

## The Role of the Persian Language in Bengali and the World Civilization: An Analytical Study

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**Abstract—** Language is the instrument and sign of culture and a bond of solidarity. In the early thirteenth century, the Turkis and the Iranians of Delhi sultanate introduced the Persian language and Islamic culture in the royal courts. Thus Farsi or Persian language enjoyed the prestige of being the language of the elite. The Persians and the Bengalese accepted the Persian language, which accessed to the domain of business and the political domain of the royal court of the region. Even the Hindus also learned this language to be qualified to interact with the rulers and in this was Bangla absorbed many Persian. Even in the Modern age Bangla retains thousands of words from Persian roots that have survived through the ages. This paper discusses the significance of the Persian language in Bangla. The current status of the language has also been presented in the paper. The contribution of Persian to Bengal and the world civilization has been also discussed in the paper.

### 1. Introduction

Persian or “Farsi” (Far-see) is a language spoken in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan and part of Central Asia and the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. Farsi or Persian was the official language of Parsa people who ruled Iran between 550 - 330 B.C. that call the Indo-Iranian group of languages. Farsi became the language of the Persian Empire and was widely spoken in the ancient days from the borders of India to the east, Russian in the north, and the southern shores of the Persian Gulf to Egypt and the Mediterranean in the west [1]. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian came in contact with Bengali and continued till 1837. During this period of six hundred years, thousands of books were written in Persian, and hundreds of poets have written their poems in this sweet language that ranked Persian language and literature as the highest stage of development [2][3]. Ancient Persia originated Persian around 500 years B.C. when the times of the Aryan rulers of Iran and the language dates back to as far as 200 years B.C. in Central Asia. Wide numbers of Persian speakers migrated westwards and took with it the language along with the country language where they migrated. A total of 134 million people speak Persian, which includes 72 million native and 62 million who speak it as a second language. There are three types of dialects of Persian language namely, Farsi, Dari and Tajik. Farsi is the language of Iran as the most modern dialect of Persian, and in other hand Dari is spoken in Afghanistan and Tajiki in Tajikistan. Persian is a very melodic language and was probably the most historic and prominent language in the Middle-east, Indo-Pak sub-continent and Central-Asia.

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As many words have very deep dual meanings, poets and writers used these in their writings to give their work better literary value. Persian was the official language of Bengal for over 600 years, and the literature influenced Bengali literature by introducing sweet synonyms of many word. The large immigration of Iranians provides many Persian words in the Bengali literature, and many Bengali Muslim poets were inspired to use Persian language and literature by the rich Persian poetry. Persian was the official language of India proper from the first conquest of India by the Muslims [3][8][13][14][26].

## **2. Development of Bengali Language and Literature**

Now, Persian is spoken mainly in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan and the language of the court of many of the Indian kings till the British banned in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although the name of the language has been maintained as Persian or Farsi or its Arabic form Farsi the language can be categorized into the following groups as [1][5].

1. Old Persian
2. Middle Persian
3. Classical Persian
4. Modern Persian

Persian became the language of the Ghaznavid court from the very beginning of the Muslim invasion of northern India, gradually achieved the status of the most prestigious language of an increasingly large region. Many poets and scholars from Persia and Central Asia had attracted by the rulers of Delhi Sultanate in 1206, and Persian literary trends assimilated and refashioned in the complex and intricately multi-layered cultural milieu of India. The mystical brotherhood and a hub of syncretistic beliefs had a strong impact on the Persian developed in the different regions of India, and Persian culture spread further of the south region. Thus the Sultanate period was an age of the development of regional languages, and in this process Bengali received an impetus for growth by the patronage of the sultans of Bengal. A number of poets composed verses eulogizing the local deities of Bengal collectively known as the 'Mangal'-Kavya' during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that composed the Manasa-mangal such as: Vijaya Gupta, Vipradas, Haridatta, etc. The original language of the Bengal inhabitants was Austric and it gradually died away after the coming of the Aryans. The name of the language of the Aryans was Ancient Vedic Language which later reformed into a language of literature. The reformed new language was named as the 'Sanskrit' language. It was assumed that the Bengali language was originated from the Sanskrit language. But the common people in the ancient time used the language called Prakrita Bhasa, and only the Brahmins used the Sanskrit language. Changes began over the language as time passed, and the language gained excellence and quality through the born of the Prakrita language in the form of one Pali and the other Apabhraṃśa. Prakrita became the language of common people and the new language was used in the Eastern India.

