

Educational, Intellectual and linguistic linkage between India and Central Asian Republics (CARs)

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Abstract

Across the Great Himalayan terrain; the culture, the lifestyle and the religion have got enriched by both geographic boundaries of India and Central Asia by integrated efforts down the ages. Historically, both the regions are interconnected in numerous ways. This relation witnessed vast and deep dimensions of socio-religious education, language and intellectual exchanges. The current paper has highlighted the indelible mutual impacts of both the regions which are earnest and very deep into history. These mutual influences are multi-dimensional and vast which incorporates multifaceted aspects like religious knowledge, language, philosophy, astrology, science, etc. among the few which are easily visible from ancient to modern period. Indian history cannot be defined without inclusion of a Central Asian segment of educational, intellectual and linguistic linkage. On the other hand Central Asia imbibed Indian fragrance within its deeper dimensions. The paper emphasizes only some of the linguistic, intellectual and religious education aspects of these dimensions towards establishing the possible bridge across the two major regions and it concludes the inseparable influence of these two regions is not merely from the recent decades but from the ancient times.

Key Words : Central Asian Region, Historical Connections, Buddhism, Kushana Dynasty

1.1 Introduction

Many Scholars like Harold Baailey, Bongard Levin, Litvinsky, Arnold Toynbee, Ravindra Nath Tagore, Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, and James Tod. M.N. Roy, Raja Mahendra Pratap, and Rahul Sankrityayan have given their unique contribution towards the study of Mutual Historical Influences of Central Asia and India. Many ancient religious texts reinforced this mutual relationship and propounded the theory that the ancestors of these two 'histories' were the same. It is mentioned in the Zend–Avesta,

The Persian Holy Book, the ancestors of Iranian, Turanians and Indians were three sons of Tratoria; Namely Tura, Sairimia and Arya (Mansura Haider, 2003). Geographical evidences points the same as Toynbee gave an account on study of History between the Oxus and Jumna and proven Aryans earlier habitat was in the Oxus Jaxartes plains. Thus the Aryans came from Central Asia to India. The findings of Bal Gangadhar Tilak established the fact that the Indo- Iranian settlement was in Valley of river Oxus and Jaxartes before they migrated south to India and Iran while he also certified the original home of the Aryans was in the Arctic region. On the basis of words like 'Pinda' and 'Pandita', scholars like Burrows and Emeneau concluded that the native dwellers of the Indians were Dravidians and

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Aryans migrated into India from the outside. They proved these words are drawn in Sanskrit from Dravidian language. They recognized and listed many Sanskrit words borrowed from Dravidian language.

Very interesting account about the genealogy of India and Central Asia is given by Farista. Fazil Khan in his book *tarikh-e-munaji- e-Bukhara* gives significant information. It is a well known fact that Sufism came to India from the Central Asian region. Great scholars like Albaruni and Abdul Rajjak Samarkandi came to India from Khwarism. Great Central Asian cities like Bukhara and Samarkand were the Centre of Sufi saints. Poets like Nasim, Masafi, Maharam, Mushrib and Shaukat popularized Indian poetry style in the Central Asia (Mansura Haider, 2003). Al-Beruni, the Great Scholar from Central Asia in his masterpiece 'Tarikh-UL-Hind' provided encyclopedic information about India. Al-Kwarezmi contributed in Astronomy at large. Ganges khan, Taimur, Babar and Nadir shah have great imprints on Indian History, all these came from the Central Asia. Great Scholars like Abdul Raja Samarkandi, Zia UL Naqsbandi (Author of Tutinama) and Alberuni (author of Kitab-UL-Hind) migrated from Central Asia to India which has left the impression of their wisdom. They played an effective role in the exchange of the legacies of these two countries that have notoriously short distances.

In Medieval age, interestingly, the Sultan of Tuglaq Dynasty Muhammad Bin Tuglaq's fifty percent appointment was from the Amirs of Khurasan, Turks, Mongolia and Persia. A Famous clan of Ilbari Turk belonged to Western Kazakhstan. Coins of Delhi Sultanate were found in Central Asia and Iran both. The Mughal Empire in India was founded by

Central Asian native Babur which happened to be the first Islamic state outside the authority of the Caliphate. Nobility of Babur mainly comprises Turanian and Central Asian ethnicity and the policy remained similar for his immediate successor Humayun. When Humayun was in exile, 57 nobles accompanied him to India of which 27 were Turanis while 21 were Iranis and 9 were unidentified. The Mughal.

Court in its prime period was always amassed by Central Asian nobles. Famous Fifteen luminaries in Mughal court like Jalalikitabar, Dastauri Nasafi, Khwaza Sami Sadat, Ghubar, Mulla Mustaifi Balkhi, Munim Bukhari, Mustaidi Bukhari and others were from Central Asia again and also 274 poets have been mentioned from Bukhara, Samarkand Nasaf and Badakhshan (BB Kumar, JN Roy, 2007).

