have not adequately questioned the claim of Insha and Qatil.⁴⁷

The chapter traces the ‘early’ history of ‘Urdu’ in Bihar to contend this dominant notion of ‘Urdu’. It historicises Urdu in Bihar within a framework posited by linguists and lexicographers of Bihar who argued that not only did Urdu engender and flourish in Bihar but also acquired a specific characteristic which they term as *Bihari Rekhta*.⁴⁸ The concept of *Bihari Rekhta* construes ‘Urdu’ as a language with multifarious identities, forms and locales as *Rekhta* means scattered. The idea of Urdu as a scattered language unsettles the ‘modern’ notion of ‘Urdu’ as a language of one community (Muslims) or region (Delhi and Lucknow) in one form (Persianised). This chapter traces the process of

⁴⁴ The quote has been taken from Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2003. “A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture.” In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia*, edited by Sheldon Pollock. London: University of California Press. 807.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 1998. “Unprivileged Power: The Strange Case of Persian and Urdu in Nineteenth Century India.” *The Annual Urdu Studies* .13:3-30

⁴⁷ One of the major limitations of works on Urdu is their inability to move beyond the Mughal imagination of Urdu. Frances Pritchett traces the genesis of Urdu in the backdrop of Mughal decline and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi mostly included the voice of Delhi writers and poets. However, both their work show that the reach of Urdu was not limited to the courtly circles of Delhi. See, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2001. *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; Frances W. Pritchett. 1994. *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁴⁸ Akhter Oranvi. 1957. *Bihar Mein Urdu Zaban O Adab Ka Irteqa 1857 Tak* (The History of Urdu Language and Culture in Bihar Till 1857). Patna: Albel Litho Press. 81-144; Syed Yussufuddin Ahmad Balqi. 1980. *Bihar Urdu Lughat(Urdu Dictionary of Bihar)*. Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 1-10

making and unmaking ‘modern’ ‘Urdu’ at multiple ‘sites’ and in various forms.⁴⁹ The tension between two ideas of Urdu came to the fore in the late nineteenth century when colonial officials started designating official status to languages. The process of formulating and defining an official language was fraught with friction and deeply contested as colonial officials operated within simple binaries of written/spoken, standard/colloquial, high/low and Hindu/Muslim to categorise and label languages that could not be denominated under one identity.

It is for this reason, while tracing the ‘early’ history of Urdu in Azimabad; the chapter does not contend Insha and Qatil’s proposition that Azimabad was also a literary ‘center’ like Delhi and Lucknow. Instead, it argues against the concept of ‘centre’ by focusing on multiple ideas, perceptions and forms of ‘Urdu’ in Azimabad.⁵⁰

Urdu in Azimabad

A period of cultural efflorescence began in Bihar during the last years of Aurangzeb’s rule when his grandson Azim us Shan was appointed *Subehdar* of the province in 1704. He renamed Patna Azimabad, after himself, and patronised poets and artists fleeing political upheaval in Delhi caused by waning of Mughal control.⁵¹ Poets as well as members of the *nawabi* family from Oudh and *Ashraf* families from Delhi and nearby regions settled in Azimabad during this period.⁵²

⁴⁹ While I tracing the ‘early’ form of ‘Urdu’ I will be using ‘Urdu’ interchangeably with *Hindavi*, *Bihari Rekhta*, *Khariboli*, *Rekhta* and *Hindustani*.

⁵⁰ For the limitation of the idea of ‘centre’ of literary tradition see C. M. Naim and Carla Petievich. 1997. “Urdu in Lucknow/Lucknow in Urdu” In *Lucknow Memories of the City* edited by Violette Graff. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 165-180.

⁵¹ Muslim Azimabad. 1921. *Shad ki Kahani Shad ki Zubani: Khud Nawish Sanawange Hayat, Khan Bahadur Maulana Syed Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabadi*. (Shad’s Stories in Shad’s Words). Aligarh: Anjuman Taraqqi Hindi Aligarh. 12; Patna was known as Azimabad in the eighteenth century, It was named after Prince Azim-us-Shan, the grandson of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb who was the Governor in 1704-5.

⁵² I am using Kumkum Chatterjee’s formulation of *Ashraf* of the nineteenth century Patna. She has argued that Muslims (Syed, Pathan and Mughals) Hindus (Brahmin, Khastriya, Rajputs, Kayasths) and the merchants like Vasiya and Jains) came under the category of *Ashraf*. See Kumkum Chatterjee. 1996. *Merchants, Politics and Society in Early Modern India, Bihar: 1733-1820*. Leiden, New York and Koln: E. J Brill. 205-206

Patronage of poets who made Patna their home continued under Azim us Shah's successors like Raja Shitab Rai, the governor of Bihar from 1765-72.⁵³ Shitab Rai gave support to Urdu poets fleeing Delhi, Rampur and Lucknow, most notably Ashraf Ali Foghan of Delhi whom he bestowed with the title of *zareefe amalq* and a *jagir* worth three *dihai*.⁵⁴ The migrant poets and artists resided in *mohallas* that were organized, and named, according to occupation or kinship of the families.⁵⁵ *Kewashkiwa mohalla*, for example, was named after a noble, *Mughalpura* was set up for the Mughal army and the *mohalla* of the Kayasth community was called *Diwan mohalla*. Azim us Shan also established a *mohalla* in his name, Shahganj.⁵⁶ Over time, such neighbourhoods, inhabited by diverse communities, became cultural centers.⁵⁷

Along with poets, painters stayed in these *mohallas*. They were known for their *Kalam* art style of paintings, whose origins can be traced to Pratapgarh district of Udaipur, in

⁵³ His three sons, Mahraja Kalyan Singh Ashiq, Raja Bhuwani Singh Giryah and Raja Rai Khusal Singh Majboor were also known to compose poetry in Urdu and Persian. See Syed Hasan Askari. 1940. "Maharaja Kalyan Singh Ashiq, the last Native Governor of Bihar." *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Studies*, 26;

Ashraf Ali Foghan was the step brother of Ahmad Shah *Ashraf* Ali Khan, the son of the Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah (1719-1748). He stayed in Delhi till the reign of Ahmad Shah and later shifted his base to Awadh, where he became a *nawab* in the Shujaud Daulah's government. He eventually had to leave Awadh and settle down at Azimabad in 1763. See Sarwarul Huda. 2003. *Deewane Ashraf Ali Foghan* (Compilations of Ashraf Ali Foghan). New Delhi: *Qami Council Bare Farogh Urdu Zaban* (Council for the promotion of Urdu language).

⁵⁵ For description of *mohalla* see Kiwamu Yanagisawa and Shuji Funo 2018. "How mohallas were formed: Typology of mohallas from the viewpoint of spatial formation and the urbanization process in Varanasi, India." *Japan Architectural Review*.

⁵⁶ Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1995. *Karwan e Rafta* (Caravan of Life), Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 1-15

⁵⁷ The other *tazkhira* such as *Gulzar I Ibrahim* was compiled by Ali Ibrahim Khan Jalil (d 1793) -during the time of Lord Warren Hasting. It took him twelve years to write it. Ali Ibrahim Khan hailed from Patna during the era of Lord Cornwallis was a Magistrate and later Governor in Banaras. It was translated in Urdu as *Tazkhira Gulshan E Hind* by Mirza Ali Lutf in 1801 at the behest of Governor General John Glichrist who wanted English officers to develop an interest in Urdu. The *tazkhira* was published in 1904 from Hyderabad under the editorship of Abdul Haq, a principal of a college in Hyderabad. Abdul Haq recalls that the *tazkhira* was translated during the waning control of the emperorship of Shah Alam. The upheaval in Delhi led to a situation where poets and writers had to move to the East. The decline was accompanied with the efflorescence of Urdu language. He credits John Gilchrist for encouraging prose in Urdu through the translations done in the Fort William College.

Ibrahim Khan Jalil marks the second last quarter of the eighteenth century as a period when a slew of Urdu poets migrated from Delhi, Lucknow, Agra and Deccan and settled in Azimabad. They were provided patronage by the *nawabs*. These poets participated in *mushaira* and left some of their collected words in Urdu in the form of *diwans*. See Ali Ibrahim Jalil. 1934. *Tazkhira Gulzar I Ibrahim*. Aligarh: Muslim University Aligarh.

Rajputana.⁵⁸ Such painters flourished during the Mughal rule but had to move away from Delhi due to political disturbances in the eighteenth century. They moved to Murshidabad initially but the financial difficulties of the *Nawabs* of Bengal forced them to again seek greener pastures. By 1760, they had moved to Patna, then Azimabad, which was emerging as an important political and economic centre of the Eastern India.

Azimabad soon also became a cultural center. The painters and poets who settled in the city's *mohallas* flourished. Among the significant cultural activities in these neighbourhoods were *mushairas*, an everyday affair organized by poets in their homes.⁵⁹ Alongside these regular *mushaira*, there were grand *mushairas* patronised by traders, the landed elite that included both Hindus and Muslims. For a grand *mushaira*, a palatial building was decorated with carpets, chandeliers and candles. Poets from near and far were invited, both masters, or *ustad*, and their disciples, or *shagird*. They would often indulge in a war of words: poets would exhibit their training and grasp over language in order to browbeat their opponents. The repartee would go on for hours, even days. It was through poetry recited at these *mushairas* that Urdu was shaped in these neighbourhoods. These events served as meeting points for poets from different cities; they established connections with each other through *ustad-shagird* relationships.⁶⁰

Apart from *mushairas*, there were many oral literary forms in Urdu such as *sozkhwani* and *dastagoi*. *Sozkhwani* and *dastagoi* were performed across the *mohallas* of Azimabad. *Sozkhwani* is an elegiac poem about the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain and his companions in the battle of Karbala that would be recited at cultural events like *majlis* - literally meaning a gathering.⁶¹ *Dastangoi* is a style of narrating a story, or *dastan*, for an extended period of time in front of an audience. There were different kinds of *dastango* – a *dastango* could be an expert performer or he could be a humble servant who recited

⁵⁸ Mildred Archer. 1948. *Patna Painting*. London: David Marlowe Ltd. 4-7

⁵⁹ The account of the social life of the *Ashrafs* has been drawn from Syed Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Stories and Histories). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 506-523

⁶⁰ *Ustad-shagird*, *tazkhira* and *mushaiara* are considered the three components of the Urdu literary culture. See Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2003. "A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture." In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. London: University of California Press. 800-860.

⁶¹ He is considered to be the third Imam meaning head primarily by the *Shia* sect within the Muslim community.

stories to his master at night. These performers were so close to their patrons and masters that they usually accompanied them on their visits to different cities and countries. Renowned *dastango* used to travel with Badshah *Nawab* to Iraq and Iran and *sozkhawan* would accompany *Nawab* of Murshidabad to England. Urdu engendered, and flourished in, a milieu where Urdu poetry was practiced, performed and widely appreciated. C. A. Bayly describe the pre-colonial society as a society which was “literacy-aware if not yet a society of mass literacy.”⁶² Although Bayly has described the literacy-aware society in terms usage of written, oral culture and debate, I will extend his argument further to include the instinct of the society to value literature, art and culture also an aspect of literary-awareness. The chapter argues that Urdu poetry and painting engendered in a literary aware society. The elites of Patna – bankers, merchants and the *Nawabs* of Bengal – patronised poets and artists to establish their political and social significance in the city. Urdu poets and *dastango* were not only patronised but their association was valued by members of the royalty and the aristocracy, many of whom were poets in their own right. Raja Shitab Rai and his brothers were known to be poets of repute. In a literary society, *mushaira*, *dastangoi* and *sozkhwani* were patronized by the elites, performed by the poets and relished by the populace. However, *mohallas* of Azimabad were not the only locales where *mushaira*, *majlis* and *dastangoe* was conducted. There were ‘other’ spaces such as *khankahs* where ‘Urdu’ was getting shaped. The ‘Urdu’ that was getting shaped in *khankah* were also understood, perceived and historicised different from usually how Urdu is dominantly perceived.

The ‘Other’ Urdu

While the narrative framed by the scholars of Delhi and Lucknow is the dominant perception of Urdu, linguists and scholars of Bihar offer a different framework for studying the origins of the language. Akhter Oranvi (1910-1977), in his book, *Bihar Mein Urdu Zaban O Adab Ka Irteqa 1857 Tak* (The History of Urdu Language and Culture in Bihar Till 1857) traces the origin of Urdu in the region.⁶³ According to Oranvi, the early

⁶² C. A. Bayly. 1999. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. London: Cambridge University Press. 180

⁶³ Akhter Oranvi. 1957. *Bihar Mein Urdu Zaban O Adab Ka Irteqa 1857 Tak* (The History of Urdu Language and Culture in Bihar Till 1857), Patna: Albel Litho Press. 81-110.

history of Urdu can be traced back to the thirteenth century, when an early form of Urdu - he calls it 'proto Urdu' - was shaped with the coming of Arabic and Persian travelers. The interaction between the language of the travellers and the local language gave birth to *Bihari Rekhta* and considers it as base upon which Urdu developed in the region. He cites Vidyapathi's compositions as an example of the influence of *Bihari Rekhta*. Oranvi argues that one can find *Rekhtapan*, defined as an intermixture of Persian and western *Apbhrams*, in Vidyapathi's *Kirtilata* and *Kirtipataka* written *Apbhramashti* and Maithili. *Wajiar* (*wazir*), *sadarwargah* (*sadargah*), *pharman* (*firman*), *badsa* (*badsha*), *maja* (*maza*), *sarab* (*sharab*) and *paedah* (*paeda*) are some examples of *Rekhtapan*.

Oranvi's argument has been extended by other linguistics and scholars from Bihar. They have compiled dictionaries arguing that the interaction of 'local dialects' with Persian led to the emergence of Bihari Urdu, signifying the existence of regional variants of the language. They also contend that Bihari Urdu has its own grammatical structure.⁶⁴

Some of the example of these 'deviations' were shift from noun to verb in a sentence (*baat* becomes *batiyana*; *pani* becomes *paniyana*); using plural for both genders (*ladkani*); using *de* instead of *re* (*macchad* instead of *macchar*); adding 'n' to words (*haanth* instead of *haath*) ; preferring English names (*sadak* and table in place of *mez*); variations of meaning of words (*tadapna* will mean suffering in Delhi but jumping in

⁶⁴Yusufuddin Balqi (-1961) was Persian professor and a poet from the Ranchi University. He composed a dictionary of Bihari Urdu in 1970 which was later published in a magazine *Fikro Nazar* (Thinking sight). Later the dictionary was published by Bihar Anjuamn Taraqi Urdu. The author argues that the purpose of compiling Urdu words was to include those words and styles of writing that inevitably seeps in the Urdu writing of Bihar poets and writers. He further mentions that these styles of writing are dismissed by some writers because of the acceptability of Delhi and Lucknow style of writing. Balqi has included 'dialects' and syntax rules that are peculiar to Urdu. He argues that the influx of different types of words makes Bihari Urdu different from what Lucknow and Rampur. The dictionary was republished from the Khudabaksh library by the then director of the library, Abid Raza Bedaar. According to him, Bihar is the second place after Kashmir where Urdu has been given the status of second language of the state. Hence, the purpose of compiling the dictionary was to fill the gap in the scholarship of Urdu where no systematic effort has been made to reflect upon the regional variation of the language. Although he does not use the exact term *Bihari Rekhta* but the underlying idea is to give credence to the different type of Urdu spoken and written in Bihar. See Syed Yussufuddin Ahmad Balqi. 1980. *Bihar Urdu Lughat* (Urdu Dictionary of Bihar). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 1-30.

Bihar); *atna* instead of *samana*, *unchalis* for *untalis*, *bhanta* for *baigan*, *pathua* for *bahu*, *golki* for *kali mirch*, *langa* for *naga*.⁶⁵

Such examples of intermixture can be found in other regions as well. Dictionaries compiled in different states furnish a list of words formed by the interaction of the local spoken language with ‘Urdu’. Such dictionaries include *Rohilkhand Urdu Lughat* of Rampur which lists words that have resulted from the intermixture between Pashto and Urdu. Dictionaries of Bhopali Urdu and Dakani Urdu have similar lists of such words.⁶⁶

Colonial linguists like George Abraham Grierson have also found examples of such intermixture. He cites *Marsia*, a song of lament sung during Muharram in Maithali by a “choir of little boys, in an outlying village.” He says, “they also sing songs in Urdu which they knew by rote but could not understand.” Such songs were sung by both Hindus and Muslims during Muharram as it was customary for the two communities to participate in each other’s cultural festivals and gatherings.⁶⁷

A genre of poetry like *Marsiya*, which has a theme associated with the Muslim community but is also, sung by ‘Hindu’ boys, defies the neat categorization of language on the basis of religious identity. Accepting intermixture or *Rekhta* as Urdu or as an early form of Urdu further complicates the process of the appellation of language on the basis of one identity. It can be argued that the proposition of Oranvi and others contests the puritanical and parochial perception of Urdu propounded by the likes of Insha. What Insha dismisses as patios, pidgins, creoles and nonstandard language of the ‘bumpkins’ of

⁶⁵ Some other Urdu scholars posited different set of arguments elaborating on the different type of Urdu spoken in written in Bihar in an Urdu journal *Nadeem* published from Gaya. The articles in *Nadeem* emphasised on the need of focusing on other form of *Rekhta* which was specific to Bihar like the intermixture of Persian and Arabic with Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magahi. The contributors of *Nadeem* included varied aspects in their definition of the Urdu language. Articles like *Bihar ki Aam Zaban*(the Common Language of Bihar), *Humari Zaban*(Our language), Urdu and Bihar (Bihar and Urdu), *Bihar mein Urdu* (Urdu in Bihar), *Zaban Urdu ki Tarweej aur Tarraqui mein Subha Bihar ka Hissa*(the Contribution of Bihar in the Development of Urdu), *Gautam Budha ke Kab Junubi Bihar* (South Bihar after Gautam Budha) traces the history of the Urdu language in Bihar. See Habib Al Haman Janani. “Bihar UlumwaAdbiyat: Bihar ke Musher ke Qalam se.”(Learning and Literature in Bihar by Eminent People in Bihar). *Nadeem* from Gaya (1931-1949) reprinted from Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library.

⁶⁶Rauf Parekh. 2018. “Urdu’s Dialects and Regional Varieties: a Brief Survey of Works on their Glossaries.” *Dawn*, Jan. 08, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1381446>

⁶⁷George A. Grierson. 1882. *An Introduction to the Maithali Language of North Bihar containing a Grammar, Chrestomathy and Vocabulary, Part II Chrestomathy and Vocabulary*. Park Street: Asiatic Society.

Azimabad and Murshidabad is being claimed by Oranvi and others as their language. Furthermore, compiling a dictionary of these words is a way of creating a standard out of what is considered non-standard.

In other words, Insha holds Urdu to be a static language pinned to an identity, region and even religion. Oranvi, on the other hand, emphasizes its fluidity; he sees Urdu as a dynamic language, acquiring meanings, definitions and identity as it traversed new regions. Such contestations, however, is less about what is actually Urdu and more about multifarious ways of defining, reading and historicising language. The multiple Urdu was also spread across different ‘sites’, one of such ‘sites’ was *khankah*.

The *khankah*

Khankah were the literary and cultural ‘centers’ spread across different regions of Bihar- whose history can be traced back up till the Sultanate period- and were one of the sites where the ‘other’ ‘Urdu’ evolved. A *khankah* situated couple of miles from the eastern gate, or *purabi darwaza*, of the Patna city of the *Sufi* saint Pir Shabuddin Jagot (d.1268) was one such *khankahs* with a long history. Some others like the Phulwari Sharif *khankah* rose to prominence due to the following of the *pir* associated with it.⁶⁸

An attendee of an annual gathering known as *majlis* - organised to commemorate the death of the *pir*- in *khankah* Phulwar Sharif remarks that a townships developed around the *khankah* owing to the in pour of the followers. Since the *pir* was a spiritual guide, a poet and a teacher by his disciples they visited him for literary and spiritual guidance. The disciples remembered their revered *pir* by reading aloud from their holy book and reciting poetry at *mushairas* and mourned their loss by reciting *sozkhwani* in the *majlis*. He further notes that during *majlis* the small *qasbah* of the Phulwari Sharif expanded and merged into *shehr*- by which he meant Patna- due to the arrivals of followers and shopkeepers and local traders who went there to organise fairs.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ For *Khankah* in Bihar, see Dr Vijay Kumar. 2013. *Bihar Mein Sufi Parampara* (Sufi Tradition in Bihar). Patna: Abhilek Bhawan. 1-10

⁶⁹ Syed Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Lives and Stories). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 506-509

Khankah also drew the attention of the British surveyors. One of them notes:

The lower and uneducated classes of Muhammadan in the district are deeply infected with Hindu superstitions, especially those regarding sickness and diseases....the most common among them is the adoration of departed Pirs or saints, of whom there are several in Patna, viz , the saints of Bihar, Jhethuli and Maner. The *darghas* or the tombs of the Pirs are places of pilgrimage to which many persons resort for the cure of disease...At Bihar there are *darghas* of Mallik Ibrahim Bayu and Hazrat Makhuddin Shah Sharif-ud-din the tomb of the latter being held in special veneration by the Muhammadan, who assemble there at *urs* or anniversary of the death of the saint on the 5th Shawwal. At Jhteuli the *dargah* of Shihab-ud-din Jagjaut and Shah Adam Sufi are also places of pilgrimage a fair being held there on the 21st Zikad. In Patna there are also shrines of Shah Arzani, which is the site of another large gathering. At Maner again are the tombs of the famous saint MakhudmYahia and of Shah Daulat and here two *melas* are held every year-one on the anniversary of saint's death and the other in commemoration of the wedding of Ghazi Mian.... His untimely fate has led to his veneration and in this district the annual fair in his honor is one of the greatest gatherings in the year. It is held on the banks of the tanks at Maner, and is resorted to chiefly by the lower orders of Hindus and Muhammadans.⁷⁰

Along with Phulwari Sharif, Bihar Sharif and Maner Sharif also emerged as centers of learning and scholarship. *Sharif* denotes that these townships developed around the *pir*. Amongst these *khankahs*, Maner Sharif is particularly well known. It lies west of Patna and is named after the *Sufi* saint Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381 AD). He is said to have been a disciple of Delhi's patron saint Nizaumuddin Auliya (d.1325). W. W. Hunter a colonial surveyor and a statistician in his account of Bihar notes that every year on the

⁷⁰L. S. S. O Malley. 1907. *Bengal District Gazetteer*. Patna.Calcutta the Bengal Secretariat. 58-77

fifth day of the month of the birth of the *pir* a large fair was held at Maner that attracted 20,000 people.⁷¹

Some of the prominent literary figures of the eighteenth and nineteenth century like Fard of Phulwari Sharif, Shah Ehsanullah Chisti and Maulana Shams Balkhi, *sajjada nashin*, or head of the Bihar Sharif *khankah*, and Shah Ethashauddin Haider (1281-1343 AH) from Maner were *pirs* known for their poetry. After receiving elementary education at their homes from their father and later undertook training under a reputed scholar. They composed poetries in Persian and Urdu and conversed in ‘dialects’.⁷²

The *pirs* also conducted ‘literary’ activities in ‘dialects’, in fact some of them even preferred conducting literary activities in the ‘dialects’ to widen the reach of their sermons.⁷³ Saint Sharafuddin Maneri, a famous *pir* from Maner is said to have encouraged holding literary gatherings in *Hindavi*. Hasan Askari, a historian of the *sufi* tradition in Bihar narrates an incident during which Maneri explained the purpose of holding gatherings in the ‘language of the people’.⁷⁴ Maghi speaking Maneri in one of his gathering conducted in *Hindavi*, said

Hindavi compositions are very forthright and frank in expressions. In purely Persian verses there is a judicious blend of allusions and what can be fittingly expressed, whereas *Hindavi* employs very frank expressions. There is no limit to what it explicitly reveals.⁷⁵

Maneri and other *pir* did not only conduct gatherings in *Hindavi* but also wrote in these languages. Some *bayaz* of Maneri contains such compositions. One of his compositions read.

‘Lo wo phitakari muradr sang..haldi zeera yak yak sang.. afym
chana bhar.. mirchi chaarurdad barabr thotha daal ..poost ke paani
mein potri karen..aankh ke peera utarte hari..’.. (In these

⁷¹W.W Hunter. 1877. *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. XI. District of Patna and Saran, Turner & Co. London. 60-63.

⁷² Their legacy was carried forward by their disciples. For the contribution of these poets see S. A Sher, *Contributions of Bihar to Arabic, Persian and Islamic Learning* (A Collection of Papers read in a seminar) 1983. The Institute of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Arabic and Persian, Patna.

⁷³ Richard. M. Eaton. 1974. “Sufi Folk Literature and the Expansion of Islam.” *History of Religion*. No. 2.

⁷⁴ Paul Jackson. - *Bihar’s Makhdum Sahib Sharafuddin Maneri*, Patna: Navjyoti Prakashan. vi-vii

⁷⁵ Ibid

compositions, Maneri is offering remedy for eye pain (*annk ke peera utarte*). The remedy is turmeric with alum, with a little cumin, opium and chilly in a small bag.⁷⁶

There is ample usage of Maghi words in other compositions as well.

Chanabhar, thotha and *potr*. Other verses are *falnama*(omen reading) are *Das chaar kutch agam avee...aanth paanch pahal maang eaave...teen gyarah bahanch eraaj...no soo satrah Karen akaal*.(Ten and four will reveal the unknown, eight and five will give some lead, ten and eleven will reveal secret and nineteen hundred and seventeen will incur loss and damage).⁷⁷

When *khariboli* came to Bihar in the eighteenth century, these *khankahs* composed and recited poems in *mushairas, majlis, melas* in ‘Urdu’. A magazine published by a *khankah*, *Mujibiya*, explains the growth of Urdu language at the religious center in the eighteenth century thus:

Khankah provided the milieu for Urdu to develop. Earlier Urdu was used in day to day conversation ... *pirs* used to write in Persian and Arabic. Gatherings and performances were conducted in Persian. Although sermons were given in Urdu but Persian was still used in writing. However, when Urdu evolved as a literary language then it was used for poetry and writing.⁷⁸

Along with poems, Urdu prose also developed in these *khankahs*. Although some scholars trace the origins of Urdu prose in Bihar to before the Mughals, citing the compositions of a *Sufi* saint named Makhdoom Shiek Srafuddin Bihari (d. 1384), most linguists from Bihar argue that Urdu prose spread in the region only around 1762-1770. A *bayaz* (notebook) from this period written in Persian by a scholar known as Peer Ali

⁷⁶ Mohammad Moinuddin Dawai. 1947. *Bihar ke Gumnam Shaera ur Adeebo ke Naam* (Names of Unknown Urdu Poets from Bihar). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library.

⁷⁷ These poems have been translated for this thesis by Rabi Prakash, a PhD scholar at the Social Sciences (JNU).

⁷⁸ Dr. Shah Fatallah Qadri. 2013. *Urdu Adab mein Khankah Mujibiya ki Khidmaat: Al Jamia (Khankah's Contribution in the Development of Urdu)* Phulwari sharif Patna.

contains a few lines of Urdu. From the nineteenth century, a collection of letters by Shiekh Ghulam Husain Rasikh (d. 1821) has some lines in Urdu.⁷⁹

The compositions and the ‘literature’ produced by the *sufi* saints shows that the distinction between spoken and written, ‘dialects’ and ‘literary’ was not fixed. ‘Dialects’ were used in performances, sermons and ‘literary’ activities and writings. By the twentieth century these intermixtures were considered ‘corruptions’ as Persian words were considered the ‘standard’ and infusion of the ‘dialects’ were considered ‘corruption’ in ‘pure’ language.

Beyond ‘Elites’, ‘Urban’ and ‘Centre’

Heterogeneity was not only found in forms of ‘Urdu’, but the composition of the ‘Urdu public’ was equally intermixed, diverse and multilocal. ‘Hindu and the lower order Muhammadans’ were just not audiences in *mushaira* and *majlis*, they were also poets. *Tazkhira Shorish*, arguably the first *tazkhira* of Bihar, compiled by Meer Ghulam Hasan Shorish, a *Sufi* and a poet includes a *topwala*– (one works in artillery factory), a *darogah* (guard), amongst the *nawabs*, Mughal administrators and emperor as Urdu poets in the eighteenth century.⁸⁰

In a different context and a different city, we also find mention of poets from varied social backgrounds. *Khush Ma’rikahe Zeba* (A Fine and Appropriate Martial Encounter,

⁷⁹ Along with these compositions, writers from Bihar such as Maulvi Abdul Kareem and Hamiuddin Bihari also is said to have contributed in development of prose as paid employees of the Fort William College in 1803; an establishment that invested in the development of Urdu prose. See Syed Muzzafar Iqbal . 1980. *Bihar mein Urdu Nasr ka Irteqa: 1857-1914* (Genesis of Urdu Prose in Bihar). Patna: Litho Press. 1-50

⁸⁰ Shorish mentions that he was exhorted to compile a *tazkhira* by his ustad during a yearlong *mushaira* held in Azimabad in 1765. From the time of *mushaira* , Shorish took twelve years to compile *Tazkhira Shorish*. In *Tazkhira Shorish*, we find mention of soldier-poets as well. Bahadur Ali Mustaq, whose father was a darogah of Nawab Haibat Jung; Shayun was a soldier. He composed poetry in Persian and Urdu and regularly participated in *mushaira*. He was also a close associate of Shorish but eventually relinquished all worldly ties and devoted himself to his *mahbub*(God in Sufi tradition). Shorish also mentions a poet named Ruswa, who worked in *topkhana*, or an artillery factory. We are told Ruswa was a Hindu who had abandoned his religion after the death of his beloved, another Hindu boy. Pained by the loss, Ruswa would wander, drunk. See Gholam Husain Shorish. 2015. Translated by Mohd. Asmi. See *Tazkhira -E-Shorish*. New Delhi: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language. 87-100, 199-200, 216-219, 322; There are also many other Urdu poets who hailed from similar socio-economic backgrounds. For instance Mir Haidar Ali was the commander of the fifth cavalries during the age of Asafuddaulah and was deputed to Manikpur (Bihar) as Nazir was also a famous Urdu poet in Bihar. See S. A. Sher. 1983. *Contributions of Bihar to Arabic, Persian and Islamic Learning* (A Collection of Papers read in a seminar). Patna: The Institute of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Arabic and Persian; Other accounts also mention poets from the ‘lower’ order see A. Sprenger. 1854. *A Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Hindustani Manuscripts of the Libraries of the King of Oudh* . Calcutta.

1846), a *tazkhira* compiled in the 1840s by Sa'adat Khan "Nasir," a Lakhnvi poet who died sometime between 1857 and 1871 also includes poets who were heralds, perfumers, kahars, watchmakers and shoemakers. Regarding Nasir's portrayal of these characters, Frances Pritchett notes.

It is clear that their relatively low social status does not exactly disqualify them from being poets, but it does let them in for patronizing treatment. Nasir is rather surprised by their achievements, and seeks to use them as a moral lesson. The poet Hajjam" ("Barber"), for example, "obtained improvement [*islah*] by trimming the beard of Mirza Rafi Sauda." Nasir enjoys his pun on the barbers' idiomatic use of the word *islahto* mean "trimming or shaving the hair."⁸¹

She argues that Nasir appreciates them by remarking, "Although he is a shoe merchant in Dalal Bazaar, in the mold of his temperament verses are well formed". His praise for his city flows from the same sentiment, "What a cultivated city Lucknow is, that nobles from elsewhere are consumed with jealousy over the eloquent word choice [*fasahat*] of our craftsmen!"

These poets in Bihar were products of the literary cultures of different 'units', 'pockets' 'regions' or *qasbah* such as Phulwari Sharif, Maner Sharif and Bihar Sharif. These *qasbahs* had a long history of literary and political activities that developed around a revered individual, a *sufi* saint.⁸²

Bihar Sharif, a prominent literary 'centre' of Urdu the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had been a center of learning and literature during the reign of Bhaktiyyaruddin Khilji. It also served as Bihar's capital before Azimabad.⁸³ Within Bihar Sharif, there were many *gaon* and within the *gao* there were *mohallas* inhabited by Persian poets and writers. Literary activities were part of the quotidian life as many families trained their

⁸¹Frances. W. Pritchett, "A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 2: Histories, Performances and Masters." In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. London: University of California Press. 895-897

⁸²For the cultural vibrancy of M. RaisurRehman. 2015. *Locale, Everyday Islam, and Modernity: Qasbah Towns and Muslim Life in Colonial India*. New Delhi : Oxford University Press.

⁸³Habib Al Haman Jananied, "Bihar Ulumwa Adbiyat: Bihar ke Musher ke Qalam Se." (Learning and Literature in Bihar by Eminent People in Bihar). *Nadeem* from Gaya (1931-1949) Vol. 9, reprinted from Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library.

children in Persian literature. These villages produced many poets, some of whom kept notebooks in Persian known as *bayaz*.

Many celebrated Urdu poets of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century such as Safir Bilgrami, Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi and Maulana Manazir Gilani were from *qasbah*.⁸⁴ One of the prominent Urdu writers and critic of Bihar Syed Imdad Asar, known for his knowledge of Urdu, Arabic, Persian and grasp of Western literature and philosophy was from a village called Neora near Patna. Asar is particular known for his book on Urdu literary criticism *Kashiful Haqq* (1897) in which he has drawn from Homer, Shakespeare, Milton and Shelly.⁸⁵ Apart from *Kashiful Haqq*, he also wrote several novels, book on philosophy, business transactions, scientific farming and Christianity.⁸⁶

The inhabitants of the *qasbahs* interacted with other writers and poets through *mushairas* and the *ustad-shagird* system of learning that was specific to the Urdu literary tradition greatly expand the reach of the ‘new’ language by enabling poets from a *gaon* to forge relationships with poets in other ‘towns’ and ‘cities’.⁸⁷

A brief history of the life of a poet in Bihar Sharif illustrates pattern of such connections.⁸⁸ Haji Basharat Haseen, pen name Akhtar, was born in a sub division of Bihar Sharif called Bariah in 1855. After acquiring elementary education in his village, he was sent to Patna to study Urdu under the famous bibliophile Salauddin Khudabaksh.⁸⁹ He also took *islah* from a poet in Lucknow and was recognized through a *mushaira* in Hyderabad. Along with Akhtar there were many poets from *gaon* and *qasbah* who

⁸⁴Qazi Muhammad Syed Najib. 1944. “Bihar mein Urdu.”(Urdu in Bihar). In *Nadeem*. Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 18-31

⁸⁵Shamsur Rehman Farqui. 2017. “Imdad Asar” In *Urdu Adab*. New Delhi: Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, Vol. issue 243.

⁸⁶Wahab Ashrafi. *Kashiful Haqq: Syed Imdad Asar*. New Delhi: Taraqqi Urdu Bureau (Bureau for promotion of Urdu language).

⁸⁷ For the role of *mushaira* , *ustad-shagird* and *tazkhira* in the spread of Urdu see, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2003. “A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture.” In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. 807-860

⁸⁸Habib Al Haman Jananied.1931-49. “Bihar Ulumwa Adbiyat: Bihar ke Musher ke Qalam se.” (Learning and Literature in Bihar by Eminent People in Bihar). *Nadeem* from Gaya. No .9, reprinted from Patna; Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library.