Bengali language did not develop much during the reigns of the Pala and the Sena dynasties because the Sanskrit language had been used mostly in Bengal in that time. The development of the Bengali language had increased in the Middle Ages. The language developed a lot during the period of 1350 A.D-1800 A.D. Bengali poetry was composed by Hindu and Muslim poets, and Bengali language gradually secured a seat of its own under the generous patronization of the Muslims Sultans of the period. [4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13].

The New Indo-Aryan Vernacular, Bengali, just evolving out of Proto-Bengali style of Apobhransha, on the Buddhist mystic songs of the Bajrajan cult flourished between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Eastern region of India, comprised the areas now known as Bihar, Orissa, Assam, West Bengal and Bangladesh. Since Ikhtiaruddin Bakhtiar Khilji's conquest of Bengal (1301 A.D.), the culture and language of Bengal gradually underwent changes. During the Ikhtiaruddin Bakhtiar Khilji's conquest of Bengal (1301 A.D.) and Muslim rule (1301-1757), Bengal had significant interactions with Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim cultures. During Muslim period Bengali was patronized, and Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah, the Sultan of Bengal (1474-82 A.D.) translated the 'Bhagabat' Hindu religious book into Bengali. Bengali literature throughout the ages became very pliable and more prone to changes than any other Indo-Aryan language. During the Middle ages the foreign languages had greater influence on the advent of Bengali. Thus Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Portuguese and Dutch words were absorbed into Bengali. The first Persian word is used in Bengali by the Bengali poet Baru Chandidhas (14<sup>th</sup> century), and later at the end of the century some Persian words had been borrowed in Bengali which had no Bengali alternatives. The most influence of Persian poetry was found in the early Medieval Bengali Romantic poetry and literature. Persian literature became very popular in Bengal, and in different libraries and depositories in Bengal had many manuscripts of Persian poems and literature like Laili and Majnu, Yusuf and Zulekha. Sultan Giasuddin Azam Shah (14<sup>th</sup> century) invited the Persian poet Hafiz to visit Sonar Gaon the capital of Bengal. Hafiz could not come to Bengal but he sent a beautiful Persian couplet, "the birds of Hindi will all be sweet-beaked when the sweets of Persia will come to Bengal." as a gift to Sultan. [1][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][26][27][28]

### 3. Influence of Persian Language on Bengali

The Persian couplet sent by Hafiz to Sultan Giasuddin Azam Shah showed the close link between Persia and Bengal during the fourteen century. The Persian story Laili-Majnu became very popular in Bengal during fifteen century, and after that many Bengali poets added some new episodes like Mujnus seasonal song or Baramashi. During the Muslim rule Persian language and culture attracted the Turks and the Afghans, and in later Persian was adopted as the official language in the Indian subcontinent under the same rule. The Persian

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literature influenced Bengal literature. A great many Persian words entered into Bengali language and literature. This was possible due to the immigration of many Iranians to Bengal in the train of Muslim conquest who founed in the service of the rulers. The Iranians engaged themselves in many functions including the services of Ulama, teachers, and poets. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century many Shia Muslims came from Iran and settled in the cities of Bengal like Murshidabad, Dhaka, Hugli etc. People of Iranian origin increased, some made this country as their home and settled, some of them spread over northern India. The Persian great writers, like Ferdousi, Jami and Nizami, and Persian Romantic tales, written by minor poets, were also popular in Bengal. Saiful-Mulk-Badiuzzaman' having two versions in Bengali, one is rendered by 'Alaol' and the other by Dowlot Gazi. Alaol acknowledged that, this tale was very old from Persia. Muhammed Akbar's 'Jable-Mulk Shamarokh' (1674) is leased on a Persian tale, origin of which has not yet been traced. Some other tales in Bengali, 'Azar Sha Shamarukh' of Muhammed Jiban,' Lalmoti Saiful Mulk' of Abdul Hakim.' Saiful Mulk Lalbanu' etc. adopted either from unknown Persian sources, or from different episodes, are currently in Persian tales and tables. A large number of poems based on 'sufi' thoughts were also written along with the Ramvvaktidhara, Krishnavaktidhara , the 'sufi' ideas came to India from Persia, where Fariduddin Attar, Nizami, Rumi and Jami had exerted great influence on Persian poetry and philosophy. The poets had influenced on medieval Hindi poetry where they composed their epic verse in the Persian 'Masnavi' style and their depiction of love [5][6][7][8][25].