Many Scholars related to Central Asia made India their workspace. Ancestors of Ghalib and Abdul Rahim Khan-e-Khana were from Turkistan and thus both regions got an opportunity of an extensive architectural impact on each other. The great architecture built by Taimur in Bukhara and Samarkand is supposed to be Predecessor of Indo-Islamic style of architecture in India. Refined version of the pithy style of architecture was adopted by his descendants Mughal. Gur Emir Mouslium and other monuments of Bukhara and Samarkand are the auspicious piece of architectural sophistication.

In 1925, Prabodh Chandra Baghchi did survey on Central Asian Nomads and highlighted interesting facts regarding entire sub-continent whereas Dev Dutta Ramakrishna Bhandarkar highlighted evidence of the origin of foreign elements in the

population of India. Even Buddhism is deeply influenced by Central Asian culture. Nirmal Sinha assigned the emergence of 'Tathagata' epithet for Buddha and spotless white horse, which is associated with the birth of Buddha are mortgaged from Central Asia. Babur in his memoir Baburnama, Abul Fazl in his book Ain-I-Akbari and Akbar name gives a nostalgic picture of Central Asia. Further, it is mentioned that Raja Ranjit Singh sent his envoy to Central Asia. Russian Orientalist Pyotr Pashino gives an account of the Indian residences in Tashkent, Bukhara during early 1870s (Dr. Gopal Surendra, 2001). The Scholarly description about mutual influence is available in abundance which proved the relationship of mutual prosperity and growth.

1.2 Linguistic interactions

Central Asia was predominantly in Iranian influence during pre-Islamic and early Islamic period where residents were primarily Sogdians, Choramiens, Scythians, Alans and Bactrans. All these were of Iranian origin and language (Amalendu Guha, 1970). With time, the region came into Turkic influence and became the homeland of Turkic people while Kazakh, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and Uyghurs had been natives of the land. Due to this effect Central Asia is now termed as Turkistan. Due to long connections and interactions between Central Asia and India, the language has also got influenced mutually which is confirmed by the phonetic similarities. Indian language adopted several Central Asian words like Ratna, Guru and Mani which are prevalent in Mangolia and Tibet as well. Bokhara comes from Vihara or Bihara and Sartha is derived from Sart in western Turkistan. Pre-Aryans in Inner Asia were the people who gave the words like Ganga, Anga, Vanga and Kalinga.

The word 'Linga' comes from Tibbeten word 'Gling' which later by Indianization became 'Ganga'. Another similarity exists for the word Ganga as it comes from Sanskrit word 'Gang ri mo' or 'Gang mo'. This means 'Daughter of snow' (Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, 1929). One Central Asian scholar claims that Lord Buddha knows Kanishka's Yu-Chi language. Sanskrit word for 'Turk' is 'Turushka' and with same syllable 'Shka' it is found suffix 'Kanishka' which in Sanskrit stands for 'youngest Son'. Turkistan is the earlier name of Central Asia the suffix 'Stan' comes from Sanskrit word 'Sthan'. The word 'chest armor' came to Sanskrit from Iranian (B.A, Litvinsky, 1964).

Urdu Language flourished due to the inter-connection between Central Asian and Indian people during the medieval period. The literal meaning of the word 'Urdu' is 'the camp of Turkish Army'. Initially this language was known as Hindustani or Hindavi, by travelling through different Sufi and Hindu Mystics it absorbed freely many regional influences and later came to be known as Dakhani or Dehalavi. The Hindi language also inherited many Turkic words like Chaku (knife), Kainchi (Scissors), Biwi (wife), Bahadur, Qabu (in control), Chammach (Spoon), Topachi (gunner), Barud, Chehak (small pox), Sarai (inn), Bawarchi (cook) etc.

Noted scholar Dr. Bhol Nath accounted about 125 Turkic words is usually being practiced in Hindi (Kapila, Vatsyayan, 2009). According to famous Russian-Indian expert Bonguard Lebin, Dravidian language is largely similar to Brahmi language. During early years of Christian era, 764 Kharosthi documents of wooden tablets were found in the Prakrit script which throws light on political, social and cultural conditions of Central Asia. In this way

both the regions has got enriched by mutual linguistic influences which continued even to the modern times.