⁸⁹ For details on the life of Khudabaksh see Mohammad Ziauddin Ansar. 2001. *Maulvi KhudaBaksh Hayat aur Karname*(Life and Achievements of Khudabaksh. Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library.

established such ties with other poets in Patna and many poets from Patna also sought guidance from poets from Delhi, Lucknow and Deccan. The role played by Urdu poetry in connecting people from across regions can be discerned through an incident of Akhtar's visit to Kanpur during the 1914 Kanpur mosque incident. Akhtar visited Kanpur to support the people who had been protesting against the government's decision to bring down a mosque to widen a road.⁹⁰ Displaying his protest against the government's decision and expressing solidarity with the people, Akhtar recited a *mussadas*, or a poem of mourning. Hearing his *mussadas*, the crowd started wailing. The incident alarmed the government and they charged Akhtar with inciting rebellion. Later, Akhtar was defended by some lawyers from Patna but the government prohibited him from attending any gatherings, including *mushaira*, and Akhtar also stopped performing.

The response of the audience to Akhtar and the reaction of the colonial state show the potency and compactness of the Urdu public. By the twentieth century not only had Urdu evolved as a potent political tool, it also blurred spatial boundaries.

These locations and interactions of Urdu poets from *mohalla* of a 'village' to a gathering in Kanpur shows the limitations of the ideas of 'centre' or *markaz*, framework within which the evolution of Urdu has been studied.⁹¹ Azimabad along with Murshidabad were not the literary 'centres' but can possibly be called pockets in which rich Urdu literary traditions engendered. Within Bihar there were *gaon* and *qasbah* and within *qasbah* there were *mohalla* where literary activities were ubiquitous. In the Urdu public formed by the interaction between poets' competitions, tensions and claims of superiority of one tradition over the other was a characteristic feature of the culture of repartee and counter repartee in Urdu literary tradition. One amongst many of their claims was the superiority of their region over others that could take form of an identity associated with a village, region, city, family, sect and even caste.

⁹⁰Spencer Lavan. 1974. "The Kanpur Mosque Incident of 1913: The North Indian Muslim Press and Its Reaction to Community Crisis." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. No. 2: 263-279

⁹¹Carla Petievich. 1992. *Assembly of Rivals: Delhi, Lucknow, and the Urdu ghazal*. New Delhi: Manohar Publication.

The political significance of these pockets was reordered by the British. The colonial state divided Bihar into administrative and fiscal units. Bankipore was the principal subdivision with a magisterial court, police circle and municipality. *Qasbah* like Maner and Phulwari were categorized as fiscal subdivisions or *pargana* that were hierarchically tied to the principal subdivision, which served as the administrative center.⁹² The people perceived these divisions differently. *Qasbah* categorized as a subdivision by the colonial state was associated with cultural vibrancy.⁹³

The administration division also created hierarchy between these pockets of literary tradition. The individuals of these *qasbah* eventually left their ‘homes’ to pursue literary activities in other ‘cities’ and ‘town’. Syed Sulaiman Nadwi joined the famous Islamic seminary Daurululm Nadwatul Ulema in 1907.⁹⁴ He later edited several Urdu newspapers and magazines, including *Al Hilal*, which was established by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Manazir Gilani. In 1949, Nadwi became head of the religious studies department at Osmania University. Similarly, even the Desna library’s collection was transferred to Khuda Baksh Library.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, one must be cautious in mapping this decline; like its growth, it was not an abrupt shift as literary activities continued in the libraries, associations and societies that were established by these laureates in their *qasbah*. These events were not confined to Muslims, but included non-Muslim traders or *munshis* as well. Syed Imadad Asar’s literary legacy was carried forward by Syed Imdad Ali through the Bihar Scientific Society established in Muzzafarpur in 1868 to translate European sciences in vernacular languages. The society ran schools, a printing press and a newspaper.⁹⁶

The rearrangement of the pockets and units as the *shehr* and *gaon* also marked a shift in Urdu. The Urdu that thrived in *khankahs*, the *Bihari Rekhta*, the intermixes of dialects

⁹² W. W. Hunter. *A Statistical Account of Bengal*. Vol. XI. 50-60

⁹³ For the cultural vibrancy of Qasbahs see, M. Raisur Rehman. 2015. *Locale, Everyday Islam, and Modernity: Qasbah Towns and Muslim Life in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁹⁴ Qazi Muhammad Syed Najib. 1944. “Bihar mein Urdu.” (Urdu in Bihar). In *Nadeem*. Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 18:31

⁹⁵ Abdul Qavi Desnavi. 1954. *Ek Mashriki KutubKhana: Qutub Khana Ale Islah* (An Eastern Library). Patna: Kutba Mahmood Dholi.

⁹⁶ See chapter four for details

with Persian, spoken with written (*bayaz* and poem), ‘high’ and ‘low’, performers and actors, *shehr* and *gaon*, Hindu and Muslim was constantly getting blurred changing the very idea of ‘Urdu’ which was in state of flux. In *majlias* and *mela* it became the language of ‘lower order’, in poems of the saints it became the language of the revered, in his Maneri’s *bayaz* it became ‘early Urdu’, in *qasbah* it became the language of the *qasbah*, in Azimabad it became an urban language. These transitions of ‘Urdu’ does not fit within the binary of high-low, spoken-written, standard-nonstandard, dialect-language and rural-urban. However, the notion of Urdu was gradually getting defined and fixed with the migrating poets of the *qasbah* and a ‘literary’ Urdu was evolving by the nineteenth century.

‘Literary’ Urdu

By 1830 the British started deliberating upon replacing Persian as the official language with English at the higher level and the ‘vernacular’ at the lower level.⁹⁷ Eventually, Oriya and Bengali were made the official vernacular of Orissa and Bengal respectively.⁹⁸ In Bihar, Urdu prevailed as the official vernacular language and also became the ‘literary’ language in Bihar.

Ajodhea Purshad's *Riaz-i-Tirhut* (1868), Biharli Lal Fitrat's *Aina-i-Tirhut* (1868), , Munshi Binayak Prasad's *Tawarikh-i-Ujjaina* (1883-1905), Bhavani Lal's *Tarikh-i-Hindustan* (1870) and Munshi Mahadeo Lal's *Tawarik-i-Kharagpur* (1884) are some examples of prose works in Urdu from nineteenth-century Bihar.⁹⁹ In the subsequent paragraphs I will be demonstrating how these were ‘histories’ of disparate linguistic and caste communities.

⁹⁷ Christopher King. 1994. *One Language Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in the Nineteenth Century India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁹⁸ Oriya as a language evolved through movement of intelligentsia against the dominance of Bengali in the education and employment. When the decision was taken to replace Persian with vernacular language, Oriya was not immediately replaced with Persian because of lack of Oriya textbooks. In fact, many officers were of the opinion of retention of Bengali language in court and schools. However, over a period of time due to the movement by Oriya intellectuals through associations and journal to encourage Oriyas to embrace western learning and to request government to print text books in Oriya language. By 1870, their efforts yielded results, Oriya was recognized as the official language and pupils were taught Oriya in government schools. See Panchanan Mohanty. 2001. “British Language Policy In 19th Century India and The Oriya Language Movement.” *Language Policy* 1: 53–73.

⁹⁹ Surendra Gopal. 2000. *Urdu Historiography in Bihar in the 19th Century*. Patna: K.P Jayaswal Research Institute. 1-10, 17-23, 27-34, 53-55, 64-69, 79-81, 108-109, 141-142.

Ajodhea Purshad and Biharilal Fitrat describe the cultural milieu of Darbhanga and Muzzafarpur in which they learnt Urdu, Persian and Arabic poetry, grammar, logic, philosophy, religious law and medicine from *Maulvis* and Arabic scholars. While Urdu was included in their pedagogy, the poetry sessions were essentially a part of their cultural milieu. Ajodhea Purshad mentions his brothers, who worked as government employees and money lenders, were, like him, well acquainted with Urdu language and poetry.

Ajodhea Purshad was from the Khatri caste and hailed from Maner. As a record keeper at the Darbhanga record room, he classified the documents written in Urdu, Persian, English and *tirhutia*. *Riaz i Tirhut* was an outcome of his disappointment with his job, which he would leave in 1866. He relied on the documents he read at the record room to write a social history of the Mithila society and interspersed it with his life history.

Another history of Mithila, *Aina-i-Tirhut*, was written by Biharilal, a lawyer at the Darbhanga Munsif court who was also well versed in Sanskrit Urdu, Persian, Arabic and English. He wrote *Aina-i-Tirhut* using inscriptions that he collected during field visits.

While Ajodhea Purshad and Biharilal Fitrat documented the history of Mithila on their own accord, Munshi Binayak Prasad's *Tawarikh-i-Ujjaina* was commissioned by the ruling house of Dumraon. It was a four-volume history of the Pamar clan of the Rajputs, commonly known as the Ujjains of Madhya Pradesh who had settled in South Bihar. Munshi Binayak Prasad deployed his knowledge of Persian and Urdu to chronicle the history of the Ujjains.

The content as well as the style of these chronicles bear imprints of the authors' literary training and show how Urdu prose covered various themes. *Riaz-i-Tirhut* and *Aina-i-Tirhut* both begin with the Muslim salutation to *Allah* and is interspersed with Urdu and Persian verses. Along with these, the history of Mithila in *Aina-i-Tirhut* is expressed through *Dohas* on religious and didactic themes and Hindustani *ragas*. These tropes are used to express histories of various hospices, individuals and events that had shaped Mithila society and history.

Biharlilal Fitrat's *Aina-i-Tirhut* also gives insights into Islamic and Hindu calendars such as *Vikram*, *Hijri*, *Saka* and *Fasil*. The literary culture of Mithila, where Urdu was used by the region's authors, is also elaborated upon. Within this literary arrangement, Ajodheapurshad, BiharlilalFitrat and Munshi Binayak Prasad covered different cultural, social and political aspects of their region and community. These themes suggest that Urdu prose was a dynamic product born of a plethora of linguistic and cultural traditions from Bihar. Various communities, regions and identities were stakeholders in this organic evolution of Urdu. With the onset of colonialism and its attendant penchant for classification and straightjacket classifications, Urdu undergoes a process of standardisation and begins to acquire well defined contours. It is this contested journey that is charted in the following section.

Colonial Encounter

The process of replacing Urdu with Hindi was initiated in last quarter of the nineteenth century. Colonial officials in support of Hindi language considered Hindi to be the 'natural' language of the people that was to be made the language of the office and school.

This section will highlight the inconsistencies, contradictions and differences amongst the British official regarding the official policy and through these debates it will underline the characteristics, markers and indices and terminologies that were used to define and describe 'Hindi' and 'Urdu'.

There were primarily three approaches to the official language question: one approach considered Hindi to be the natural language of the people that was different from the artificial Hindustani/Urdu language, the other approach did not consider Hindi and Urdu to be different languages and the third approach preferred a 'Bihari' language to be the 'real' language of the people of Bihar as opposed to Hindi or Urdu.

The first approach was held by the Commissioner of Patna District, SC Bayley. Bayley made an appeal to the Secretary of Government of Bengal in 1875 and requested him to gradually introduce Nagri in courts in Patna and Bhagalpore division and write all

proceedings and notifications and police reports, diaries and registers in Nagri character. He further suggested that to facilitate this process, *amlah* should be made to pass the examination in Nagri. In his appeal he mentioned that he had received an appeal from some residents of Patna and Bhagalpore in a pamphlet titled “*Why Should Nagri Be Introduced in Courts and Other Offices in Behar.*”¹⁰⁰

Bayly defined ‘Hindi’ through the script-Nagri and made characteristic, antiquity, utility and ‘popularity’ as the criteria for selecting Nagri over Hindustani/Urdu. Some of the arguments that he gave in support of Nagri was that its use in business transactions by the zamindar classes made it ‘simple’ and its ‘practical’ characteristic made ‘tampering difficult and transliteration easy’, further Sanskrit ‘roots’ of Nagri made it ‘natural’. Hindustani, on the other hand, he argued, was an artificial language, which, apart from inflexions and auxiliary verbs, contained a lot of Arabic words that made it intelligible only to the ‘specially educated’ classes. He considered Kayasths and the Muslims as the educated classes who, due to their ‘monopoly over court language, consequently court places’, influenced the opinions of their superior officials against the Hindi-Nagri script.

101

The second approach was held by the Inspector of Schools, A. W Croft in Bihar and Orissa and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. They did not consider ‘Hindi’ and ‘Urdu’ as two separate languages. He argued that the differences were more a matter of the character of the language as the ‘same accidence and syntax and same stock of words [are used] for most simple objection and conceptions’. ‘Hindi’ and ‘Urdu’ only differed in constructions with complex subjects and this could be remedied by enriching the language from varied sources rather than antagonism.

With this understanding, a detailed response to the pamphlet was drafted by A.W Croft and endorsed by the Lieutenant Governor. The rejoinder was drafted with the view to help the common people avail the benefits of education was forwarded to the

¹⁰⁰ From the commr of Patna division, No 182 J of 20th May, Nagree character in Behar, General Department, Education, BSA. (Bihar State Archives).

¹⁰¹ From the commr of Patna division, No 182 J of 20th May, Nagree character in Behar, General Department, Education, BSA.

Commissioner of Bhagalpore, Chotanagpur, as well as the judicial department with the intention of aligning the court language with the medium of instruction in schools.¹⁰²

A. W Croft and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal approach to the language question was also different from Bayley. While Bayley wanted to replace Nagri with Urdu/Hindustani, Croft and Governor wanted the government to play a proactive in reducing the antagonism between 'Urdu' and 'Hindi' in the civil administration and the education department. Instead of Muslims and Kayasth for withholding jobs through their control of the language; Croft blamed Hindi and Urdu puritans, the former for Sanskritising Hindi in the education department and the latter for Persianising Urdu in the courts. Due to intransigence from both sides, he believed the use of an unintelligible language in the courts had made education meaningless for Hindus and Muslims alike.¹⁰³

The third perspective on Hindi and Urdu was propounded by Sir George Abraham Grierson, an Irish administrator and linguist in British India. Grierson conducted a six-week survey, following a request by the President of the Seventh International Oriental Congress to the Aryan Branch of the Congress for a survey of India's vernacular languages in 1887. The idea behind working on India's vernacular dialects and their scientific treatment by comparative philology was to bring the official class into easier and closer communication with the people and foster the growth of provincial sentiments.¹⁰⁴

Grierson concluded that the language spoken in Bihar by the 'rich and poor, educated and uneducated alike' was different from 'Hindustani' and 'Hindi'. He argued that not only 'literary language or government language' but even the 'polite' language learned by the Europeans to communicate with the people was different from the lingua franca. Hence, the question of simplifying the court language for the people was knottier than assumed because the language was not just difficult; it was rather incomprehensible for the

¹⁰² From C.E Buckland, Esq., Offg. Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the commissioner of Bengal, 9th July 1875, BSA.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ From A.P Macdonnell, Esq., Secretary to the Govt. of India, Home Dept to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General (Miscellaneous) Dept. BSA.

'common man'. He put the point across quite pithily: "Before a poor man can sue his neighbor in the court he has to learn a foreign language."¹⁰⁵

Grierson not only made a distinction between Bihari language and 'Hindustani' or 'Hindi' but also recognized it as a regional language like Bengali or Punjabi. He described the spoken Bihari language as consisting of three 'dialects', Magadhi, Maithili and Bhojpuri, with similar vocabularies but different grammatical bases.¹⁰⁶ The etymology of 'Bihar', he argued, went back to the time of the Buddha when it meant Buddhist *viharas* (monasteries) in the language of the early Jains and Buddhists. The existence of Maithali literature only served to bolster the proposition of Bihari language, he said.

Triumph of Hindi

The Indian press owned by the British also mobilized opinion in favor of Hindi. The press was critical of Grierson's preference for Bihari language. The compilation of the 'dialects' of Bihar was dismissed by the *Indian Chronicle* as purely philological speculation. The review by the *Indian Chronicle* read:

The dialects of Mithila or Bhojpore though they will never supersede Hindustani as the common or standard language of Hindi-speaking India... Whether these dialects are the dialects, technically so called, of any languages that ever was is now current in India, is a matter of pure philological speculation; but that they will remain in a subordinate position to what is called the Hindustani language is a fact which cannot be now doubted.

107

¹⁰⁵ From G. A. Grierson, ESQ., B.C.E. and Dr.A. F Rudolf Hoernle dated 23rd November, 1886. BSA

¹⁰⁶ George Abraham Grierson. 1886. "Review of the Series of Grammar: The Indian Antiquity, 1st July, 1885." In *Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language: Spoken in the Province of Bihar the Eastern Portion of the North-Western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion of the Central Provinces* Vol.-3 in Three Parts, Calcutta: Secretariat Press.

¹⁰⁷George Abraham Grierson. 1886. "Review of the Series of Grammar: The Indian Chronicle. 7th April, 1884. " In *Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language: Spoken in the Province of Bihar the Eastern Portion of the North-Western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion of the Central Provinces* Vol.-3 in Three Parts, Calcutta: Secretariat Press.

Other newspapers like *The Englishman*, *Bihar Herald*, *Saturday Review*, *Indian Antiquity* and *Anthenaeum* argued along similar lines; they appreciated Grierson's effort in organizing 'jargons' but disagreed with his proposition that Bihari was not a dialect of Hindi but a language in itself. The *Bihar Herald* and the *Saturday Review* questioned the very premise on which Grierson formulated his theory.¹⁰⁸ For them the demarcation between Hindi and Bihari on the basis of pronunciation, peculiarities in the use of verbs and nouns was not a tenable proposition. They believed that although 'literary Hindi may not be very rich in literature, it exists all the same and furnishes the common standard'. The Ramayan of Toolsidas and schoolbooks were furnished as examples of Hindi literature. *The Indian Antiquity* summed up the debate by saying 'classification and subdivision, though it entitles Mr. Grierson to high rank among scientific philologist, is rather out of place in hand-books intended to teach officials the patios of their district'.¹⁰⁹

The newspapers went on to define 'Hindi' as a separate language which contained the 'jargons and dialects' classified by Grierson as Bihar language.

In the end, Grierson the administrator prevailed over Grierson the linguist. By 1911, Grierson had sided with the use of Nagri script for 'general purpose' and Kaithi, the 'local' script, for handwriting.¹¹⁰ In his *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan*, he cites Tulsi Das's *The Assi Ghat of Banaras* as defining the 'Hindu' territory. This spatial imagination was carried forward by subsequent writers and linguistics such as RamchandraShukla to define the literary space of the Hindi language.¹¹¹

I argue that the shift in Grierson's position on Hindi was a product of tension between his two identities: his identity as a linguist and his identity as an administrator. As a linguist, he wrote *Grammar of The Dialects and Sub-Dialects of the Province of Bihar* and *Bihar Peasant Life*, which explained the histories, origins and correlations between Bihar's

¹⁰⁸ Mr. George A. Grierson's Seven Grammar in. "The Indigo and Tea Planter's Gazette, 8th April, 1884; *The Englishman*, 11th April 1884; *The Behar Herald*, 22nd April 1884; "Dialect of Hindi", *The Saturday Review*, 2nd May 1885."

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ A Note by George A, A Progs.no 1/6, Misc. Gen. Br., Govt of Bengal. July 1887, BSA; from Grierson From G.A Grierson, ESQ., B.C.E and Dr. A.F Rudold Hoernle, 23rd November, 1886

¹¹¹ Ira Sarma, 2013. "The Hidden Spatiality of Literary Historiography: Placing Tulsi Das in the Hindi Literary Landscape." *Environment, Space, Place*. Issue 2: 35-64.

various dialects. Thus, as a linguist, he dismissed the proposal to make Hindi the official language because the spoken language that he described as 'Bihari' had no correlation with Hindi. Later, though, he changed his position and called Hindi the language of the people. Recognising Hindi as the official language was a position held by the administrator Grierson.

Even the Governor General, despite his belief in encouraging a language that would encapsulate the best elements of both the languages, ultimately bowed down to the need to "fix the standard of educated speech as to hasten the desire of consummation." He concluded that "the force of numbers will make itself felt and the Nagri would prevail." However, popularising Nagri ended up being an uphill task.¹¹²

Roadblocks

The experience of the implementation of Nagri showed that the colonial government was trying to impose a language that neither the officials nor the petitioners used. The people for whom the language was 'simplified' and 'standardised' continued using 'Urdu'. The Inspector General of Police brought to the notice of the Lieutenant-Governor that the 'Behar Police Gazette' is practically useless to the officers of his department, because few Police officers could read fluently the Nagri character in which it was printed.¹¹³ The Commissioner of Patna also reported that the order for the introduction of Hindi had remained a dead letter, except in his own office and Madhubani subdivision; that petitions are almost invariably written in Urdu. Moreover, the vernacular orders to the police and police diaries and registers are almost invariably written in Urdu; the registers in the collectorate and *fouzdari* were also generally written in Urdu; and in some courts Hindi printed forms of notices are filled up in Urdu, instead of Kaithi. The Inspector-General of Police also reported that the lithographed manuscripts issued by the Central Examination Committee for the departmental examination of civilians deputy magistrates, police officers are for the Urdu language, written in the Persian instead of the Hindi character, and that officers are not required to pass any examination in Hindi as written in Nagri

¹¹² George Abraham Grierson. 1886. *Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language: Spoken in the Province of Bihar the Eastern Portion of the North-Western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion of the Central Provinces Vol.-3* in Three Parts, Calcutta: Secretariat Press

¹¹³ Letter No. 12009, dated 6th September 1879, from the Inspector-General of Police, and NO. 81J., dated 12th March 1880, from Commissioner of Patna. BSA.

Character. Thus, it was observed that “no real advance has been made in giving effect to the wishes of Government in this matter.”¹¹⁴

The higher-rung officials blamed pundits, maulvis, Muslims and Kayasths for deliberately complicating the simple language but overlooked a glaringly obvious fact that it was the colonial state that was supplanting an existing language with one that was initially named Nagri and then Hindi with Kaithi script. It was a language that was defined and designed only after the decision to implement it was made.

The Lieutenant Governor had to replace the Urdu lithograph with Kaithi and allow time for officers to ‘acquire fluency in reading the character’ as the decision to make Nagri or Kaithi the exclusive language of the courts and the warning to *amlahs* to make space for Nagri-knowing officials were not working because the lithographed manuscripts issued by the Central Examination Committee for the department examination of civilians, deputy magistrates, police officers were written in Persian and not in Hindi.¹¹⁵ The lower-rung officers also frequently complained that the people spoke in *ganwari* language instead of a standardised language.¹¹⁶

Despite ironing out differences among officials over the use of Hindi, implementation of the decision remained beset with problems, suggesting the framework within which the colonial government was operating could not capture the linguistic landscape of Bihar. The ideas and understanding of Hindi and Hindustani was formulated in Fort William College.

'Hindi', 'Hindustani' and 'Urdu'

The idea that 'Hindi and 'Urdu' were separate languages of two religious communities was formulated in Fort William College, set up in 1800 to train the British civil servants

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ ibid

¹¹⁶ G A. Grierson wrote to the Director of Public Instruction of Bengal that the many official in Bihar were unable to understand the language of people in the court. To resolve this problem, he was suggested to compile a grammar of the language of Bihar. In order address this ‘issue’ Grierson started collecting and analysing the ‘languages’ in Bihar. From G.A Grierson, Esq., c.s. Offg Joint-Magistrate of Patna to the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, Bankipore, 24th January, 1884. George A. Grierson, B.C.S., *Seven Grammars Of the Dialects and Subdialects Of the Bihari Language Spoken In the Province of Bihar, In the Eastern Portion Of the North-Western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion Of the Central Provinces, Vol. I in three parts, part I introduction, Calcutta, 1883.*

in 'Indian' languages.¹¹⁷ John Borthwick Gilchrist, professor at Fort William College defined 'Hindwee' as the language of Hindus that was made 'Hindustani' by the infusion of Arabic and Persian words.¹¹⁸ Consequently, 'Hindustani', the language of Muslims, or 'Urdu', meaning camp, became the language of the subcontinent.

In Bihar, this theory, which informed the choice of the official language, divided the officials. Different officials interpreted Gilchrist's theory differently. Bayley's position was closest to Gilchrist's idea of 'Hindustani' as being an 'artificial' language that had to be replaced with Nagri while Croft argued that 'Hindi' and 'Urdu' differed only in the articulation of 'complex' matters, Grierson considered 'Hindustani' a 'camp jargon' that was an alien language to the people of Bihar.

Notwithstanding their differences, all these officials considered 'Hindustani' or 'Urdu' a 'foreign language' that had to be replaced with a 'simpler and standardised' language to be used in courts and educational institutions. Since most of the British officials in India were trained at the Fort William College, their understanding of the language was shaped by the framework within which language was taught at there. When these officials formulated and implemented the colonial government's language policy, they encountered difficulties, as detailed above, because Hindi was not understood either by functionaries or by the people who came to the court.

¹¹⁷ One of the most significant literature produced at the Fort William College was Mir Amman's *Bagh O Bahar*, written on the instruction given by Gilchrist, who wanted to Mir Amman to write the history of Urdu in a 'simplest language'. Mir Amman defined Urdu as a camp language which came with Akbar. However, he obliterated facts like *Hindavi* was spoken in Delhi before the coming of Akbar. For a detailed analysis of the colonial construction of 'Urdu' a camp language see, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2003. "A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1 Naming and Placing a Literary Culture." In Sheldon Pollock edited *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, London: University of California Press. 805-812.

¹¹⁸ According to Bernard S Cohn, Gilchrist traces the emergence of Hindee language by arguing that 'Brijbhasha' was spoken all over north India which was later transformed into 'Hinustanee' by adding Persian and Arabic words that was 'Rekhtu' in poetic terms, 'Oodrduwee' in military terms and 'Hindee' as an everyday language of the 'Hindus' See. Bernard S Cohn. 1928. *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India*. Princeton. Later works like *A House Divided: The Origin of Development of Hindi/Hindavi* by Amrit Rai on the history of Urdu in India like have deployed Gilchrist's framework to historicise the history of Hindi. See Amrit Rai. 1984. *A House Divided: The Origin and Development Of Hindi/Hindavi*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. The acceptance of the understanding that the word, meant camp, hence a language of 'foreigners' has been questioned by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, he argues that Urdu was one amongst many names of the language used in North India. The word Urdu was a shortened version of the composite word, *zaban -e urdu e mua'lla shahjahanabad*, meaning the City of Shahjahanabad, till 1796 meant Persian, and later with the patronage of Shah Alam II (1759-1806) in 1772 'Urdu', started flourishing. See Shamsur Rahman Farqui, *Early Urdu Literary Cultures and History*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

One of the reasons for the gap in their formulation and implementation of the language policy was a superimposition of the European conceptualisation of language on the Indian context. Although unlike Croft and Bayley, Grierson's analysis was a product of his training as a linguist, his findings were inconsistent. He could not, for instance, ascertain whether Maithli was a 'language' or a 'dialect'. His proposition of Bihari language was also did not rest on firm ground. As Richard Burghart argues in *A Quarrel in the Language Family: Agency and Representations of Speech in Mithila*:

The philological discovery of Bihari language defies in some measure common sense. Grierson offered the comparison of Marathi, Panjabi and Bengali as territorially defined languages, yet the comparison is not entirely apt. True that Bengali is spoken in dialect, yet the speakers in these various dialects recognize in some sense their common membership in a Bengali speech community. No such awareness exists in Bihar of there being a Bihari language, or there having ever being a Bihari language. It seems preposterous that Maithli, Bhojpuri and Maghi speaker could all speak the variants of the language, of the existence of which they remain unaware.¹¹⁹

Grierson's comparative philology the theoretical premises according to which distinction between 'language' and 'dialect' relatedness could be stemmed by tracing their 'origin' could not adequately explain and historicise the 'languages' of Bihar accordingly. The spoken, written, literary, dialect was not neatly divided and connected to each other. The spoken language, termed as *ganwari* by the lower level officers was not the official language. There were variations even in the spoken language, different 'dialects' were spoken in different parts of Bihar. There was also no clear segregation between spoken and literary language, the literary compositions borrowed from the 'dialects', poetry was composed in 'dialects' and written in *bayaz*. The language also moved along with poet from the *mohallas* of Azimabad, to the *gaon* of *qasbah*. They were yet to merge together around an identity or a region in a manner where the official language became the language of instruction, of daily use.

¹¹⁹ Richard Burghart. 1993. "A Quarrel in the Language Family: Agency and Representations of Speech in Mithila." *Modern Asian Studies*. No. 4: 761-804.

Conclusion

The chapter explored two ideas of ‘Urdu’: the dominant one being that it was a language of the ‘elite’ Muslims while the other one employed the framework of *Bihari Rekhta*, an idea that also considers scattered (*Rekhta*) form as ‘Urdu’. It primarily traced the journey of this ‘other’ Urdu and its multiplicities – of forms, locations, affiliations and nomenclatures. *Hindavi*, *Gujri*, *Deccani*, *Rekhta*, Hindustani were all known as early Urdu.¹²⁰ Although I have used ‘Urdu’ to denote the early history of Urdu, it could also be perceived be considered an early history of ‘Hindi’ as well. Hence, it would be postulated that rather than tracing the history of ‘Urdu’ per se, this chapter has traced the history of early literary cultures.

The colonial state used shifting parameters to identify and define language. They sometimes called Hindi ‘Nagri/Hindi’ and Urdu as ‘Urdu/Hindustani’ to denote the shared histories of both languages. Since the late nineteenth century, the multifarious identities of ‘Urdu’ were gradually replaced with a concrete idea of Urdu.

The ‘new’ language, ‘Hindi’, was also supposed to play a unifying role. It was to be the official language, the spoken language and the language taught in schools. I argue that by replacing Urdu - which had multifarious identities – the British officials sought to bind the colony through a uniform language. For Hindi was to eventually become the ‘one language’ key to nation making. Grierson aptly augured that “in the course of future years, no doubt, through the agency of railways and the printing press, the literary language will in many cases become the norm of home conversations.” By replacing Urdu, they were seeking to replace a multilingual Indian society with one bound by a uniform language system that served both the political and administrative agenda of the colonial rulers.

Along with the colonial state, Urdu also grew to become an evocative symbol for the *Asharfs*. For them, Urdu represented everything they had lost to the ravages of time accentuated by the brutality of an alien western colonial power unaware and unappreciative of their world and its inner workings. In nineteenth century, Patna’s

¹²⁰ For the early names of ‘Urdu’ see Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2003. “A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture.” In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. 807-818.

Urdu poets expressed their emotions with respect to the city through *Shahr E Ashob* - a lament for a city in decline.¹²¹ Voicing his deep anguish, a nineteenth century Urdu poet of Patna, Shad Azimabadi, wrote, “*Kya arz karun, aaj hai jo quom ki haalat, azbab e tejazarat hai na haatho mein hukumat; ek ek kar ke badh hawa hai, allah re adaavat; aankhon mein hayat, namuhabbat na marwaat.*” In these verses he says that nation neither has business and government and people have hatred in their hearts for each other, they neither have affection nor manners.¹²² Similar angst was also felt by a twentieth century Urdu poet, Jamil Mazhari. He wrote “*Ye haal is Patne ka hai jise aap sahi mano mein Azaimabad keh sakte hai.. jo Pathan aur Mughlon ka banaya huwa hai lekin wo Patne jaise angrezo ne Bankipore ke naam se mashoor hain.*” Mazhari, like Shad, is also expressing his sadness at the deep seated social changes engulfing him. He points out that what is known as Patna today was made by Mughals and Pathans; unfortunately it is turned into Bankipore by the British.¹²³

Eighteenth century Urdu would undergo transformation in subsequent decades but these poets perceived it as decline. Though the system of patronage dwindled, Urdu proliferated in different spaces. It became a vernacular language in colonial institutions.¹²⁴ While literary forms such as *dastangoi* doused out, others such as *mushaira* entered new spaces. Patna’s colleges and universities conducted regular *mushairas* known as *bazm*.¹²⁵ Through associations such as *Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu* (1920) and clubs called *yaaranien maikada*, literally friends in a bar, Urdu continued to thrive.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Anand Yang. 1998. *Bazaar India: Markets, Society, and the Colonial State in Bihar*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 53-60

¹²² Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1992. *Baqiyat E Shad* (Shad’s Compositions). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 38. Self translated.

¹²³ Dr. Eijay Ali Arshad. 1991. *Mansuratein Jamil Mazhari, Hissa Dom* (Collection of Jamil Mazhari’s work). 339-345. Bankipore was the side of the city that was inhabited by the British. 339-345. Self translated

¹²⁴ See chapter four

¹²⁵ Dr EaqbalHaseen. 1989. *Daastan meri: Khud Nwavisht Sanwange Hayat* (My Story: Autobiography). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 124-126

¹²⁶ Syed Mohammad Ali Saba.1975. *Yaaranien Maikada* (Gathering of Friends). Patna: Kashna Sangi Dalan Patna City. 1-10

Chapter Two

Ilm and Fan: Ways of Learning

While criticising the colonial education system, Shad Azimabadi, wrote the following couplets.

*Iskool mein is quom ke bacche hai do chaar...ma, baap
ye kehte hai ki honge na chaar...wo kehet ka ilm beche ke jeena bhi
hai sauda...kya unko padhaya kare ab beech ke ghar baar.. jaahil jo
ye reh jaaye toh kya isko karein hum...iskool ke de ke faake se mare
hum.. Only a handful of students from the community study in
school ... the parents cannot understand the education system ...
selling education, making it a business is like staying in a drought
like situation... should we educate them by selling our land and
property? ...let them remain uneducated... we are dying of hunger,
we cannot afford schools. ¹²⁷*

Shad's poem represented the angst of the parents against the colonial *iskool* (schools). Their discontent was with the system of 'payment' or 'fees', especially in the times of economic distress. Agonised with colonial system of education, Shad asked (*jaahil jo ye reh jaaye toh kya isko karein hum ... iskool ke de ke faake se mare hum*; should we educate them by selling our land and property?). This could perhaps be one of the reasons as to why these 'schools' were thinly attended (*iskool mein quom ke bacche hai do chaar*; only a handful of students from the community study in school). The dissatisfaction with the colonial system of education suggests that education in the 'indigenous schools' was

¹²⁷ Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1992. *Baqiyat E Shad* (Shad's Compositions). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 38. Self-translated.

not just limited to the idea of employment, a business transaction or a buyable entity (*ilm beche ke jeena bhi hai sauda*).¹²⁸

This chapter intends to complicate the linear and straightforward link between education and employment by attempting to understand the myriad reasons and ideas of learning associated with an ‘indigenous system of education’. In this context, it argues that the indigenous system of education was acquiring *ilm* and *fan* or the myriad ways and ideas of learning.¹²⁹

The Indigenous System of Education

I will be drawing upon surveys of colonial officers that were conducted before the implementation of the Charles Woods Act of 1854, according to which, ‘practical knowledge’ through English along with vernacular education was to be imparted.¹³⁰ From the 1830s, colonial officers were engaged with questions of education as they debated on the medium in which education was to be imparted and the purpose of it. There were broadly three approaches to the question of medium of instruction: one approach was to focus on Arabic, Sanskrit and Persian language; they wanted education to be imparted through English and ‘vernaculars’ was considered an apt medium for the other stream.¹³¹

In subsequent sections, I will be discussing William Adam’s report on the vernacular education system of education in Bengal and Bihar authorised by Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General of Bengal in January, 1835 to decide upon any future scheme of national education. Adam mostly covered ‘vernacular’ ‘schools’, described as ‘Bengali or Hindi schools’ and ‘Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic schools’, “each embracing with modifications the following details employed for each description of school, one for,

¹²⁸ Most of the works on Hindi and Urdu have focused upon the link of employment with learning of languages. See Paul R Brass. 1974. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, London: Cambridge University Press; Christopher R King. 1994 *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in the Nineteenth Century in North India*. Delhi, Calcutta, Madras: Oxford University Press.

