

Dakkhani

Tushant Mittal (14762)

Introduction

Dakkhni, literally meaning South, is a major language spoken in the Deccan Plateau region, in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Goa, some parts of Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

It is the mother tongue or a native language for most of the Muslims in the former Hyderabad State which includes Telangana, Marathwada region of Maharashtra and some part of Karnataka. It is also the spoken language for most people of the region and is the most common "street-language" in several cities including Hyderabad, Bangalore and Aurangabad. There are no current census figures for speakers of Dakkhni because no one reports Dakhni as a mother tongue. One of the estimates puts it at around 11 million speakers.

It has no script of its own and can be written in Devanagari, Perso-Arabic script and this has also contributed it to being adopted by a larger group of people.

Brief History

Dakkhni was the form of speech in use in the 13th century Delhi. It is considered the earliest ancestral predecessor of the contemporary Hindi-Urdu.

It entered the Deccan Plateau along with the troops of Allaudin Khilji and more so by the shifting of the capital from Delhi to Devgiri by Mohammad Bin Tughlaq. It was here that it gained not only its current name but also the form which it has today. The Bahamani, Adil Shahi and the Qutb Shahi kings provided great patronage which led to the flourishing of the language.

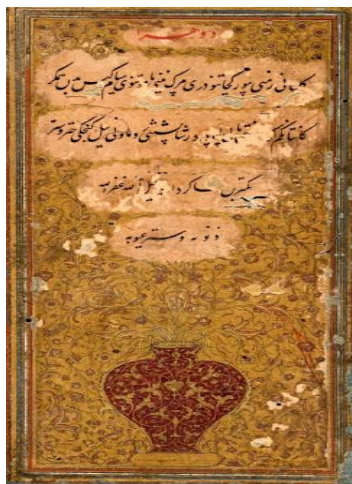
Language Features

Dakhini is part of the Indo-Aryan grouping of the Indo-European languages but its specific classification is a confusing subject as it is also considered by a few as the Persianization of the Marathi language.

Dakkhni is a very interesting language from the point of view of language studies as it, being in close contact Dravidian languages for an extensive period of time, has had significant bi-directional convergence with languages like Telugu, Tamil, Kannada which has in turn led to lexical, grammatical and other organizational variations in the language based on the region in which it is spoken.

Three varieties of the language are generally recognized Kannada, Tamil and the Andhra Dakkhni which is further subdivided into the Rayalseema and the Telangana(Hyderabad) dialect.

Literature



The golden period of Dakkhni literature began in the 14th century long before North Indian Urdu primarily by the Sufis of Bijapur with creations such as M'iraju 'l 'Ashiqin by Banda Nawaz, the epic 'Kadam Rao Padam Rao' by Nizami of Bidar, Sabras. The Deccan rulers were accomplished poets as can be seen in works like Quli Qutb Shah's voluminous Kulliyat-e-Mohammad Ibrahim Adil Shah's Nauras (image shown beside). The literary culture saw a decline after the great 17th century poet Wali Dakhni and was reduced to only a spoken language.

There is, however, a resurgence due to the modern tradition of mizahiya shayri(poetry) which took root in 1930s Hyderabad, and flourished rapidly following the fall of that independent princely state in 1948. This form of poetry has significantly contributed to the popularity of the language.

Popular Culture

There has been a meteoric rise in the popularity of "Hyderabadi" Movies which are primarily slapstick comedy movies produced in the Hyderabadi dialect of Dakkhni, due to the phenomenal success of the movie "The Angrez" in 2005.

Adrak Ke Punjey, an Indian satirical play written by Babban Khan in a mix of Urdu and Dakkhni was declared by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's longest-running one man show.

Language Status and Identity

Although a large number of people speak the language, not many look up to it as an integral part of their identity. Many speakers do not know the history of the language and believe it to be the "corrupt" or a slang form of the standard Hindi/Urdu which can be no further from the truth. Also, it is portrayed in a negative manner in popular cinema, primarily Bollywood, as the language of hooligans and gangsters much like the Bombay Hindustani. Thus many people avoid using it in formal occasions and "purer" forms of Hindi/Urdu are seen with greater respect.

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