

## NATIONAL URDU INFORMATION SYSTEM: A PROPOSAL

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### ABSTRACT

*The paper highlights role of Information Systems, enumerating importance of Urdu language, the Government efforts for promotion of Urdu and present status of Urdu library and information centres in the India. It brings out need, objectives, hierarchy, participating agencies of the proposed National Urdu Information System (NUIS) .It also lists functions of national, regional, and local Urdu Centres of the system and suggests strategies for its successful operation.*

### KEYWORDS

*Urdu language; Information Systems; National Urdu Information System.*

### INTRODUCTION

India, a land of about 1700 language and dialects, declared 14 languages as 'Scheduled Languages' in the constitution in 1947. Later Sindhi (1962), Konkani, Manipur, Nepali (1992) and Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali (2003), were included in the list. Thus, at present, 22 languages constitute 'Scheduled languages'

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of the country. Despite of Hindi being the national language, Urdu is the most popular language with 55.3 million Urdu speakers in the country (**Turner, 2007**) .Table 1 lists statistics about speakers of Indian languages.

**Table 1: Modern Indian Languages Speakers**

| S.No. | Language    | No. of Speakers (millions) |
|-------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1.    | Assamese    | 16.6                       |
| 2.    | Bengali     | 88.6                       |
| 3.    | Gujarati    | 51.7                       |
| 4.    | Hindi       | 429.1                      |
| 5.    | Kannada     | 41.7                       |
| 6.    | Kashmiri    | 1.1                        |
| 7.    | Konkani     | 2.2                        |
| 8.    | Malayalam   | 38.6                       |
| 9.    | Manipuri    | 1.6                        |
| 10.   | Marathi     | 79.5                       |
| 11.   | Nepali      | 2.7                        |
| 12.   | Oriya       | 35.7                       |
| 13.   | Punjabi     | 29.8                       |
| 14.   | Sanskrit    | (less than one Million)    |
| 15.   | Sindhi      | 2.7                        |
| 16.   | Tamil       | 67.4                       |
| 17.   | Telugu      | 84.0                       |
| ❖     | <b>Urdu</b> | <b>55.3</b>                |

*Source: Statesman Yearbook 2007*

## URDU LANGUAGE

Urdu holds a unique status among the '*Scheduled Languages*' of the country for following reasons:

- Geographically, it is international in character. Besides being an official language of Pakistan it is also spoken in several countries such as United Kingdom, USA etc.
- Culturally, it symbolises India, besides spoken by different communities of the world irrespective of religion, caste, colour and creed.
- Demographically, it is spoken by 60 million people in the world and 55.3 million in India. The comparative strength of Urdu speaking population in various parts of the country is highlighted more vividly in Table 2.
- Constitutionally, it is one of the scheduled languages. It is an official language of Jammu and Kashmir and second most widely spoken language in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- Educationally, Urdu language is being taught from Certificate to Doctorate level by number of universities (i.e. Graduation 66, Post-graduation 56, Diploma 21 and Certificate 16 Universities) (**Association of Indian Universities, 2006**)
- Historically, it had a rich status especially during Mughal governance and furthermore, being common in mass media and Bollywood also.

