

LEARNING OF BRAHUI LANGUAGE IN BALOCHISTAN

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ABSTRACT:

Brahui a North Proto Dravidian (NPD) language spoken about 2000 km far from other South Dravidian languages (SPD) in South India i.e. Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannda, Gondi etc and Central Proto Dravidian (CPD) languages in the Central India i.e. Karukh and Malto by about two million people. It is spoken in the central parts of Balochistan, interior Sindh province in Pakistan and in the Sistan o Balochistan province of Iran, Helmund and Nimroz provinces of Afghanistan, Gulf States, and also there are few families have still preserved Brahui in Mari province of Turkmenistan.¹ In compare with the other non literary tribal dialects of Dravidian languages Brahui is enjoying a worth mentioning literary status in Balochistan-Pakistan. The past history of Brahui language is witnessed that it has been used only as an oral language till post-colonial period in Balochistan. There was no tradition of using Brahui as medium of instruction or in writing. Although some works in Brahui had appeared before then, the Brahui literary movement started in the reign of Khan Naseer Khan in the 18th century but a standard literary movement started only after the 1950 when some newspapers including "Muhallim Quetta", "Balochi Karachi" started publishing in Brahui besides Balochi in Pakistan. While weekly "Elum" Mastung a Brahui-Urdu newspaper was a revolutionary addition in the history of Brahui journalism and learning.

Besides many minor dialects Brahui has three major dialects i.e. Srawani, Jhalawani and Chagi or Rakhshani dialect. There are probably around one million Brahui speakers around the world. The Srawani dialect is most widely used in Brahui literature also. The Jhalawani dialect is

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spoken in the southern parts of Balochistan and in Sindh province, the Rakhshani dialect is most influenced by Balochi spoken in the Chagak, Kharan, and Panjgur areas while there is a reasonable number of Brahui speakers in different parts of Sindh.²

Brahui has been written in first time in the Pashto style Arabic script in the book "Tofah tul ajahib" written by Mullah Mailk Dad religious scholar and Brahui poet in the 1759 BC in Kalat Balochistan. Later on Brahui writers of Mukatab Durkhani the famous religious school in Dhadar Balochistan applied this script for their Brahui and Balochi Books. While after 1950 Brahui is being written in the Persian script and now all books, magazines and newspapers are being published in the Persian style Urdu script.

According to the census of Pakistan figures the households which Brahui is spoken are Brahui 1.21 per cent of the country.³ Brahui being the mother tongues of the Brahuis besides many other regional languages is not thought in the manner and the degree to which they would have been had the state adopted multi-lingual language-teaching policies in the country.

When we gone through the literary history of Brahui we see that the first printed book on Brahui has been written by Molvi Allah Bakhs who wrote this book in 1886 for teaching of Brahui to the Englishman, the English officers learned Brahui in order to project their power onto the people of Balochistan. In his book he adopted Sindhi orthography for Brahui. The earliest manuscripts of a religious book dated 1173 AD, have been written by Mullah Malik Dad Kalati a native writer of Brahui in Kalat.⁴

Durkhani Religious School near Dhadar (Balochistan) was the first school in which Brahui was used as medium of instruction. This religious school was established under the leadership of Muhammad Fazil Durkhani Raisani in about 1880. The pioneer of the Durkhani movement was Maulvi Mohammad Fazil Durkhani (1823-1896) whose village, Durkhani which is about ten kilometers from Dhadhar in Balochistan. The work of this School of thought can be mentioned as a literary and religious movement for spreading religious awareness among the Baloch and Brahui people. There was apprehension among the Baloch religious scholars that Christianity would spread among them. Since the missionaries had translated their holy book bible in the Brahui language

between 1905 to 1907. Mohammad Fazil and his followers Molvi Abu Bakar, Mullah Nabo Jan, Abdullah Durkhani, Muhammad Umar Dinpuri, Mullah Saleh Muhammad wrote Islamic books for the common people in Brahui language. This institution started publishing of books written by local scholars and printed, in Lahore and Dehli.⁵

The exact number of books published by this institution cannot be mentioned although Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui in his book "Brahui Zuban Adab ki Mukhtasar Tareekh" (Brief history of Brahui language and literature) says that around 1000 books were published in Brahui.⁶ While another scholar Aseer Abdul Qadir Shahwani lists 210 books in Brahui.⁷ There are various lists scattered, each book published from this institution has also a list of fresh books published by this institution at its back page.

Brahui is still used informally to explain texts in Arabic and Persian in some madrasas of Balochistan. Brahui is also the informal language of explanation in the Urdu medium schools of the small towns and rural areas where non-Baloch students do not study apart from the madrasas where Brahui is used only for explanation.