A large number of Persian words probably 10,000 have been used in Bengali vocabulary; some of them are as [5][25][27][28]:

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| (1) | Words relating to revenue and administration and to law, for example, আইন (ain), জেরা (jera), দারোগা (daroga), নালিশ (nalish), ফয়সালা (faisala), ফরিয়াদ (fariad), রায় (ray), etc (bhp).   |
| (2) | Words pertaining to kingly state, warfare, chase: জমিদার (zamidar), ZLZ (takhat), তহশীলদার (tahshildar), নবাব (nawab), বাদশা (badsha), বেগম (begum), বাহাদুর (bahadur), কামান (kaman), তীর (tir), তোপ (top), ফৌজ (fauj), শহর (shahar) etc.   |
| (3) | Words relating to religion: খোদা (khoda), পয়গাম্বর (paigambar), ফেরেশতা (fireshta), বেহেশত & (behesht), দোজখ (dojakh), মসজিদ (masjid), ঈদগাহ (eidgah), খানকাহ & (khanqah), দরগাহ (dargah), bvgvh (namaz), রোযা (roza), মর্সিয়া (marsiya), মাতম (matam), জায়নামাজ (jainamaj), ওয়ু (wazu), গুনাহ (gunah), etc. |
| (4) | Words relating to education: কাগজ (kagaj), পীর (pir), বুয়ুর্গ (buzurg) etc.   |

(5)	Words relating to the objects of luxury, trade, arts and crafts: আতর (atar), আয়না (ayna), গোলাপ (golap), ফুলদানী (guldani), চশমা (chashma), দদালান (dalan), মখমল (makhmal), ফরাশ (pharash) etc.
(6)	Words relating to the body and its organs: বায়ু (bayu), বদন (badan), পা (pa), সের (ser), wmbv (sina), গরদান (gardan), পাঞ্জা (panja), hev (yaban), নাখন (nakhan), দেল (del) etc.
(7)	Words relating to garments: AvPKvb (achkan), Avev (aba), †RveŸv (jobba), Pv`i (chadar), c`©v (parda), kvjIqvi (shalwar), wcinvb (pirahan), evhyev` (bazuband), Kvgviev` (kamarband), †cvlvK (poshak) etc.
(8)	Words relating to foods: কালিয়া (kaliya), কোপ্তা (kopta), কোর্মা© (korma), পোলাও (polao), বিরিয়ানী (biriyani), গোশত (goshta), পনির (panir), চা (cha), হালুয়া (haluya), কাবাব (kabab), কিমা (kima), পুস্ত (post), মোরববা (morabba), সজী (sabzi), খোরাক (khorak), কিশমিশ (kishmish), পেস্ট্র (pesta), বাদাম (badam) etc.
(9)	Words relating to nations: হিন্দু (Hindu), ফিরিঙ্গি (Firingi) etc.
(10)	Words relating to business: কারিগর (karigar), খানসামা (khansama), খানা (khana), খিদমাত (khidmat), খিদমাতগার (khidmatgar), চাকর (chakar), দোকানদার (dokandar), বাজিকর (bazikar), যাদুকর (Jadukar) etc.
(11)	Words relating to family and relatives: বাবা (baba), মা (ma), বেরাদার (beradar), দাদা (dada), খালা (khala), দামাদ (damad), শওহার (shaohar), কানীজ (kaniz), দোস্ট (dost), ইয়ার (iyar) etc.
(12)	Words relating to male and female names: দিল-আফরোয (Dil-aphruz), দিলরুবা (Dilruba), নুরজাহান (Nurjahan), জামশীদ (Jamshid), রোস্টাম (Rostam), সোহরাব (Sohrab) etc.
(13)	Words relating to places: হাম্মামখানা (hammamkhana), গোছলখানা (gosalkhana), সরাইখানা (saraikhana), মোসাফেরখানা (mosapherkhana), ইয়াতীমখানা (yatimkhana), কারখানা (karkhana), আসমান (asman), যমীন (zamin), বাজার (bazar) etc.
(14)	Words relating to birds and animals: বুলবুল (bulbul), কবুতর (kabutar), বাঘ (baz), তেতা (tota), গাভী (gabhi), খরগোশ (khargosh), হাইওয়ান (haiwan), জানোয়ার (janoyar) etc.
(15)	Words relating to common things and notions of life: আওয়াজ (aoyaz), আবহাওয়া (abhaoya), আফসোস (aphsos), কম (kam), কোমর (komar), গরম (garm), তাজা (taza), নরম (narm), পেশা (pesha), লাল (lal), সবুজ (sabuz), সেফিদ (safid), হুশিয়ার (hushiyar), হরদম (hardam), সেতার (sitar) etc.