**Table 2: Population of Urdu speakers in India.**

| State/UTs                | Population (2001) | No. of Urdu Speakers of the total population |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Andhra Pradesh           | 76210007(7.40)    | 560154(7.29)                                 |
| Andaman & Nicobar Island | 356152(0.03)      | 1492(0.41)                                   |
| Arunachal Pradesh        | 1097968(0.10)     | 1370(0.12)                                   |
| Assam                    | 26655528(2.59)    | 3925(0.01)                                   |
| Bihar                    | 82998509(8.06)    | 7066617(8.51)                                |
| Chandigarh               | 900635(0.08)      | 4570(0.50)                                   |
| Chhattisgarh             | 20833803(0.02)    | 86164(0.41)                                  |
| Dadar & Nagar Haweli     | 220490(0.02)      | 198(0.08)                                    |
| Daman & Diu              | 158204(0.01)      | 84(0.05)                                     |
| Delhi                    | 13850507(1.34)    | 512990(0.03)                                 |
| Goa                      | 1347668(0.13)     | 39944(2.96)                                  |
| Gujarat                  | 50671017(4.92)    | 547737(1.08)                                 |
| Haryana                  | 21144564(2.05)    | 261820(1.23)                                 |
| Himachal Pradesh         | 6077900(0.59)     | 8252(0.13)                                   |
| Jammu & Kashmir          | 10143700(0.98)    | NA   |
| Jharkhand                | 26945829(2.61)    | 1475846(5.47)                                |
| Karnataka                | 96878627(9.41)    | 4480038(4.62)                                |
| Kerala                   | 31841374(3.09)    | 12625(0.03)                                  |
| Lakshadweep              | 60650(0.0058)     | 37(0.06)                                     |
| Madhya Pradesh           | 60348023(5.86)    | NA   |
| Maharashtra              | 96878627(9.41)    | 5734468(5.91)                                |
| Manipur                  | 2293896(0.22)     | 193(0.08)                                    |
| Meghalaya                | 2318822(0.22)     | 2683(0.12)                                   |
| Mizoram                  | 888573(0.08)      | 349(0.03)                                    |
| Nagaland                 | 1990036(0.19)     | 1381(0.06)                                   |
| Orissa                   | 36804660(3.57)    | 502102(1.36)                                 |
| Pondicherry              | 974345(0.09)      | 6170(0.63)                                   |
| Punjab                   | 24358999(2.36)    | 13416(0.05)                                  |
| Rajasthan                | 56507188(5.49)    | 1953497(3.45)                                |
| Sikkim                   | 540851(0.05)      | 1703(0.31)                                   |
| Tamil Nadu               | 62405679(6.06)    | 1036660(1.66)                                |
| Tripura                  | 3199203(0.31)     | 173(5.40)                                    |
| Uttar Pradesh            | 166197921(16.15)  | 12085628(7.27)                               |
| Uttaranchal              | 8489349(0.82)     | 407299(4.79)                                 |
| West Bengal              | 80176197(7.79)    | 1455649(1.81)                                |

*Source: Census of India 200 cited in (Bhatt S C & Bhargawa GK 2005)*

*\*Figures in parentheses indicate %age*

## PROMOTION OF URDU: GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

Government of India and a few state Governments have taken major steps for promotion of Urdu language in the country. These include:

- Treating scheduled language in the constitution of the country.
- Making official/second language in the states like J&K, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh respectively.
- Gujral Committee recommendations for promotion of Urdu.
- Urdu academies in various states/Union Territories.
- Establishment of Maulana Azad National Urdu University (Hyderabad).
- Establishment of National Council for promotion of Urdu language (New Delhi)
- Institution of 'Iqbal Samman' award by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.
- Appointment of Urdu teachers, translators by state Governments particularly in Uttar Pradesh.
- Report on Social, Economic and Educational status of Muslim community of India highlighting problems and solutions related to Urdu language under heading Educational attainment and issues of languages. (**Sachar Committee, 2006**)

## **URDU LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTRES: STATUS**

Though, literature and scholarship exists in most disciplines of knowledge (Arts, Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences and Applied Sciences) in Urdu language but few libraries possess primarily Urdu collections while others contain partial collections in their holdings.

The status of these libraries is not quite adequate especially with regard to collection, organization, services, personnel, finance and infrastructure. These lack adequate finances, qualified and skilled manpower, adoption of standard schemes for cataloguing and classification, and techniques and tools of Information Technology.

However, few major libraries such as Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh; Central library of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad; National Council for Promotion of Urdu Library, New Delhi, Khuda Baksh Oriental Library, Patna; Raza Library, Rampur; etc are adequate in finances, skilled manpower and infrastructure.

## **INFORMATION SYSTEM**

“A group or set of methods, procedures, and techniques organized to achieve a specified end result or functions” is termed as a system as opined by **Young (1983)**. He comments Information system as a complete system designed for generation, collection, organization, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information within institution, organization, or other defined area of society. On the other hand **Ray (2005)** is of the opinion that “Information system is an organized procedure for collecting, processing, storing, and retrieving information to satisfy variety needs.

However, to sum up 'Information System' is viewed by peers as an organization of people, material, and machines that serves to facilitate the transfer of information from one to another organizational structure meant for information gathering, processing, and dissemination in a speedier and economic way .