After the martyrdom of Khan of Kalat Mir Mehrab Khan on 13th November 1839 and the Mastung Accord in 1886, when Britishers took control of the powers of the rulership into their hands, a new era was commenced in Balochistan. The British officers accompanied by their religious clerics and the persons affiliated to the Christian Missionary with their strong intentions to convert the local people to Christianity translated the Holy Quran into Brahui and started their free distribution among the local people.⁸

These were the causes of initiation of a very organized movement in Balochistan which resulted in commencement of writings in Brahui and Balochi languages. The religious scholars not only adopted Brahui as a medium of education but they translated Holy Quran and other religious books in it which was the medium of instruction for the religious institutions. The Holy Quran was first translated into Brahui in 1914 by Mulla Muhammad Umer Deenpuri. No doubt, Maktaba Durkhani was the first Brahui and Balochi religious university of Balochistan for promoting religious and academic conscience among the people of Balochistan. The Ulema belonging to this religious institution played a major role in promotion of not only these languages but they also spread the

religious knowledge in Balochistan for about 125 years and the efforts made for the Christian Missionary could not become fruitful which they had initiated for converting the people of Balochistan to Christianity.⁹

However, the institution created a very rich religious literature in the province. Madrasa Durkhani had opted Arabic type orthography for Brahui and Balochi texts and used retroflex lateral voices in their Brahui and Balochi texts. Maktaba Durkhani is the first institution which giving Brahui language a status of teaching language was taught along Arabic and Persian. Later, a number of scholars of this Maktaba which had acquired education in the province where Brahui languages created best literary pieces.

In Balochistan, the demand for making Balochi language as the medium of education was continuing since Independence of Pakistan. However, in 1972 when Balochistan had the National Awami Party government and the eminent writer and poet of Balochi and Brahui languages Mir Gul Khan Naseer becomes the Education Minister, he convened a meeting of the Baloch writers and intellectuals in Quetta reviewing Balochi language as the medium of education and adoption of Roman script for it. He was not considering Brahui along with Balochi, this made anger to the Brahui youth and they started demanding Brahui also as medium of education and they were demanding for Brahui programs from Radio Pakistan Quetta and Quetta television Centre.¹¹ Teaching After suspension of NAP Government in 1973, a guerrilla war was begun in the mountains of Balochistan, some people had their resistance movement through weapons while some young writers of Brahui and Balochi distributed the Brahui and Balochi first book compiling and typing it in Roman text.¹²

It is clearly mentioned in the Constitution of Pakistan that "a section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture shall have the right to preserve and promote the same and, subject to law, establish institutions for that purpose", and "a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language"¹³. In 1989, The Government of Pakistan allowed Government of Balochistan to use the local languages (Brahui, Balochi, and Pashto) at primary level in the primary schools of Balochistan. The Brahui languages was formally inducted as medium of education for Primary level in 1990 and the initial books in Brahui have

been written by the local writers in the same year and arrangements were made for teaching of Brahui. The Balochistan cabinet in its meeting under the chairmanship of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, Chief Minister Balochistan held on 14-15 March 1989 decided that education shall be imparted in the mother tongue (Balochi, Brahui and Pashto) of the child at primary level in the province from academic year 1990.¹⁴ To implement these decisions Balochistan Text Book Board Quetta was assigned duty to appointed Panels of writers to prepare manuscripts and text books for class I in Brahui. A Grand Master Training Course was also conducted to impart training to a selected number of senior Primary Teachers from the districts where Brahui is spoken by majority of the population. After completion of one month language course, these Master Trainers were assigned duty to take on training the remaining Primary teachers in the areas where Brahui language is spoken. These Master Training Course was designed and conducted as Master trainers by Prof. Nadir Qambrani and Prof. Dr. Abdul Razzaq Sabir of the Department of Brahui University of Balochistan.