¹²⁹ I will be explicating this idea in the subsequent sections of this chapter. *Ilm* mean knowledge and *fan* mean acquiring skills.

¹³⁰ Sudipa Topdar. 2015. “Duties of a ‘good citizen’: Colonial Secondary School Textbook Policies in Late Nineteenth-century India.” *South Asian History and Culture*. 6:3: 417-439; Stephen Evans, 2002. “Macaulay’s Minute Revisited: Colonial Language Policy in Nineteenth-century India.” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 23:4: 260-281.

¹³¹ John D. Windhausen. 1964. “The Vernaculars, 1835-1839: A Third Medium for Indian Education.” *Sociology of Education*. No. 3: 254-270.

another for, viz., the name of the town or village in which the school was situated the description of place employed as a school-house; the name, religion, caste, and age of the teacher".¹³²

'Schools' where 'Bengali' and 'Hindi' were taught were declared to be 'vernacular' schools. These schools were 'most numerous' and were seen to have 'most directly and most powerfully influenced the character of the people.'¹³³ Mostly 'commercial, agricultural accounts' were taught in these 'schools' but 'vernaculars' was also taught in a few schools.¹³⁴

'Commercial account' was learnt by money-lenders and retail-traders and 'agriculture accounts' were learnt by those who were dependent on land for their income. Writers and accountants usually studied both: agricultural accounts and commercial accounts.¹³⁵ These writers and accountants were mostly from the Kayastha caste 'scholars with almost exclusive possession by the caste of the business of vernacular teaching.'¹³⁶ However, the pupils of these schools were not restricted to a particular caste, religion or class. As Adam mentions 'The very low degraded castes, as the *Dosads*, *Pashi*, *Luniar*, &c., are comparatively numerous, and have begun here also to seek a participation in the benefits of vernacular instructions'.¹³⁷ It was also not segregated along the lines of religion. Regarding this Adam writes: 'The *mutual disposition of Hindus and Musalmans* towards each other is not an unimportant element of society in this country, and it may be estimated by the state of vernacular education.' To this effect he says 'The Musalman teachers have Hindus as well as Musalman scholars; and the Hindu and Musalman scholars and the different castes of the former assemble in the same school-house, receive the same instructions from the same teacher, and join the same plays and pastimes.'¹³⁸

¹³² Rev. J. Long. 1885. *Adam's Report On Vernacular Education In Bengal and Behar Submitted In 1835, 1836 And 1838 With a Brief Overview Of Past and Present Conditions in The Rev. J Long*, Calcutta printed at the Home Secretariat Press. 146.

¹³³ Ibid. 158.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 163-173.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 178.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid. 159.

¹³⁸ Ibid. 171.

The pupils in these schools were taught in *bhaitakh khanas* (sitting areas), huts, verandahs, shops, village temples, outhouses, corner-shops, sides of the road, under the shade of a tree, or outhouses built in schoolyards. Copper plates and chalks were the kinds of equipment used to teach the ‘pupil’. The teachers were also employed from within the community who was ‘paid’ either by a wealthy patron or the community undertook the responsibility of ‘paying’ the teachers. The ‘payment’ included uncooked food, weekly gifts or weekly subsistence money.

Schools in which Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit were taught were similar to vernacular schools in terms of teaching in open spaces and system of payment. However, the course content and the composition of teachers in these schools were different. In the Sanskrit medium schools, Law, Philosophy and Hinduism were taught. Unlike the vernacular school where *kayasths* were the teachers, the teachers of these schools were mostly ‘Brahmans’.¹³⁹ Although the Sanskrit schools were dominated mostly by the students belonging to the ‘Brahman’ caste, these schools were ‘open to all classes of society whom inclination, leisure, and the possession of adequate means may attract to its study.’¹⁴⁰ Likewise, Persian and Arabic were taught included Philosophy, vocabulary, grammar, forms of correspondences, poems, accounts of kings, names and attribution of God were taught in what Adam calls Persian and Arabic schools.

From the above analysis, some characteristic features of the indigenous education system can be outlined. Pupils acquired training to carry forward their caste occupation. Money lenders, traders and land based communities learnt ‘Commercial’ and ‘Agricultural accounts’ and the *kayasth* caste- associated with teaching- learned both. However, despite these occupations- based alignments, learning spaces were inclusive. Disparate castes and religious groups could avail of education depending on their needs and requirements.

Blochman, an Assistant Professor of Calcutta Madrasha in one of his surveys in Bengal around the time period, divides the indigenous system of learning into *ilm* and *fan*. Blochman notes:

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 196.

Literature and grammar naturally hold the highest place in the school; they form what is called *ilm*, or science, in contradistinction to arithmetic, history, &c., which are each a *fan*, or accomplishment. Mahomedans are so weeded to philological pursuits, that they often complain of the limited time which is devoted in our schools to their favorite subjects, and I believe vernacular schools be established for Mahomedans, the course of study should in the beginning be rather philological than practical.

¹⁴¹ (sic)

Language and literature taught in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit schools were referred to as *ilm*, meaning knowledge. Astrology, drama, lexicography in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit constituted *ilm* or knowledge. *Fan* or acquiring skills was learning commercial and agricultural accounts in ‘Hindi, Bengali and Tirhutia.’ One can argue that acquiring skills or *fan* thus enable one to carry with their *hereditary* occupation. This chapter intends to capture the transition from the indigenous system of education to the colonial system of education. Through a study of this transition, I would like to look at how Urdu itself was transformed from a language of the populace to a language of the elite Muslim world by focusing on how the idea of ‘Urdu’ changed with this transition. Urdu described by Adam as:

‘Vernacular language of that class is never employed in the schools as the medium or instrument of written instruction... but.. more copious and expressive, more cultivated and refined than either and possess a richer and more comprehensive literature, Urdu school-book are wholly unknown. It is the language of the conversation in the daily intercourse of life and in the business of the world, and it is also the language of oral instruction for the explanation of Persian and Arabic, but is never taught or learned for its own sake, or what it contains... it is employed

¹⁴¹ From H. Blochmann, EsQ., M. A., Assistant Professor of the Calcutta Madurssah, to J. Sutcliffe, EsQ., M.A., Principal to the Calcutta Madrussah, - (dated Calcutta, the 9th October 1871), Education Department. (BSA).

as a written language chiefly in popular poetry and tales and in female correspondence, and often in the pulpit.¹⁴²[sic]

One can infer from Adam's observations that languages, in this context Urdu/Hindustani were shaped outside schools and textbooks. In the subsequent sections, I will be demonstrating that through well delineated space called 'school', 'textbook' and 'trained' teachers, the 'shared system of education' was demarcated along the lines of religion and class. This demarcation, I argue was critical in the construction of Urdu as the language of Muslims.

Making of the Schools

Adam's recommendation was rejected by the Calcutta Council of Education on account of it being 'impractical and expensive.' The Council opined that the colonial state should focus on major towns instead of expending their energies on rural areas and villages, and focus primarily on English rather than 'classical' or vernacular Indian languages.¹⁴³

Thus, after rejecting Adam's report, the colonial state finally settled the long-drawn debate on education by deciding not only the medium of imparting education but also its constituency. Education was to be imparted in English and 'vernacular' to a small section of the society and not the entire population. The educated communities were then entrusted with the responsibility of imparting education to the masses, it was referred to as the 'filtration theory' propounded by Lord Macaulay.¹⁴⁴

For imparting vernacular education existing structure of the 'schools' were altered and different kinds of schools were set up. A 'Normal school' was to be set up, to train the 'natives' to impart 'superior' vernacular education; a model school to serve as a model for the other indigenous schools; a grant-in aid school where half of the cost of education was defrayed by the government; a guru school was an indigenous school that were

¹⁴² Rev. J. Long. 1885. *Adam's Report On Vernacular Education In Bengal and Behar Submitted In 1835, 1836 And 1838 With a Brief Overview Of Past and Present Conditions in The Rev. J Long*, Calcutta printed at the Home Secretariat Press. 2010-211. Emphasis added.

¹⁴³ John D. Windhausen. 1964. "The Vernaculars, 1835-1839: A Third Medium for Indian Education." *Sociology of Education*. No. 3: 254-270.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

brought within the circle consisting of three schools. In addition, to these schemes, there was also a provision where the government would provide financial aid to the teacher, if he adheres to conform to the government's method of teaching. Along with these schools another set of schools also imparted vernacular education. Thus, besides providing grant in aid for schools that impart English education, the government also planned to set up Anglo vernacular schools, Zilla colleges and Normal Schools.¹⁴⁵

These schools thus changed the undivided and shared system of indigenous education system. Apart from guru schools, none of the other kinds of schools were accessible to the masses. Even amongst the rest of the schools, there was a division between vernacular and Anglo-vernacular schools; the latter was accessible to only a small section of the society who could afford it. Since these schools did not aim to provide education to the masses, a system of competition was introduced where the students were selected through competitive examination to pursue higher education. Since the government altered the existing system of education by excluding people who could not afford to attend the colonial schools, it introduced different categories to attend to the needs of women, Muslims and ryots.¹⁴⁶

Along with introducing new school systems the government also planned to replace 'indigenous' teachers -the mainstay of the indigenous education system, with 'trained' teachers.

Thus, while the teachers were getting trained in schools that were called 'normal schools', the government recruited teachers who had already been trained in colonial schools and colleges. Thus, when the Bihar government wanted recruits to teach English, Hindi and Urdu, and work as Deputy Inspectors and Deputy Sub Inspectors in English Zilla Schools, Vernacular Model Schools, they did not consider these indigenous teachers equipped enough to for these responsibilities.

¹⁴⁵ Rev. J. Long. 1885. *Adam's Report On Vernacular Education In Bengal and Behar Submitted In 1835,1836 And 1838 With a Brief Overview Of Past and Present Conditions in The Rev. J Long*, Calcutta printed at the Home Secretariat Press. 27-31.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

The Inspector of the North West Division, S. W Fallon wanted to recruit teachers and inspectors from the Moulvis in Lucknow and Pundits from Banaras College. Further, for the post of the inspectorships, Fallon wanted to recruit young men who were familiar with Persian and Arabic or Sanskrit with some knowledge of Urdu and Hindi, which, he believed 'only the natives of North West Provinces possess'.¹⁴⁷ He wanted to recruit these men from Government and Mission Colleges in Agra, St. Stephens College in Delhi, and those appearing for L.A and B.A examinations. He argued that *maulvis* and Pundits in Bihar were not well equipped to teach pupils in government schools. According to Fallon, the *maulvis* and Pundits did not qualify because, despite their knowledge of Arabic and Sanskrit, they were pedantic and unaware of the art of teaching. Lack of knowledge about the colloquial and idiomatic vernaculars were also the reasons cited by Fallon, which made him prefer Government and Mission Colleges teachers over *maulvis* and Pundits from Bihar. He further even disqualified those teachers from Bihar who were familiar with vernacular language by saying that they were 'demoralized' and unfit to be teachers.

Through these changes, Fallon and other colonial officers were altering the characteristics of the indigenous education system. The indigenous system of education was to be replaced with colonial schools and teachers. As discussed in the preceding section of the chapter, the schools surveyed by Adam were, what we can call shared an undivided system of education. Within the shared system of education, at least the training in vernaculars was open to all. Alongside, there was no hierarchy between vernacular schools and *tols*, pathshala and madrasa. They played different kinds of role in shaping a pupils life, mainly imparting knowledge about religion, skill based learning and rudimentary reading and writing.

This system was reorganized in a system of hierarchy where unlike the system preceding it, the patron or the pupils were expected to partially pay for their education. Furthermore, unlike before, only a select few could climb up to higher education. Therefore, instead of all, a handful of students were encouraged through a system of

¹⁴⁷ From S W Fallon ., EsQ, Inspector of Schools North West Division to the Director of Public Instruction, - (No.176, dated the 28th February 1865). Education Department. BSA.

scholarship. Since the government did not intend to educate everyone; what was earlier an undivided system was now categorized by introducing religious category such as Muhammadan education.

Along with these changes, the teachers of the indigenous system of education, a respected member of the society or a village community were replaced. The teacher of the indigenous system taught what was considered valuable in the society; however, the new graduates brought with them a different idea of knowledge and vernacular. For instance, Fallon wanted Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit to be taught through vernacular schools. However, vernacular schools were invested in helping their students in acquiring skills and considered learning Persian and Sanskrit literature as a separate aspect of learning. Within the new system of school learning of vernacular and Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic were joined together in an unwieldy fashion.

With these changes, Fallon also introduced the concept of teaching in vernacular by which they meant the language of the people. However, different ‘dialects’ were spoken in Bihar and Urdu was the court, cultural and literary language. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, Tirhutia in Bengali script and other such formations were taught that was not the ‘Hindi’ was that to be taught from the teacher from Banaras.

I argue that by introducing the idea of teaching in vernacular, Fallon imported a specific and standardised ‘Hindi’ and ‘Urdu’ from Banaras and Lucknow because he considered the spoken language of Bihar to be ‘too corrupt’ to be taught in schools.

Fallon wanted languages to be taught in ‘superior’ vernaculars and ‘the language written and spoken by the inhabitants [Bihar] is not indigenous to the province, but a mongrel mixture of the Vernaculars of the Provinces of Bengal and the North West’.¹⁴⁸ Thus, a vernacular was made. A Banaras based ‘Hindi that was Sanskritised and Hinduised and high flown Urdu from Lucknow was to be transported through the teachers’.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ From S. Fallon, EsQ, Inspector of Schools, North-West Divisions to the Director of Public Instructions, -(No. 176, dated the 28th February 1865).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

The idea of colonial schools, ‘trained teachers’ and ‘superior vernaculars’ changed not only the indigenous system of education but the very idea of learning. Through these changes, Fallon did not replace just the teachers and introduced new schooling system but also the conception of knowledge what is defined by Blochman as *ilm* and *fan* in what he defined as the vernacular or the ‘language of people’.

Limited Reach of these Schools

Along with replacing teachers through normal school, the government also brought other indigenous schools within their own system through the grant in aid scheme.¹⁵⁰ Within this scheme the government extended grants to schools to ‘impart sound and secular education.’ This scheme altered the structure of the indigenous education system by bringing indigenous schools within its circle of control. The indigenous school desirous of grant by the government was supposed to be placed under a management body that was to be held accountable by a school inspector.

A school inspector was appointed to take periodical examination of the pupils of these schools to assess the quality of education imparted in these schools. Within this system, teachers were appointed and graded according to their qualification and degrees from universities and colleges. B. A degree holders were given the first grade, those with First examination in Arts grade were placed below them. A matriculate degree holder was placed at the end of the hierarchical order. Along with these degrees, the teacher was also required to possess knowledge of school education, theoretical understanding of school management and teaching power. An existing school master was supposed to assess the newly appointed teachers on above mentioned teaching ‘skills’. Along with recruiting degree holder as teachers, the schools that were brought within the grant in aid scheme were also mandated to maintain attendance registers and time tables.

While some schools were brought within the grant in aid schemes, the other schools known as *patshalas* were brought under the *patshala* scheme by the Lieutenant

¹⁵⁰ From the Hon’ble R.N Cust, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to A. J Arbuthnot, Esq Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort. St. George, - (No, 6264, dated the 3rd December 1864) Education Department, BSA.

Governor.¹⁵¹ Mr. Grant in his minutes on the vernacular education in 1860 said that he wanted to retain the indigenous school but improve it through a system of rewards to teachers in proportion to the success that was later changed to a system of fixed stipends. The teachers had to be trained in normal schools to teach reading, writing and arithmetic. The course in the schools brought with the *patshala* system included: reading from print and manuscripts, writing from dictation, letters, lease and agreements, arithmetic, tables, four simple rules, keeping of books and accounts, practicing surveys and information, geography and history of Bengal and outlines of the world and art of teaching. This scheme was earlier introduced in some districts of Bengal but later it was implemented in the whole of Bengal district. Although the divisions of the schools within lower level were not clearly demarcated but pupils at the primary stage were judged by their ability to read, write and understand simple sentences in their mother tongue.

In 1872, the Lieutenant Governor, George Campbell set apart a sum of four lakh rupees to be expended in primary level of training of masses in various districts of Bengal according to their population. The masses were to be equipped to read and write in ‘real indigenous language and character of the province’ along with arithmetic. However, the rudimentary training was not intended to prepare them for government jobs. The resolution to strengthen primary education, categorically states, ‘but of all things must be avoided a grant which may be used to turn out clerks and attorney; education of that kind is separately provided for.’¹⁵² The purpose of primary education to the masses was outlined as follows:

What is wanted to teach ordinary village boys enough to enable them to take care of their own interests in their own station of life, as petty shopkeepers, small landholders, ryots, handicraftsmen, weavers, village headmen, boatmen, fishermen, and what not. It is beyond all things desirable not to impart at village schools that kind of teaching which in a

¹⁵¹ From A.W Croft. Esq., *Director of Public Instruction*, to the Secretary to the Government in Bengal, General Department, Dated 15th August, Calcutta 1881, Education Department, BSA.

¹⁵² Ibid

transition state of a society, might induce boys to think themselves above manual labour and ordinary village work. ¹⁵³[sic]

Amongst the masses, only a select few, those who could secure a scholarship were to be given the opportunity to aspire to scale to the university level of education. System of competition in scholarship was to 'enable clever and deserving boys to climb from the lowest to the highest stage'; so that, the gifted son of the labourer may become a distinguished engineer, or physician or agriculturalist, or administrator of higher degree, or a judge of the highest court'. ¹⁵⁴ However, only a small section of the boys could avail the scholarship and acquire higher education and aspire to become a professional or a government employee. The remaining, the majority of pupils were 'not led to look beyond their own calling'. ¹⁵⁵ As stated in previous paragraphs, they were supposed to continue with their education that equipped them with employability and carry on with their inherited occupation.

This system of primary education was also limited in its coverage. The schools that were covered by the government were divided into circles. The education report of 1877-78 states that the schools that were brought under the jurisdiction of the government were brought within an internal circle. The inner circle schools were to be transformed by 'liberalizing' education. The government believed that most of the indigenous schools only imparted technical education and thus the government should supplement it with liberal education. Bengali language, history and geography of Bengal, Arithmetic, first book of Euclid and rudiments of physical sciences were to be taught.

The primary pupils were tested according to these parameters. Along with examination, they were assessed on their ability to read printed texts. Majority of the pupils were not able to pass this test, as the report mentions that only 23, 000 pupils were able to read sentences in a printed book as opposed to 44, 000 who were unable to read through the printed text. The printed books were the only addition to the existing course. The level within the primary section was also determined by the ability of the pupil to read printed

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

texts. The pupils in the lowest section wrote on the floor and learnt multiplication, measures, weights and money. The section above them learnt how to read from a printed text about wage, price, writing lease forms and *zamindar* accounts. The top of the primary section could read a Bengali text *Bodhday* and learn mensuration, and appear in the scholar examination in which out of two one gets selected. The high section included middle and higher vernacular and Anglo schools.

Within the colonial system of education, it was not just that pupils who could read from the printed text were excluded - the system itself was designed to be non inclusive. Only a select few could aspire to become professionals, distinguished engineers, or physicians or agriculturalists, or administrators of higher degrees, or judges of the highest courts. A large section of the population was to remain in *patshalas* and only a handful of pupils could avail higher education. The students of *patshala* were supposed to continue with their education and yet contribute to the work-force by carrying on with their hereditary profession. These people were uprooted from their familiar education set up and were left to compete for a limited number of opportunities. While the colonial state dismantled indigenous system of education, it also left a good number of schools outside the circle. As the government categorically stated that extending beyond the outer circle was beyond their control.

Thus, along with schools and teachers, printed textbooks were one of the means through the colonial state was introducing their own system of pedagogy. In fact, the ability to read from printed texts was the first step to climb up the ladder leading to higher education. Textbooks, in a way, defined what constituted knowledge in colonial terms. Since it was a potent means to control and define knowledge its content and its language was a debated and contested issue.

The Politics of Textbooks

Through textbooks the colonial state determined what constituted ‘teachable’ knowledge. Mensuration, Engineering and Law was to be taught in Patna College in elementary

English.¹⁵⁶ ‘Practical knowledge’ like Physical sciences and theodolite was taught in the Zillah, Normal and aided schools in Patna and Muzzafarpore considered ‘high standard’ vernacular. Along with it survey and drawing classes were to be opened in all Zillah schools.¹⁵⁷

I argue that through textbooks, the colonial government transformed the idea of knowledge. As mentioned in the above paragraphs, within the indigenous system of education, grammar and literature were considered *ilm* and practical knowledge was considered *fan* meaning skill. However, the text books for the Patna College focused on History, Algebra, Geography and Mensuration. The Director explained the intentions, ‘The little book under notice is introduced with the intention of giving children the ideas of the English pieces in a dress, they can remember easily and in which native scholars welcome.’¹⁵⁸

The colonial government wanted to disseminate ‘English knowledge’ through the language of the people which they called vernacular. However, defining knowledge became a cumbersome task for the colonial officers. The confusion with respect to the vernacular can be understood through a discussion that took place between the Director of Public Instruction of Bengal and the Lieutenant Governor on the vernacular language of Bengal.¹⁵⁹ The Governor was of the opinion that the ‘real language’ spoken by the intelligent people should be made the vernacular of Bengal and not the ‘artificial’ and ‘corrupt’ hybrid language.¹⁶⁰ The Director had to explain to the Governor that dialects of the Bengal vary from region to region but even for him, a ‘modern’ ‘pure’ Bengali literature existed which was not only ‘uniform’ but was also informed by English with Sanskrit roots. The Director wanted the ‘uniform’ ‘pure’ Bengali to be taught in schools.

¹⁵⁶ From – S. C. Bayley, EsQ. Officiating Commissioner of the Patna Division to the Officiating Secretary to the Government Bengal. No, 239, dated Muzzafarpore, the 21st June, 1872, Education Department, BSA.

¹⁵⁷ From J. Ware Edgar, EsQ. *Offg Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal*, to the Commissioner of Patna Division, General Department, Education, Calcutta 10th July, 1872, Education Department, BSA.

¹⁵⁸ From – M. Kempson, EsQ, Director of Public Instruction, North –Western Province to the Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, No.428, dated Allhabad, the 4th May 1872. BSA.

¹⁵⁹ From W. S Atkinson, EsQ., M. A., Director of Public Instruction to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal the General Department, No 1715, dated Fort William, the 6th May 1872, Education Department, BSA.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

Thus, while the Governor considered ‘spoken language of the intelligent people’ as the vernacular, the Director considered ‘uniform’ and ‘pure’ literature as the vernacular of Bengal. In Bihar as well they wanted a ‘uniform’ and ‘pure’ vernacular to be taught in schools. The search for the ‘uniform’ and ‘pure’ literature in Bihar started, ironically, by importing books and teachers as well from the North Western Province. The books that came from the North Western Province were divided into Hindi and Urdu languages and in thematic rubrics: Literature, Grammar, Morals were one rubric and Mathematics, History, Geography and miscellaneous other subjects constituted the other rubric.¹⁶¹ The government was also contemplating coming out with another set of books that would be suitable for the girls as well.

After getting books from the North West division, the Bihar government wanted to vernacularise these books. The process of vernacularisation started by removing Persian and Arabic from the text books. The Director of the North Western Province wrote to the Secretary to the government of the North Western Province suggesting removing all the Persian and Arabic elements from grammar and literature books and retain only those books that were ‘everyday Urdu’. The text book committee removed Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit nouns, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives and particles.¹⁶² The books were assessed on percentage of content of the Arabic and Persian words. The idea was to retain books that were ‘simple and idiomatic’.¹⁶³ Alongside this, the government also wanted to make the language more ‘natural’. Fallon along with the headmaster of the Normal School, Rae Sohan Lal undertook the responsibility of making ‘Hindustani’ Literature in ‘simple and instructive language’. Fallon wanted to remove all the excesses -- by excess he meant Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit words -- of the Hindustani books and introduce ‘natural’ themes such as ‘glaciers, icebergs and winter Russia’.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ From- E. Llyod, EsQ., for Secretary to the Government of the N.W.P to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated Allahabad, the 16th May, 1872, Education Department, BSA

¹⁶² Appendix I

¹⁶³ From S. W. Fallon-. EsQ., Inspector of Schools, North-west Divisions, to the Director of Public Inspector, No.1145 , dated Dinapore, the 29^h May 1872, Education Department, BSA

¹⁶⁴ From S. W. Fallon-. EsQ., Inspector of Schools, North-west Divisions, to the Director of Public Inspector, No.1145 , dated Dinapore, the 20th May 1872, Education Department, BSA

However, the government was caught in its own conundrum. After purging Sanskrit words and grammar in order to make them more ‘natural’, they replaced Persian words with Sanskrit words to vernacularise text books. The Director of Public Instruction, N. W Provinces, M Kempson reviewed five books that were sent from Bihar. *Hawa ka Ilm* , *Easy exercise in Algebra*, *Key to above*, *Ragar bijli bal part 1*, *Dourta bijli bal part 11* compiled by Rae Sohan Lal were the books that was under the review.¹⁶⁵ He commented that translations of words such as *hawa bajh nap* for barometer and *garmi nap* for thermometer instead of Urdu words for the equipments *mizan hayat* and *miyazul harat* that were forced. Likewise *daswin kasr* for decimal instead of *kusur asarzia* were ‘unnecessary alteration’. His reports furnish many such examples where the Persian and Arabic technicalities were directly replaced with Sanskrit terms to make the language ‘simple’. He further adds that such direct translation reads even more absurdly in Urdu books and even in Hindi books it makes the language inelegant and inconsistent. He recommended to retain technical Urdu words as they were ‘neater and more expressive.’ The Lieutenant Governor approved the suggestions of Kempson and recommended discarding those words marked by Kempson and substitute it with English words where no vernacular was available.¹⁶⁶

After the negative feedback from Kempson, Fallon made another attempt to compile textbooks in the vernacular for schools in Bihar. In June 1872, he presented a proposal to the government of Bengal requesting government’s financial assistance for a year.¹⁶⁷ He aimed to collect songs, hymn, chants, witticisms and street cries and utterance of the ‘common people’. Through these collections he proposed to compile ‘Hindi’ and ‘Hindustani’ school readers, in a literature common to all. He also wanted to standardize these collections through dictionary.

¹⁶⁵ From C. A Elliott, EsQ, Secy, to the Government of the North West Province to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the North West department, Allahabad, 25th April, 1872; Memo by M Kempson, EsQ., Director of Public Instruction, N. W Province, Education Department, BSA

¹⁶⁶ From T. J. C PLOWDEN, ESq., offg, Under sec to the Government of Bengal to the Director of Public instruction. Calcutta, 4th May, 1872, Education Department, BSA

¹⁶⁷ From S. W. Fallon, Inspector of Schools Bihar Circles, to C. E Bernard, ESq, Offg Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department Director of Public Inspector, No.928 , dated Dinapore, the 9th June, 1873, Education Department, BSA

While proposing to compile textbooks in ‘common’ people’s language, he was arguing against Sanskritised Hindi. He appealed to consider exploring the ‘rich and extensive field of spoken Hindi’.¹⁶⁸ I argue that this memorandum was a shift from the earlier position of Fallon where he preferred teachers who were acquainted with North West frontier Urdu and pundits who had learnt Hindi from the Banaras Hindi College. Although, he continued being skeptical of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit training but there was a definite shift in his idea of the vernacular of Bihar. Instead of a Sanskritised Hindi he was now advocating incorporating the ‘dialects’ and literature of Bihar, which was a ‘rich harvest awaiting the labors of the diligent explorer.’¹⁶⁹ One of the possible reasons could be his inability to draft textbooks in vernaculars which was not ‘clumsy and inconsistent.’¹⁷⁰ Fallon was not the only one who paid attention to spoken language literature. In 1888 George Abraham Grierson also conducted a survey of the languages of Bihar and argued that Bihari language consisting of Bhojpuri, Maithali and Magadhi were different from both Hindi and Hindustani.¹⁷¹

However, Grierson’s and Fallon’s plan was foiled. The rejection of Fallon’s plan of including Bhojpuri songs, hymns and witticisms in text books further showed how the colonial state preferred and prioritized what they considered ‘practical knowledge’ like History, Mathematics and Sciences over language and literature, thus, changing the idea of teachable knowledge over *fan* and *ilm*.

Making Urdu the Language of Muslims

The constant shift in position and differences and confusion over defining ‘superior’ and ‘unified’ vernacular was similar to what government faced while recruiting teachers in colonial school. What the colonial government could not perceive or was overlooking the fact that Bihar did not have one language or dialect as the vernacular of Bihar. Moreover, the script that was taught in indigenous schools was not ‘Hindi’ in the colonial

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

¹⁷¹ Ibid; George A. Grierson, B.C.S., *Seven Grammars Of the Dialects and Subdialects Of the Bihari Language Spoken In the Province of Bihar, In the Eastern Portion Of the North-Western Provinces, and in the Northern Portion Of the Central Provinces*, Volume I in three parts, Calcutta, 1883.

sense of the term. Adam found Bengali, Nagri as well Kaithi scripts. If there was no well defined 'Hindi' in the indigenous system of education, learning of Urdu was also different. Urdu was taught through poetry by the village or community teachers.

I argue that after a series of experiments, debates and confusion over the question of vernacular, the colonial government defined vernacular through religious identity. A Nagri Hindi was made the language of the people and Hindus and Hindustani or Urdu as the language of the elites or literati and Muslims.

A letter was sent to the Commissioner of Patna and Behar argued the same.

...I believe the position of the Behar district is precisely similar to that of the Hindustani districts of the Central Provinces, Hindi being the universal language of the ordinary people, while Hindustani is generally understood by the educated classes and used in court and offices. As decided by the Government of India, the Persian character cannot probably be retained for the regular offices work, care being only taken that the language used is simple and such as in common vernacular use, and not foreign and artificial, a subject in which I have already dealt and in respect of which the High Court have already issued instructions. But I think that as directed by the Government of India in Central Provinces, processes, notifications, proclamations, might well written in Hindi in the Nagari character, and also bonds, attestations, &c; and the same might be used in police outposts at least, if not at the regular police stations. It may be said that people do not understand the Nagari character; but in truth it bears the same relation to the ordinary Hindi character that English print does to English writing and people will soon be able to read it especially if it used in primary schools.¹⁷²

¹⁷² K. W Progs for June 1872, No 114.

However, it was not an easy task as Urdu was not already in use but also preferred in official documents. The Government of Bengal explained the roadblock that could be faced while replacing Urdu with Hindi to the commissioner of Bhaugulpore and Patna.

If this were merely a question of character, the Government of India would have entertained proposal, for there can be no doubt that the Nagree character is the worst for dispatch of the business, being far more bulky than the Urdu Shiketha. It is also more difficult to write more fluently... But in fact the issue is one language and not of character, and the government of India will not absolutely refuse to appeal based on these considerations will so far concede that when Hindee is really the language of the people, it ought to be gradually introduced and Mr Shore's instruction when Persian was superseded in 1835, seem to be pertinent to the present occasion. The government General in Council is therefore pleased to authorize that the Hindee character to be employed in the issue of all process, notification, proclamation, parwaanags & petitions, bail and security bonds and recognizant might also be written in Hindee and Hindee should be the language of the police duftus in the districts in Urdu now the language.

¹⁷³ [sic]

Another problem was that the records in the education department used Urdu as the language of natives. This conundrum is captured through an objection raised by the Lieutenant Governor to the usage of the word Urdu for the vernacular by the Calcutta University.¹⁷⁴ Although the Governor considered Urdu to be an artificial language the Home Department said that it had been used as the vernacular. In a response to the Governor's objection, the Home department replied,

¹⁷³ From –C. Bernard, EsQ., Offg. Secy to the Govt of Bengal in the General Department to the Commissioner of Bhaugulpore and Patna. No. 2206 dated Calcutta, the 27th June 1872, Education Department, BSA.

¹⁷⁴ From A. C Layll, EsQ, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department to the Secretary to the Government of India Home Department, No 234, dated Simla, the 2nd June, 1873. Emphasis on Urdu word original in the text the other emphasis added. Education Department, BSA.

His Excellency the Governor General in Council appreciates the object with which the Lieutenant Governor believing Urdu to mean highly artificial language or style of language prohibited the use of the term in Government schools. But His Excellency thinks that the University that they desire to teach no other dialect than that commonly spoken and written in the country; and that the word *Urdu* was adopted with no spirit whatever of aggressive innovation. The word Urdu may found in the Educational despatch of 1854; it has been received by the departments of State education in other parts of India; it is used to *mean their mother tongue, spoken and written by the Natives of some literary authority, and it seems preferable as having a more specific significance than a vague term Hindustani.*¹⁷⁵

While the colonial state was attempting to define Hindi as the language of the people as opposed to Hindustani, it also changed the meaning of Urdu. In the first phase of defining the vernacular, the government used simple Urdu and Hindustani interchangeably. The idea was to make Urdu simple that would be defined as Hindustani. In later exchange as well, Hindustani was used to define simple language. Hindustani was to be used as the ‘ideal’ language of the textbooks that was to be composed by S. W Fallon along with Rae Sohan Lal. Fallon wrote to the Director of Public instruction:

There is so little Hindustani literature, and so small a portion of that little consists of instructive matter in simple languages, that fully three-fourths of the compilation will have to consist of original pieces and translations, and this work will take time. Similarly, the task of picking out a few lines here and a couplet there out of all the Hindustani books, which must be sought for and read and studied for this purpose.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

¹⁷⁶ From- S.W. Fallon, EsQ, Inspector of School, North-West Divisions to the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, No.1145, dated Dinapore, the 20th May 1872. BSA.

Rae Sohan Lal also described simple Hindustani as opposed to High flow Urdu or Hindi.¹⁷⁷ However by making Hindi the language of the people instead of Hindustani and equating Hindustani with Urdu which was called an artificial language, the government was pushing an agenda of a ‘uniform’ and ‘pure’ vernacular. They rejected Hindustani because it aimed to capture diverse scripts, languages and styles within its fold.