## **NATIONAL URDU INFORMATION SYSTEM (NUIS)**

### **Need**

Library resources are considered as national resources. These can be better utilized through a well planned and organized Information system. Thus, need crops up to establish NUIS for many reasons like explosion of knowledge and literature, lack of cooperation and coordination in utilization of resources, lack of Urdu teachers, de-linking of Urdu from employment, absence of Urdu databank in the country, deterioration in cultural heritage, increasing number of users and limited resources, innovation in Information Technology etc. (Khan & Yusuf ,1998)

### **Objectives**

The establishment of NUIS need to be established to realize following objectives:

- Provision of National Information Service to fulfil information needs of the users.
- Optimum utilization of existing information service and development of new ones to meet the needs of users.
- Provision of education and training to produce trained manpower for the libraries.
- Promotion of cooperation and coordination among participating agencies both at national and international level.

## **STRUCTURE AND HIERARCHY**

The system should have National/Regional and Local Urdu Information Centres.

### **National Urdu Information Centre (NUIC)**

#### **Functions and Services**

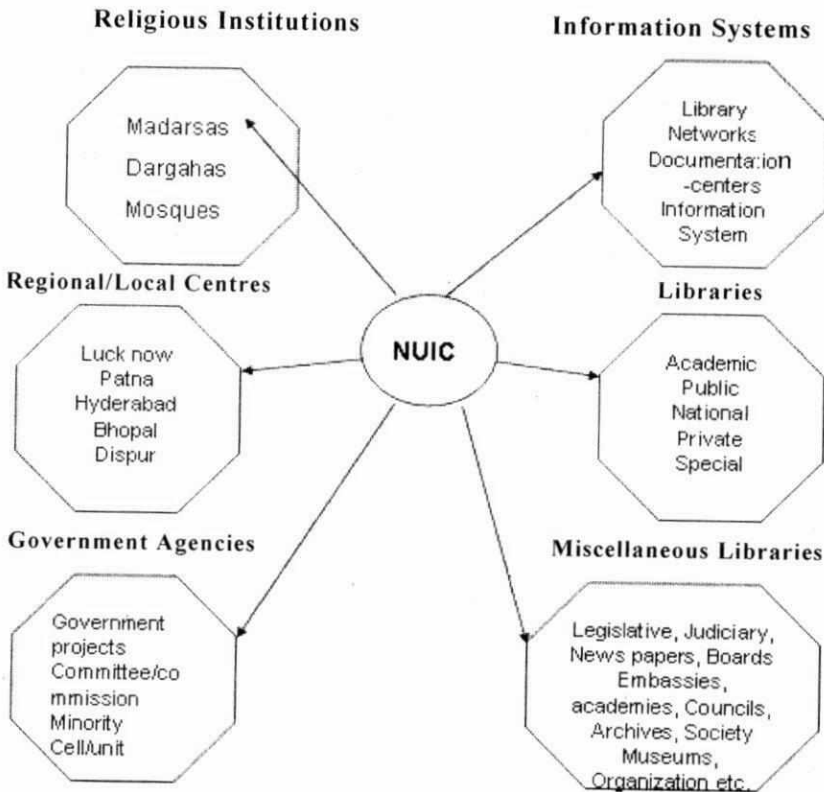
- To provide various services like translation, Indexing, Abstracting, Reference and compilation of databases etc.
- To provide other reader and user facilitating services like Bibliographical, current awareness, selective dissemination of information , interlibrary loan, press clippings, Xeroxing etc.
- To conduct surveys of Urdu libraries in the country and suggest measures for their improvement.
- To set up Regional/local centres.
- Provision of education and training facilities for Urdu libraries and information centres.
- To put efforts for promotion of Urdu language and their libraries in the country.
- To compile broad guidelines, tools and standards for NUIS



### Organizational Structure

The NUIC shall have following structure. (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1: Organizational Chart of the Participating Agencies of NUIC



## REGIONAL URDU INFORMATION CENTRES

India constitutes of 28 states and 7 Union territories with diverse physiographic regions and cultural aspects. Regional centres are needed for successful operation of NUIS. These centres shall support to the National centre in term of organization and management of resources, creation of databases, conducting surveys for purpose of planning, automation in libraries, organization of conferences, compilation of references tools, conduct of education and training programmes, cooperation and coordination of participating agencies etc. The regional center are suggested for following places (Table 3)

**Table 3: Proposed Location of Regional Urdu Information Centres**

| Regions    | Location  | Domain of the States /UTs  |
|------------|-----------|--|
| North      | Lucknow   | Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Chandigarh |
| North East | Dispur    | Assam, Arunachal, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura   |
| South      | Hyderabad | Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andaman & Nicobar, Islands and Lakshadweep           |
| East       | Patna     | Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh,   |
| West       | Bhopal    | Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Dadar Nagar & Haveli, Daman and Diu                                   |