(16) Words relating to the names of cities as well as provinces: নওয়াবপুর (Nawabpur), গুলিস্তান (Gulistan), রাজশাহী (Rajshahi), রংপুর (Rangpur), etc.

Bengal and Iran had been in contact with Traders. Indian, Bengali and Iranian ports were connected from ancient times. Bangla language and literature was greatly affected by the language of the Persian-speaking and Turko-Afghan conquerors that made Bengal their new home. Bangla vocabulary has been increased in the process of borrowing from Persian by attaching Persian prefixes and suffixes to Bangla words. For example, the Persian a (Av) or sign (v) has been elided: কামার (kamar) > কমর (kamar), গারম (garm) > গরম (garam), নারম (narm) > নরম (naram) etc. In many cases Persian prefixes and suffixes form compounds with Bangla words. For example: কেরানীগিরি (Keranigiry), বাবুগিরি (Babugiry) etc. Even the word Babu to many is the miker of two Persian words 'Ba' (with) and 'bu' (scent,smell). So Babu means one with smell!

Bengal came into contact with the Middle East and Iran, and Iranian merchants and commodities came to soldiers and generals, engineers and craftsmen, Sufis and dervishes. Due to the cultivation of the Persian language and the propagation of ISLAM, people converted to Islam became acquainted with the QURAN and Sunnah in Arabic, and with Persian. With the compilation of numerous books on mysticism, science and technology by Sufis influenced the development of Persian language in Bengal. During seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Persian and Muslim became the spirit in India, and came to Bengal, and Persian words which formerly brought into Bangla began to be admitted in larger numbers into Bangla and the result was that towards the end of the eighteenth century Persian became the sons of rich people [9][10][26].

## **5. Contribution of Persia in the World Civilization**

"Persia" is the Greek name of Pars or Fars, a province of modern day Iran Shiraz being the capital, and the most important contributions of the people of Persia or Iran, to the world civilization as the mother of all civilizations are as follows:

1. The first human civilization: It was ahead of Egypt by 500 years, of India by 1,000 years, and of China by 2,000 years, of Greece by 3,000 years, and of Rome by 4,000 years. [29]
2. During the first Persian empire in the world it was from the Indus River down to the Danube River in Europe and up to the Nile River in Africa. The Greeks and The Romans copied the best features of Persian Empire and the method of governing the Empire [15].
3. Cyrus, the Great conquered Babylonia, Assyria, Media and India; the Government insurance was started during Cyrus the great empire of Persia
4. In 2,500 years ago, the measurement procedure of Weight and Money was standardized in Persia.

5. Sanskrit the father of all modern languages was born in Iran. Stone age, which is the cradle of the earliest human civilization started in Iran about 70,000 years back.[30]
6. There are about 1.2 million historical sites which were discovered in Iran along with 70,000 historical moulds [16].
7. The first accounting tools were found in Iran and the first brick invention took place in Iran. The Iranian legends are some 20,000 years old.
8. The first Caesarian operation was done in Persia in 5000 years ago upon the birth of Rustom.
9. The homo sapiens was scattered throughout the world during 15, 000 B.C, and the evolution of man started with the history of Persia [17].
- 10 The first World Super-Highway as Silk Road that connected East and West and joined China to Europe whose main part was Ancient Persia.
11. Navy was first time used in Military operation by Persian Army during 2,500 B.C. The ship was used first time to cross the river by King Darius to cross the Nile and conquered Egypt. The Suez Canal in Egypt was planned and constructed by King Xerxes of Persia during 500 B.C.
12. The first Tax System, Customs Duties, official records and the legal code were established first time in the world by Darius the great of Persia. The name of some countries were came from Persian language, some of them being Hindustan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Azarbaijan, Turkministan, Qirgizistan, and Pakistan. Some of the historical sites whose names came from Persian as are, Bukhara, Samarkand, Allahabad, Islamabad, Rajshahi, Cox's Bazaar, Nippur etc.
13. Some famous queens and princesses in the world history came from Iran, Queen Vashti of King Xerxes, Queen Mumtaz Mahal (of Taj Mahal) Queen of the Mogul Emperor of India, Nusrat Bhutto, the First Lady of Pakistan (1971-1978) wife of Pakistani Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the First Lady of Egypt (1970-1982), wife of King of Egypt, etc [31].
14. The most famous clothing and dresses of the Mogul Darbar in the Indian subcontinent were originated from Persian that includes the world famous Nehru Tunic or Shirwani, the Jinnah Cap, Shalvar Qamis, Indian Turban, Parsi Gara, and variety of shoes and other accessories include the well known Sukarno cap in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, the Philippines, etc [30].
15. Persian was the official language of the Moguls of Indian subcontinent for over 700 years. Urdu the official language of Pakistan and India came through Farsi and Sanskrit, It is now spoken by 800 milion people around the world [1][3].
16. The first animal domesticated by man was goat in Persia [18].
17. Fish was used as food by people around the Persian Gulf [19],