Hindustani, as defined, by Fallon while drafting textbooks in regional languages and by the Director of Public instruction included a variety of literature. It attempted to bring discursive literary traditions within the folds of Hindustani.¹⁷⁸ Fallon included folk songs and sayings as Hindustani and ‘Hindi’ and the Director of Public Instructions included simple ‘Hindi’, Braj bhasha as Hindustani as opposed to Persianised Urdu and Sanskritised Hindi.¹⁷⁹ An example of Hindustani in the form of an answer sheet of the Patna Normal School, attached to the report by Fallon, is 'an indication of the healthy influence of our publication simple colloquial of the people' in Roman script. The extract of the sheet read:

Jab kisi cheez par chot pahunchti hai tab us chiz ka kan leherne lagte hai. us chiz ka kan laharne se us chiz us jagah ka hawa laharati hai aur us mein lahar uthi hai . Hawa bahut hi lachkadar chiz hai: jab is men koi chiz hilti hai, tab uska ek hissa age ka garha aur dusra hissa jo picche rahta hai patta hota hai, isi tarah se har se hare ek lahar ke do hisse hote hain. Agla garha, aur piche ka patta age ko barhte chala jaite hain. Jahan tak ki garha hissa hawa ka kan ke dhol ke parde par ake takrata hai (The place where you get hurt starts burning. The air around it also starts burning. Air by nature agile. If things gets intertwined with air, it

¹⁷⁷ From- Baboo Rae Sohan Lal, Head Master of the Normal School to S.W Fallon, ESQ, Inspector of Schools, North-West Division, dated 20th May, 1872. BSA.

¹⁷⁸ Appendix II

¹⁷⁹ From –S.W Fallon, EsQ, Inspector of School, North West Division to the Offg. Director of Public Instruction, Bengal. No 1250, dated Dinapur, the 5th June, 1872. BSA

takes its shape. The intermixture of air with any other things hits the air drum)¹⁸⁰

This incoherent piece of writing in the answer sheet is furnished by Fallon as the ‘ideal’ Hindustani. Some of the words in the passage like *cheez* (thing), *leherna* (burning), *lachkdar* (agile), *tarah* (like), *gahra* (deep), *hissa* (part) are what came to be termed as ‘simple’ Urdu.

Thus, by considering Urdu an artificial language and replacing the word Hindustani with Urdu the government was finally imposing the idea of a pure, uniform vernacular and chose Sanskritised Hindi as the vernacular. Hindi was chosen as the vernacular by rejecting Urdu and Hindustani as the vague form of Urdu.

The government further defined the vernaculars by defining and delimiting vernacular according to religion. They made Hindi the language of the Hindus and Urdu the language of Muslims as opposed to Hindustani. This idea was implemented in schools by teaching Hindu by Hindi and Muslim boys Urdu. It was a departure from the indigenous system of education where schools were not divided according to religion, in other words Hindu teachers taught Muslim students and Muslim teachers taught Hindu students. However, in colonial schools, Hindi and Urdu were taught as languages of two different communities.

In a report to the Government of Bengal, the Commissioner of the Bhagalpur Division mentioned that the order to not teach Hindustani to the boys who have not learnt Hindi-Nagri was not carried out.¹⁸¹ The Government replied ‘Under it Mohammedans may have instructions in Persian, even if they do not know Hindi, and Hindu boys are not allowed to join them’. In another report from Monghry, Hindustani was made the language of Muslims.¹⁸² A committee ‘Resolved that, as the Persian teacher was appointed as a special concession to the Mohammedan boys, the boys learning Persian should not be

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. Self-translated

¹⁸¹ From G N Barlow. EsQ, C S I, Offg Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division and Sonthal Pergunnahs to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department. No 787, dated Bhagulpore, the 5th May, 1873. BSA

¹⁸² From E. D Lockwood, EsQ, Officiating Magistrate of Monghyr, to the Commissioner of Circuit Bhagulpore Division, No 405, dated Monghyr, the 11th May, 1873. BSA

required to learn Hindi'. The Government of Bengal approved the recommendations of the Committee. A letter to the officiating commissioner of Bengal read:

..as appears, the question is whether Mahomedans boys are to be compelled to learn Hindee, when they prefer to learn Hindoostanee and are already reading in the Persian character, then the Lieutenant-Governor has no wish that they should be forced to learn Hindee in addition. I am also to say that the previous order of Government referred to your letter clearly did not apply to Mahmomedans, but is to be strictly applied to all Hindoos.¹⁸³

However, both Hindu and Muslims still preferred learning what the government called 'Persian character'. In fact the school had to teach 'Persian character' along with Hindi and Kaithi to ensure enrollment in schools. The colonial government also had to employ both Hindu and Muslim teachers in the hope that boys who came Persian character also learn the 'Hindi-Kaithee'.¹⁸⁴ However, the plan was not successful as the Inspector of Government School observed that vernacular school taught Hindustani in Persian character despite the instructions given to the schools to teach Nagri character. When reprimanded for not following the order, the school master informed that after learning Nagri 'every boy turned his attention to Hindustani and completed his schooling through the medium of that language and character'.¹⁸⁵ They said boys could only be retained in schools by teaching Hindustani, furthermore they do not continue with schooling if only Nagri-Hindi was taught.

For similar reasons, they retained Kaithi and allowed pupils to take examinations in Kaithi despite considering Kaithi a vulgar and 'ill written' and 'ill-spelt' script. Kaithi was also not preferred because of lack of distinction between short and long vowel. However, the schoolmaster had to ensure that those short and long vowels had to be distinguished and words to be separated. They were also allowed to answer in Persian

¹⁸³ From the Offg Asst. Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the general department to the Officiating Commissioner of Bhagulpore, No 1867, Calcutta 3rd May, 1873. BSA

¹⁸⁴ From-W.T. Welles, Esq., Vice-President, District Committee, Public Instructions, Shahabad, To-The Director of Public Instruction, Lower Provinces. No.83, dated Arrah, the 25th March 1876. BSA

¹⁸⁵ Ibid

character for general papers that included History and Science provided if they write grammar and Hindi literature in Nagri script.

Another reason for retaining Kaithi over the Nagri is the comprehensibility of the former over the latter amongst the *amlahs* and *mookhteyaars* (court officials) of the court. In 1872, when the government was planning to replace Persian script Hindustani with Nagri, they made the Persian script an ‘artificial’ language but were unable to define and categorize the Kaithi script.¹⁸⁶

Perceiving Nagri as the ‘language of the people’, Mr. Eyre, the Deputy Collector of Sasseeram reported that majority of the ministerial officers had learnt ‘Nagree’ and were in favour of making it the language of the court. However, when the courts were surveyed, it was found that the majority of only a handful of the *amlahs* and *mookhteyaars* knew ‘Nagree’ Mr. Palmer, the Collector of Gaya reported ‘only 3 out of 118 revenue agents, and 6 out of 25 ministerial officers attached to the office are conversant with the ‘Nagree’ character.’

Since people knew Kaithi over ‘Nagree’s, he was of the opinion that processes, notifications should be printed in what he terms as ‘Kaithee Hindee’ instead of the ‘Nagree’ or ‘Hindustanee’ characters as the former would be more intelligible in the mofussil. Although the district official suggested gradual replacement of ‘Nagree’ with Kaithi but conceptually they considered ‘Nagree’ to be a variant form of Nagri and a script of the Hindus. Mr Eyre, remarked ‘the variation between the ‘Kaithee Hindee’ and the standard ‘Nagree’ is really slight and the knowledge of the first will require acquaintance with the other’ and thus ‘knowledge of Hindee and of the Nagree character should be made a *sine quo non* for ministerial appointment, and to be fair to Mahomedans.. six months’ notice of intended change should be give’.¹⁸⁷ Another official, Chandra Sekhar Banerjee, personal assistant of the Commissioner of Patna Division remarked.

¹⁸⁶ From –S. C Bayley, EsQ, Offg Commissioner of the Patna District to the Offg. Secretary to the Bengal, General Department.No. 367, dated Bankipore, dated November 1872. BSA

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

I am of the opinion that the changes proposed by the Lieutenant Governor is a beneficial one, and can without difficulty be carried out. It should, however, be introduced after due notice and with some tenderness to the Mahomedan amlahs. It must be remembered that Mahomedans are already somewhat overweighted in the educational race, that they have hitherto abstained almost as a matter of religion, certainly as one of national pride, from learning Hindee. It would not do to turn out all the existing Mahomedan amlahs, who do not qualify themselves in Hindee, although a knowledge thereof may be properly be made a *sine quo non* in all future candidates.¹⁸⁸

However, survey of another aide of the colonial officer, Baboo Bhoodev Mookerjee revealed that Kaithi was used by both Hindu and Muslim trader community in Behar, Oudh and North-West Provinces. It is for this reason he suggested that Kaithi was a consensus script; and

hence should be retained.

I may as well mention here what seems to me attainable in the end having books printed in the *Kaithi*: I have said that the *Kaithi* character is used for all ordinary business purposes by all classes of men, as well as Hindus and Mussulmans. The Mussulman does not read the *Nagri*, which is scared to the Hindus Pundit, but he takes readily enough the *Kaithi*. The Hindu also, who has strong veneration for the *Nagri*, carries on business in the *Kaithi* and looks upon it as his own. It is possible, I think, that in time there may arise a compromise in theory, as there is already a community in practice between the two adverse parties who now send up petitions and counter petitions to Government in favor or disfavor of the *Nagri* or the Persian, - a compromise in which *Kaithi* will be admitted as

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

the character common to both; the *Nagri* being consigned the Pundit only, and the Persian to the Moulvie only, as the characters sacred to their respective creed.¹⁸⁹

The response of the pupil and *amlahs* to Nagri and Kaithi script and Persian character suggests the government's formulation of Hindi and Urdu was inaccurate. Students not only preferred Persian character but also exhibited reluctance to learn Nagri script. Thus, Nagri was not 'the universal language of the ordinary people' and Urdu was not an 'artificial language' as stated by the colonial officers. The accounts suggest that the different style of Kaithi scripts were used by both Hindus and Muslims alike. Along with Kaithi even Persian character was preferred by the pupils of both the communities. I argue that Persian character and Hindustani was preferred by the pupils because of familiarity with Urdu poetry and Persian script and the seed of the divide was sown in schools by forcibly making Hindus pupils chose Nagri script over Persian character.

Along with making Hindi the language of the 'Hindus', the colonial state also changed meanings and perception of 'Urdu'. In 1835, Adam used Urdu and Hindustani interchangeably and considered it to be a spoken language of Muslims with a rich and copious literature. Later the books that were drafted in the North West region in 1872 construed Hindi and Urdu as two, Sanskritised and Persianised languages. Thus, Fallon as the Inspector of School at the North West division made Hindustani the vernacular of the people as opposed to Hindi and Urdu. He also attempted to draft textbooks in Hindustani which he considered language of the 'common' people.

However, later Hindustani and Urdu both were considered artificial and foreign and Hindi was made the official language. Nevertheless, the process was not an easy one as mentioned in the above paragraphs, Urdu was still used and considered as the language of literati and even considered an easier language. It is for this reason the officials were cautioned against an abrupt and hasty imposition of Hindi.

¹⁸⁹ From-Baboo Bhoodev Mookerjee to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department, dated Bankipore, the 16th March 1877. BSA

I argue that by making Hindi the language of Hindus and Urdu the language of Muslims through a long drawn process of drafting textbooks and recruiting teachers from the North West division, the government was imposing the colonial perception of teachable knowledge. Through these two mediums the government was supplanting an already existing system of knowledge transmitted through language that was not strictly and definitively Hindi and Urdu.

Resistance to the Colonial Idea of Education

As discussed in the above section the vernaculars were the means through which the colonial state imparted their idea of education and knowledge. The government was apprehensive of the response of the people to this transition. Regarding the change in the medium of education from oral to textbooks, The Director of Public Instruction of the North West Division wrote to the Secretary of the North West Division on the language used for the textbook

In conclusion, I may add that native scholars of the indigenous order sometimes object to our school books, as being inelegant and bald. The reason is that they miss the favorite ring of Persian and Arabic vocables, the sound without sense, by which the reader charms his hearers. In a country where books are little read, an author writes for the ear. It is in really skillful hands that sound and sense are combined in any language. Urdu is forming itself, and is gradually becoming a simple unaffected mode of speech. Witness the country newspapers, the editors of which express their communications in plain terms enough, for the one good reason that they have no time to spend on artificial polish and elaboration.¹⁹⁰

The discontent was asserted on many counts such as the replacing of Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, the removal of religious education, and regarding the colonial idea of education itself. Thus, early on, the government resorted to various means to popularize colonial schools. One of the ways through which they approached this issue is through the financial and moral support by the *zamindars*. These *zamindars* not only extended

¹⁹⁰ From M Kempson, Esq., Director of Public Instruction, North West Provinces to the Secretary to the Government of North West Provinces, Allahabad 4th May 1872. BSA

financial assistance but they were the local allies of the state who by virtue of proximity with the people convinced them to study and support the Zilla and the Anglo vernacular schools. But this alliance between the *zamindars* and the colonial state was not devoid of tension.

Despite their support, the *zamindars* were also engaged in a continuous negotiation with the colonial state to retain some features of the indigenous education. For instance Syud Mahomed Tuckee offered Estate of Jogearah to Zilla school at Mozuffopore in 1853 on the condition that the money should be spent in promotion 'Ordoo', Persian, Arabic and writing.¹⁹¹ However when he found out that the government was not spending the money in promoting 'Ordoo', Persian, Arabic and writing he threatened to withdraw his estate. The officiating Inspector of the School dismissed the concerns of Syud Mahomed Tuckee arguing that the government does not intend to promote oriental learning beyond a point as there was already an oriental department attached with Patna High school and Tirhoot.¹⁹² However, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal sided with Syud Mahomed Tuckee and reprimanded the officiating inspector from overstepping his limits of authority.¹⁹³ He categorically stated that it had no objection in adhering to the wishes of the donor of teaching 'Ordoo', Persian, Arabic and writing as long as it is 'secular'. However, principally the government was in favor of promoting English and vernacular education, and believed that students should expend their energies in learning English.

Its contention was not just over the medium of education, the *zamindars* were also negotiating with the colonial state over retaining their control over the schools. In another case, the Deputy Magistrate of the Sub Division of Behar, Syud Zainoodeen Hossein Khan in 1862 demanded that government should contribute an amount equal for the establishment of the school without the condition of regulation and interference by

¹⁹¹ From W.S Atikson, Esq Director of Public Instruction to Secretary of Government of Bengal, No. 2788; From J Sanders, Esq., Officiating Inspector of School, North West Division, to the Director of Public Instruction - (No 448 dated the 25th November 1862, BSA

¹⁹² Extract of a letter no 450, dated the 25th November 1862, from J Sanders, Esq Officiating Inspector of School, Northwest division to the Secretary to the Local Committee of Public Instruction, Tirhoot.

¹⁹³ From G. D Gordon esq, off Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Director of Public instruction Fort William 16th December 1862.

them.¹⁹⁴ Even on this issue, the officers were divided amongst themselves. The Collector of Patna was in favor of conceding to the request of Syud Zainoodeen Hossein Khan because of his influence in the community that had ensured enrollment and participation by the locals who were otherwise indifferent and even hostile to the effort of the government. Although he could not find the exact reason for the demand of autonomy by the locals 'it may be that they distrust the Government system of teaching or of supervision, and they think that they themselves have a closer interest in the matter than any Government Servant would have, will be able to manage the school better, or it may simply arise out a natural desire for independence of action'.¹⁹⁵ However, Fallon disagreed with the collector.¹⁹⁶ Lauding the effort of Syud Zainoodeen Hossein Khan and other *zamindars* like Khuda Bux and Syed Imdad Ali for promoting English education that refused by the locals- due to the difference between the government and the people of 'language, habit and feeling'-. Fallon argued that the community does not have the expertise to run a school on their own and under no condition can the government let go its control over an establishment if it is providing them with grant in aid. The regulation and control ensured maintenance of accounts, funds, inspection, examination and decision regarding the books and reports regarding 'nature and course of instruction, the adequacy of local management, the attendance and proficiency of the scholars, the qualification of the masters and the state of the school'. Even the Director of Public instruction of West Bengal Atikson returned the appeal saying that the fear of interference by the government was unfounded as under no circumstance it was planning to restrict the study of Arabic.¹⁹⁷

Even the local response to the colonial schools was lukewarm. These schools flourished in those areas where *zamindars* supported the colonial officers. Amongst Gaya, Chapra, Nowadah, Patna, Dharbhnga, Champaran, Aurangabad, Tirhoot, Seetamurhee, Saran and

¹⁹⁴ From R. P Jenkins Esq, Officiating Commissioner of Patna Division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal , Revenue Department (no-184, dated Patna 1st June, 1869); From Syud Zainoodeen Hossein Khan the Deputy Magistrate of the Sub Division of Behar, to the Magistrate of Patna, April 1869.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ From S W Fallon, Inspector of School Northwest division to the director of Public instruction, (No 741, dated Dinapore, the 12th March 1869, BSA.

¹⁹⁷ From S C Bayley, Esq, Magistrate of Patna Division, to the Commissioner of the Patna division, 5th May 1869.

Sasaram the reception varied depending on their location and the investment by the local *zamindars*. While the condition of government schools in towns like Seetamurhee, Saran and Sasaram, Aurangabad were in abysmal state, Patna and Darbhanga were doing well in terms of reception and the enrollment in government schools. Patna had a self supported school and Dharbhnaga had a school in each and every village supported by the Raj.¹⁹⁸

However, despite this long arduous process of reconfiguration, the government found it difficult to convince both *zamindars* and the local population to accept new schools, teachers and curriculum. The officiating Commissioner of the Patna Division R. P Jenkin explaining the reason for low acceptance of government's education programs in the report on 'Progress of education in Patna Division' to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in 1868 by saying:

I beg to notice a very manifest reluctance on the part of the subscribers, to private schools such as that of Bihar, to be placed under the supervision of the Education Department. I cannot account for the cause of such reluctance, but i know that it exists most strongly; so strongly indeed, that they will rather forego monetary aid from the Government than accept the interference of the Office of the Education Department.¹⁹⁹

The category of Muhammadan Education

In this section, I will argue that the colonial government averted the discontent with the colonial structure of schooling by creating division on the basis of religion. I will extend the argument made in the preceding section of the chapter on the teaching languages on the basis of religion in other words teaching Hindi to Hindus and Urdu to Muslims.

¹⁹⁸ From J. W Dalrymple, EsQ, Commissioner of the Patna Division to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal- (No.223, dated the 20th August 1860) BSA.

¹⁹⁹ From R. P Jenkins, Esq, Officiating Commissioner of the Patna Division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, -(number. 278 dated Patna, the 19th September 1968) page number 4 , BSA

Along with making Hindi the language of Hindus and Urdu the language of Muslims, the government also conceptualized the idea of ‘Muhammadan education’.²⁰⁰

The idea behind conceptualizing the idea of Muhammadan education was to address the ‘backwardness’ of Muslims in the field of education and in employment. The reports of the colonial officers argued that the cause behind the backwardness of the Muslims is their reluctance to attend government’s schools, making them lag behind their co-religionists. Thus in order to address the issue of education among the Muslims, the government of Bihar decided to open denominational schools.

Two denominational schools were opened for Muhammadans in Calcutta: Collinaga Branch School and Anglo Persian Branch School for Muhammadans. Instead of opening more denominational schools, the government brought in mofussil schools within the jurisdiction of the government to further their agenda to improve the response of the Muslim community to English education. Within these schools, the children were to be taught Arabic, Urdu and English. Persian and Bengali as a medium of instruction were abolished as the former was now not an official language and Bengali could be learnt out of schools.

Along with these denominational schools, separate books and literature, catering to the needs of the Muslim community were drafted.²⁰¹ The plan was to eventually replace the Persian character books with English style of composition. The idea of increasing Muhammadan representation in the education department was further extended by ensuring the employment of Muhammadan inspectors in area where there was a substantial Muhammadan population.²⁰² In addition to these, Muhammadan Educational Committees were formed in different provinces such Madras, Bombay, Bengal, North West Province and Oudh to administer the management of Muhammadan endowment.

²⁰⁰ From J. Sutcliffe, EsQ., M. A., Member of the Madurssah Committees, to R. H. Wilson, Esq., Officiating Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal, -(No.975, dated Calcutta, the 8th November 1871). BSA

²⁰¹ From H. Blochmann, EsQ., M. A., Assistant Professor of the Calcutta Madurssah, to J. Sutcliffe, EsQ., M.A., Principal to the Calcutta Madrussah, - (dated Calcutta, the 9th October 1871). BSA

²⁰² From –C.E. Buckland, EsQ., Secretary to the Govt of Bengal, General Dept., to All the Commissioners of Divisions. Nos. 51-59T.-G., dated Darjeeling, the 13th June 1894. BSA

National Muhammadan Association was formed as one such Educational Committees that administered the divestment of funds within Bengal.²⁰³

However, these associations, literature and institutions to address backwardness in employment could not make the colonial idea of learning that was linked to employment. There were divisions amongst the Muslim community over the colonial perception of education. Even the Muhammadan Associations was divided amongst themselves on the content of education. There were two factions in National Mohammedan Associations. One faction headed by Mr. Amil Ali was in support of English education, and the other faction wanted to concentrate more on religious education.²⁰⁴ I argue that this division reflected the contestation of the colonial idea of education. Those in support of the colonial idea of education were accepting of English as a language that will lead to the advancement of the Muslim community but those emphasizing on religious education perceived it beyond being an employee in the government department.

In fact, in Bihar many such madarsas were opened by the local *zamindars* to focus more on religions and Arabic education. *Al Punch* a popular Urdu weekly published from Bihar, reported in detail about the course content and teaching of these madarsas.²⁰⁵ Most of these madarsas emphasized on religious education. Some others also included English education in their syllabus. These madarsas along with being critical of the colonial schools also differed with the educational institutions set up along the lines of the colonial schools like Aligarh to encourage English education while retaining studies in Arabic and theology.

The clash between two visions of education can be understood through a meeting that was held when the widow of a *Sharif* of Bihar donated her income to promote religious education. The resolution known as *waqfnama* read:

²⁰³ From P. Nolan, EsQ, *Secretary to the Muhammadan Educational Committee* to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department, Dated Calcutta, the 30th July, 1896. BSA

²⁰⁴ Jata Shankar Jha, *Aspects of the History of Modern Bihar*, Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute. 1988. Pp 74-113.

²⁰⁵ Ibid

We need education and also etiquette. We read much but did not get the (juice) of education. The new education did not reach its blessings to us. It did not change our habits though we put in years in study. We read but for the results... We have not paid due attention how to lead our life; we have not yet learnt to hate falsehood and back-biting. We have seen many M. A. s who are more degraded than ignorant. They have neither the impress of learning nor the skill, just the ego that they are pleaders. Not the light of learning in their heads. They indulge in cock-fighting. And unhesitatingly visit the prostitutes. We do not hate perjury; to steal and lies have become our character. What use is this education which does teach the lesson of humanity. O, those going (for enrolment) to Aligarh please tell this to the Syed... Tell my opinion also to Mehadi and Nazir Ahmad... If you concerned about ignorance and also habits, we need moral trainings as we as (formal) education..

206

The *Waqfnama* record of her donation is highlighting the limits of the colonial education. It is an indictment on Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and likes of him who promoted English education. According the *waqfnama* English education was merely about collecting Degrees without educating the pupils about the 'proper' way to lead life which prevents them from vices like 'back-biting and falsehoods'. In fact, it goes to the extent of accusing the benefactors of English education as people who indulge in cock-fights and prostitution. Their main point of emphasis is retaining religious education, which would ensure character building along with material advancements that follows English education.

It is important to note that the *waqfnama* is not a complete rejection of the colonial rule and its education system. It is rather highlighting the incompleteness of it by saying that formal education is not enough; education should also aim to build character and morals. Even the madarsas that were established in Bihar were structured like the colonial

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 111

schools with a system of reward, fees and classes. The only difference was an emphasis on religious education which was linked to the character of the pupil.

An interesting aspect of these enterprises was the absence of Urdu; it was not even a part of their syllabus. In fact, it was only the colonial enterprises where Urdu vernacular was created and Urdu teachers were appointed to teach Muslim students. In these schools and institutions Urdu was taught as the language of Muslims. However, the low enrollment rate in the colonial schools and the intransigence of the local allies of the colonial state on issues like the content of the syllabus suggests that till the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Muslims still held on to religious education and Arabic learning. Their attachment to Arabic as opposed to giving primacy to English education - a means of ensuring a place in government offices - further suggests that they viewed education and learning as mentioned in the *waqfannam* as means to improve the morals and character of the man as opposed to just acquiring a degree. I argue that for Urdu to be perceived as the language of the Muslim community- around which a movement in the twentieth century was started to retain its status as the official language- the colonial conception of the knowledge had to take roots.

Conclusion

This chapter focused upon the changes brought in the indigenous education system through schools, teachers and textbook. Colonial schools excluded a vast section of the students. The aspirations of becoming a professional or a government employee was reserved for a few students. The remaining was to continue with their traditional occupation. The textbook and teachers changed the idea of knowledge. The teachers through textbooks focused more on sciences instead of literature. Moreover this was taught by supplanting teachers and textbooks from the North West provinces, Lucknow and Banaras. Not only indigenous teachers, the mainstay of the indigenous education system were replaced but in the name of the vernacular, the languages and dialects of Bihar were also replaced with Hindi.

They tried to condense the literary culture in one language, Hindi. In this process, they sidelined the regional script Kaithi and the spoken languages. However, the most

significant change was in the perception and definition of Urdu. Earlier Urdu was used interchangeably with Hindustani. The ambit of Hindustani was wider than Urdu, it included different languages such as Braj Bhasha. However, after a long debate, 'Urdu' was preferred over Hindustani. Urdu instead of Urdu/Hindustani meant a language of Muslims.

Since these changes were too abrupt and too unfamiliar the community consisting of *zamindars* and the parents of the pupils were resistant to the colonial conception of education. The chapter reads the division of language along the lines of religion making Hindi/Hindu and Urdu/Muslim and creation of Muhammadan category as an attempt by the colonial state to thrust their idea of education on people. However, the project was incomplete till the nineteenth century because within the Muslim community there were voices which proffered contestation to the colonial idea of education.

Chapter Three

Urdu Public: *Ecumene* to print

This chapter studies the coverage of events, reports and opinion pieces in a popular bilingual weekly of late nineteenth century Patna called the *Indian Chronicle* in order to understand the characteristics and composition of the Urdu print ‘public’ shaped and constituted by the weekly. It will attempt an understanding of the socio-economic background of the employees and its editor. The aim will be to map the social category of people who started engaging with print or found avenues in print in late nineteenth century Bihar.

The *Indian Chronicle*, started from Patna in 1881 by an Anglo- Indian, ran for four years until 1885 and set the trend for a growing print readership in Bihar. Before the *Indian Chronicle*, most weeklies were either government mouthpieces or were extremely short lived. An example of a notice issued by the weekly during the important festival of *Durga Pooja* illustrates how the weekly had managed to build a sustained, accountable readership in nineteenth century Bihar. In the notice, readers are told that they could send their articles, payments and advertisements to the manager. It also cautioned readers about possible delays in issue availability and requested them to avoid arriving at hasty conclusions. It weekly explained that as most people who worked for the weekly were Hindus; they would take leave during *pooja* leading to unavoidable delays.²⁰⁷

By such a study, this chapter broadly departs from two primary strands of scholarship on print. One strand which traces an uninterrupted formation of a Hindi public sphere with the coming of print or in other words assumes an immediate dislodging of Urdu as the chosen medium of the elite literati.²⁰⁸ The chapter contends that Urdu continued being the medium of the ‘public’ and even by the late nineteenth century it was yet to emerge as a

²⁰⁷ Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979. “Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna.” *Ma’asir*. No. 3: 16-18. The chapter draws upon contents of the weekly (November 1886) republished by Ma’asir and edited by one of the foremost Urdu literary critic and researcher Qazi Abdul Wadood (1894-1970). He also served as the head of the Anjuman Tarrqi Urdu branch in Patna, an association that was set up to promote Urdu.

²⁰⁸ Francesca Orsini in the *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* deploys Jurgen Habermas’s theoretical framework of Public Sphere to argue that print was one of the significant factors in creating a Hindi Public Sphere. See Francesca Orsini. 2002. *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

symbol of any particular religious community.²⁰⁹ This chapter also critically engages with another strand of scholarship on print that argues that the shrinking of geographical boundaries through print led to the emergence of a ‘urban provinciality’ and made Urdu a ‘cosmopolitan’ and a ‘modern’ language.²¹⁰

The chapter understands the role of print by tracing the changes and continuities from ‘pre-print public’ defined as *ecumene* by C. A Bayly.²¹¹ While tracing the changes and continuities from *ecumene* to print, I argue that the first phase of print while dissolving geographical boundaries, established new boundaries by restricting access to print and by heralding ‘new’ notions of morality. Taking *tazkhira* as a site of *ecumene*, the chapter further argues that early Urdu literary sphere was not only inclusive of people from varied backgrounds but was also more accepting of people with ‘morally unacceptable’ traits.

²⁰⁹ According to political scientist Paul R Brass this period was marked by languages becoming ‘multi congruent symbols’ through which ‘elites’ manipulated the ‘masses’ while crafting two potent tools- religion and language- to promote ‘communal’ and ‘national’ sentiments. The process of linking religion with language and eventually nation began in early nineteenth century Banaras and owe its origins to the father of the Hindi movement Bharatendu Harishchandra. The process that started in Banaras was eventually shaped by the middle of the twentieth century with the formation of the ‘Hindi Public Sphere.’ While Hindi was associated with the ‘Hindu’ identity, Urdu was shaped around the Muslim identity from the early twentieth century with the formation of the Urdu Defense Association in 1900 by Mohsin Ul Mulk (1837-1907) -a close associate of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) the founder of the Mohammed Aligarh College. Mulk formed the association to ‘safeguard’ the interest of Muslims against the decision of the government to replace Urdu with Hindi as the official language in the United Provinces. See Paul R Brass. 1974. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, London: Cambridge University Press; Christopher R King. 1994. *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in the Nineteenth Century in North India*. Delhi, Calcutta, Madras: Oxford University Press; Vasudha Dalmia. 1997. *The Nationalization of Hindu Tradition*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

²¹⁰ David Boyk analyses an Urdu weekly, *Al Punch* to argue that the newspaper connected readers and writers in Patna to nearby regions thus making certain spaces ‘provincial urban’. See David Boyk. 2018. “Collaborative Wit.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1): 89–106; Similar arguments have been made by Jennifer Dubrow in her analysis of *Avadh Akhbar* to argue that print literature were the sites where protocols of modernity were worked out. See Jennifer Dubrow. 2019. *Cosmopolitan Dreams: the Making of Modern Literary Culture in Colonial South Asia*. New Delhi: Permanent Black; However, it is pertinent to point out that in Bengal print also accommodated people from diverse backgrounds see Aninditha Ghosh. 1998. “Cheap Books, ‘Bad Books: Contesting Print-Cultures in Colonial Bengal.” *South Asia Research, Sage Publications*, 18. 2

²¹¹ C. A Bayly. 1999. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. London: Cambridge University Press. 182-185

The chapter locates the *Chronicle* vis-a-vis the emergence of the ‘middle classes’ associated with print.²¹² The chapter strives to understand varied engagements of diverse social groups with different languages and argues that a well-defined consolidated group was yet to arrive in Bihar. It studies the formation of these groups post the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 that gave administrative responsibilities to *zamindars* of the new administrative units.²¹³ It further reads the interests of these groups through the 1857 rebellion and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885.²¹⁴ The chapter argues that in the wake of the 1857 revolt, the divide between landed elites and the ‘lower order’ was sharpened. The elites actively distanced themselves from the rebels and the weekly became a means through which they bargained with the colonial state to reconsider the 1885 Tenancy Act that was drafted to give rights to tenants.²¹⁵ The chapter demonstrates that the *Indian*

²¹² Mostly terms like ‘middle class’, ‘professional class’, ‘intelligentsia’ are used to understand the analyse the affiliations of different groups with language. Hindi’s formative phase has been dealt by Vasudha Dalmia in her book *The Nationalization of the Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras*. Dalmia traces the process of making Hindi the national language, a move initiated by Bharatendu Harischandra (1850-85). By 1870 the Hindi movement gained momentum from Banaras and had spread to Allahabad and the North Western Province. She argues that Bharatendu’s location in the holy city, along with the support of the Maharaja, played a significant role in initiating a process of linking Hindi language with religion and subsequently the nation. The second phase of the Hindi movement has been studied extensively by Orsini. She claims that by the early twentieth century, the Hindu public took a definite shape and moved beyond the close knit circle of Bharatendu and his associates based in Allahabad, Kanpur and Calcutta to different cities. She further argues that the emergence of the journal *Sarasvati* under Mahavir Prasad Divedi’s editorship (1903-20) not only helped standardise Hindi but also made Hindi commercially viable through its tie ups with government affiliated schools and public libraries. The emergence of *Sarasvati* in Allahabad also paved the way for the centre of Hindi journalism to be shifted to the United Province from its previous seat in Calcutta. This shift also enabled the spread of Hindi to various cities like Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Delhi, Central Provinces and Bihar by the early twentieth century. In the context of Bihar Hintendra Patel has used the term ‘intelligentsia’ as an educated class that supported the ‘Hindi’ ‘movement. See, Hitendra Patel. 2011. *Communalism and Intelligentsia in Bihar, 1870-1930*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan. 24-29. One of the limitations of the analysis is using a generic category of ‘professional class’, ‘middle class’ to understand their support for the Hindi movement. I argue that social compositions of these categories were extremely fuzzy, especially during the late nineteenth century, considered an early phase of the Hindi movement.

²¹³ The introduction of the Permanent Settlement Act in 1793 resulted in the institution of *zamindars*. Hereditary chieftains with large landholding became *zamindars*. With the passage of Government Acts in 1860 and the establishment of Municipalities, these *zamindars* were chosen to head these institutions. They were also entrusted with the responsibility of running schools that were opened in these districts. See Surendra Gopal. 2018. *Mapping Bihar from Medieval to Modern Times*. New York: Routledge. 96-97

²¹⁴ The Permanent Settlement Act gave landholders complete control of the land while the Bengal Tenancy Act reinstated the rights of the *ryots* after escalating tensions between the landed class and peasants. For the tension between *ryots* and landlords see. Anand Yang.1990. *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793–1920*. Berkley and Los Angles: University of California Press. 181-192

²¹⁵ For the Tenancy Act see Peter Robb. 1988. “Law and Agrarian Society in India: The Case of Bihar and the Nineteenth-Century Tenancy Debate.” *Modern Asian Studies*, No. 23:19-354; Anand Yang. *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793–1920*. Berkley and Los Angles: University of California Press.

Chronicle was the vehicle through which the landed elites politically and culturally distanced themselves from the 'lower order'.