## LOCAL URDU INFORMATION CENTRES

Local centres necessitate to be established on need basis. These shall be located in the capital/district head quarters, tehsils or blocks convenient and desired in each state/UT. These centres shall provide support to regional centres to achieve objectives of the NUIS

### Participating Agencies

The proposed participating agencies of the NUIS are associated with several types of Institution/Organizations. There include private, Government and autonomous institutions, religious bodies, embassies , newspaper offices etc. (Table 4)

**Table4: Proposed Participating Libraries in Information System**

| Types of Institution          | Illustrations   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Academic and Public libraries | Select College, University and Public libraries at different levels         |
| Archives                      | National Archives Library and Select state archives Library                 |
| Private                       | Kutub-a-khan Saidiya, Hyderabad   |
| <b>Religious Institutions</b> |   |
| Madrasa :                     | Darululoom Deoband (Saharanpur), Nadwatuloom (Lucknow)                      |
| Dargah :                      | Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin (New Delhi), Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti (Ajmer). |

Contd.

| <b>Information System / Documentation Centres</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Library Networks                                  | DELNET, CALIBNET and INFLIBNET  |
| Documentation Centers                             | NASSDOC (New Delhi), NASDOC (New Delhi),  |
| <b>Government Agencies</b>                        |   |
| Central / State / Local government                | Home Ministry Library, Foreign Ministry Library   |
| <b>Miscellaneous Institutions</b>                 |   |
| Academy , Boards and councils                     | Urdu Academy, Lucknow, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi ,Tarqui Urdu Board (New Delhi), National Council for Promotion for Urdu Language ( New Delhi) etc |
| Research Institute                                | Institute of Islamic Studies (New Delhi), Rajasthan Oriental Research institute (Tonk), etc   |
| Manuscripts, Societies and Museums                | Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library (Patna), Rampur Raza Library (Rampur), Asiatic society of Bengal, salar Jung Museum etc                         |
| Judiciary ,Legislature                            | District / High Court and Supreme Court of the country. States Legislative Library and Parliament Library   |
| News papers                                       | Quami Awaz, New Delhi, Rastriya Sahara, Siyasat, Kanpur e.t.c.  |
| Organization, Embassies                           | Jamaitul Ulema-i-Hind (New Delhi), Embassy of Pakistan etc  |

## REQUISITES AND STRATEGY

In order to achieve objectives of the system the essential ingredients include finance, manpower and bibliographical tools. An allocation of huge amount is required for successful operation of the system for setting up national, regional, local centres, training of manpower, creation of databases, provision of services and infrastructure. Human resource development may include an active role played by academicians, technologists, language experts, librarians, information scientists, researchers etc. The initiative needs mobilisation at many fronts to create awareness, planning and implementation at various levels. However, as long term goal, the proposed NUIS should adopt following initiatives to realise its objectives.

- Compilation of reference tools i.e. Directories, encyclopaedias, biographies, bibliographies, handbooks, manuals and union lists of Urdu serials, theses, dissertations etc. by the National/Regional Centres.
- Organization of workshops / seminars / conferences on various aspects of Urdu languages by National/Regional Centres.
- Conducting short term workshops for producing skilled staff by the National/Regional Centres for Urdu Library and Information Centres.
- Creating awareness among users by bringing out Urdu journals/magazines/Newsletters of the NUIS etc.
- Application of Information Technology in Urdu libraries and information centres for modernization of services, developing multi lingual interfaces and databases etc.

- Framing scientific policy for growth and development of Urdu Library and Information Centres by the National Centre.
- To collect data regarding various aspects i.e. Urdu speakers, scholars, teachers, translators, Urdu medium schools, literature with active support of research scholars, NGO's etc.
- Introduction of NUIS card for better utilization of library resources.
- Compilation of standards and translation of classification, cataloguing, indexing, abstracting, of documents by the National centre.
- Taking all initiatives for optimum utilization of library resources for the growth and development of the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

National resources may be better utilized through Information System for the growth and development of any country. In fact NUIS can play a major role in this context. However, success of the NUIS will depend upon active support of scholars as well as government. Therefore, it is suggested that Government of India should appoint a Committee to assess feasibility of setting up NUIS.

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