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18. The pastime smoking pipe of name Nargileh or Hookeah or Shishah was invented in Persia in the Ottoman Empire. Pearl was discovered and harvested first time in Persian Gulf state of Bahrain, according to CNN report, 2002.
19. The first Noodles and Beer making techniques were discovered in Persia [20].
20. The first calendar that composed of 354 days of a year was invented in Persia, 2000 B.C. and Great Omar Khayyam who was a world famous scholar invented more accurate calendar than Western Gregorian. In his work only one day error in every 5,000 years on the other hand one day error in every 3,500 years in Western calendar. [30]
21. Vertical windmill was invented in Persia, in 9th century, A.D, the world famous Holland Windmill was originated from Persian, the Dutch knew about it in later time. [30]
22. The first wheel was invented in the cradle of civilization, the area that is known in history as Medeo Persia, some 5,000 years ago [21].
23. Legendary Persian King used Airplane in first to fly by the name of Keykaus.
24. Many other ancient inventions were originated from Persia, some of them are: Needle, Weaving, Roads/High-ways, Chain mail, Coins, Oil, World map, Military fire power, Early electrical devices, first reporting system like mores code using mirror and sun [22].
25. The number 13, belief as unlucky one, started in Persia, some 5,000 years ago. Presently, all most of the people leave their homes on every 13<sup>th</sup> day of every new year to avoid the so called bad luck of the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the New Year.
26. The phenomenon of the New Year is a Persian tradition, and the natural one the first day of Spring, not middle of the winter, is celebrated on March 21 every year [23].
27. The first religious revolution in the world took place in Iran in 1979 that led to the establishment of an Islamic Republic. This Islamic revolution caused the revival of the Islamic aspirations all over the Muslim world which is visible everywhere, today, [24].
28. The nationalization of oil and all other natural resources began in the Middle East had by Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq of Iran, in 1940 and 1950s.
29. Most of the sweetest and most famous poetry and literature were discovered in Persian (Farsi), some of them, One thousand and one nights (Alif Lila), the Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam, the story of Rostum and Sohrab in Shah Namah of Firdausi, the ultimate light of mysticism and Sufism by Jalal uddin Rumi (The best seller in the US today), the sweetest language in poetry and prose in the Rose Gardens (Gulestan) of Sheikh Sa'di.



## 6. Bengal Civilization

Most of the premodern sufi poetry in south Asia took up the challenging task of employing local languages such as sindhi, panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and Tamil to write about sufi mystical themes. Literacy was developed throughout the Mughal period (1576-1757) by the influence of Persian, and the literature became the product of the expansion of Mughal efforts to cultivate the forest hinterland expanded, more rural mosques, shrines and schools. The Bengali literature on Islamic topics on this period falls into three categories: Risalas (Muslim tales), Yoga-kalander (Love poetry), and Marsias (Imam Husayn elegies) [25][26].

Islam was introduced to Eastern Bengali through the saints, most of them are Shah Jalal, Bayazid Bostami, and Khan Jahan Ali. These Islamic philosophers are associated directly with the introduction of Islam and civilization building in Bengal.[27][28]

## 7. Conclusion and Future Work

The Persians are the ethnic group native to Iran that laid the foundation for a successful Arabian conquest in the seventh century. Persian was the official language of Bengal during 700 hundred years and the modern Bengali literature began from at period. Iran had started earlier than many nations contributing continuously to the achievement of civilization and still continues to survive and plays role to modern civilization in variety of ways. Today's Bengali literature had reached to its rich status during Mugal period that local poets and composers translated literature in Bengali from Persian sources.

The Persian language and literaturer (Farsi) can be used as scientific research methodology in modern times. The popular Persian writers in nineteenth and twentieth century like Ahmad Shamlou, Simin Behbehani and M.Omid had lot of works in the world of language and literature. All the Persian literature having a very limited publicity in Indian sub-continent and more major works on Indo Persian literatures can be done in future.

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