Urdu *Ecumene*

In order to understand the changes brought about by print, this section will elaborate on the characteristics of the pre-print Urdu public. I have drawn on C.A Bayly's formulation of *ecumene* for this purpose. Bayly argues that a culture of political debates existed in north India before the emergence of newspapers and public associations. The guardians of these *ecumene*, the Hindustani writing literati, presented the view of the *bazaar* people and artisans and their connections transcended religious, caste and sectarian boundaries without necessarily dissolving them. Other scholars, such as Sandria Freitag, have elaborated on the various facets of such an *ecumene* like open air meetings and public gatherings through which contemporary values, ideas and rules were collectively formulated.²¹⁶ Arguing along similar lines, Farhat Hasan also contests the notion of 'public' being a colonial construct. He takes us back to the Mughal period and presents spaces such as *mushairas* and *melas* as sites where critical public opinions were discussed and shaped.²¹⁷

This chapter will undertake a close examination of the Urdu/Hindustani *ecumene*. It originated and matured amidst political turbulence and moved with poets and writers in their search for patronage. These poets reflected on critical political shifts and their verses were pregnant with tides of change. One such popular genre was the *Shahr E Ashob*, an ode to a declining city.²¹⁸

Poets from Delhi, Agra and Patna mourned the loss of livelihood in their *Shahr E Ashob*. The ruin caused by Nadir Shah's invasion (b.1688) in Delhi was lamented by two major Mughal poets, Mirza Rafi 'Sauda' (1713-1781) and Mir Taqi 'Mir,' (1724-1810). Other poets from Bihar who wrote *Shahr E Ashob* were Shah Ayat Allah Jauhari (1714-1796) and Shiekh Ghulam Husain Ali *Rasikh* (c, 1749-1823). Both *Rasikh* and *Jahuri* were

²¹⁶ Sandria Freitag. 2007. "Introduction. South Asia." *Journal of South Asian Studies*.4:1: 1-13.

²¹⁷ Farhat Hasan. 2005. "Forms of Civility and Publicness in Pre-British India." In *Civil Society, Public Sphere and Citizenship: Dialogues and Perceptions*, edited by Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld. New Delhi: Sage Publications Private Limited. 84-106

²¹⁸ For *Shahr E Ashob* see. Fritz Lehmann. 2018. "Urdu Literature and Mughal Decline." *Asian Studies Center*. 6 (2): 125-31; Frederick Louis Lehman. 1967. "The Eighteenth Century Transition in India: Responses of Some Bihar Intellectuals." PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin.

poets who were closely associated with the *khankah* culture. While Rasikh's compositions reflected his *Sufi* thoughts, Shah Ayat Allah Jauhari headed the Khanqah Junidiyyah in Phulwari Sharif, a village eight miles west of Patna.²¹⁹

Shahr E Ashob, written in Urdu, mapped the drastic changes brought forth by the growing political control of the English while expressing a deep yearning to return to the glory days of the *nawabs*. This genre of Urdu poetry also symbolised a significant break from the Persian literary tradition.²²⁰ The break represented the ability of poetry to reason and reflect on the rapid transitions witnessed by poets during their lifetimes. From blaming the *nawabs*, to finding solace in religion and sometimes even accusing the *lalas* and *babus* -indicative of the power wielded by Hindu administrators during the times of the *nawabs* in Bengal- the poets attempted to find solace in a variety of reasons. Along with lamenting the decline of erstwhile aristocrats, *Shahr E Ashob* also talked about poverty and the terrible penury people faced in the eighteenth century.

While *Shahr E Ashob* was the genre through which responses to colonialism were documented, *tazkhira* are accounts or histories of the early Urdu literary cultures. These were notebooks, memoirs or stories of Urdu poets. In their *tazkhira*, they wrote about their fellow poets, their histories, about the milieu and sometimes even their perspectives on Urdu poetry. Like *Shahr E Ashob*, even *tazkhiras* were a part of the 18th century *ecumene*.

Tazkhira Shorish is an account of Urdu poets of eighteenth century Bihar and their social lives.²²¹ Written by *Sufi* poet, Ghulam Husain Shorish, it delineates the diverse elements that comprised pre print Urdu/Hindustani *ecumene*. Extensive kinship like networks was a feature of the *ecumene* where participants perhaps knew each other personally. Writers of *tazkhira* were participants of *mushairas*, who were in turn related to each other by teacher-pupil relations (*ustad-shagird*). Thus, *tazkhira* gave a brief sketch of a poet,

²¹⁹ Frederick Louis Lehman. 1967. "The Eighteenth Century Transition in India: Responses of Some Bihar Intellectuals." PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin .

²²⁰ Fritz Lehmann. 2018. "Urdu Literature and Mughal Decline." *Asian Studies Center*. 6 (2): 125–31

²²¹ Ghulam Husain Shorish. 2015. Translated by Mohd. Asim Aazmi. *Tazkhira-E-Shorish*. New Delhi: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language. 87-100, 199-200, 216-219, 322.

including his family history, ancestral and pen name, manuscript compositions and even temperament and behavioral traits.

Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam, were amongst those mentioned by Shorish as Urdu poets. Gatherings of Urdu poets were a regular feature of the Mughal court. Similarly, there are numerous examples of governors and administrators in Bihar who were also well known as Persian and Urdu poets.²²²

However, the Urdu literary sphere was not limited to just administrators and emperors but included people from diverse social, economic and religious backgrounds. There was a poet named Ameen, known for his *saleqa* (decent behavior), whose ancestry could be traced to Kashmir. Shorish points out that the audience of *mushairas* included both *kammene* and *sharif* (wayward and well-bred). Some poets carried *two* kinds of poems—one mocking in tone and the other appreciative. Depending on the favor to be garnered from a listener, the poet used to choose which one to recite. Listeners of *majlis* were equally diverse as it drew from both ‘the lower order Hindus and Muslims’.²²³

There were numerous Urdu poets in the eighteenth century known for violating the norm or code of conduct known as *adab* associated with Mughal culture.²²⁴ One such ‘wayward’ Urdu poet was Mir Muhammad Jafar, who gave himself the title of ‘Zatalli’ meaning ‘blabber’.²²⁵ Zatalli is known as the first Urdu prose writer famous for his political satires against the Mughals expressed through sexually explicit themes.

Zatalli was not an ordinary poet and was employed in the Mughal courts by the emperor and nobles. Raziuddin Aquil, in his description of ‘improper acts’ in Mughal India, provides a detailed account of Zatalli’s compositions and argues that his sexually explicit poems represented his angst and commentary against a weakening Mughal empire.²²⁶

²²² See chapter one

²²³ Ibid

²²⁴ Barbara Daly Metcalf. 1984. *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*. London: Princeton University Press. 1-23

²²⁵ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 2008. *Burning Rage, Icy Scorn: The Poetry of Ja'far Zatalli*. Lecture under the auspices of the Hindi-Urdu Flagship, University of Texas at Austin, September 24, 2008

²²⁶ Raziuddin Aquil. 2017. *The Muslim Question: Understanding Islam and Indian History*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House India. 133-137

According to Aquil, the ‘vulgar’ and unacceptable compositions of Zatalli symbolised the last years of Aurangzeb when emperors were considered incapable of ruling. Since he wrote in the second decade of nineteenth century, an early phase of Urdu, some of his compositions were in *Rekhta* form where some Persian couplets were followed by Urdu while being interspersed with *Hindavi* words.

The presence of *ajooaba* (strange), *kammene* and *sharif* (wayward and well-bred) and the ‘obscene’ court poet Zatalli was an integral part of early Urdu literary tradition and *ecumene* and was included in *tazkhiras*. However, it was not that their transgressions were not punished. Zatalli was removed from his position as court poet but his presence in the court meant that the Urdu literary sphere was accommodative of what was considered ‘wayward’ or ‘in violation of norms’.

In the following sections, I will trace how the features delineated above, such as - Hindustani/ Urdu as a medium of expression, presence of a well-knit group, personalised descriptions in *tazkhira*, inclusion of supposed wayward ‘poets’ like Zatalli and inclusion of the ‘lower order Hindus and Muslims’ changed with the the onset of print. I will expand on this point employing the example of the *Indian Chronicle*. However, before exploring the onset of print, it will be useful to understand the formation of ‘literati’ or ‘intelligentsia’ associated with print.

The ‘Literati’

To understand the composition of the ‘literati’, I will be discussing *darbari* lists.²²⁷ Anand C Yang, in the context of *darbars* held by the British officers in Saran (a district in Bihar), describes attendees as “individuals signaled out for inclusion in the *darbari* list, maintained in every locality, represented the people whom the government repeatedly aided, supported, honored and consulted: in short, group recognized for its local connection.”²²⁸ A list of *darbar* attendees, who were “notables of the towns and cities”, is

²²⁷ The Darbar List Proper, Patna Division, 12587.

²²⁸ Anand Yang.1990. *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793–1920*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; C. A Bayly has also argued that the *darbar* list is a significant source to understand the compositions of notables in Allahabad. See. C. A Bayly. 1971. “ Local Control in Indian Towns—the case of Allahabad 1880—1920.” *Modern Asian Studies*. 5, 4: 289-311

an important source to understand 'literati' composition and their association with language and culture. Employing such lists available from the early nineteenth century, this section also attempts a mapping of the socio-economic location of the early key players in the realm of culture and literature. The list provides details such as the name of the *darbari*, father's name, caste, occupation and age and reason for their mention in the list.²²⁹

Darbari lists provide a framework within which a weekly like the *Indian Chronicle*, and its associated personnel, could be located. It provides the characteristics and composition of the 'notables' by using Permanent Settlement Act as a departure point.²³⁰ In his study of the settlement act, colonial officer B. H. Baden-Powell observes, "the years 1772-1781 may be regarded as a second stage, during which the essential features of modern organisation-the 'district,' with its collector and his assistants, the revenue 'division,' with its 'commissioner' (to supervise a group of districts), and the board of revenue (in direct communication with the provincial government)-were gradually, and with many retrogressions, evolved."²³¹

In Bengal and Bihar, the act gave *zamindars* complete control over their tenants in lieu of a fixed amount paid consistently to the colonial government.²³² The Act benefitted the big *zamindars* of Bihar which included Darbhanga in Dharbhang, Bettiah in Champaran, Hatwa in Saran, Dumraon in Shahabad and Tikari in Gaya.²³³ Just below these big *zamindars* were smaller *zamindars* who suffered due to the resumption of *jagirs* and rent-free lands such as *al tamga*, *jaagir*, *madad e mash* as a result of a set of similar acts.²³⁴

²²⁹ The Darbar List Proper, Patna Division, 12587.

²³⁰ Surendra Gopal. 2018. *Mapping Bihar from Medieval to Modern Times*. New York: Routledge. 96-97; For the role of intellectuals on the land question in Bengal see Kalyan Kumar Sen Gupta. 1974. "Bengali Intelligentsia and the Politics of Rent, 1873-1885." *Social Scientist*. No. 2: 27-34; Amalendu De. 1977. "Bengali Intelligentsia's Attitudes to the Permanent Settlement." *Social Scientist*. No. 8: 18-40

²³¹ B. H. Baden-Powell. 1895. "The Permanent Settlement of Bengal." *The English Historical Review*. No: 38. 276-292; For other works on the permanent settlement see Hetukar Jha. "Permanent Settlement in Bihar." *Social Scientist*. No. 1: 53-57

²³² Anand A Yang. 1998. *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and the Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar*. London: University of California Press. 69-77

²³³ Ibid

²³⁴ *Al tamgha*: land given to nobles, *jaagir*: tax free land given to a select few and it was taxable; *mada e mash*: land given to poor, hospices and temples. These were tax free lands; Irshad, N. Ahmad. "Jihad E Azad: 1857 ke pehle" [War for Freedom: Before 1857]. *Khuda Bakhsh Library Journal*. no. 150 (Oct-Dec 2007): 1-5.

However, these economic setbacks were offset by other privileges and political responsibilities they were entrusted with.

They became administrators of those districts formed in 1793 within the Bengal Presidency under the English collectorate after the Battle of Buxar (1764). Tirhut, Saran, Purnea, Behar, Bhagalpur and Shahabad were the districts formed in Bihar.²³⁵ Along with these districts, Patna continued to remain an important political and economic center. The revenue, civil and judicial administration of these districts were given to these aristocrats.

There were different ways by which big *zamindars* and *darbar* attendees maintained their area of control. Big *zamindars* organised through fairs and festive celebrations such as *dusshera* which was held during the beginning of every agricultural year. Through these public gatherings and celebrations, *zamindars* exhibited their control over the *ryots* and reinforced their proximity to the colonial state. There were also members of committees and bodies. Some committees were formed for social reform addressing issues like reduction of marriage expenses.²³⁶ Other bodies such as the Bihar Landholders Association, education committees and municipal committees were formed to assist the colonial state in administration. While big *zaminadars* maintained their political position through investing in these bodies, associations and festivals, I argue that the notables mentioned in *darbar* lists retained their power and stature by investing in cultural enterprises such as libraries, educational institutions and newspapers.

The *darbari* lists mention individuals such as Moulvi Khudabaksh Khan, Shamsul Ulm Maulvi Syed Imdad and Maulvi Syed Mohammad Khan (Shad) Bahadur. Moulvi Khudabaksh Khan founded the Khudabaksh Library known for its rare manuscript collection. He received his education from Calcutta and started practicing law in Patna. He was the chief judge at the Hyderabad court from 1894 to 1898 and later became a government pleader and the first non-official Chairman of the Patna Municipality and Patna District Road Committee. His wife, Jamila Khudabaksh, was the student of Shad

²³⁵ Surendra Gopal. 2018. *Mapping Bihar from Medieval to Modern Times*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributor. 88-97.

²³⁶ Anand Yang. 1989. *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793–1920*. University of California Press. 181-191

Azimabadi and an Urdu poetess. Shamsul Ulm Maulvi Syed Imdad was one of the finest Urdu writers of the eighteenth century and was well known for his literary works that included a biography of the Queen Victoria, a philosophical work, a treatise on floriculture, agriculture and plagues. His sons Mr Syed Ali Imam (1869-1932) and Hassan Imam (1871-1933) were famous Barristers of Bihar. Shad Azimabadi was an Urdu poet, a Magistrate and Municipal Commissioner of Bihar. In addition to these, he also received a pension from the colonial state. It is also pertinent to note how ancestors of most of the attendees had been living in Bihar and also held significant administrative posts. Syed Imada Asar's father was the Subordinate Judge of Arrah in 1857 and Khudabaksh's family was from Chapra where his father was a lawyer and a collector of manuscripts which was handed over to Khudabaksh.

Along with these administrator aristocrats, heads of *Sufi* shrines were also close to the colonial state. They represented another axis of power as they wielded considerable influence in society due to their cultural location. Like the above mentioned notables, they were close to powerful authorities since Mughal times as the *sufi* shrines and heads such as Shah Syed Latafat Husain received patronage from the Mughals. This practice survived even during colonialism and their proximity to the state was strengthened during the 1857 revolt. The *darbar* list mentions Shah Syed Fariuddin Ahmad, a Syed and a priest from Manair, who was the *sajjadanish* of the famous shrine of Maner. He was recognized for his support to the government during the revolt and for his contribution during the plague. Along with Shah Syed Fariuddin, support from other *darbar* attendees was also acknowledged. In addition to these groups, the list also mentions those who moved to Hyderabad to get salaried jobs. For instance, Hafeez Syed Nizam Reza, a Syed in Bankipore entered the Nizam's government service, was Judge of the High Court (Deccan) and was conferred with the title Nawaz Sikandar Nawab Jung Khan Bahadur.²³⁷

However, it was not that employment opportunities were completely absent in Bihar. The *darbar* list describes 'brahmans of Benares' as a caste group who worked in government educational institutions. Pandit Bihari Lal Chaube was one of such brahman

²³⁷ Kavita Datla has shown how Hyderabad provided for Urdu knowing intellectuals see Kavita Datla. 2013. *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial Hyderabad*. University of Hawai'i Press.

who was formerly the 'Head Pundit' in Patna College Collegiate School. He was a Sanskrit scholar and an author of works which were approved as school syllabi and text books. Pandit Chaube was also head member of the Asiatic school. Another caste group who were a visible presence in government institutions were the *kayasth*. Individuals such as Babu Gobind Chandra was leader of the Bar Association while others from the community were *vakils* (lawyer) at the Law College or professors at Patna College.

Thus, *darbari* records provide the association of different communities with Hindi and Urdu. One can infer from the records that brahmans from Benares and *kayasths* held government posts where Hindi was still supported by the brahmans. Urdu, on the other hand, was mostly shaped and identified with what can be called 'traditional aristocracy'.²³⁸ Khudabaksh, Imdad Asar and Shad Azimabadi were what can be called traditional 'elites' whose lineage could be traced back to officials who held significant administrative posts in the office of the Bengal *nawab* and the Mughals. These individuals established institutions and associations with the assistance of the British.

Print in Bihar

A significant body of academic scholarship has established how print played a critical role in creating a cohesive identity.²³⁹ However, the accounts of Urdu weeklies demonstrate that they did not continue for long and their subscription numbers were also low. *Nurul Anwar*, published from Arrah in 1850, is considered Bihar's first newspaper.

²³⁸ Other districts such as Saran, Gaya, Shahbad, Champaran, Mozafarrpur, Darbhanga mentioned in the *darbari* records were mostly *zamindar* who held administrative posts such as barristers or municipality vice chairman. These *zamindars* hailed from the brahmin and Rajput castes. Along with them, there were also *sonars* and *aggarwals* representing the merchant castes.

²³⁹ Print, along with education and salaried jobs (*chakri*) as argued by Sumit Sarkar, played a significant role in the creation of *bhadralok* identity. *Bhadralok* identity poised itself higher than the lower culture, Muslims and the lower castes. See Sumit Sarkar. 1992. "Kaliyuga', 'Chakri' and 'Bhakti': Ramakrishna and His Times." *Economic and Political Weekly*. No. 29 (Jul. 18, 1992): 1543-1559. Print also facilitated debates. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy engaged in polemics with the British and was associated with journals in Bengali, English and Persian like *Bengal Gejeti* (Bengali, 1818), *The Brahmunical Magazine* (English-Bengali, 1821), *Sambad Kaumidi* (Bengali, 1821), *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (Persian, 1822) and *Bengal Herald* (English, 1829). In fact, he closed *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* in protest against the Press Ordinance of 1823 which made the 'starting or using a press without license' a penal offence. These restrictions were directed chiefly against Indian language newspapers or those edited by Indians. Rammohan Roy's *Mirat-ul-Akbar* had to stop publication. See Ramananda Chatterjee. 1929. "Origin and Growth of Journalism among Indians." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Part 2: India (Sep., 1929) 161-168; Native Newspaper Reports Bengal 1880.

After *Nurul Anwar*, many other Urdu weeklies such as *Patna Harkara* (21st April, 1855), *Vakil Report* (May 1856), *Akhbar Bihar* (1856) were published from Bihar. They were more or less similar in their organization style, most of them were 24 pages long and divided into columns. Some of them like *Harkara* and *Akhbar Bihar* came out thrice a month i.e. on the first, eleventh and twenty first day of the month. The content of these weeklies were largely controlled by the government and none of them lasted more than two years.²⁴⁰

Even during 1857, newspapers like *Urdu Dilli Akhbar*, *Sadiqul Akhbar* played pivotal roles in disseminating information and supporting the rebels in Delhi.²⁴¹ Despite having various tensed regions in Bihar during the revolt, there was no newspaper to disseminate information even though the *wahabis*, the faction that were at the forefront of the revolt, used Urdu pamphlets to pass on information.²⁴² It can be argued that although Urdu had emerged in Bihar, people were still unfamiliar with print as a medium.

After 1857, Urdu newspapers in Bihar started breaking away from their role as tools of the state and took on more active and critical roles. This was also the time when intellectuals in Bihar were establishing links with burgeoning reform movements. For instance, *Azeemul Akhbar* was a weekly published from *Patna* in 1859. Its contents mostly comprised court news. After *Azeemul Akhbar*, an Urdu weekly came out from an organ of the Bihar Scientific Society started by Imdad Asar in Muzzafarpur.²⁴³

After the revolt, concerted efforts were initiated by Muslim elites to constructively engage with the British. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and other individuals of the ‘elite’ Muslims emerged who were open to work with the colonial state and embrace new policy

²⁴⁰ For the history of newspapers in Bihar I have referred to N. Kumar. 1971. *Bihar District Gazetteers, Journalism in Bihar (A Supplement to Bihar State Gazetteers)* Patna: Government of Bihar Gazetteers Branch ; Safdar Imam Qadri. 2015. “Bihar mein Urdu Sahafat” (Urdu Journalism in Bihar). In *Muhammad Hussain Azad ka Tanquidi Shaur aur Deeger Mazameen* (Literary Criticism and Works of Muhammad Hussain Azad) edited by Afshan Bano. New Delhi: Maktaba Jamia Limited. 141-161; Syed Muzzafar Iqbal. 1980. *Bihar mein Urdu Nasr ka Irteqa: 1857-1914*. (Genesis of Urdu prose in Bihar). Patna: Litho Press.

²⁴¹ Iqbal Husain. 1998. “The Rebel Administration in Delhi.” *Social Scientist*. No. 1/4 (Jan. - Apr., 1998): 25-38

²⁴² Qeyamuddin Ahmad. 1966. *The Wahabi Movement in India*. Calcutta: Firma.K.L. Mukhopadhyay. 307.

²⁴³ For a detailed role of the Scientific Society see V. A. Narain. 1969. “The Role of Bihar Scientific Association In The Spread Of Western Education In Bihar.” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*. 1969. 421-424.

changes such as the propagation of the English language.²⁴⁴ Like the Aligarh movement, *Akhbarul Akhyar* also worked to promote the English language.²⁴⁵ Weekly content was published from left to right instead of the usual calligraphy style of Urdu printing from right to left in order to prepare readers for their English edition. *Akhbarul Akhyar*'s editors included members from both the Hindi and Muslim communities. The weekly published life stories of Urdu poets and names of students who cleared the Indian Civil Service examination. Most importantly, it continued supporting the government like other newspapers as its aim was to foster ties between rulers and the ruled.

Preceding accounts about circulation figures and social make up of printing establishments suggest that print readership had not yet fully evolved in Bihar. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I will discuss the contents of the *Indian Chronicle* to understand the different characteristics of what can be called the 'Urdu Public' formed by the weekly.²⁴⁶

Formation of the Urdu public

The *Indian Chronicle* was a bilingual weekly started from Patna in 1881 by an Anglo-Indian and ran for four years until 1884. There were two versions - an English version known as the *Indian Chronicle* and an Urdu version known as the *Urdu Indian Chronicle*. The Urdu edition of the *Indian Chronicle* was 14 pages long and each page had three columns. For urban (*shehr*) inhabitants, the annual price was two rupees and for outsiders it was six rupees, which was later reduced to four rupees. Prices were further reduced for people who bought both English and Urdu editions. It was published and circulated on Mondays. Subscription figures of the weekly suggest that it was not

²⁴⁴ Peter Hardy. 1972. *The Muslims of British India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 146.

²⁴⁵ Safdar Imam Qadri. 2015. "Bihar mein Urdu Sahafat." (Urdu Journalism in Bihar). In *Muhammad Hussain Azad ka Tanquidi Shaur aur Deeger Mazameen* (Literary Criticism and Works of Muhammad Hussain Azad). Edited by Afshan Bano. 141-161

²⁴⁶ Native newspapers reports of 1887 show a slow emergence of print readership in Bihar. *Khastriya Patka*, *Bihar Bandhu* and *Hindi Samachar* were some of the prominent Hindi weeklies while *Aftul Alam Arra*, *Anis*, *Sharaful Akhbar* and *Al Punch* were some of the Urdu ones. Readership for these publications was as low as 150 subscriptions a week as opposed to the high readership rates in Bengal. One of the reasons is the late emergence of printing or lithographic press in Patna. Books came from Bombay, Calcutta and Sasaram as late as 1853. Native Newspaper Report 1887. National Archives of India. NAI

confined to Muslims alone. 192 Hindus, 126 Muslims and 4 Christians were registered as subscribers.²⁴⁷

In the subsequent paragraphs, I will discuss the role played by the *Chronicle* as one of the first ‘Urdu public’ weeklies in Bihar.²⁴⁸ Through a discussion of its reports, opinion pieces, and news that transcended national, international and regional boundaries, the chapter will understand the nature and formation of literati which this Urdu Anglo Urdu weekly strove to represent. It will demonstrate the role, nature and purpose of an Urdu weekly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Most of the information and reports were drawn from other Urdu and English newspapers. By doing so, it became a means through which it kept the readers abreast of latest developments. Along with political reportage, the weekly also undertook the responsibility of taking the lead in reporting on latest books and cultural events. Importantly, in the process, the weekly helped define, delimit and perpetuate the contours of an ‘ideal’ individual. Thus, readers and subscribers of the *Chronicle* were also given cues to define themselves by the books they read and the culture they subscribed to. It was a two way process, individuals were defined through the books while the books were written and read by these ‘ideal’ individuals. In others words, through opinions on arts and literature, the *Chronicle* set forth boundaries of what comprised ‘ideal’ literature, readers and writers. Along with these, the weekly also published biographical sketches of individuals who were considered archetype personalities of the late nineteenth century. They not only made forays in the field of administration and literature but they were also the ones who were known for maintaining strong ties with the colonial state. Thus, it is pertinent that we read the *Chronicle’s* extensive political and cultural reportage and opinions against the backdrop of the three significant political events mentioned earlier- the 1793 Permanent Settlements Act, the 1857 ‘rebellion’ and the 1885 Tenancy Act.

As previously discussed, the 1793 Permanent Settlements Act led to the emergence of what I call the administrative *zamindars*. These administrative *zamindars* forged strong ties with the colonial state by siding with the British during the 1857 ‘rebellion’. These

²⁴⁷ Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979. “Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna.” *Ma’asir*. No. 3: 18

²⁴⁸ I am using the terms Urdu public weekly to argue that the *Chronicle* was able introduce a culture of reading and consumption of weeklies.

ties helped them seek support of the colonial state amidst growing tensions in the village between *zamindars* and peasants and during the reinstatement of land rights to the tenants.²⁴⁹ I argue that the *Chronicle* was the means through which the emerging literati opened channels of dialogue with the colonial state and defined their identity vis-a-vis and in opposition to the *ryots* and the culture they represented. At this juncture, it would be useful to provide a brief history of the weekly.

According to Syed Badrul Ahmad (1862-1973), an advocate from Patna whose father held the post of *Bhadur*, in his autobiography *Haqeqat Bhi Kahani Bhi* (Histories and Stories) the Urdu edition of the *Indian Chronicle* weekly was one of a kind. It was known for its national and regional news along with its serious and intrepid editorials. He further mentions that the *Chronicle* was run by two advocates: Babu Basheshar Singh and Babu Guru Prasad Patna. Babu Bashishtar Singh was a lawyer and also a *zamindar* in Shahabad.²⁵⁰ Apart from them, other people involved with the weekly were from nearby *qasbahs* such as *Desna*. Post its closure, some of the people involved with the weekly started working as deputy accountants in Hyderabad and others sought work in similar enterprises involving Urdu printing. After *Indian Chronicle*, another famous Urdu weekly, *Al Punch* was started by the same group.²⁵¹

The people associated with *Al Punch* and the *Indian Chronicle* were from *qasbahs* and acquired religious education that included training in Arabic, Persian and Urdu at their homes or through teachers. Being a part of the milieu where *mushaira* and poetry was an

²⁴⁹ On the growing tension between *ryots* and *zamindars* see Yang, Anand. *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793–1920*. 206-214

²⁵⁰ Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Stories and Histories). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 455-457

²⁵¹ However, N Kumar reports that the *Indian Chronicle* began as a bilingual weekly from Patna in 1881 by an Anglo- Indian, Mr. Chick. Editorship of the newspaper was later passed on to Indians who ran the newspaper until 1885. It could mean that though the newspaper may have been started by an Anglo Indian, as with most early newspapers, later the responsibility was taken over by the emerging service gentry who were acquainted with both English and Urdu. Another interesting aspect of the *Chronicle* is its absence in any of the Native Newspapers reports. This could mean many things. The obvious could be that the newspaper was not considered seditions enough. It could also be due to the relative less importance of print in Patna. It also reflects the disparity in information collection. Colonial records are replete with information about newspapers coming from Bengal but only scattered and patchy information is available on publications from Bihar. The content and circulation of the *Chronicle* suggests that it heralded an era of readership in late nineteenth century Bihar amongst an emergent intelligentsia. See N. Kumar. 1971. *Bihar District Gazetteers, Journalism in Bihar (A Supplement to Bihar State Gazetteers)* Patna: Government of Bihar Gazetteers Branch, Revenue Department Patna. 51-52

endemic part of local culture, they were adept in Urdu poetry. However, along with this background and exposure, they also took pains to learn English by either going to Aligarh College or Calcutta University. This was the trajectory of one of the known editors of *Al Punch*, Maulvi Syed Rahimmudin, who was also associated with the *Chronicle*.²⁵²

While the ‘notables’ or attendees of the *darbar* invested in institutions or other such activities and were close allies of the state, the *Chronicle* represented and comprised of those groups who could be perceived as an emerging service gentry. Although they grew up in ‘traditional’ settings, they embraced not only English but also heralded a transition in Urdu, from patronage based poetry to print and employment in educational institutions. The people involved with print as contributors, editors, writers and managers, in case of the *Indian Chronicle*, also found employment opportunities in Patna College where they taught Urdu. Some of them also shifted their base to Hyderabad where Urdu was given official status.²⁵³ This emergence of English acquainted service gentry foraying into print and educational institutions - who also comprised the main chunk of readership of weeklies like the *Chronicle* - marks the shift from *ecumene* to print. As discussed in the previous sections of the chapter, Urdu *ecumene* that included *mela*, *mushaira* and *majlis* accommodated people from diverse economic and social backgrounds.²⁵⁴ However, ‘print public’ could only include people who could afford to pay two or six rupees to buy the weekly, were acquainted with English and worked in government institutions. An analysis of the reporting of weekly will further delineate the interest and alignments of the constituency of the *Chronicle*.

The emergent Urdu public defined itself through two significant events of the nineteenth century: the 1857 revolt and the 1885 Tenancy Act. During the course of the revolt, they distanced themselves from the rebels and appealed to the colonial state to reconsider the provisions of the Tenancy Act which according to them gave undue privileges to the *ryots*. The intelligentsia, represented by the weekly, often included administrators of the

²⁵² Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Stories and Histories). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 455-464

²⁵³ Ibid. 455-464

²⁵⁴ See chapter one.

newly formed districts who were heavily invested in land relations, particularly post the 1793 Permanent Settlements Act.

In the context of brewing tensions between peasants and *zamindars* in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the *Chronicle* responded to the 1859 and 1885 Bengal Tenancy Acts.²⁵⁵ *Zamindars* within Bihar also responded to the mounting tension by forming, perhaps the first, provincial body of Bihar, the Bihar Landholder's Association, in 1878.²⁵⁶ Since then, the association took steps to build connections with the British Parliament. In 1880, Henry Fawcett was provided monetary support for his election to the British Parliament so as to facilitate the voicing of *zamindari* concerns. Concomitantly, the Bihar Landholder's Association, along with other associations such as the British Indian Association and Indian Associations of Calcutta, organized to safeguard landholders' interests. The *Chronicle* reported and supported such initiatives. They appreciated efforts by Maharaja Darbhanga Raj in setting up an Indian Constitution Association in collaboration with the Liberty and Property Defence League (LPDL) - an organization founded in 1882 by Lord Elcho for the support of *laissez-faire* trade in Britain.²⁵⁷ However, these lobbying efforts failed to stop the passage of the 1885 Bengal Tenancy Act which provided some safeguards and recognition to tenants, at least on paper. The *Chronicle* reported that the Government of India lost the case in the High court against charges of an increase 40 to hundred per cent of their share. Leading to the implementation of the 1885 Tenancy Act which they called *ghair zarrori* (not of use) *bewaqt* (untimely).²⁵⁸

Some of the *zamindars* were also administrative post holders in the districts. The *Indian Chronicle*, along with speaking against the Tenancy Acts, also reported and advocated giving equal space to Indian legislators and commissioners. It published a series of articles on how some British official viceroy disregarded and dismissed Indian

²⁵⁵ For the Tenancy Acts see P. G Robb. 1997. *Ancient Rights and future Comfort Bihar, The Bengal Tenancy Act Of 1885, And British Rule In India*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

²⁵⁶ Shreedhar Narayan Pandey. 1975. *Education and Social Changes in Bihar, 1900-1921: A Survey of Social History of Bihar from Lord Curzon to Non-cooperation Movement*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas. 100-103

²⁵⁷ Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979 "Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna." *Ma'asir*. No. 3: 68-69

²⁵⁸ Ibid

legislators. They particularly criticised the actions and speeches of Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Augustus Rivers Thompson KCSI CIE (12 September 1829 – 27 November 1890).²⁵⁹ The weekly criticized him for libeling against the Indian municipal commissioners of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation and for giving speeches against Indians. One of the reports mentioned how the Indian Commissioner at Calcutta Municipal had to resign because of the vilification propagated against him by Thompson. The weekly complained that he not only wrongly accused the Indian Municipal Corporation of inactivity but also proposed to initiate cases against them in court. The newspaper also expressed umbrage against Thompson's speech where he reportedly said that Indians were not worthy of British friendship. The *Chronicle's* extensive coverage of the issue rekindled debates around differences between Anglo Indians and the Indian people.

Along with the question of Indian representation in government bodies, the *Chronicle* also reported on the issue of disregard and disrespect within other colonial spaces such as railways. The *Chronicle* voiced its opinion against incidents of racial discrimination and forceful removal of *zamindars* from public transportation such as when Raja Rajchandra Narayan was ousted from the train occupied by the Governor General. While travelling from Surat to Mumbai, Justice Nanabhai Haridas and his son were not given space in a first class compartment occupied by a colonial officer and his wife.²⁶⁰ The *Chronicle* reported about an evening party where a colonial officer exhibited racial superiority by refusing to shake hands with Raja Rampal Singh Taluqdar and the station commissioner. The weekly remarked that the Raja had shaken hands with head of states such as the Prince of Wales and Lord Rippon and that a lowly paid junior officer could not understand the Raja's importance.

While demanding equal space and respect from colonial officers, the *Chronicle* distanced themselves from the 1857 revolt, arguing that it was the handiwork of a small section of society.²⁶¹ Acting as representatives of the other section who were not involved, they suggested that efforts be undertaken for rapprochement between the people and the

²⁵⁹ Ibid. 38-39

²⁶⁰ Ibid. 48-49

²⁶¹ Ibid. 36

government. This kind of political posturing through Urdu print was a departure from the earlier times in Bihar. Before the emergence of print as a medium, Urdu was associated with rebellious *wahabis* who used Urdu pamphlets to mobilise people against the British during the 1857 revolts.²⁶² Along with these pamphlets and newspapers, resistance to the British was also expressed through folk songs in Bhojpuri by many Muslim lower caste men and women. People were mobilized through letters known as *patia*.²⁶³ I argue that the Urdu public of Bihar, represented by publications such as the *Indian Chronicle*, represented interests of the nascent district elites, comprising both Hindus and Muslims, against the lower classes who used to express themselves through regional languages and folk mediums.

The chapter argues that the *Chronicle* voiced the opinion of *zamindars* who were aware of the fact that they needed government support, in fact they were dependent on the colonial state right from the 1793 Permanent Settlement Act. As argued earlier, despite economic losses, their political position was strengthened through administrative posts bestowed upon them by the colonial state. For this reason, they not only kept aloof from the 1857 uprising but also distanced themselves from the rebels and maintained close ties with the colonial state.