The text books only for class 1, 2, and 3 were written in Brahui. The basic book for class I was prepared in 1989, for class II books in 1990 and class III were under preparation in 1991 when Nawab Bugti government was dissolved. The Brahui Text book writers were Prof. Nadir Qambrani, Dr. Abdul Razzaq Sabir, Dr. Hameed Shawani, Abdul Haleem Sadiq, Abdul Samad Shaheen, M. Afzal Mengal, Khuda-i-dad Gul. Teaching in the Brahui was running very successfully in the Brahui speaking areas (Central Balochistan) of the province when Nawab Bugti Government was dissolve and Mir Taj Muhammad Jamali sworn as Chief Minister Balochistan in his chairmanship the provincial cabinet in its meeting held on 6-10-92 discussed the issue of local languages as medium of instruction and decided to stop the teaching of these languages.¹⁵

The University of Balochistan, Quetta in 1974 decided to establish language courses up to Adib, Alim and Fazil level at the campus. The founder teachers appointed for Brahui language were Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui and Prof. Nadir Qambrani. The classes were running successfully up to 1984. After starting of Master Degree course in Brahui the University of Balochistan In the same year and after establishment of a full fledged Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) in the Balochistan province the new Board was assigned to take over Adib Alim and Fazil courses on private bases instead of University. The exams in the

said level are still being taken regularly under the BISE, Quetta. It is worth mentioning here that comparatively number of Brahui students are more than other languages, i.e. Balochi and Pashto.

Currently, Brahui is being taught at degree level in both cases as an elective subject of 200 marks as well as optional subject of 100 marks. A reasonable number of students are taking part in both cases. Besides degree level Brahui is also being taught at Inter level in the secondary and degree colleges and as an elective subject of 100 marks at secondary school level in the high schools. In 1990 Pakistan Study Centre, University of Balochistan, introduced M.A Pakistan Studies in the Centre while University established a separate Department of Languages to teach Balochi, Brahui and Pashto languages at Masters Level. In 1994 the Department of Language bifurcated into four separate Departments and at present the Department of Brahui is enjoying status of a full fledged Department in the University of Balochistan, Quetta.¹⁶

Besides M.A Brahui classes the Department of Brahui has produced one Ph.D and three M. Phil scholars. At present (in 2007) there are two M.Phil scholars registered in Brahui Department, while one scholar is registered in Ph.D Brahui and one three in M.Phil Brahui in the Balochistan Study Centre, in the same University. One M.Phil scholar completed his M.Phil Brahui in the Pakistan Study Centre, in the same University. Brahui is also being taught as an optional subject of 100 marks at M.A Pakistan Studies level in the same Centre since 1990.

Other than University of Balochistan, Brahui is now being taught at M.Phil level in the Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, where three scholars are registered in M.Phil Brahui. Additionally, here is an elective paper of Balochi/Brahui in M.A Pakistan Studies in the National Institute of Pakistan Studies Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad.

CONCLUSION:

Efforts were made during the last two centuries for introducing Brahui as medium of education in Balochistan at different levels in different eras. The first era begins when the first book by a Persian teacher of that time High School Karachi Molvi Allah Bux was published in 1886 from Karachi. The main purpose of the book was to provide basic knowledge of Brahui to the British army officers. The second era begins in the first half of the twentieth century when religious scholars of Madrasa Durkhan or Durkhani religious institution at Dhadar besides Brahui and Balochi languages as medium of education for spread of Islam. The third and latest period begins from the last quarter of the twentieth century up to now. In this phase Brahui has been introduced as medium of instruction in many educational institutions including public sector universities and colleges in Balochistan. Besides other social political and academic reasons one main reason for backwardness of the language is its induction in the education system not in a proper but a reversed way. The language was introduced in education institutions from top to bottom instead of bottom to top. This caused many problems for language teachers as well as students.¹⁷

Brahui initially introduced as medium of education at Adib, Alim and Fazil certificate levels at University of Balochistan in 1974. Later on, introduced at Masters (M.A) level, at the same University in 1995. In 1990, Brahui was introduced as an optional subject of one paper (100 marks) at Bachelor (B.A) level in the degree colleges. In 1992 as an elective subject of two papers (200 marks) at same degree level. Later on, introduced at inter level and afterwards at high school level. In the end Brahui was introduced at primary school level for a short period of only two academic years in 1990 but ended in 1992. Only private students can appear in Brahui subject at Secondary and Inter level as private candidates. At a result now the Balochi is being taught entire except primary level in Balochistan.

Despite its expansion from upper to lower levels Brahui is rapidly developing in the education system from secondary school to post graduate and higher studies level in Balochistan. Despite shortage of language teachers the overall out put in Brahui is not so bad; hundreds of students are appearing at Bachelor, Intermediate and Secondary School

Certificate level examinations in the colleges and schools every year in province.

The University of Balochistan Quetta has also produced two Ph.D and six M.Phil scholars on various linguistic and literary topics in Bra while there is one Ph.D and six M.Phil scholars enrolled on various top related to Brahui language and literature. The University of Balochistan its academic council has already approved to allow the M. Phil and Ph.D scholars to write their dissertations in Brahui instead of Urdu and English languages.

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