

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH THE CENTRE IN-CHARGE OF CABA-MDTP, URDU AND ARABIC CENTRES ON 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2017 AT HOTEL IMPHAL, NORTH AOC.

Prof. Syed Ali Karim ji, Director, National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language,

Mohammad Afzal, Social Activist,

All the Invitees,

Friends from print and electronic media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here with you all this morning at this important interactive session with Urdu and Arabic centres of Manipur, organized by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. I wholeheartedly encourage the initiative taken up by the Council for promotion of Urdu language.

The word 'URDU' comes from Turkish word which means ARMY. Urdu is one of those unique languages which can easily take in words from different languages without sounding alien. Urdu is spoken in Pakistan and parts of India. It is Pakistan's national language and one of India's official languages. It is a lot similar to Hindi when spoken, and speakers of Urdu and Hindi perfectly make sense to each other, although subtle differences in usage can be noticed. However, it is in formal writing that the differences start showing up to the extent of wiping out any signs of mutual intelligibility between Urdu and Hindi. There are two reasons why it is so:

(1) Urdu is written in Nastaliq script, which is the superset of modern-day Arabic script, whereas Hindi is written in Devanagari script. These two scripts are completely different from each other.

(2) Though Urdu and Hindi share a near-common grammar, their vocabularies are different. Urdu being a predominantly Muslim

language, its vocabulary is chiefly derived from Arabic and Persian. Hindi, on the other hand, has several loan-words from Sanskrit, an ancient Hindu language.

Urdu and Arabic have a lot of common vocabulary. Urdu has words from many different languages including Arabic, Farsi (Persian), Sindhi, Sanskrit, Turkish even English. When Urdu is spoken many words even if they don't sound Arabic, are derived from Arabic root words. This can be observed in written Urdu which uses the same script as Arabic.

Urdu's relationship with Arabic is complicated in the sense that it's not related in the same way as the romance languages are to Latin. I would say it is more of an influence, but a rather strong influence since it was based on religion. It gets even more complicated when it comes to the writing system. Urdu is written in Nastaliq script which is descended from "Naskh", the modern Arabic writing system, and "Taliq", a different writing system. So, if we were to give an Urdu speaker, with no Arabic knowledge, something written in Arabic, he would be able to read it but would only be able to make out bits and pieces of what is written.

However, Persian and Urdu have a different relationship. Urdu was developed first under the Ghaznavid empire in the 9th century. Urdu initially was a mixture of Old Persian and Chagatai Turkish. Chagatai Turkish, unfortunately went extinct, but Urdu and Persian still lived amongst each other and thrived during the Mughal Empire becoming the official languages. It was a great era until the British came. Under the British, Persian went extinct in India. The British came in and abolished Persian from the lands of Northern India in 1832. The last generation that was able to speak Persian was my grandfathers generation. After the British erased the language from the territories of Northern India and Pakistan, they then took Urdu and amalgamated it with some Sanskrit, to create this new language called Hindi-Urdu, which took over the land. Hindi or Hindu is actually a Persian

word. Today, Hindi is heavier in Sanskrit, and Urdu is heavier in Persian - especially the Urdu spoken in Pakistan, which I do think will develop into its own dialect, as languages continue to merge and change.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Council is fully committed to promoting, developing and propagating this beautiful and ancient language of Urdu. The present interactive session is also an endeavor towards this direction. I am sure the language as well as the participants will get enriched from this interactive session. And once again I thank the organizers for inviting me to this important event.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.