The *Chronicle*, while voicing views against the rebels, reported events where locals expressed their affective sentiments towards British officials. Reports of events such as Hindu priests offering prayers for the well being of the Queen and Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India (1884-88); traffic congestion reported by the Bombay police caused by the visit of the Prince of Wales and Lord Rippon; selling idols of Lord Rippon in Calcutta and the establishment of a national conference in Bombay proclaiming loyalty to the government were published to bolster their claims of loyalty.²⁶⁴ However, it will be simplistic to assume that *Chronicle* was just a government mouthpiece like the earlier weeklies. While demanding an equal space in government bodies, it also raised concerns of the people and spoke against the various press gagging acts.

²⁶² Qeyamuddin Ahmad. 1966. *The Wahabi Movement in India*. Calcutta: Firma.K.L. Mukhopadhyay. 307.

²⁶³ Badri Narayan. 1998. "Popular Culture and 1857: A Memory against Forgetting." *Social Scientist*. No. 1/4: 86-94.

²⁶⁴ Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979 "Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna." *Ma'asir*: No. 3: 38

The weekly raised its voice against preferential treatment given to European police officers over Indian ones. They pivoted their argument on the principle of justice and argued that the High Court should intervene and ensure justice was delivered universally. An illustrative example was that of an incident in Gaya.²⁶⁵ A carriage carrying a colonial officer accidentally ran over and killed a Muslim boy. The officer in question was saved by the Gaya session's court wherein a case of theft was made against the Indians. After considerable furore created by the media, the colonial officers expressed grief over the inadvertent killing. The *Chronicle* opined that it was a pattern within the legal system to treat European officers leniently for committing crimes against Indians. Same balancing act was maintained in their war reportage. In the course of supporting the government in the Anglo-Russian war (1807-1812) and reporting on it, the weekly introduced readers to issues that transcended regional boundaries and spoke in support of press freedom.

The *Chronicle* fuelled fears of a possible Russian invasion of British India. It translated reports from other newspapers. One of the translations read, "... compared to Sikandar... Chengez Khan, Taimur, Nadir Shah ... Russia will find it less difficult... We can enter India and take it away from British... our friends in India will be like stars on sky".²⁶⁶ It particularly focused on reports that reinforced Muslim loyalty towards the Empire. The *Chronicle* published a report from the *Mumbai Gazette* which warned that Muslims who were opposing the British were not friends of Indian Muslims. Another report published in the *Chronicle* mentioned that no other government could ensure Muslim welfare like the British.²⁶⁷ While ensuring loyalty of the people, the *Chronicle* also played on fear of conquests by a relatively more alien country, Russia. Reports in the *Chronicle* created a fearful image of Russian soldiers or incited fear of loss of pension for Bengali government employees in the event of a Russian invasion.

These reports and opinions were published to quell fears that Indian Muslims would stand in favor of Egypt and Turkey.²⁶⁸ *Chronicle* republished a report published in the *Indian Spectator*, which argued that not only due to Egypt, but Indian Muslims would get

²⁶⁵ Ibid. 44-45

²⁶⁶ Ibid. 82-83

²⁶⁷ Ibid. 82-87

²⁶⁸ Ibid. 77-80

affected if relationships between England and Turkey were further strained. Therefore, the weekly warned its readers that pro Egypt sentiments of some Muslims would only further the chances of increased Russian power and control. Consequently, it would further the chances of Russian incursion into British India, the dangers of which had already been alluded to in the international section of the weekly.

I argue that despite their engagement with transnational issues, they could not evolve well defined political positions. This was not the case with port cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras where the struggle in Asian colonies of Spain, Portugal, France and Holland were spread by newspapers and word of mouth. Intellectuals like Raja Rammohan Roy discussed developments within these colonies in the context of India.²⁶⁹ C A Bayly points out that these “meetings were among the first public gatherings in India at which mixed-race Portuguese, Anglo-Indians and elite Indians were present, along with Europeans. They were certainly the first at which the concepts of Right and Left, of liberalism and Toryism, were applied to Indian conditions and existing Indian debates”.²⁷⁰ However, the *Chronicle* managed to introduce its readers to issues that were not limited to Bihar.

In 1880, when the *Chronicle* was published, an ‘intelligentsia’ was just emerging and yet to gain a definite shape.²⁷¹ As argued above, Patna’s ‘intelligentsia’ specifically and Bihar, more generally, had specific characteristics and they were engaging and articulating their responses to ‘colonial modernity’ in their own way. They demanded freedom of press, owning of private property, representation in government bodies and formulating opinions on government policies. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will discuss how the *Chronicle* articulated these ‘liberal’ claims.²⁷²

The *Chronicle* reported on legal cases against editors and shutting of newspapers. It made a strong case against the one month punishment order given to editor of *Rafeeq Hind*, a newspaper based out of Lahore. While criticising the government for being too harsh on

²⁶⁹ C. A. Bayly. 2012. *Recovering Liberties Indian Thought In The Age Of Liberalism And Empire: The Wiles Lectures Given At The Queen’s University Of Belfast, 2007*. 42. London: Cambridge University Press. 42

²⁷⁰ Ibid

²⁷¹ Ibid. 1

²⁷² C A Bayly while defining liberalism in the Indian context argues was foundational to all forms of Indian nationalism and it was both wider in scope, and more specific in its remedies, than nationalism. Ibid

the editor, it was also critical of other weeklies who hesitated in speaking against press censorship.²⁷³ Thus, the weekly was critical of other newspapers and weeklies for caring about only their profit interests and being pro government. While the *Chronicle* did side with the government on issues related to war, the weekly was also being 'liberal' in its approach by speaking in favor of press freedom.

Thus, the *Chronicle* created fertile ground debates, discussions and polemics in Patna. It also marked a departure from earlier newspapers of Bihar which functioned chiefly as state mouthpieces. It was thus similar to the role played by newspapers and other print forms published by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Through his newspapers, he not only engaged in polemics with the colonial state but also worked towards building an opinion against sati and in favor of widow remarriage. However, his most significant contribution was his defiance of the various press censorship acts.²⁷⁴ Thus, one could infer that despite their pro government stance, the *Chronicle* was not only introducing its readers to events that were not region specific but also sowed seeds of debate. In addition to these, the weekly also reported on publication of books and weeklies and thus critically influenced the 'ideal' norm of its readers.

The Birth and Nature of the Reading Public

While politically the *Chronicle* represented the concerns and interests of the intelligentsia with *zaminadri* roots, they also strove to distance themselves from the 'lower classes'. In their capacity as the forerunner of Urdu print readership, the weekly also acted as a critic of other publications and various forms of writing. While introducing *Al Punch*, the *Chronicle* lamented about the lack of regular newspapers in the city, particularly in light of how most publications struggled to maintain circulation numbers. After the *Chronicle*, *Al Punch* had the reputation of introducing a new genre of humor writing and for being self sustainable in the late nineteenth century while most publications were closing shop.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979. "Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna." *Ma'asir*. No. 3: 29-30, 32-34

²⁷⁴ Ibid. 32-37

²⁷⁵ David Boyk. 2018. "Collaborative Wit." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1): 89-106

When *Al Punch* began its run, the *Chronicle* welcomed the newspaper, hailing the relevance of such a newspaper which spoke about social events and reported on political issues in a humorous manner. The price of *Al Punch* was lower than that of the *Chronicle*. *Al Punch* charged one and a half rupee for rural inhabitants and two rupees for urban dwellers while *Chronicle* sold for four rupees in urban areas and two rupees in rural areas. The *Chronicle* also had more number of pages than *Al Punch* which was just four pages long.²⁷⁶

The *Chronicle* also helped introduce the Urdu reading print public to newspapers published elsewhere. The weekly praised an *akhbar* (newspaper) named *Azad* from Lucknow that was started in March. The newspaper was praised for writing editorials about people centric political issues in a ‘clean and good language’ with appropriate idioms. Along with newspapers, the *Chronicle* introduced and commented on Urdu books that were being published from Patna and other cities. In the process, it connected the readers of Patna to Urdu writers in other cities, thus expanding and integrating the Urdu print public.

The *Chronicle* reviewed books such as *natak nazm* (theatre poetry) written by a collector and army personnel, Maulvi Mohammad Nawab Sahib titled *Khawja Baksh Samshul* Nehar. The *natak nazm* was 24 pages long book. The *Chronicle* appreciated the book for its ‘simple language’ - “*roz marra ki saadi saadi baatain*”, language of everyday instead of tales of fairies, magic or didactic tales. The book was also appreciated for refraining from the temptations of being too explicit in its description - which could have been a possibility considering the theme of the book. Another example of a book review was that of a work from Patna about a *sufi* saint which was praised by the weekly for being written in a new style.²⁷⁷

Advertisements about new books, book translations and reviews, periodicals of all kinds and from various places such as Patna, Lucknow, Banaras, Lahore, Delhi etc were published in the *Chronicle*. Some foreign books also managed to make an appearance such as the review of a translation of an English novel, *Tales of the Zanana* about deeds

²⁷⁶ Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979. “Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna.” *Ma’asir*. No. 3: 30-31

²⁷⁷ Ibid. 15-16, 19-29

of people of *Hindustan* and Russia. The weekly used similar parameters while reviewing novels- the onus was on those that depicted reality instead of narrating impossible and absurd things. Translations were appreciated for making texts ‘simple’.²⁷⁸

While commenting on the exciting books and newspapers being published at the time, it also encouraged a certain kind of print culture. According to the *Chronicle*, newspapers should be regular and accountable to its readers, language should be clean, of everyday use, ‘real’ and should conform to the moral standards of society.²⁷⁹ It also marked a departure from the way Urdu poetry was written that included themes of love and intimacy. With the coming of colonial education inspectors, a certain kind of literature was propagated. According to them, language needed to reflect life’s realities instead of talking about esoteric themes like love. In Punjab, the text book committee and education inspectors conducted *mushairas* that encouraged participants to recite *ghazals* about their surrounding ‘realities’.²⁸⁰ Likewise, there was also an insistence to ‘purify’ Urdu of ‘obscene’ and ‘illicit’ themes such as love and sex. Works such as a canon of Urdu poetry *Water of Life* (Abe Hayat) subscribed to such contemporary notions of the Urdu language.²⁸¹ Most Urdu laureates who conformed to these notions of the colonial state were men from similar backgrounds. They were erstwhile *zamindars* who were given employment in colonial institutions such as schools, colleges and text book committees. By virtue of its position as harbinger of an Urdu public, the *Chronicle* played its role in creating a certain kind of taste and style of Urdu literature which was reflected in both newspapers and books.

Along with reviews and reportage, the weekly actively commented on events that took place in other parts of the subcontinent and similar parameters of morality were deployed to assess these events. It was not just Urdu poetry or literature that had to be sanitised, they applied the same norms while talking about areas such as theatre and folk art. The *Chronicle* also discussed the decision of the *Brahmo Samaj* to restrict young men from

²⁷⁸ Ibid

²⁷⁹ Ibid

²⁸⁰ Ibid

²⁸¹ See chapter four

watching theater as it was perceived to be full of ‘prostitutes’.²⁸² Earlier, theatre performances used to be conducted in *zamindari* households but by the late nineteenth century they were being held in open platforms. As most women refused to perform publicly in the theatre, it was believed that prostitutes used to play female characters. The *Brahmo Samaj* believed that women and children of respectable households had to be guarded from theatre’s corrupting influence while young men were in constant risk of being lured by ‘public’ women of theatre thus posing a dire threat to the sanctity of the home.

Drawing on book excerpts, the weekly defined the role of writers and poets in society. They argued that *akhlaq, khayalat* (nature, thinking) was shaped by literature and hence writers and poets needed to perceive themselves as people who shaped society.²⁸³ However, the weekly was quick to lament the deplorable standards of contemporary poetry and essays which, they argued, was so deeply detached from life’s realities that it could easily be dismissed by even a lowly European porter. It is of salient importance that what the writers, editors and critics at the *Chronicle* projected as ‘dirty and wayward’ had always been an intricate part of Urdu literary tradition. Urdu poetry discussed love and sex freely and was a central and enduring theme for countless works. Interestingly, some of the poets mentioned in *tazkhiras* were also known to be wayward characters due to their drinking and womanising.²⁸⁴ The impulse to sanitise poetry and prose which could eventually pave the way for social reform was also a symptom of growing government control. The colonial state wanted to ‘reform’ Urdu weeding out immoral elements dealing with love and sexuality.

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, early Urdu *ecumene* had poets from varied classes and accommodated people with diverse characteristics. With the coming of the ‘middle class’, there was increasing pressure to restrict art and literature to a select few and to purge Urdu literature to suit colonial notions of morality. Similar trends can be seen in other areas such as folk literature. In his work on popular culture in colonial

²⁸² Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979. “ Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna.” *Ma’asir*. No. 3: 16-17

²⁸³ Ibid. 15-16

²⁸⁴ Gholam Husain Shorish. 2015. Translated by Mohd. Asim Aazmi. *Tazkhira-E-Shorish*. New Delhi: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language

Bengal, historian Sumanta Banerjee describes how the *bhadralok*, in collusion with the state, tried restricting *jatras*, *panchalis* and *jhumurs* performances by mobilising opinions against these forms in newspapers, meetings and books.²⁸⁵

Print and Identity

Along with discussing culture and literature, the *Chronicle* also talked about people from similar backgrounds as those as the weekly's founders and regular patrons. Their anxieties, hopes and aspirations were often similar to the literati shaped by the *Chronicle's* readership. This is a critical aspect, as it sheds light on how the weekly helped mould a class of people who shared common socio-economic and cultural interests and worked towards consolidating and cementing their position in a society undergoing tremendous flux.

The *Chronicle* published material on interesting and news creating characters. For example, it published an excerpt on a *zamindar*, Sultan Nawab Jung, who was supposed to pay around 50-60 lakh of rupees to the government and 20 lakhs to other people and whose land was to be returned to the government after the Permanent Settlements Act.²⁸⁶ Similarly, another report- a translation of an original piece first published in a Parisian newspaper- discussed the intellectual pursuits and travels of the Afghan born scholar Jamaluddin Afghani. Well versed in Arabic and Philosophy, he roamed different parts of the world from Turkey to Paris, India and even his hometown, Afghanistan.²⁸⁷ Through his story, the *Chronicle* attempted to capture the hardships plaguing lives in times of seismic geo-political shifts and also shed light on the uncertainty enveloping the fate of indigenous languages. Another piece published in the *Chronicle* was on Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and demonstrated the hopes of elites who wanted to establish cordial ties with the colonial state after the 1857 revolt. English writer Alexander Graham's biography on Khan was used to highlight aspirations of the elites and the fact that an Englishman wrote about an Indian was celebrated. Similarly, other individuals like Syed Ali Bilgrami, who

²⁸⁵ Sumanta Banerjee . 2009. "Of the Bawdy Changing Concept of 'Obscenity ' in 19th Century Bengali Culture." *Economic and Political Weekly* 22 (29): 1197–1206.

²⁸⁶ Qazi Abdul Wadood. 1979. "Urdu Indian Chronicle Patna." *Ma'asir*. No. 3: 94-95

²⁸⁷ Ibid

had stayed in England and served the Hyderabad Nizam, was also mentioned for his education and social standing.

Conclusion

The present chapter attempted to understand whether by 1880, with the replacement of Urdu with Hindi as the official court language in Bihar, the former started representing Muslim interests? Before the official arrival and popularity of print, I discussed how the the Urdu *ecumene* comprised people from diverse backgrounds and social standings. Even with the onset of print in nearby provinces, Muslim landed elites who became administrators of newly formed districts and the *kayasth* community continued using Urdu to their own end. In the absence of a rampant and flourishing print culture, Muslims invested in cultural institutions while the *kayasths* mostly worked in courts and schools.

The chapter located the founding and popularity of the *Chronicle* as an early phase in the formation of a 'print public'. A detailed analysis of issues raised by the weekly suggest that the emergent print medium mostly served the interests of landed elites. It further argues that the first phase of print in Bihar helped create a divide between the 'elites' and 'masses' rather than between religious communities. Before the coming of print, Urdu *ecumene* included people from even the lower strata of society. Print, however, not only excluded these people but also brought in new notions of morality which were historically never part of Urdu *ecumene*. The chapter argues that it is pertinent to focus on specificities of social groups in Bihar to understand the role of print in creating a Hindi-Hindu identity. A study of social groups employing *darbari* records and weeklies suggest that Hindi was yet to emerge as a symbol of the Hindi community and break the continuity of Urdu.

Such an argument contradicts prevalent notions that emergence of newspapers like *Bihar Bandhu* in the same period led to the replacement of Urdu with Hindi.²⁸⁸ An analysis of some of the articles and letters published in *Bihar Bandhu* and other such publications in support of the Hindi language will demonstrate that the process of making Hindi the

²⁸⁸ Hitendra Patel. 2011. *Communalism and Intelligentsia in Bihar. 1870-1930: Shaping Caste, Community and Nationhood*. New Delhi. Orient Blackswan. 77-83

national language, 'mother tongue' or the 'vernacular' was still in its formative phase. In other words, the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a period when Hindi, as a language and its identity as the 'natural language of the people', was in the *making* than having been already made. A brief background and analysis of some reports in the *Bandhu* will be useful in discerning the character of the newspaper.

Bihar Bandhu was founded in 1872 in Calcutta by Balkrishana Bhatta in collaboration with Keshavram Bhatta. They were Marathi Brahmans and their forefathers were from Sharif, a district in Bihar. In the initial stages, the paper was edited by Munshi Hasan Ali, a colleague of Keshavram Bhatta who was a close associate of Bharatendu Harishchandra. They were part of a group whose members used to write plays for theatre and engaged in debates in journals to promote Hindi. *Bihar Bandhu* was Keshavram Bhatt's project for the same and was almost a mission for him. He collected news, edited texts and did proof-reading and printing. His family members used to assist him in his endeavors.²⁸⁹

Bihar Bandhu supported the cause of Hindi with a sense of urgency and highlighted the delay in implementation of the official promulgation replacing Urdu with Hindi. A report titled *Nagri Nagri Nagri: Bihar ke Kacheriyo mein Nagri ka Jaari Hona* (Nagri, Nagri, Nagri: the Introduction of Nagri in the Courts of Bihar) reported that Urdu was still being used in offices where as Hindi was only being used in the Commissioner's office and the Madhubhani Division.²⁹⁰ The *Bandhu* lamented the widespread usage of Urdu such as in police registers, court proceedings and even question papers set for exams for the post of Deputy Magistrate or police officers. Furthermore, it was pointed out that when forms were printed in *nagri*, it was being answered in Urdu. According to the *Bandhu*, the issue was not dealt with as the Lieutenant Governor considered Hindi and Urdu to be one language.

²⁸⁹ N. Kumar. 1971. *Bihar District Gazetteers, Journalism in Bihar (A Supplement to Bihar State Gazetteers)* Patna: Government of Bihar Gazetteers Branch, Revenue Department Patna. 41-43

²⁹⁰ "Nagri Nagri Nagri: Bihar ki Kacheriyo mein Nagri ka Jaari Hona." *Bihar Bandhu*, 29th April, 1880.

Other reports published around 1880 were didactic and explanatory in nature. It called upon people to own the language and in the process clarified what Hindi was. While ‘defining’ Hindi, they posited it against Urdu. An article was written in *Bihar Bandhu* in response to a petition against Hindi made by a Muslim notable of the city, Syed Willayat Ali titled *Nagri Jaari Hone ke Darkhwast par Bihar Bandhu ki Pratkiriya* (Bihar Bandhu’s opinion on the petition against Nagri). The paper rebutted Ali’s position, arguing that he was speaking as a resident of an urban area where Urdu was spoken unlike the rural areas where Hindi was more common.²⁹¹ However, along with rebutting Ali’s opinions, *Bihar Bandhu* also expressed satisfaction over the fact that ‘elites’, including Hindus and Muslims, had started taking interest in the language question instead of being apathetic to it.

Bihar Bandhu also exhorted readers to take up the cause of Hindi in one article titled *Nagri, teri bhi Unnati Hogi!: Neej Bhasha se Prem Bangaliya, Angrezi Aev Europeyo Desho se Seekho* (Even you will progress Nagri: learn to love your language from Bengalis and European).²⁹² Through this article, *Bihar Bandhu* chastised fellow Biharis claiming they weren’t proud of their language the way Bengalis were proud of theirs. The paper expressed regret and criticised the fact that some people referred to Hindi as Urdu and spoke Persian, Arabic or English when asked to speak in Hindi. *Bandhu* explained that ‘simple, pure and clean’ ‘mother’ Hindi had a long legacy spoken by Hindu kings and emperors. However, unlike the English, who taught their own language, the children of Bihar were sent to *maktabs* (indigenous school) and English schools.

The opinions held by the *Bandhu* was fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies. While they claimed Hindi to be a ‘popular’ language, they lamented the lack of support for the language within Bihar. In another report, they reviewed the Hindi *Gazette* and argued that the style in which the Gazette was written was not ‘Hindi’ enough as it used too many Arabic, Persian and Urdu words and hence did not do justice to the language.²⁹³ *Bihar Bandhu*’s report, though written in the *Nagri* script, also contained Urdu words

²⁹¹ “Nagri Jaari Hone ke Darkhwast par Bihar Bandhu ki Pratkiriya.” *Bihar Bandhu*, 12th August, 1880.

²⁹² Letter to the Editor. 1899. “Nagri, teri bhi Unnati Hogi!: Neej Bhasha se Prem Bangaliya, Angrezi Aev Europeyo Desho se Seekho.” *Bihar Bandhu*, 12th May, 1899.

²⁹³ A report, *Behar Bandhu*, 24 January 1877, Report of the Native Newspapers of Bengal.

such as *lihada* (bad), *tammul* (fortitude), *fizul* (useless), and *bebunyaad* (baseless). The third contradiction that came to the fore was defining the ‘natural’ ‘mother’ tongue of the people of Bihar. On the one hand, Hindi was made the language of Bihar while all materials collected to support Hindi in Bihar were brought from the North West Provinces. Thus, while advocating for Hindi as the language of Bihar, the *Bihar Herald* also had to justify the incongruity of their claim of importing books and other literature from the North West Provinces and calling it the language of Bihar. One letter written to the *Behar Times*, another weekly in support of Bihar, appealed to the readers to cultivate their own literature. In a letter titled *The People of Behar too have their own Duty to Perform. With them Nothing Could be or Should be More Binding than to Cultivate their Nation at Literature* read,

It has been, moreover, established by arguments and demonstrated by fact that with every rising nation its own Vernacular has been regarded as a living sentiment. It has duly appreciated and its value largely understood. Its utility and importance have been counted upon. With every nation its own vernacular literature besides shedding, chastening and enobling influence has got a peculiar historical value of its own. The history that is discovered out of literature is of greater importance than that gathered from proposed records of event ... Moreover, considerations would show to a nation no language can be of greater importance than its own vernacular which advances with its progress.

²⁹⁴ (sic)

However, another letter sent to *Bihar Times* titled *Behar versus N. W. P – A critique of Khadga Vila Press*, had to justify getting books and literature from the North West Provinces to cultivate Hindi. The letter read,

²⁹⁴ Letter to the Editor. 1898. “The People of Behar too Have Their own Duty to Perform. With them Nothing Could be or Should be More Binding than to Cultivate their Nation at Literature.” *The Behar Times*, 22nd April, 1898.

“It has been often said, specially within the unreportable precincts of the chamber of some of our educational luminaries that Behar has no literary credentials whatever, and that whatever she boasts of in the sphere of literary success are but contribution from the N.W.P to her empty stores. So far has this insinuation spread its way that the very eyes of the chief of the educational authorities have deceived. They have come to conclude that the Behar of day to day has no literary men to compete with writers of the N.W.P. and thus the ‘Khadag Vila Press’ the premier Behari publishing house, has been stigmatised as the circulating medium of borrowed feathers’.²⁹⁵

The writer also expressed his dissatisfaction over selecting Hindi books written by writers from the North West Provinces over books written by Bihari authors. He observes, “but contrast the patriotism of Behari authors by introducing N.W.P books, though the former are far superior, These are strange days.”²⁹⁶

These inconsistencies and contradictions in the opinion of the *Behar Herald* and other newspapers in support of Hindi demonstrate that contrary to the dominant idea of Bihar being one of the ‘Hindi heartlands’ in the late nineteenth century, Hindi was still being shaped by newspapers and the printing press. One of the problems with most studies on the Hindi movement in Bihar is their excessive reliance on either Hindi sources or official sources which inadvertently consider Hindi and Urdu as two distinctive languages. Moreover, both of these sources also negate the continuity or the role of Urdu as a language of non-Muslims as well.

This chapter has attempted to fill this gap in contemporary scholarship by not restricting the tangents of analysis to just Urdu or Hindi sources. The idea was to highlight the ruptures in a projected linear trajectory of the Hindi movement and to observe if the continuity of Urdu was broken with the inception of the demand to replace Urdu with Hindi. However, the focus has been restricted to the late nineteenth century. An expansion

²⁹⁵ A.T.C. 1899. “Letter to the Editor.” *The Behar Times*, 15th September, 1899.

²⁹⁶ A.T.C. 1899. “Letter to the Editor.” *The Behar Times*, 15th September, 1899.

of the time frame of study until the separation of Bihar from Bengal would further complicate the picture as most government posts were held by Bengalis who supported the Hindi movement.²⁹⁷ The relationship or dynamics between Hindi and Urdu with English as a necessary qualification for acquiring official posts will provide new dimensions to the study of Hindi and Urdu. However, this is beyond the scope of this chapter that has limited itself to just print. The chapter also questioned Paul R Brass' idea of a "multi congruent symbol" and has argued that Hindi and Urdu were yet to emerge as symbols of religious communities until the late nineteenth century.²⁹⁸ Although the violence related to cows had already started by then, the chapter states, as argued by Gyanendra Pandey, that communitarian identities were not necessarily 'communal' till the early twentieth century.²⁹⁹ Pandey has demonstrated how caste associations formed during 'riots' sometimes forged solidarities with Muslims against dominant castes.³⁰⁰ It was not until the middle of the twentieth century that cows and Hindi became a symbol of the Hindu community and Hindi and Urdu newspapers started categorically voicing the opinions of Hindus and Muslims per se.

²⁹⁷ Narendra Jha. 1912. *The Making of Bihar and Biharis: Colonialism, Politics and Culture in Modern India, c.1870-1912*. New Delhi: Manohar. 94-114.

²⁹⁸ Paul R Brass. 1974. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, 168-170. London: Cambridge University Press.

²⁹⁹ Gyanendra Pandey. 2002. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

³⁰⁰ Gyanendra Pandey. 2002. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press. 200.

Chapter Four

The Contested Terrains of Urdu

In 1884, a treatise (*tazkhira*) on Urdu language, *Nawa E Watan* (Call of the Homeland), written by the poet Syed Ali Muhammad, under his pen name Shad Azimabadi (1846–1927), stirred up a debate between him and his literary counterparts in Bihar. In *Nawa E Watan*, Shad raised concerns about the ‘declining standard’ of Urdu in Bihar. The ‘proper’ Urdu spoken in Delhi and Lucknow was the ‘standard’ to be adhered to, Shad believed, and Bihar’s ‘colloquial’ and ‘rustic’ ‘Urdu’ fell short. Shad’s views were criticised by his literary counterparts, who expressed their dismay through the weekly newspaper, *Al Punch* (1880). Interestingly, Shad’s own oeuvre fell short of the ‘standard’ he had set for ‘Urdu’, since some of his compositions were in *Hindavi* which borrowed from diverse literary repertoires that included various ‘dialects’, themes and motifs. I argue that these interactions of ‘Urdu’ with diverse literary traditions unsettled the perspective that Urdu was the language of the urban elites. In other words, this interaction did not fit squarely with an *Ashraf* idea of Urdu.³⁰¹ Through contradictions and inconsistencies in Shad’s perspective, this chapter looks at how and why Urdu came to be associated with *Ashrafs* of Delhi and Lucknow. It understands the role of the late nineteenth century *tazkhira* – histories of Urdu – in this context, particularly *Nawa E Watan*’s role in shaping the ‘dominant’ notion of Urdu. The chapter argues that the late nineteenth century *tazkhira* were steeped in subjective notions of poets caught in a time of seismic sociocultural changes brought about by the colonial state. The ‘histories’ were an emotional response to these changes as well as a means to retain power by conforming to the colonial notions of Urdu. The chapter also takes note of the ‘marginal’ and ‘peripheral’ versions of Urdu found in Shad’s *Hindavi* compositions. It reads these

³⁰¹ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 1998. “The Strange Case of Persian and Urdu in India.” Center for South Asia, University of Wisconsin–Madison; Lelyveld has defined *Ashrafs* as a fluid category that shares some similarity but differs with the Hindi ‘caste’ system on various counts. The meanings and connotations of *Ashrafs* changed with the changing contexts. I am deploying this category to understand the self perception of late nineteenth century declining *zamindars* or the landed aristocracy. For the idea of *Ashraf* in this chapter see David Lelyveld. 2016. “Ashraf.” In *Keywords in South Asian Studies*. SOAS South Asia Institute.

supposedly tangential perceptions of Urdu as continuities in the multifarious identities of ‘Urdu’.³⁰²

Life and Times of Shad Azimabadi

Shad Azimabadi was one of the most prolific Urdu poets of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Within the broader rubric of poetry, he composed *Ghazal* (lyrical Urdu poetry), *Rubaie* (quatrain), *Marsiya* (poem mourning death and suffering), *Qasida* (poem written in praise of someone) and *Masnavi* (religious exhortations in the form of poem). His prose works included a history of Bihar, literary criticism, fictional novels and letters.³⁰³ Shad’s poetry was appreciated for its ability to express complex human emotions in simple and rhythmic verses.³⁰⁴

Shad came from a family that served in the army during Siraj Ud Daulah's reign.³⁰⁵ His maternal grandfather had gained control over several administrative divisions, known as *tehsils*, that once yielded an annual revenue of one lakh rupees, but was eventually reduced to just one hundred fifty rupees. By the time Shad was five years old, financial hardship had forced his uncles to take up jobs in colonial government offices. One of his maternal uncles, Jalaluddin Haseen Khan, served as a *munsif* (judge) for eight years in a *qasbah* known as Naubatpoor. Since Urdu was replacing Persian as the official language of the court during this time, Shad’s uncle developed his interest in the Urdu idiom. Other than this, his family did not have any connection with the literary world.

However, Shad developed an interest in literature quite early. He spent his childhood in his maternal grandparent’s home, where he was taught to read and write Urdu, Arabic

³⁰² For multifarious identities of Urdu refer to chapter one.

³⁰³ For a detailed account of his works see Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1941. *Yaadgarien Shad*, (Memories of Shad), Patna, Anjuman Taraqqi Hind, 1941; Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1982. *Shad ke Ahed Aur Fan, be Silsila Takreebaat Shad Azimabadi* (Work and Times of Shad, Chronology of Events in Shad's life) Patna: Bihar Litho Press.

³⁰⁴ Shamsur Rehman Farqui. 2000. “Shad Azimabadi.” *Shabknoon* 240: 68-72.

³⁰⁵ For life history refer to Muhammad Muslim Azimabadi. 1961. *Shad ka Kahani Shad ki Zabani: Khud Navisht Sawanih-e Hayat-e Khan Bahadur Maulana Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabadi* (Shad's stories in his words) by Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabadi. Aligarh: Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu. 12-19, 23-28.

and Persian. Though he was interested in poetry, his parents did not encourage him to take it up as a profession. They wanted him to concentrate on Islamic education.

Despite this, Shad, continued to compose poetry. He was recognised by established poets of his time after a friend sent one of his poems to a *mushaira* in Calcutta. This brought him in contact with an *utsad* and he was bestowed with the title *Shad*, meaning 'gratified', after the *mushaira*. He was barely twelve years old then. By the late nineteenth century, he had established himself as an Urdu poet of repute. He was also honoured by the British, who gave him the title *Bahadur* and an annual pension of six hundred rupees that was later raised to a thousand rupees. He got a job as a Magistrate and Municipal Commissioner in Patna as well.

A Controversial Treatise

The effect of *tazkhira* on notions of language can be discerned from the role *Abe Hayat* (Water of Life), by Mohammad Hussain Azad, played in shaping the dominant perception of Urdu from late nineteenth centuries onwards. *Abe Hayat*, written in 1880, is considered by scholars of Urdu to be the last *tazkhira*, because histories of the language written after *Abe Hayat* perceived, criticised and assessed Urdu within Azad's framework.³⁰⁶

Azad was critical of the 'old and ornate' style of writing poetry and *Abe Hayat* was a call to 'reform' Urdu. He wanted Urdu poetry to move out of the confines of the old themes of love and loss, and explore 'natural' themes instead.³⁰⁷ However, a close reading of *Abe Hayat* shows Azad shared a contentious relationship with the 'old and ornate' style. His dilemma is explained by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, who argues that it is difficult to grasp Azad's motive since he belonged to a generation that despised the British and, in fact, mocked them before 1857. Things changed after that year's revolt. The British became India's new masters, and the impact of their control and dominance was felt everywhere, including on literature. Faruqi reads *Abe Hayat* as a negotiation wherein he was

³⁰⁶ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 1995. "Constructing a Literary History, a Canon, and a Theory of Poetry: *Ab-e Hayat* (1880) by Muhammad Hussain Azad (1830-1910)." *Social Scientist*. No. 10/12: 70-97.

³⁰⁷ Muhammad Hussain Azad. 2001. *Abe Hayat: Shaping the Canon of Urdu Poetry*. Translated and edited by Frances Pritchett and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

conforming to the British notion of language while immortalising the tradition he was a part of.³⁰⁸

I argue that *Nawa E Watan* was written in a similar tone of urgency as *Abe Hayat*. Like Azad, Shad urged his countrymen to reform Urdu poetry and much like Azad, Shad mourned the loss of political power to the British while conforming to the colonial notion of the Urdu language.³⁰⁹ For Shad, the history of Urdu was woven in a narrative of its 'decline' in Bihar.³¹⁰ According to him, Urdu originated during Mahomood Ghaznavi's reign, was nurtured in Shahabuddin Ghorī's time and shaped in Shahjahan's era. The language, Shad argued, 'declined' after it came to Bihar. He compared 'pure' Urdu to a melodious song, a delicate language that had to be kept away from 'harsh' and 'rough' words. Shad believed Persianised Urdu was melodious and lamented that it had been 'corrupted' through intermixture with local languages and 'dialects'.

We have the market of Calcutta in front of our eyes, where Urdu has intermixed with Arabic, English, Bengali, Chinese; this intermixing has affected the delicacy and the clarity of the language. Due to dictionaries, we are able to write Urdu, but when we use the language, it appears that it has become a mixed bag of different languages.³¹¹

As an example of the 'corruption' of Urdu, Shad noted that people in and around the Arrah region suffixed their words with '*ttho*' while those of eastern Bihar used the suffix '*che*'.