1.3 Indian Literature based Mutual Interaction

In Ancient Sanskrit literature we found many descriptions about Central Asian lifestyle, culture, civilizations, philosophy, literature, scholars etc. Apart from Mahabharata and Ramayana various Sanskrit texts like Kavyamimansha by Rajshekhara, Kalhan's Rajtarangini, Kalidasa's Meghdoota and Vikramo-Varshiyam are the major source of our knowledge about mutual influences and interactions of both the regions. Regional details are texted in many mythological books. Markandeya Purana mentioned the geographical aspect of Central Asia and India collectively. In Markandeya Purana we find detailed description of 'Jambudvipa' which is significantly mentioned as 'a vast land which is elevated and broad in the middle and depressed on the south and north' (Mahabharata). Description of Jambudvipa depicts a very vast area from the Aral and Caspian Sea to the Yenisel and from Tien Shan range of Turkistan to the Arctic. Sage and author of Great Indian epic Valmiki has also given geographical details of Central Asia in Ramayana. It is said in many Ancient Indian Texts that 'Meru' Mountain is the famous Pamir plateau which is considered as the roof of the World, which was used to churn the sea to get fourteen Ratnas and Amrit was one among these Ratnas.

Mahabharata also gives the lists of the Warriors who were invited for the Great War of Kurukshetra by the King Yudhishtira. It says them Kshatriya of good birth Saka, Darada, Pahlva and Kirata. These Central Asian warriors fought from the both sides of the Kauravas as well as Pandavas. It is mentioned in Mahabharata that Nakula defeated Hunas, Sakas,

Yavanas and Pahalvas of the Kaurava's side. Further, Tushara or Yu-Chi clan (of which Kanishka belonged) was present in Raj Suya Yajna of Yudhishtira. Matsya Purana and Vayu Purana describe Chakshu River which is recognized as Amu Darya. Patanjali in his Mahabhashya, considered Saka and Yavana to be the migrants from the India. Kumar Jiva, the personal Vaidya of Buddha, mentioned about the great city of the North Alasanda and Tashkent in his writings (Prabhu dayal Agnihotri 2007). In ancient Indian texts the multidimensional description about Central Asian region indicates the easy mobility and continuous touch and transactions of the people from both the sides. Vedic and Epic age decodes significant factors which indicate expeditiously to the proximity of the two above mentioned territories.

1.4 Religious knowledge interaction

Religion plays major role in bilateral transactions of Indian and Central Asian region. Religious transactions are much visible from Paleolithic age. However, it became more evident at the time of Kushan dynasty as for the first time in history many religions sects like Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, Jorashtrian etc. thrive together. This was the time when Mahayana Buddhism and Indian Art and culture reached to China, Japan and Korea via Central Asia. Export of Indian Ayurvedic Medicines and Herbs began along with it. Many Buddhist Mathas of Kushana age are found in territories of Central Asia. Even today, in many places in Central Asia Buddhist traditions are kept alive. Places like Karataipia near Tarmej at the boarder of Afghanistan and Russia are found to be practiced Buddhist traditions and cultures. A long Buddha statue is found on the crossroad of ancient city 'Dal Warij Tepe' which evident the influence of Buddhism in

ancient time in Central Asia. Many Buddhist ancient documents have been found in South Tajikistan.

In India, Central Asian ruling dynasties pretended themselves as protector of local culturally socio-religious aspects of India. They adopted titles like “Kshatrapa” and “Mahakshatrapa”. Saka patronized Bhagvata movement, Vaishnavism and worship of Sun (Surya) through Sakadvipi Brahmins who were supposed to have come from Central Asia to India. Parthian patronized Surya worship. Saka, Parasika and Kushana brought number of icons like Amitabha and Avalokitesvara. Saka Era, which began from 78 AD by Kaniska was advised by leading Astro Physicist to Indian Government to adopt it as National Calendar and it came in to existence on March 22, 1957 by the Government of India.

In addition to this, different religious arts and culture have left its impact on each other. Numerous paintings have been found in Central Asia which has bright visible impact on the paintings of Ajanta and Elora in India while evidence of Lord Shiva as a cave painting is found in Penjikent (Tajikistan) and painting of Buddha in sleeping posture has been found in Adena Tepe in Tajikistan. Some very significant paintings of Heenyana Buddhism, Pastured Cow by Krishna, and Kalidasa's Raghuvansham and Dancing pose of Rani Chandra Prabha have been found in the cave of Kijil in Central Asia (Chayya Bhattacharjee, 1970). All these reflect possible Indian impacts on the art of Central Asia.

As far as Buddhism is concerned many Central Asian elements are imbibed in it. Evidence of first Buddhist monastery goes back to 211 BC. Fa-Hian and Hiuen Chwang described significant Buddhist

influence in Central Asia. Marcopolo had given them title of 'Idolators'. Kucha was considered as important Buddhist Centre since first century AD. Buddhist Scholar Kumar Jiva, who was personal doctor of Buddha, was born from Kuchian mother and Indian Father. Balkh was known as little Rajgriha with hundred convents and five hundred monks. Tirmij and Aksu was greatest Buddhist Centers with one thousand monks. Northern Xingxiang was famous as a center of Heenyana sect of Buddhism. Basic Mahayana scripture came from the border region of Mangolia and Manchuria which was the earliest habitat of Yu-Chi race. Buddhist terminologies like Dharmakaya, Sambogakaya, and Nirvanakaya were inspired by Greek deities. Further, fusion of Hinduism and Buddhism is found in Balawaste.