The second part of Shad's treatise includes an extremely short list of poets from Bihar – Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil, Mullah Mohammad Alim Tahqeeq, Shiekh Gulam Ali Rasikh, Syed Shah Alfat Husian Faryad - which stands in stark contrast to a much longer list of poets from Lucknow and Delhi. He praised Mir Babar Ali Anis and Mirza Salamat Ali

³⁰⁸ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 1995. "Constructing a Literary History, a Canon, and a Theory of Poetry: Ab-e Hayat (1880) by Muḥammad Ḥusain Azad (1830-1910)." *Social Scientist*. No. 10/12: 70-97.

³⁰⁹ For the colonial notion of the Urdu language see Frances W. Pritchett. 1994. *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 155-169

³¹⁰ Maulvi Syed Ali Mohammad Shad. 1888. *Nawa E Watan* (Call of the Native Land), Patna: Mutba Qaisri. 103-109.

³¹¹ Maulvi Syed Ali Mohammad Shad. 1888. *Nawa E Watan* (Call of the Native Land), Patna: Mutba Qaisri. 10.

Dabeer, elegiac poets of Lucknow, for shunning the conventional themes of love and loss in favour of real life events, ranging from a mournful event like the Battle of *Karbala*³¹² to a joyous marriage ceremony.³¹³

Along with their views on Urdu, Shad and Azad shared a similar socioeconomic location as well. Like Azad, Shad was part of a literary tradition that was changing rapidly in front of their eyes. Azad had to work in the education department in Lahore after his father was executed for participating in the revolt of 1857; Shad had to take up an administrative job after his hereditary landholding was resumed.³¹⁴ Since both had to rely on the political and economic support of the British, their *tazkhiar* were acts of conforming to the British notions of language, that were critical of the 'ornate' style of composing poetry. I argue that through their *tazkhira*, Azad and Shad were seeking to project themselves as representatives of an Urdu literary culture, who acknowledged and wished to reform the tradition they were part of, this acting as a bridge between the Indian society and the British.

Shad's claim of being a representative of the Urdu literary tradition was questioned by his fellow poets and writers in Bihar. He recollected in his autobiography that after *Nawa E Watan* was published, he feared for his life when men with batons surrounded his home, apparently to teach him a lesson for disparaging Bihar's Urdu literary tradition.³¹⁵ He held *Al Punch* – which was launched just around that time – responsible for stoking anger against him. Shad suspected that the Urdu weekly had been started by his enemies overnight, mainly to write against him. This claim was an overstatement. Qazi Abdul Wadood, an Urdu literary critic from Bihar, has argued that the weekly had a much wider scope than merely ridiculing Shad. An appeal from the editors of *Al Punch*, published in

³¹² Karbala is a sacred city of Iraq remembered by the Shia community annually to mark the martyrdom of Hussein Ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Mohammad.

³¹³ Maulvi Syed Ali Mohammad Shad. 1888. *Nawa E Watan* (Call of the Native Land), Patna: Mutba Qaisri

³¹⁴ For the trajectory of Azad see Frances W. Pritchett. 1994. *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 127-140.

³¹⁵ Muhammad Muslim Azimabadi. 1961. *Shad ka Kahani Shad ki Zabani: Khud Navisht Sawanih-e Hayat-e Khan Bahadur Maulana Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabadi* (Shad's stories in his own words) by Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabadi, Aligarh: Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu. 76-80

the newspaper *Indian Chronicle* on 9th of March 1885, clearly sets out the weekly's agenda and scope. It reads.

A newspaper named *Al Punch* has been in circulation in our city since the month of February. This newspaper has been a product of some educated men of our region. The newspaper mostly discusses regional issues. In order to make our reportage enjoyable, we attempt to make it as humorous as possible. We also highlight social issues. Our newspaper has also reserved a space for poetry. Our poets are not restricted to Asia. The poems published in *Al Punch* have a social and political message.³¹⁶

Al Punch did, however, publish many articles mocking Shad and his claim of being an 'ideal Urdu speaker'. Some of the articles even made personal attacks against the poet, accusing him of having an 'illicit' liaison with his servant, and the paper published a poem mocking Shad's *zat* (caste).³¹⁷ A few reviewers accused Shad of writing *Nawa E Watan* as a Shia, implying that it was biased in favour of the *Shia* community.³¹⁸ They argued Shad had praised Mir Babar Ali Anis (1803-1874) and Mirza Salaamat Ali Dabeer (1803-1875) and described the former as Shakespeare of Urdu for the same reason. Further, they charged, while explaining Urdu's usage through the verses of Quran, Shad had deliberately preferred the Shia interpretation of the holy book.³¹⁹

I argue that the tension between Shad and *Al Punch* was rooted in their competing notions of the Urdu language. While Shad espoused a restricted and exclusive idea of Urdu, *Al Punch* was one of Patna's first independent Urdu weeklies. Before *Al Punch*, most weeklies in Bihar were either controlled by the colonial state or confined to political

³¹⁶ Kalimuddin Ahmad. 1975. *Kulliyat E Shad* (Compilation of Shad's works) Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 75-77.

³¹⁷ Wahab Ashrafi. 1985. *Shad Azimabadi aur Unki Nasar Nigari* (Shad Azimabadi and his Prose writings). Patna: The Art Press. 14-16, 180-185.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Wahab Ashrafi, *Shad Azimabadi aur unki Nasar Nigari*, (Shad Azimabadi and his Prose writings). Patna: The Art Press, 1985; Kalimuddin Ahmad. 1975 *Kulliyat E Shad* (Compilation of Shad's works) Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 126-27

reporting.³²⁰ *Al Punch* also offered humour and gave space to poets from remote corners of Bihar. David Boyk has argued that *Al Punch* was the medium through which a vibrant interaction was maintained between various cities, towns and *qasbahs* of Bihar.³²¹ Shad, in fact, took issue with *Al Punch* also for publishing ‘ordinary poets’ so much so that those who published Shad’s work complained of his petulant behaviour towards popular publications.³²² They blamed the fact that most of Shad’s work was unpublished during his lifetime due to his unwillingness to publish in print medium.

Although Shad’s tensions with *Al Punch* died down over time, the weekly continued to question his claim that the *ammer*, *shurfa* and *buzurg* (rich, genteel and old) alone spoke Urdu.³²³ Shad’s battle with the print medium, specifically periodicals, which helped expand Urdu’s domain and whose editors and contributors included men from *qasbahs*, was pivoted around Bihari identity.³²⁴ Writers of *Al Punch* argued that even the young from Bihar’s *qasbahs* could speak and write ‘proper’ Urdu. They contested Shad’s claim that compared to Delhi and Lucknow – considered the centres of the Urdu literary tradition – Bihar was too ‘rustic’ to be associated with Urdu. In 1902, *Al Punch* reported about and published the transcript of a five-day *mushaira* that was apparently organised in response to a Delhi poet mocking Bihar’s claim of being a part of the Urdu literary tradition.³²⁵ *Al Punch* gave a detailed account of the *mushaira*. According to the weekly, the event was organised after the Delhi poet sent his mocking letter to Badshah Nawab Shah Raees Guzri, an aristocrat in Patna. Badshah appeal to Bihar’s Urdu poets to prove the Delhi poet wrong, the rules and regulations of the *mushaira* and the list of participants got space in *Al Panch*. The *mushaira* was reportedly attended by Urdu poets from rural areas such as Arrah, Biharsharif and Gaya – the audience of the contributors of *Al*

³²⁰ See chapter four.

³²¹ David Boyk. 2018. “Collaborative Wit.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1): 89–106.

³²² Muhammad Muslim Azimabadi. 1961. *Shad ka Kahani Shad ki Zabani: Khud Navisht Sawanih-e-Hayat-e Khan Bahadur Maulana Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabadi* (Shad's stories in his own words). 1-5.

³²³ Maulvi Syed Ali Mohammad Shad. 1888. *Nawa E Watan* (Call of the Native Land), Patna: Mutba Qaisri. 1-7.

³²⁴ David Boyk. 2018. “Collaborative Wit.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1): 89–106.

³²⁵ Yusuf Kurshidi. 1979. *Azimabad ka ek Yaadgaar Mushiara* (A memorable Mushaira in Patna). Patna: Azad Press.

Punch.³²⁶ It cannot be said with certainty whether the programme was actually held or *Al Punch*'s account was a fictitious one, but the article suggests that the weekly held itself up as a defender of the claim that Bihar was a part of the Urdu literary world.

However, it is important to note here, that Shad later clarified the intent behind his critique of the Urdu used in Bihar. He defended himself in his autobiography, arguing there was a context in which *Nawa E Watan* was written. The context he presented in his autobiography was one where an attempt was made by the education inspector and lexicographer based in Bihar, Dr S. W. Fallon and his deputy, Munshi Sohan Lal to replace Urdu with Hindi in Bihar. According to Shad, Fallon used court papers, clips of known newspapers, periodicals and transcripts of *mushairas* to propagate the idea that Urdu had been forced upon on Bihar's people and very few of them actually wrote and spoke the language.³²⁷ Fallon also argued, according to Shad, that since the complexities of the language, such as sentence construction, lack of synonyms and calligraphic style of writing, made Urdu a difficult language to read and write, it should be replaced with Hindi. Using this argument, Sohan Lal appealed to Sir Richard Temple, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to replace Urdu with Hindi as the official language in courts and government schools. It was to defend Urdu against this attempt to replace it with Hindi as the official language, Shad claimed, that he wrote *Nawa E Watan*. As he explained in his autobiography.

It was finally established that inhabitants of Bihar are not speaking and writing proper Urdu. They usually commit seven types of mistakes. What else can be done? One should take these mistakes into account and write a book which would shock them to write correct Urdu... Keeping these thoughts in mind, I decided to write a book for the Urdu language and my countrymen, and named it *Nawa E Watan*. I wanted to draw the attention of my countrymen to the mistakes they commit in using the Urdu

³²⁶ Ibid; "Collaborative Wit." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1): 89–106.

³²⁷ Muhammad Muslim Azimabadi. 1961. *Shad ka Kahani Shad ki Zabani: Khūd Navisht Sawanih-e Hayat-e Khan Bahadur Maulana Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabad* (Shad's stories in his own words). Aligarh: Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu. 76-80.

language. Don't think that I believe that my countrymen are not equipped to understand the details and finesse of the Urdu language. I understand I have been severely harsh in my criticism; however, I have chided them as a concerned friend would.³²⁸

The tension between Shad and *Al Punch* seemed to have resulted from Urdu's transition from a language sustained through patronage, to a language whose access was being widened through popular publications. *Al Punch* was staking Bihar's claim to the Urdu literary tradition. But these claims were forwarded through the vehicles of caste and sectarian (Sunni versus Shia) identities. *Al Punch* claimed that by writing *Nawa E Watan*, Shad had emphasised his Shia identity and the fact that he was not an upper caste or a Sunni Muslim. I argue that both sides, despite being opposed to each other on the question of access to the language, were inevitably projecting Urdu to be the language of upper caste, Sunni Muslims. Shad's nostalgia for Urdu's past, however, also saw him define its transformation as decline.

The Narrative of Decline

Shad claimed that his treatise was intended to safeguard Urdu in Bihar from the machinations of Munshi Sohan Lal and Fallon. One of the reasons given by the colonial officers for replacing Urdu with Hindi as the official language, he pointed out, was the 'bad quality of spoken and written Urdu in Bihar'.³²⁹

Yet, despite official declarations to have Hindi as the official language, Urdu continued to be used in offices and schools. One reason was that official documents were largely written in Urdu. Another was that people who came to submit their depositions in courts did not speak Hindi as expected. Moreover, some officials said they preferred Urdu to Nagri as the court language. Similar problems were encountered in schools. The pupils preferred Urdu/Hindustani over Hindi, so the government made Hindu boys read

³²⁸ Ibid. 82

³²⁹ Ibid.

Hindi.³³⁰ Despite the segregation, textbooks continued to be written in Urdu. Regarding Urdu, the registrar of the Calcutta University wrote to the Government of Bengal:

In reply to your letter No. 715 of the 26th ultime , I am directed by the Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate to explain that the language termed Urdu in the University middle class scheme, is the language which is use in current literature of the day, i.e. in vernacular popular books and in the native newspapers of the day- in fact the language used by the people themselves, which the University consider should be that in which their examination should be conducted. The Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate are not aware of the character of the language designated by the Government of Bengal as common Hindustan, but presume that the object which they seek, and that desired by the Lieutenant Governor, are in fact essentially the same.³³¹

Though the government ensured Hindu boys learnt Hindi instead of Urdu, this did not lead to a decline in the status of Urdu. The significance of Urdu/Hindustani as the vernacular can be ascertained from the fact that the British Indian Association – started by the Muslim reformer Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to facilitate dialogue between the Muslim community and the colonial government – formed a sub-committee because ‘considerable dissatisfaction prevails with the present mode of selecting vernacular textbook’³³² (sic). The association wanted to address the fact that selection of textbooks was left to the predilection of local committees which meant a good book might be accepted in some places but rejected at another. Although the sub-committee reported that it was not in a position to review Hindustani, Persian and Arabic textbooks, the government continued to look into the issue raised by the British Indian Association.

³³⁰ See chapter two.

³³¹ From-J Sutcliffe, Esq., Registrar, Calcutta University to –R.H. Wilson, EsQ., Offg, Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal. No.209 dated Calcutta, the 4th March 1872.

³³² Resolution of the Government of India on the report of the committee appointed to examine the text book used in Indian schools, and opinion of the local government on the administration of that report. General Department Education. K. W Progs for January 1881. File XXIV- nos. 13. BSA.

The government created a textbook committee to meet the requirements of Bihar and Orissa. A central committee was formed, with sub-committees for Bihar and Orissa. To the Bihar sub committee, along with the education sub-inspector, a Muslim was appointed.³³³ The sub-committee was to examine textbooks for minor and vernacular scholarship courses. The general committee, along with the sub-committee, reiterated that primary education must be imparted in the 'mother tongue', including reading and writing, simple arithmetic and geography. Secondary education should be in vernacular, Anglo-vernacular and English. Along with Hindi, Urdu was listed as one of the vernacular languages.³³⁴

Even at the college level, there were substantial numbers of Urdu teachers. At Patna College, the principal was paid six hundred rupees a month, the headmaster of English Literature was paid five hundred rupees, and teachers of History and English literature were paid two hundred rupees each. There were two Anglo-Urdu teachers, one of whom was paid a hundred and fifty rupees and the other eighty rupees.³³⁵ The college's Oriental department had four Persian and Urdu teachers, but only one Hindi teacher, who was paid forty rupees. The demand for Urdu teachers did not go down even while the government was assiduously trying to replace Urdu with Hindi. In 1872, in fact, the college had to hire two additional Persian and Hindustani teachers to satisfy growing student demand.³³⁶ Aside from teaching Urdu as a course, Patna College had Urdu literary societies known as *bazm e sukhan*, run by professors and students. Every month, these societies organised a gathering where students and teachers recited their compositions. Some of the teachers were famous for their poetry and their performances were eagerly awaited. These literary activities continued until the twentieth century.³³⁷

Such literary gatherings and *mushairas* were not limited to institutional spaces like Patna College, they flourished in Azimabad's *mohallahs* as well. The tradition of patronising

³³³ From S. C Bayley, EsQ, *Offg Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal* to the Director of the Government of Bengal. General Department. Education 216. Calcutta 24th March 1881. BSA.

³³⁴ Home Department Resolution No. 101 dated 23rd April, 1877. BSA.

³³⁵ Proposition Statement to accompany letter, No. 1055, dated 21st March, 1863. BSA.

³³⁶ K. W. Progs for August 1872, Nos.164- Education. BSA; The government used Urdu/Hindustani interchangeably. Refer to chapter two.

³³⁷ Dr Eqbal Haseen. 1989. *Daastan meri: Khud Nwavisht Sanwange Hayat* (My story: Autobiography). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 124-126.

writers and poets and investing in cultural activities did not diminish even when the British took over political control of Bihar from the Nawab of Bengal. Kunwar Singh Raj Bhadur, for one, was famous for organising a *mushaira* in Patna almost every month.³³⁸ He was the grandson of the famous Persian poet Pyarelal Ulfati.³³⁹ In 1878, he invited the famous Urdu poet Daagh Dehelvi to one of his gathering. It is said the arrival of Daagh in Patna was widely celebrated by the Urdu literati. Such programmes served to widen interaction among poets from different regions and helped make Azimabad an Urdu literary ‘centre’.³⁴⁰

Besides Kunwar Singh, several notables of the city supported not only artists but also educational institutions. Badshah Nawab Rizvi was one of them.³⁴¹ He was the son of Lutf Ali Khan (1812-1890), a prominent businessman of Patna in the nineteenth century.³⁴² The relationship between Lutf Ali Khan and the colonial state had not been devoid of tension. Lutf Ali Khan was almost put on trial for his role in the 1875 rebellion. He was convicted by the judge for harbouring a mutineer. William Tayler, the commissioner of Patna, in his memoir *Patna Crisis or Three Months During the Insurrection of 1857*, recalls, “The Sepoy was hanged, the evidence was not considered by the Judge to be sufficient against Lutf Ali, and he was acquitted, to the great disappointment of the Christian public, who all felt a moral conviction of his guilt, not only of this special crime, but of complicity, generally, in treasonous designs.” Lutf Ali was a suspect for the British because of his proximity to Maulavi Mehdi, the *darogah*, and the city’s Wahabi leaders.³⁴³

Badshah Nawab Rizvi utilised his share of the inheritance of 3.2 million rupees and an annual *zamindari* of five hundred thousand to become the most distinguished among Lutf

³³⁸ Syed Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Lives and Stories). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 506-509.

³³⁹ Pyarelal Ulfati was a Persian poet. His father had migrated to Patna from Delhi in reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar II. See Faisuddin Balkhi. - *Tazkhira Hindu Sohra Bihar* (Hindu Poets in Bihar). Daltongonj: National Book Centre. 34-35.

³⁴⁰ By ‘Centre’ I mean one of the regions where Urdu flourished.

³⁴¹ Syed Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Lives and Stories). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 513-517.

³⁴² Anand A Yang. 1998. *Bazaar India: Markets, Society and the Colonial State in Gangetic Bihar*. London: University of California Press. 72-75.

³⁴³ William Tayler. 1858. *The Patna crisis; or, Three months at Patna, during the insurrection of 1857*. London: J. Nisbet. 36

Ali Khan's three sons and two daughters. Badshah Nawab Rizvi's mansions, Badshah Manzil and Badshah Mahal, often hosted grand *mushairas*. He also organised *mushairas* outside Patna and set up a drama club where actors from outside the city could train people who wanted to be actors. It was said that many people pursued careers in acting after training at the club. Moreover, Badshah Nawab Rizvi helped fund the establishment of Patna College, Patna Medical College and the Engineering College of Bankipore. His death in 1920 was described by many commentators as marking the end of an era of cultural efflorescence in Patna.³⁴⁴ Patrons like Badshah Nawab likewise helped sustain other forms of arts such as *dastan goi*. When a famous *dastan goi* went to Lucknow to perform and was promised patronage by the Nawab, he stayed. Thus, a particular art form ebbing away from the public space was usually owing to the loss of patronage.³⁴⁵ Often, it was a case of transformation: poets, for example, continued to hold *mushairas* in their homes instead of public spaces, until late into the colonial period.

After the passing away of patrons like Badshah Nawab Rizvi and the weakening of patronage, Urdu was shaped in institutions established by landed aristocrats associated with reformist movements like that of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. One such institution, which played a significant role in developing Urdu prose, was Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Urdu, formed in 1866 as part of the Muslim Educational Conference launched by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for the promotion of Urdu³⁴⁶. In 1903, Anjuman started translating English books into Urdu. Anjuman changed significantly when the Muslim Educational Conference, at its annual meeting in 1912, nominated Maulvi Abdul Haq as the institution's head. He was known as Baba e Urdu for his contributions to the development of Urdu prose. When Abdul Haq was made Anjuman's president, he was working as the inspector of schools in Hyderabad State and lived in Aurangabad. He set up Anjuman's own press, compiled dictionaries, wrote and published a large number of books in Urdu on scientific, technical, literary, linguistic, historical and philosophical subjects.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ Syed Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Lives and Stories). Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library. 513-517.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. 207.

³⁴⁶ Shabuddin Saqib. 1990. *Anjumman Taraqqi Urdu ki Ilmi aur Adbi Khidmaat* (Literary Contributions of Anjuman Tarqqui Urdu). Aligarh: Litho Colors Prints. 21-37.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

Anjuman opened branches in different regions, including in Patna in 1918.³⁴⁸ There, the responsibility of running the institution was entrusted to Qazi Abdul Waddod and Mohammad Zabi Siddiqui. Anjuman and the people associated with it represented the transformation of Urdu. Waddod and Siddiqui, for example, were Urdu laureates of the twentieth century but they had also studied English and other disciplines. Their engagement with Urdu derived from both these streams of learning. Waddod was born 1896, in Kaku, a small town in Jehanabad district of Bihar. He studied Islamic theology in Kaku and went on to complete a Bachelor's in Arts from Patna. He later obtained a degree in law from Middle Temple and a tripos in economics from Cambridge University.³⁴⁹ After returning to Bihar, he deployed his training in English, German, Latin and French to encourage research in Urdu through Anjuman, libraries and research centers in Patna. Siddiqui followed a similar academic and professional trajectory.

Anjuman, though, was not the first association in Bihar to work on shaping modern Urdu. That honour goes to the Bihar Scientific Society, which was established in Muzzafarpore on 24th May 1868 by the city's Subordinate Judge Syed Imdad.³⁵⁰ It was set up as a 'British Indian Association' with the intention of opening a channel of communication with the government and spreading 'scientific' knowledge and European ideas through vernacular languages. The society also aimed to establish schools, printing presses, newspapers. It had a department of translation which made efforts to translate Trigonometry, Optics, Physiology, Algebra, Mechanics, Philosophy, History, Agricultural Sciences, and Masonry into Urdu. Imdad brought books from Oxford and Cambridge to prepare the syllabus for the Scientific Society. His activities were not restricted to Muzzafarpore; in 1875, he opened a branch of the society in Gaya.

Along with these associations, the Khuda Baksh library played a significant role in promoting a public culture of reading. Salauddin Khuda Baksh inherited his passion for books as well as his profession as a pleader at the Patna Bar from his father Mohammad

³⁴⁸ Syed Badrul Hasan. 2003. *Haqeeqat bhi Kahani bhi* (Lives and Stories), Patna: Khudabaksh Oriental Public Library . 485-87.

³⁴⁹ Prof. Kalimuddin Ahmad. 1991. *Qazi Abdul Waddod: Tehqeeqi-o-Tanqeedi Jaaeze* (Research and Literary criticisms of Qazi Abdul Waddod). New Delhi: Ghalib Institute. 1991. 29-45.

³⁵⁰ V. A. Narain. 1969. "The Role of Bihar Scientific Association in the Spread of Western Education In Bihar." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* Vol. 31.

Baksh. Along with Qazi Reza Hussain (the founder of Mohammadan Anglo Arabic School) and Moulvi Mohammad Hussain (founder of the Education Conference), Mohammad Baksh formed a reputable trio of Muslim reformers in Bihar.³⁵¹ They worked on reforming the Muslim community after the setback of 1857.³⁵² Like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of the Muhammadan Anglo Arabic College, they shouldered the responsibility of reviving the culture of learning and promoting English language. While the Anglo Arabic School and the Education Conference were branches of the reformist mission of Sir Syed, Mohammad Baksh wanted to open a library with the same reformist agenda. He collected precious manuscripts but could not see the project through to the end. His mission was taken forward by his son, Khuda Baksh.

The idea behind opening a library with Arabic and Persian manuscripts was to revive the 'lost glory' of Muslims after the revolt of 1857. Khuda Baksh believed the subcontinent had a long history of learning, art and culture. Regarding the contribution of the Mughals in promoting culture, he said.

True it is, indeed, that the Mughal never rose to the same eminence in culture as the Muslims of Baghdad or Cairo or Cordova; nevertheless, they held themselves up, after their iconoclastic work was done, as the patrons of letters. The decadents of Chengiz Khan and the sons and grandsons of Tamerlane embraced Islam and encouraged learning. It was under them that Nasir'uddin Tusi.... and others flourished. The Mughal dynasty in India, likewise, extended protection to arts and sciences, and took deep interest in the progress of culture. The Emperor Shah Jahan was indeed a well-read man and extremely fond of books. Then Adil Shahi and Qutub Shahi kings of the Deccan also followed the example of the

³⁵¹ S.Khuda Baksh. 1909. *Khuda Buksh: founder of the Bankipore Library*. Calcutta: Baptist Missionary Press.

³⁵² For the 'reformist' agenda of Muslims after 1857 see. Peter Hardy. 1972. *The Muslims of British India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 146.

Mughal princes as far as the encouragement of the learning was concerned.³⁵³

Khuda Baksh wanted the library to help revive the culture of reading, learning and preserving history. Books on *Hadith* (tradition), *Fiqh* (law), *Usul* (jurisprudence), *Tafsir* (commentary on the Quran), histories of India by Muslim authors, biographies of Mughal emperors were some of the collections that found place in his library. He drew inspiration from the Arab and Persian civilisations where writing ensured permanence and the security of intellectual works. Appreciating the number of libraries in Spain, he remarked, ‘So universal was the passion for learning in Spain, in the heyday of Muslim power that the number of libraries open to the public in different parts of Spain amounted to seventy.’

Institutions like the Scientific Society, Khuda Baksh Library and Anjuman not only shaped Urdu literature but also gave an identity to the ‘landed aristocracy’ that wanted to reestablish their relationship with the British after the 1857 revolt.³⁵⁴ Their legacy was carried forward by the subsequent generation of literati in the twentieth century who were lawyers and teachers of the Anglo Arabic School. Urdu poetry was recited, contemporary issues discussed and social events celebrated in club like spaces. One such space was Hugh’s Club, named after an English magistrate. Similar associations called ‘club of friends’ held gathering where people remembered the past.³⁵⁵ Nostalgia was an overwhelming theme of such gatherings. A member of one such club recollected that they referred to the older part of Patna as ‘sheher’, meaning city. Their *sheher* was Azimabad, where Daagh once visited and where *mushairas* were an everyday affair, and not Bankipore, the part of the town where the British lived.

³⁵³ Dr. Mohd. Ziauddin Ansari ed., 2003. “The Islamic Libraries.” *Glimpses of Khuda Baksh Library*. Patna: Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library. 1-24

³⁵⁴ Peter Hardy. 1972. *The Muslims of British India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 146.

³⁵⁵ Syed Mohammad Ali Saba. 1957. *Yaaranien Maikada* (Gathering of Friends). Patna: Kashna Sangi Dalan Patna City. 1-10.

Shad in the Twentieth Century

Much like his contemporaries Shad too fondly remembered the city of the Ganges, Patna.

Gautam ka az tune baros yaha suna, dekh ashok ko bhi Patna mein rajdhani, baaki nahi ab inka goab koi nishnai, lekin dil par ab tak karte hai hukmarani, Turki ka kafilu ne paani tera yaha piya, kehate hai turko ke majmou mein ab tak wa kahani (Oh, Ganga you have heard Gautam, witnessed how Patna was once the capital, now there is no trace of them, but they still rule our heart, Turks have drank your water and have carried your stories with them.)³⁵⁶

There was, however, a difference between Shad's imagination of Urdu and Patna and that of the city's twentieth century laureates. Shad remembered Azimabad as a member of the aristocracy who was unwilling to engage with the changes happening in Urdu. By the twentieth century, as shown in the previous section of the chapter, Urdu was being shaped in institutions, associations and print medium. But Shad was stuck in his imagination of Urdu as a courtly language sustained through a system of patronage. I argue that his representation of Urdu as a courtly language stemmed from his own subjective location.

Shad believed the city which was once the capital, an abode for travellers, had declined by the late nineteenth century. He equated his own economic decline with the decline of the city. Most of his family's lands had been appropriated by the colonial state.³⁵⁷ So, by 1905, he had to sell his own lands to pay for his aristocratic lifestyle.³⁵⁸ Although he received an honorarium from the colonial state worth six to seven

³⁵⁶ Naqi Ahmad Irsahd. 1990. *Baqiat E Shad* (Compositions of Shad). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 34. Self translated.

³⁵⁷ Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 2007. "Jihad E Azad: 1857 ke pehle" (War for Freedom: Before 1857)" *Khuda Bakhsh Library Journal*. No.150: 1-5.

³⁵⁸ He still had to pay round about fourteen rupees to his domestic help which included three servants working indoors and the other two worked as a gardener and as a fan puller for three and five rupees respectively. His literary expenses including maintaining a scribe for twenty rupees, thirty rupees to printing press. In addition to these, he also had bear the expenses of teachers employed to teach his brother's son. See Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1982. *Shad Ke Ahed aur fan, be Silsila takreebaat Shad Azimabadi* (Work and Times of Shad, Chronology of Events in Shad's life). Patna. 244-247.

hundred rupees a year, the amount was too meagre to sustain his lifestyle and pursue his literary activities.³⁵⁹ Some of his financial burden was relieved when at the request of Sir Ali Imam, a famous barrister from Patna, the state hiked his honorarium to one thousand rupees a year.³⁶⁰

He was still financially dependent on his friends and acquaintances, though. He was supported by the son of his *ustad*, Ulfat Husain Faryad, a barrister in Hyderabad.³⁶¹ In Shad's correspondence with Faryad, the poet lamented that he was financially dependent on him. In another letter, he politely asked Faryad not to ask Shad's family for help. This was after Shad learned that Faryad had approached the husband of Shad's daughter to help him.³⁶² In his autobiography, Shad claimed that in order to publish his last book, *Hayat I Faryad* (Life of Faryad), he had to mortgage his meagre property worth one hundred and fifty rupees and some tracts of land.³⁶³

Perhaps because of these financial difficulties, he wanted to go to Hyderabad to find a patron. By the twentieth century, Hyderabad had become the abode of Urdu poets who could not sustain themselves in their own cities. Some of Shad's contemporaries from Delhi and Lucknow like Daagh Dehlvi and Ameer Menai found a patron in Mir Mahbub Ali Khan Asaf (1866-1911), the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad.³⁶⁴

Daagh received a pension worth two thousand rupees a year for correcting Asaf Khan's poetry and working on his manuscripts.³⁶⁵ The pension was supplemented by fees from his *shagirds*. Daagh's pupils not only provided him financial support, they even compiled his dictionary *Faish ul Lughat*, and biography, *Jalwa E Daagh*. This allowed Daagh to continue experimenting with poetry and publish three volumes of his work in Hyderabad.

³⁵⁹ Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1982. *Shad ke Ahed aur Fan, be Silsila Takreebaat Shad Azimabadi* (Work and times of Shad, chronology of events in Shad's life). Patna: Bihar Litho Press. 246-247.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Kalimuddin Ahmad. 1975. *Kulliyat E Shad* (Compilation of Shad's works). Patna, Bihar Urdu Academy. 127.

³⁶² Syed Muhammaduin Qadri Zaur. 1939. *Maktubat Shad Azimabadi* (Letters of Shad Azimabadi). Hyderabad: Press Ghar. 39-52.

³⁶³ Kalimuddin Ahmad. *Kulliyat E Shad* (Compilation of Shad's works). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy, 1975. 127

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ T Grahme Bailey. 1932. *Urdu Literature*, Calcutta: Association Press. 76-77.

While Daagh was scaling new heights in his literary career, Shad was feeling disgruntled. He expressed his disillusionment with the literary world thus.

This is how the world functions, an illiterate poet like Daagh has become famous...Despite having my friends in the same city, I have been left here...Hasrat is busy sloganeering. What does Daagh write? His poetry is full of illicit and immoral themes, it is all about prostitutes. What do I tell you? I wonder what kind of place Hyderabad is? When I think of it, my heart sinks...I have been left to rot here, while Daagh is reaching new heights.³⁶⁶

I argue that *Nawa E Watan* should be read in the context of Shad's economic hardship. He was one of the leading Urdu literary figures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He survived on his inherited wealth while pursuing his literary endeavours. He attended *mushairas* in Patna and other cities. He had *shagirds* to look after as well.³⁶⁷ His contemporaries followed a similar trajectory. His arch enemy, Fazle Haq Azad, known for writing against Shad in *Al Punch*, came from a similar socioeconomic background.³⁶⁸ Azad was born in a small village in Bihar and migrated to Patna after his father's death. He was known to be a propertied man who lived a lavish life that included regular *mushairas* and even performances by courtiers who were called from Lucknow and Delhi. Azad's lands too were taken away by the colonial state. He wrote that he had to sell his property in Patna worth forty five thousand rupees to the government for just thirty two thousand rupees in 1912. This left him with limited means to pursue literary activities. He had started a newspaper, *Taj*, in 1902 which earned appreciation from Abu Nasar Mohammad Naseem Dehelvi, the Urdu literary critic and brother of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, but it did not last long. He, thus, came to be known mostly for his recitals at

³⁶⁶ Kalimuddin Ahmad. 1975. *Kulliyat E Shad* (Compilation of Shad's works). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 127.

³⁶⁷ For his social and literary life refer to Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1982. *Shad ke Ahed aur Fan, be Silsila Takreebat Shad Azimabadi* (Work and times of Shad, chronology of events in Shad's life). Patna: Bihar Litho Press. 229-231; for detail of his students see Syed Mahmud Ali Khan Seba Azimabadi. 1987. *Hazrat Shad Azimabadi ke Nau Ratan*. Patna: Millat Art Press.

³⁶⁸ Mateen Emdadi. 2006. *Fazle Haq Azad*. Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 4-19.

mushairas in Bihar. Azad spent his last years in his village, where he continued to organise *mushairas*. By then his sons had moved to England to pursue higher education.

All these literary figures sustained themselves through inherited wealth and with the assistance of a society that appreciated poetry. In fact, in the pre-colonial society, poetry was a profession. C. M. Naim, in his essay “Meer and his Patron” explains the role of the poet in society.

Being a poet was an occupation in the pre-modern times, no different from soldiering or accountancy. Poets and patrons sought out each other with certain well-understood expectations. [Poets] provided companionship, served as confidants, wrote commemorative verses, acted as poetic mentors or ustad, even composed verses in the name of the patron and defended his reputation through their writings. The patron ... found pleasure and pride in the poet's company and verse and in having him identified with [him] rather than with some [rival]. There were many shared traditions between the poets and their patrons, including many implied or overt obligations to each other. Honor begot honor, loyalty received loyalty. Just as the patron assured the physical well-being of the poet, so did the poet contribute to the perceived sense of prosperity of the patron.³⁶⁹

It is not that poets were suddenly derecognised or disregarded after the East India Company took control of Bihar in 1757. Their economic decline was gradual. Shad continued commanding respect in the society. The colonial state recognised his literary repute and requested him to undertake administrative responsibilities. They also provided him with a pension. In addition, Shad assisted the colonial administrators draft school textbooks and wrote a history of Bihar in Urdu.³⁷⁰ He continued his literary activities well into the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the gradual depletion of his wealth meant he had look for other avenues to maintain the lifestyle and fanfare he was accustomed to

³⁶⁹ C.M. Naim. 1992. “Mughal and English Patronage of Urdu Poetry: A Comparison.” In *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture* in Barbara S. Miller, edited. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 269.

³⁷⁰ Wahab Ashrafi. 1985. *Shad Azimabadi aur Unki Nasar Nigari*, (Shad Azimabadi and his Prose writings). Patna: The Art Press. 123-127.

as an *Ashraf*. The pension he received was not enough to sustain his lifestyle and he was unwilling to write for popular publications or run institutions like *Anjuman*. He also did not consider teaching in colonial institutions like Patna College. Shad wanted to continue as a poet who was an aristocrat. But with his limited income and the absence of a patron, he came to be precariously dependent on the colonial state.

In this context, I argue that through *Nawa E Watan*, he was conforming to the colonial notions of Urdu. Colonial reformers believed the language was in decline and in urgent need of attention. They saw Urdu as a ‘decadent’ language detached from the realities of life. Instead of being limited to the ornate and morose theme of love and loss, they argued, Urdu poetry should explore ‘natural’ themes.³⁷¹ Since Shad was dependent for financial support of the colonial state, he used literary criticism and history to echo the colonial urgency to reform Urdu. He praised poets writing about ‘natural’ themes as opposed to artificial ideas. By creating a narrative of decline, he posed himself as the saviour of the language. He was also acting as a gatekeeper of the language, arguing that it was only the *Sharif* who could shoulder the responsibility of saving Urdu. In the process, Shad resisted the changes taking place in Urdu at the time. While Urdu was being shaped in institution and popular publications, Shad was unwilling to move beyond his own turf. He was particularly wary of popular publications, which he believed made Urdu less exclusive and thus challenged his narrative of decline. *Nawa E Watan*, therefore, was the outcome of a combination of Shad’s nostalgia for the past glory of Patna, the loss of his own privilege and a desire to maintain relations with the colonial state.

Contradictions in Shad’s work

Shad’s perspective on Urdu stands in sharp contrast to his own compositions. In *Nawa E Watan*, he held Urdu to be the language of the urban elite of Delhi and Lucknow that was ‘corrupted’ by intermixture with regional languages and ‘dialects’. Aside from cleaning Urdu of regional influences, he wanted to purify it from what he called the ‘vulgar’ themes of love and sexuality. He was critical of Daagh’s compositions and

³⁷¹ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 1995. “Constructing a Literary History, a Canon, and a Theory of Poetry: Ab-e Hayat (1880) by Muhammad Husain Azad (1830-1910).” *Social Scientist*. No. 10/12. 70-97.

dismissed him as a poet who only engaged with 'illicit' themes. Yet, Shad's poetry bears regional influences and explores the theme of sexuality.

A collection of his poems, compiled by his grandson Naqi Ahmad Irshad, offers an idea of the range of his compositions. It contains poems about the city of Patna, Shad's interactions with his contemporaries and his political engagements. Most of the compositions were either recited at *mushairas* or found in his notebook. Irshad also included in the collection Shad's poems that were written in 'Hindi'.³⁷² Irshad mentions he found these 'Hindi' compositions in Kaithi script in Dumka, a district in Jharkhand, and published them in Persian-Arabic script. Though Irshad describes them as 'Hindi' poems, it is difficult to categorise them either as 'Hindi' or as 'Urdu'.

Shad's 'Hindi' compositions are steeped in intermixtures. They are written in Kaithi script, expressed in different 'dialects' and follow subgenres such as *barah masa*, literally meaning twelve months, an oral form of lyrical poetry from rural North India that covers the themes of love, waiting and sexuality. In *barah masa*, the poet expresses feelings of waiting that can acquire erotic, religious and 'secular' tones.³⁷³ Shad's 'Hindi' compositions include *bhajjan*, devotional songs associated with Hindu Vaishnavite and Sikh religious traditions and grounded in melody in Hindustani music. Some tunes and themes of *bhajjan* are borrowed from the Bhakti tradition, mostly covering episodes from the lives of gods and saints where seemingly complex spiritual truths are expressed in a simple manner.³⁷⁴ Other compositions are about Holi and Basant Bahar festivals. This repertoire of dialects, themes and genres in Shad's poetry lays bare the definitional limits of the colonial distinction between Urdu and Hindu.

³⁷² Naqi Ahmad Irsahd. 1990. *Baqiat E Shad* (Compositions of Shad). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 183-187.

³⁷³ Francesca Orsini. 2009. *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black. 51.

³⁷⁴ Denise Cush, Catherine Robinson, Michael York. 2008. *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. New York: Routledge. 87.

Some of these compositions are:

Barah masa:

*Chait maas ban hai phule sukhi re baisak ..koel papad shor
macahye veyakul ban ban moore jhte tapat din raat jalaye asad
maas udaas..sawan maas paphiay roye ghan garajt cha orRaen
andheri lat chatakye bhado maas phuaar... megh bhiyawat neer
bahaye sujhat aur an aur an chor...kuwar maas morwa nache..
kartk maas nehan..tum bina kutchu na sahaye jiya talpad chit
chor..aghan ghun andes puss bessar lagat hai jada...maagh mein
sahyurat paran humaro chalt pawan jhag jhor..phagwan manwa
holi manwa samran ki chita jalaye..ninana ke pickhkaro banaye
yahi katah hai moore..ro ro kabja Shad phukare yahi disha hai
more*

(All flowers dry in the month of Chait...in the month of Baisakh
cuckoo chirps in its restlessness...the month of May makes me
anxious...my heart sinks in the early month of June...in the month of
monsoon crested cuckoo cries aloud while it thunders all night...it
is drizzling and I am blinded by the drizzle...peacock dances in the
month of September...I am bathing in the month when people take
baths...with you the heart stealer...with you the heart stealer...I am
unable to make sense of anything...I like the month of January
better than other months...the breeze of the early month of
February cajoles and teases me...my heart celebrates Holi...let the
co-wife burn in pyre...I keep crying copiously...this is my fate.)³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ Naqi Ahmad Irsahd. 1990. *Baqiat E Shad* (Compositions of Shad). Patna: Bihar Urdu Academy. 183.
These translations are done by Rabi Prakash.

Bhajjan:

Mat cheen liyo har jayi.. mete tere charan borayi.. tum bina sajan kutch na suhahe.. tnindya na sej daaraye.. dukh kaal megh hai chahe.. birah mein torah dhayyan lagaye..baithi hun man ka deep jalaye.. man ki jwala tan ko khulaye.. hari darshan ki lalchaye.. mein to tore cahran buraye.. naath kaha nindya pyaare.. jaagt hun mein dukh ki maari.. laagi parchand kaatri kaise jiyo zakhsn hai kaari.. roh lag ke sudh hai besaari.. jaye kaha man prem pujari.. more such gayi amraye.. mein toh tore cahran buraye.. birah cahith cchwatwat aye.. ghar aangan kutcho no suhaye.. dol pwan jab phul khilaye.. tan saarhe man akoilayee.. nis din radha neer bahaye.. asie rehas ko kaun baatey.. Shad ye kine preet liye.. brij kinare sab buware.. man cheen leharajaye.. mein toh mter charan buaraye..

(Don't steal the wanton women...I go mad in your vicinity...I cannot make sense of anything when you are around...without you my bed frightens me...these are clouds of bad times...the thought of separation from you disturbs my mind...my heart burns like a candle...the flame of my heart consumes my body...I cannot distinguish between your reflection and reality...my wound has turned black...I have lost consciousness since I have fallen in love with you...my man is a worshipper...where do all devotees go...my tree has dried...I want to touch you...in nights of separation I feel like the bird chakwa, who has lost his attachment with the world...when the winds blows, my mind and body get restless...I feel jealous of flowers when I see the breeze...I cry day and night...who will reveal the secret.. how have you loved me...the entire *braj* is crying...my heart is getting restless...I want to touch you.

)³⁷⁶

³⁷⁶ Ibid. 184

There are also compositions in the raga (melodic tone of Hindustani music) such as *Basant Bahaar* and in *Bharavi*:

*Juman tak mat jaiyo sun ae re chabeli naar..ghughat pat mat kholiyo..
sun er re chablei naar..O' ko sud bhu nahi..khekat rat khiladi.. hil hil
sakhiya khelat bheeg na jaye saari..rang na dare turi chderiya..nanad ka
laal nadi.. ko, O sang mat kheliyo .. sun are chameli naar.. jamnu tak
mat jaiyo.. resale bol mat boliyo..sun re cahbeli naar..*

(Don't go till Friday...Oh! you good-looking women...don't unveil yourself...listen, o, you beautiful women...who will not lose senses...of, you the player of the night...my friends have got hold of my *saari*...no one should throw color on your *chunariya* (drape)...your sister-in-law should not drench your *chunariya*...don't play with her...listen, o, you beautiful *chameli*...don't go on Friday...don't utter sensuous and juicy words...listen, o, you beautiful girl.)³⁷⁷

*Tum bina nahi awat chaeen.. mein karre karun.. nis din barsat more
anin.. mein kare karun.. taap ko teri suni dagariya.. largajat paran..
dujhe papan kaali rain.. mein kare karun.. murli bajat chan aur..
madhur madhr bole.. sunat tere meethe been.. meiin kaare karo.. nsi din
barsat ankiho more.. neer abhe din raat.. basrat nahi tore nain.. mein
kaaer karun.. saajh to paayri ro ro kaati .. bhor se mojhe aan milo.. ye
sabhi na layo kacho chain.. mein kaare karu.*

(I cannot be in peace with you...what to do? I am crying day in and out with you...without you even the paths are empty...there are black clouds everywhere...these black clouds are sinister...what to do...I can see Krishan he is playing flute...sweet sounds are coming...I am listening to your melodious sounds...I cry everyday...I cannot take my eyes off you...I am deeply attached to my loggings...I am urging you in

³⁷⁷ Ibid. 185

the evening to come and meet me in the morning... please comfort me...what to so.)³⁷⁸

On Holi:

Rask e rasselin bake basariya.. roka na mori sham dgariya.. brigh Bihari.. moko na chedo.. bhej na jayee mori chunariya.. nanad ke naad brij bisaye.. man mein uthaat hai preet lahariya.. sawarein meto aap chabeli..deko na chalke pat mein ghagriya.. kaes jahat ke se nawayo.. bhal ke bendi mori girwayo.. karke bhi vinti har gayi.. tut gaye kanjan mein gagariya.. deke gagan se preet ki bundo.. aankh ke moti more girayo..damin much ke tuut padi hai.. kesh ki chahhiye kaaro badariya.. mor mukut aur kana kandal.. hat mein murli, roop Narayan.. nain murakh, much bhagat na janat.. roke na mori sham dagariya...laagi preet ki rista..

(Oh Kahna, please don't block my way...the flute of Krishna...don't stop my way...*brij bihari* (Krishna)...don't tease me...my drape should not get wet...*Nand ken nad* (Krishna) resides in Braj...waves of love crest in my heart...oh! you dark man I am your lover...don't look at me I get distracted...how are you walking? you are breaking my pitcher...my requests are falling on deaf ears...your pebbles are breaking my vessels...your hair is like black cloud...peacock feather crown and your golden earring... flute in your hand...you are the figure of Vishnu...my foolish eyes don't know, stray away...don't stop my way...I have fallen for you.)³⁷⁹

Shad not only composed poems around such themes, he also endorsed this style. A couplet of his explains this style thus: "*Namak hai farsi ka, dard Hindi shaeri ka hai; yeh Urdu e mualla nukta e sanjane ajam dekhe.*" (The pain is in Hindi, the spice is in Persian.)

³⁷⁸ Ibid. 185.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. 186

In an article titled '*Muqala ba unwaan fasi alfaaz wa matruqat*' (Essay on Fluent Words and Redundancy) and published in *Urdu E Mua'lla* – a journal started by the poet and activist Hasrat Mohani – Shad advocated expanding the boundaries of Urdu.³⁸⁰ He argued in favour of adding new words, ideas and themes to the repertoire of Urdu poetry and literature. Explaining how a language interacts with the social atmosphere in which it grows and expands, he appealed his fellow laureates to understand these patterns and, accordingly, make changes in Urdu. To initiate the process, he even approached a laureate with a list of four hundred 'new' words that were being used by people but not used by poets. However, Shad recounted, the laureate was unwilling to get into such a 'daunting exercise' as it involved questioning dominant conventions. Yet, Shad was no different from the laureates he accused of not questioning conventions. By propagating a puritan view of Urdu in *Nawa E Watan*, Shad discounted the rich interactive literary and cultural tradition he was a part of.

Naqi Ahmad Irshad offers the context in which Shad composed his *Hindavi* poems. He notes that before 1857, Muslims and Hindus participated in each other's cultural gatherings like Holi and Muharram.³⁸¹ Shad likely explored such themes as Holi at such gatherings. Irshad also mentions how the courtesan culture helped shape Urdu prose and poetry. The practice would eventually come to be looked down upon, but it was once customary for *Asharfs* to visit the courts of courtesans. This, Irshad points out, is where Shad could have borrowed his Hindustani music themes from.

Historicising Urdu: Writing *Tazkhira*

This context of Shad's compositions does not feature in *Nawa E Watan*. I argue that one must understand the evolution of *tazkhira* to understand the politics of the historicisation of Urdu in the late nineteenth century. The genesis of *tazkhira* can be traced to the practice of poets and writers maintaining *bayaz*, meaning notebook, that contained

³⁸⁰ Doctor Rehan Ghani. 2007. *Urdu E Muallah ki Adbi Khidmaat* (The Literary Contributions of the Urdu E Mualla). New Delhi: Classic Art Printers. 147.

³⁸¹ Naqi Ahmad Irshad. 1982. *Shad ke Ahed Aur Fan, be Silsila Takreebaat Shad Azimabadi* (Work and Times of Shad, Chronology of Events in Shad's life). Patna: Bihar Litho Press. 49-51.

accounts of their contemporaries.³⁸² As *bayaz* became more organised over time, it acquired the shape of *tazkhira*. The organisation of *tazkhira* can reveal the author's biases or preferences. If the author has, say, included more poets from a particular region in his treatise, it would show his predilection towards that region. Some *tazkhira*, like *Nikat-ush-Shora* by Meer Taqi Meer, along with delineating the boundary of the Urdu literary tradition also defined and described its grammar.³⁸³

In Bihar, histories of Urdu like *Tazkhira Gulzar E Ibrahim*, written by a colonial officer, served a dual purpose: to inform the British rulers and chronicle the contribution of colonial officers in the development of the language.³⁸⁴ While *Gulzar E Ibrahim* is an example of a commissioned *tazkhira*, *Tazkhira Shorish*, written by a *Sufi* poet, tells of the lives of his compatriot poets.³⁸⁵ *Nawa E Watan* is more detailed than either of these *tazkhira*. It was consciously written in the format of history. It provides a chronology of Urdu, its genesis, rise and downfall. History is interspersed with opinion on what qualifies as Urdu.

I argue that the evolution of *bayaz* into *tazkhira* in the late nineteenth century played a significant role in delineating the boundaries of Urdu, while reflecting the increasing colonial control over how the language was perceived. The colonial state wanted to reform the language because they believed existing Urdu literature was 'artificial' and 'vulgar'. Colonial linguists wanted Urdu to express 'real' and 'natural' themes instead of such amorous ideas as love and sexuality. In fact, the very idea that *tazkhira* were histories of Urdu language was a colonial construct. As Shamsur Rahman Faruqi explains:

There had been no histories of Urdu poetry, or even of Urdu literature, before *Abe Hayatt*. Detractors of Urdu literature have notched this up as yet another proof of the 'primitiveness' of the

³⁸² Frances. W. Pritchett, 2003. "A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 2: Histories, Performances and Masters." In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions in South Asia* edited by Sheldon Pollock. London: University of California Press. 895-897.

³⁸³ Ibid. 864-870.

³⁸⁴ Ali Ibrahim Jalil. 1934. *Tazkhira Gulzar I Ibrahim*. Aligarh: Muslim University Aligarh.

³⁸⁵ Gholam Husain Shorish. 2015. Translated by Mohd. Asim Aazmi. *Tazkhira-E-Shorish*. New Delhi: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language.

Urdu mind. The reason for the lack of literary histories, however, was not a lack of interest in history. There had been, of course, numerous *tazkirahs* (biographical anthologies) of Urdu poets. Loosely organized alphabetically (if at all), the entries in these anthologies rarely if ever recognized the passage of time as a criterion or category of excellence, or change, or decline. There had been no literary histories before the nineteenth century in Arabic or Persian either...the main reason for the absence of literary histories in Arabic, Persian, or Urdu before the modern age is that present and past cultural production – literary production, certainly – was viewed in those centuries as existing simultaneously: there was no real past; everything was synchronic.³⁸⁶

Tazkhira played such a significant role in shaping perceptions of Urdu because they were upheld by ‘insiders’, that is, recognised and revered poets and writers such as Shad, Mohammad Hussain Azad and Altaf Hussain Hali. These literary figures carried forward the agenda set by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who wanted to renegotiate the Muslim community’s relationship with the British after the revolt of 1857.³⁸⁷ I argue that in the nineteenth century, Urdu was a means through which *Ashraf* Muslims redefined their identity. The idea was to ‘renovate’ Urdu by making it more ‘natural’ and ‘clean’. As argued in the preceding sections of this chapter, Shad wrote *Nawa E Watan* with a similar objective. However, his agenda and intention behind writing the treatise was riven with tension and dilemma. It is simplistic to read *Nawa E Watan* as Shad’s way of conforming to the British notions of Urdu. I read it as an emotional response to the changes he was witnessing in the society, including his economic hardship and the ‘value’ or relevance of his profession of poetry.

³⁸⁶ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. 1995. “Constructing a Literary History, a Canon, and a Theory of Poetry: Ab-e Hayat (1880) by Muhammad Husain Azad (1830-1910).” *Social Scientist*. No. 10/12: 73.

³⁸⁷ Safdar Ahmad. 2012. “Literary Romanticism and Islamic Modernity: The Case of Urdu Poetry.” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 35: 434-455.

Such voices as Shad's, however, were not the only ones defining Urdu. *Nawa E Watan*, for one, was fiercely questioned by writers of *Al Punch* who insisted Bihar was as much a part of the Urdu literary tradition as Delhi. Later historians of Urdu from Bihar argued the genesis of the language lay in ancient times.³⁸⁸ For them, a non-standardised Urdu they called *Bihari Rekhta* was as much Urdu as Persianised Urdu. In other words, intermixtures were not just acceptable but integral to how Urdu was defined. Indeed, as pointed out earlier, intermixtures influenced even Shad's own compositions. The self-proclaimed language puritan's use of Kaithi script and *barah masa* sub-genre suggests there were possibilities of Urdu interacting with other literary forms and themes. It also means the landscape of Urdu poetry was not restricted to *mushairas* held in Azimabad's *mohallahs*; it extended to diverse repertoires.

Moreover, the very presence of *Bihari Rekhta* exposed the limitations of the colonial categories of Hindi and Urdu. It also indicates some continuity in the multiplicity of Urdu, even if on the margins of the tradition that favoured mostly Persian themes. This chapter, however, does not intend to replace a nomenclature with another but only to point out the overlaps, intersections and continuities in Urdu literary traditions.

³⁸⁸ See Chapter one.

CONCLUSION

As I reach the end of my thesis, I am reminded of a lecture delivered by Professor Neeladri Bhattacharya on 'Historical Methods' in which he explained the difficulties researchers encounter while concluding their thesis. Professor Bhattacharya argued that the vector of 'narratives' is decided by our subjectivities. This is made evident in our selection of a theme, in the choice of our sources and in the structuring of the thesis. His lecture made me interrogate my own location through my work and ask myself why I wanted to work on the history of Urdu in Bihar, and to what extent my experiences have 'informed' or 'coloured' my arguments and conclusion.

I developed an interest in literature and Urdu through my engagement with my father. My father, a banker by profession, was also deeply interested in learning languages. He was a polyglot with a command over English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Punjabi. His love for languages was so great that he not only wanted me to be well versed in Urdu and Hindi, but expected my friends to be proficient 'in their own languages'. As I pursued my higher education in English, my father's entreaties to remain rooted in a culture through language, began to gather dust. However, life came full circle when my interest in the histories of Muslim cultures and politics required me to re-acquaint myself with Urdu. My chosen subject made knowledge of Urdu indispensable for me. Seeing me struggle with the vernacular sources, my father would often joke that he had always prophesied that I would 'come back'. His remarks stayed with me and I often find myself wondering if I am writing a history of Urdu or my personal history through Urdu.

This journey of defining and redefining Urdu and History began four years ago. At an early stage of my PhD, I was surprised to learn that both Hindi and Urdu shared a common past, in fact they were one, like India and Pakistan. My belated recognition of an obvious fact, made me realise the extent to which one is oblivious of the fluidity of colonial categories. Since then, my project had focused on disentangling colonial notions of Urdu and also the allied perceptions around it.

However, when I sifted through colonial records, accounts of Urdu writers and secondary sources, I realised that even their explication were seeped in the subjectivities of their contexts.

While the colonial state categorised Urdu to facilitate the administration process, it became a symbol of the yearned past for the beleaguered elites of the late nineteenth century. Even the secondary sources on Urdu to a certain extent defended the Urdu language against the accusation of it being ‘communal’, ‘inward’, ‘unreal’, ‘ahistorical’ by arguing that it was ‘secular’, ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘accommodative’.

However, the larger questions that I posed to myself and guided me through this research, without arriving at a definitive answer were: why does Urdu have to carry the burden of being open, accommodative and interactive? What is the ‘parochial’ when juxtaposed with the ‘cosmopolitan’? Do religious affiliations make any language ‘communal’? Is it possible to write histories that are free from the expectations of conforming to some acceptable notions of how and what language should be?

The colonial state dismissed Urdu for not being a scientific language, and for being too poetic. The officers working in schools often complained that students rejected colonial textbooks as they missed the ring of their favorite poems, and of being inclined towards Philosophy and Grammar. The response to these accusations has to move beyond the defence that Urdu was scientific. One should rather ask why do languages have to be scientific and can languages ever move beyond utilitarianism? This was one of the many ideas around which I shaped my thesis.

With these questions in mind, I have used Urdu as a site to understand the multifarious functions, ideas and associations that people made with language, and religion and culture are among many such associations. The underlying idea was not to simply depict how Urdu was spoken and written by Hindus but to find multiple associations, affiliations and attachments that disparate communities had with the language. In this thesis, I have attempted to understand how these affiliations and associations varied in different contexts and junctures. While the concretisation of religious and regional identities happened by the second half of the twentieth century even today the all encompassing

national status of Hindi and Urdu is being questioned. My impulse was to keep track of the multiplicity of the processes at hand and to avoid and resist the urge to be limited by the categories of religion, caste and nation.

From the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, this thesis has attempted to capture this heterogeneity of Urdu in its various ‘broken’ yet ‘fixed’, ‘spoken’ yet ‘written’, ‘rural’ yet ‘urban’, ‘official’ yet ‘cultural’ variations. These categories were always in flux and in tension with colonial categories. The idea of a standard, uniform language was imposed through various means. Promulgation of official policy was one of the significant ways through which the colonial state intended to ‘tame’ it. However, the implementation of these policies was not an easy one as the officials were divided amongst each other, even the lower ranked officers often complained that the deposition in court were not given in a standard language, the people spoke *ganwari* (village like or dialects). Similar tensions were also felt in changing the indigenous system of education where spoken language, called ‘vernacular’ was imposed through colonial schools and textbooks. The restructuring of this form of education was not critical of giving religious ascription to languages.

In this vein, I have argued that Urdu was not learnt as a language to gain employment in the early nineteenth century, but Urdu as a literary and spoken language was learnt through teachers or *ustads*, the indigenous teachers, in *khankahs*, in gatherings (*majls*). These constituted what can be called pre-print Urdu public, *ecumene* that included people from diverse backgrounds. Urdu *ecumene* was already ‘cosmopolitan’ and poets traveled near and far leading to the intermixing of ideas whereas print restricted its access. However, poets caught at the cusp of the change, like Shad Azimabadi, painstakingly negotiated between these transitions by recording histories that denied their past. On the one hand, he lamented the drastic changes he witnessed in society and on the other he tried desperately to locate himself through his writings. After the English took over, the city transformed spatially and socially. The importance of older part of the city, Azimabad, was being replaced with Bankipore. Urdu was not just losing its significance but its various forms were also being subjected to various norms of standardisation, hierarchy and uniformity. Shad’s own profession, his identity as a poet was one that was

on the verge of redundancy. His history of Urdu forged a dream of the present by obliterating the past.

I understand writing the history of Urdu to be a similar act of negotiation. Writing the history of Urdu in English is not simply subjecting one language to scrutiny through the norms and structures of another language. Rather, it is also a constant struggle between studying the ideas on its own terms and also translating into another. Although I contest notions around 'Urdu', I struggled to find an alternative term. I have used Urdu interchangeably with *Hindavi*, Hindustani, *Khariboli*, *Bihari Rekhta* and even Hindi. This constraint simultaneously works for and against me. While some may argue that the terminology used is not standardised, others may contend that this lack of standardisation captures the essence of my argument. Other contentious terms were 'sheher', 'gaon', 'urban' and 'rural'. They often had me wondering whether inverted commas conceal our inability to break out of the confines of categories.

However, histories of Urdu should not negate lived experiences but strive for a dialogue between the two. The impulse to understand the overbearing nature of the colonial conception of knowledge came from my own experiences and realisation of the dominance of knowledge produced in English as well as the role of literature in my life. I was struck by the realisation that while I was aware of literatures in English I could not make similar claims about 'my own language'. The term 'own knowledge' is a contentious term but as of today I perceive it as a smattering of Hindi, Urdu and 'Bihari'. Maybe my father was right to note that 'I have come back' or maybe I was here all along without knowing it.

I hope I continue going back and forth. Although I have been able to address the questions I have raised in my introduction such as - thinking beyond communal categories, studying language in the context in which it evolved and being aware of the temporality of the texts - some questions, ideas and themes that have come out in this thesis are something I intend to study further. I want to work more closely on the relationship between oral literary traditions, manuscripts and print culture and analyse if this transition played any role in restricting the access of Urdu. While, I have consciously

avoided the Hindi/Urdu divide narrative I would like to explore the language movements that were initiated to support the Urdu language in Bihar in the twentieth century. In addition, I also want to conduct interviews of writers and poets of Hindi, Urdu and other languages in Bihar to understand their perspective on the language question.

Their perspective and ideas will be of immense significance considering how knowledges are deeply embedded in power structures. Their 'values' are assessed depending on their positions in the power structures. While the voices of the people from the 'margins' are used as 'primary data' or statistical data, the voices of the 'centres' qualify as 'theory'. This separation and binary must be reconfigured. The reshuffling of these binaries have made me question some of the assumptions related to language and knowledge and with these new themes I intend to not just be 'accurate' or 'scientific' but also aware of the politics of these parameters.

An awareness of these parameters is imperative in a context, where states all across the nations have massively slashed funding to social sciences institutes due to preference for 'scientific' knowledges, it becomes all the more important to hold on the concept of *ilm* within which knowledge is assessed not counted in numbers and figures.

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Appendix I

No.2233, dated Fort William the 24 june 1872.

Memo. from H.WOODROW, Esq, Offg, Director of Public Instruction. Copy, with enclosure, forwarded to the secretary to the government of bengal, general department, with reference to his No.1531, dated 4th May.

No. 1250., dated Dinapur, the 5th June 1872.

From -S. W. Fallon ,Esq., Inspector of Schools, north west division,

To - The Offg. Director of public instruction ,Bengal.

UNDER paragraph 2 of government order no:1531,dated 4th may 1872,to”weed out” the books described by me” as containing too much Arabic or Sanskrit and to allow only the remainder to be taught in the schools under his charge” and retained permanently or temporarily, and to state that the most objectionable of these have been already discontinued under the orders just quoted’

2. In the case of candidates for entrances .I beg to solicit the orders of Government whether”Urdu Entrance Course Qawaid Urdu”(Urdu Grammar) and the “Ramayan” which are the textbooks for “second language” as appointed by the Calcutta University, should be discontinued;if these books are to retained under the circumstances, their use might be confined to the two upper classes of higher schools.

3. I beg to say that I should have submitted these lists immediately on the receipt of the Government orders above quoted (received 10th may),but for my reading of the order, by which I understood that I was directed only to “weed out” the books described by me as too full of Arabic and Sanskrit. Neither under the Government order nor under the endorsement conveying it “for information and guidance” was I directed to submit any further list or report on the subject.

No. 1.

List of books proposed to be discarded at once .

URDU.

<u>Name of books</u>			<u>Character of the Books</u>
Diwan Sanda	....	....	.... For the most part too much Arabic and Persianized.The style at times difficult.
Araish Mehfil	....	....	.... In parts too Persianized, otherwise it contains a larger proportion of Hindi words than is used by native authors generally.
Surur Sultani	....	....	.... Too much after the Arabic and Persian. The construction artificial and difficult for the most part.

Qawaid Urdu (*Grammar*) 4parts Too much after Arabic in language and matter.

Risala Mantiq(*Logic*) Entirely Arabic in design,too much Arabic.

Miyar-ul-Balagat(*Rhetoric*) Entirely Arabic in design,too much Arabic.

Dastur-ul-irqam (*Forms of petitions*) Too much Arabic and Persian.

Ajaibat-mihnati shari(*Political economy*) Ditto

Dilbabla Unidiomatic and inaccurate. Not simple according to the standard of the minute.

HINDI.

Bhasha Chandrodia (*Grammar*) Difficult . Too much Sanskrit in form and matter.

Baranmala (*primer*) Too Sanskrit in form and matter. Too difficult.

Jivkaparipati(*Political Economy*) **Bhajprabhandhsar**.... Difficult; too much Sanskrit. Tolerably simple, but interspersed with Sanskrit slokas.

No.2.

List of books proposed to be retained permanently.

HINDUSTANI.

Bao Bidya(Pneumatics)	....	.... Simple hindustani
Bijli Bal (Electricity)	....	.... Simple hindustani.
Mahajani Hisab	....	.... Simple.
Bhugol Hustamalak	....	.... Simple on the Whole.

Appendix II

Statement showing the comparative percentages of Arabic, Persian, Hindi, and other words employed in Urdu or Hindustani and Hindi Books.

NAME OF BOOKS. (Portion analysed, the first five pages of each book)	PERCENTAGE OF ARABIC WORDS.				PERCENTAGE OF PERSIAN WORDS.				Total percentage of Arabic and Persian	PERCENTAGE OF HINDI WORDS.				Total percentage of Hindi words.	Percentage of English, Turkish and other words.
	Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs, particles, &c.	Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs, particles, &c.		Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs, particles, &c.		
URDU OR HINDUSTANI															
<i>Standard text books.</i>															
Araish Mahfil	20	8.89	....	3.11	13.33	5.78	....	4.44	55.55	9.78	3.11	12.89	16.	41.78	2.67
Bag-o-Bahar	23.65	8.45	....	2.11	14.92	5.49	.42	2.06	58.	11.65	5.77	11.26	8.03	36.01	5.35
Jasane Ajab	30.14	6.2	.44	2.07	23.3	7.4	.76	2.28	71.59	13.27	2.38	7.62	2.94	26.11	2.29
Urdu Entrance Course	28.57	6.4	...	2.46	13.3	6.4	...	4.93	62.06	2.46	1.97	16.26	13.79	34.48	3.45
<i>Publications of North-West Provisions.</i>															
Guldasta-i-Ikhlāq	30.6	7.86	...	5.34	10.06	5.34	...	4.4	63.5	8.17	4.09	13.2	9.75	35.21	1.23
Haqqeq-ul-Manjudat	21.66	7.33	...	5.33	14.	3.33	...	.67	52.32	14.	4.67	11.	12.67	42.34	5.33
Sandford and Merton	15.3	2.24	...	3.26	11.22	2.24	...	2.89	37.15	17.14	7.34	19.18	11.22	54.88	7.96
Mirat-ul-Urus	14.03	5.35	...	1.67	17.04	2.34	...	4.34	44.77	18.71	3.68	15.37	10.36	48.12	7.03
<i>Publications of the North-West Division, Behar.</i>															
Bao-bidya (Pneumatics)	5.48	.97	...	1.94	9.68	.65	...	1.61	20.33	17.42	17.09	24.51	18.06	77.08	2.59

Baggar-bijli-bal (Frictional Electricity)	3.52	.11	...	1.76	9.25	1.76	...	4.85	21.58	21.58	7.49	30.84	15.42	75.33	3.08
Answers of Bahadur Ali to question on Natural philosophy.	11.06	4.51	...	2.46	6.56	1.64	...	2.87	29.1	15.57	5.74	29.51	16.57	66.39	4.51
<i>HINDI.</i> <i>Publications of</i> <i>the North-West</i> <i>Provisions.</i>															
Surajpore-ki- kahani	4.55	2.12	...	...	4.24	1.81	...	1.21	13.03	28.79	4.55	20.6	16.06	70.	15.75
Sandford and Merton	1.73	.25	...	...	5.68	.25	...	.74	8.65	28.16	8.15	24.45	17.78	78.34	12.8
Bhugolhast Malak	4.38	.94	...	.63	3.76	.63	...	1.57	11.91	25.04	2.82	19.09	19.41	66.36	21.6

Glossary

<i>Amlah:</i>	Staff
<i>Ashraf:</i>	Respectable of the society
<i>Ameer:</i>	Rich
<i>Bayaz:</i>	Notebook
<i>Dastan goe:</i>	Narration of story
<i>Darogah:</i>	Inspector or overseer
<i>Dargah:</i>	Hospice
<i>Dihai:</i>	Decade
<i>Fauzdari:</i>	Related to Court
<i>Fiqh:</i>	Law
<i>Ganwari:</i>	Rustic or related to village
<i>Ghazal:</i>	Lyrical poem in Urdu
<i>Hadith:</i>	Sayings of Prophet Mohammad or tradition
<i>Islah:</i>	Correction
<i>Jagir:</i>	Land holding
<i>Karbala:</i>	A Town in central Iraq which is the chief holy city of Iraq and centre of Shia Muslim pilgrimage
<i>Khankah:</i>	Hospice
<i>Markaz:</i>	Centre
<i>Marsiya:</i>	Elegiac poem, lamentation of the dead
<i>Masnavi:</i>	A poem based on independent, internally rhyming lines"
<i>Majlis:</i>	Social gathering
<i>Mela:</i>	Fair
<i>Munsif:</i>	Judge
<i>Mussadas:</i>	Poem of six verses
<i>Mushaira:</i>	Symposium of poetry
<i>Nawab:</i>	Social or political elite
<i>Pir:</i>	Spiritual head
<i>Qaseedah:</i>	Laudatory, elegiac, or satiric poem

<i>Rubae:</i>	four-line stanzas poems
<i>Sajjada nashin:</i>	descendent of the head of the shrine
<i>Shagird:</i>	Student
<i>Shurfa:</i>	Respectable
<i>Subehdar:</i>	Chief native officer of a company of Indian soldiers in the British service.
<i>Sozkhwani:</i>	It is allegorical attribution to the martyrdom of Imam Husain
<i>Tafsir:</i>	Commentary on Quran
<i>Tazkhira:</i>	To mention, accounts of poets
<i>Ustad:</i>	Teacher
<i>Zamindar:</i>	Land holder
<i>Zareefe Amalq:</i>	Known of the city