In west Central Asia, Vedic traditional funeral rights were in practice in Sogdiana. Brahma as Ravan, Indra as Adbad and Shiva as Vishparkar were worshipped in Sogdiana. Durga has also been worshipped there but with new incarnation of four arms. The worship of water deities 'Gandharvas' and Vishwakarma was also practiced in the Central Asian region. This water based worship shows extreme Indian religious connections. Scholars also relate Kank with Ganga. Paintings and idols of Narayana, Shiva, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Mahakala, Dignals, and Krishna are being found in various places which show strong Hindu linkage.

According to Dr. M.Kh Abuseitova “spread of Buddhism in Central Asia under the Kushanas was accompanied not by blind acceptance of the idea of ancient Indian culture but by their understanding and combination with local cultural traditions”. There is Buddhist manuscript on brick bark and palm leaves, which were found in Central Asia.

Along with Gandhara art it is the Mahayana form of Buddhism that emerged from Gandhara and spread along the Silk Road through Afghanistan, Central Asia, Tibet, Cina, Korea and Japan. Monks carried Buddhism from India to Central Asia and Sufis brought the contemporary culture from Central Asia to India. The first Madarsa in Central Asia was created in influence of Buddhist Vihara. Buddhist Monasteries remains of the period from 525 BC to 700 AD have been found in Transoxiana. It is mentioned that the first Guru of Sikhs Nanak Dev visited Oxus Valley many times. This further confirms the argument that there exist strong cultural and religious connections.

From Ancient to medieval age, Buddhism was medium of cultural and religious exchange of India and Central Asia which was later replaced by Sufism. Buddhist texts and missionaries are medium to spread philosophical thoughts and ideas into the region. Central Asia knew different Buddhist School of thought including Lamaism, which was Tibetan version of Buddhism and prevalent in the state mainly Kyrgyzstan. Lamaism was well enough in practice in Central Asia. Lamaism terminology may be found in 'MANAS' epic. With introduction of Islam, Buddhism disappeared from Central Asia but the Buddhist religious and cultural practices were already absorbed in the bone marrow and flesh of the local people in a deeper manner that Buddhist thoughts may be found in folklore, fairy tales and epics of Central Asian local regions.

Buddhism was later dominated by Islam in and after 8th century AD. The 751 AD proved to be transforming when Arab checked the spread of Chinese Empire in the battle of Talas River. This battle was breakthrough in the Central Asian and Indian mutual transactions because the Arab victory

resulted in domination of Buddhism by Islam and afterwards India suffered continuous invaders. All invaders had Islam as common defining element of their culture. Unlike India, Islam did not make its approach aggressively in Central Asia but it was introduced by Persian Islamic Missionaries. Next splash in India and Central Asia relation can be seen with the advent of Muhammad Ghori. Sufism entered into India as a byproduct of Ghori military campaign. With the introduction of Sufism, India witnessed a new dimension of Islam which comprises liberal principles and adhere many Indian practices within. Many Sufi saints came to India with convoy of Ghori and settled in Delhi, Kashmir, Multan, Punjab, and other places. Through this route the traces of Buddhism, with little different fragrance which came back to India.

1.5 Conclusion

It is ensured that the multi-faceted impacts of both the regions have rendered mutually which has shaped the different views of the regions towards a golden goal which is far away to be achieved in the times to come. The ancient Indian social structure was one of the important determinants for the religious knowledge transformation, intellectual interaction and linguistic exchanges with Central Asian regions. The mutual influence in history was such pervasive that even we can't imagine the present form of India in the absence of that and same is reciprocally true for the central Asian region also. India and Central Asia need to expand their educational links by establishing more Indian educational institutes in Central Asia. Scholar exchanges between India and Central Asia needs to be increased In Medieval period Central Asian people ruled India and with stowed great cooperation at intellectual level to it which made

India known globally. Since Paleolithic age up to now both the region's mutual steps are moving in rhythm towards prosperity and cooperation. The inseparable influence of these two regions is not merely from the recent decades, but from the ancient times. Numerous linguistic similarities have been found that in turn reinforces the mutual dependency over the novice relationship. The influence did not remain restricted to linguistic or religious effects, but to a large extent because of literature, painting, architect, poetry etc. More importantly, this multi-faceted, multi-dimensional study generates an opportunity to have a microcosmic study to find better strategic factors to strengthen the educational, intellectual and linguistic interaction between India and Central Asian Republics.

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