

# Language of Home and Language of Literary Expression – A Discourse

RAHAMATH TARIKERE  
(translated by Shakira Jabeen B. )

Choosing the home language as the medium of literary expression is natural to writers anywhere in the world. Could there be a possibility of such a choice being read as unnatural? This paper intends to see the above possibility with a focus on the writers from the Muslim community in Karnataka. Muslims of Karnataka are linguistically different from the Muslims of other states in the South. The Muslims of Kerala and Tamil Nadu speak the official language of the State as home language too. Until recently, the home language of Muslims of Andhra Pradesh and the language of administration of the State were one and the same. However, the multilingual space of Karnataka throws up multiple languages to choose from.

As a religious community the Muslims of Karnataka use either Urdu, Kannada, Navayath Konkani, Tamil, Byary or Moplah as home language. If one can assign a region wise division, then Muslims of Bidar, Gulbarga and Princely state of Mysore (old Mysore) area use Urdu: Muslims of South Canara use Byary and Moplah and the Muslims of Bhatkal region of North Canara Use Navayath Konkani. In the rural areas of Hyderabad and Mumbai Karnataka regions, Kannada is the home language of Muslims. The migrated Labbai Muslims use Tamil as their home language. Muslim writers in Karnataka use one or the other of the above languages for creative writing. In ancient times, writers were recognised by their religious background- Jaina poets, Vaishnava poets, Veerashaiva poets, etc. It is not possible to tag such adjectives to writers in modern times. Besides, 'Muslim' writers, 'Christian' writers etc, are not acceptable adjectives in the literary world. There are

writers who have objected to their grouping under 'Dalith' (Dalit) and 'Muslim' frameworks. The group that's called 'Dalith writers' is more an adjective used due to historical reasons and has grown into a genre today. However, in a society that is divided on the lines of caste, creed and religion, there is a need to know the language that writers choose to express, the experiential world within which they choose to posit their work and the difficulties they face in communication. To understand all this, it is necessary to fathom the socio-religious background which influences the choices they make with language and vocabulary. The term 'Muslim writers' is chosen here as a loose cover term to discuss the role of home language and the language of literary expression and the diversity that prevails under the nomenclature. For some writers, the home language, the language of surrounding environment and the language of literary expression are all the same. The writers of Bidar area who write in Urdu or the Kannada speaking Pinjara Muslim writers can be cited as examples for this mode of choice. For many other writers, their home language, language of the surrounding environment and the language of literary expression are three different things. The moot point is to see the linguistic, literary, cultural possibilities and dilemmas that surface in these two different situations- when the language of literary expression and the home language are the same and different. The language choice made by the Muslim writers of Karnataka falls under four models: (1) writing in the home language, (2) writing in the language of environment, (3) writing in both these languages, and (4) writing only in English.

\* Rahamath Tarikere, Professor, Department of Kannada Literature Studies, Kannada University Hampi, Karnataka. Shakira Jabeen B., Associate Professor, Department of English, Nehru Memorial College, Sullia, Karnataka.

### WRITING IN THE HOME LANGUAGE

Writers who choose to write in their home language do not face difficulties in communicating shared cultural ethos. Hence, the writers who write in Urdu, Byary and Konkani share a direct communicative connection with the people of their religious community. It is this ability of the writer to communicate his experience and empathy to the reader that makes for an intimate relationship between the two. However, this intimacy has reduced the possibility of the writer being a critical insider. One of the reasons for this situation where a thinking writer decides not to critically evaluate his community is the historical facets of post-partition India. The Muslim community was viewed with suspicion and had to prove its patriotism to the nationalists. The community had to shoulder the collective guilt of the Partition. Muslim writers were, therefore, burdened with a necessity to adopt a defensive stand about their own religion and to write with willing caution about other religions. Post-Ayodhya (1992) and Godhra (2002), communal clashes intensified this difficulty. The writers of Pakistan and Bangladesh do not face such compulsions. But the Christian, Sikh, Hindu and other writers belonging to minority religious communities of those countries might have faced a similar predicament. Fundamentalism coupled with blasphemy laws prevalent in those countries have made their writers feel more insecure. Writers like Sadat Hasan Manto in Pakistan and Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh faced wrath for their writings. It is not only the writers who face such difficulties, Human Rights activists who think beyond the diktat of religion face similar backlash. But that is a different issue which merits another discussion.

Writers who choose to write in their home language, especially the ones who write in Urdu, have not been able to address the non-Muslim life and its experience in a big way. The monolingual connection between the Muslim writers who write in Urdu and their readers has isolated them into cultural islands. These cultural islands, huddled together, are visible in Urdu schools and universities where there are a large number of Muslim students and teachers. Most Urdu writers of Karnataka lack a give and take relationship with Kannada literature. Their writings have remained unknown to the Kannada writers. Many Urdu poets from Hyderabad Karnataka have made a name at the national level but the Kannada literary world doesn't know them. Their works are not translated into Kannada which leads to mutual anonymity. Though this is a technical reason, there are also other cultural and educational reasons. There is a strong mindset to place 'Kannada' within the paradigm of 'Hindu' in Karnataka. The Gokak agitation of 1982 was, in reality, against the 'mother tongue' status accorded to Sanskrit with an objective to give Kannada a prime place. Unfortunately,

it turned into a narrative against the Muslims who spoke Urdu as home language. The decision of Doordarshan to air news in Urdu leading to communal riots can be cited as another example of tagging official language with the majority community.

The Urdu speaking traditional Muslims have a notion that Kannada is a part of 'Hindu' identity and 'Urdu' is a part of Muslim identity. This polarization is visible in the pictures and paintings of historical figures, Gods and Goddesses displayed on the walls of Urdu and Kannada schools. The pictures of Tipu Sultan and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad are rarely found on the walls of Kannada schools. Some Kannada schools display boards with '*baagilolu Kai mugiduolage baa or Jnana Degulavidu*' meaning 'this is the temple of knowledge, enter with folded hands in reverence'. Such display gives a religious edge to modern schooling which in turn is not inclusive. The Urdu writers generally would have studied in Urdu medium schools. They reside in urban areas. The concentration of Urdu speakers, educated in Urdu medium and the Urdu writers share a strange connection with each other. They huddle together to form an island psyche.

### WRITING IN THE LANGUAGE OF ENVIRONMENT

Writers who choose to write in a language spoken outside their home enjoy the possibility of exploring and portraying more universal experiences. Their chosen language can be one of the regional languages or the official language of the state. This choice eliminates the problem of communicating at a cultural level in a language spoken by a community. This makes for a larger readership too and opens up a larger canvas of issues and topics. For example, Nisar Ahmed's poems – '*kurigalu Sir Kurigalu*' (Lambs), '*Raman sattasuddi*' (News about Raman's Death) or Ramzan Darga's '*Pranalike*' (Manifesto) handle issues that are universal. These writers have the responsibility of communicating their people's unique experiences, empathy and trepidations to the people of other languages and religions. The writers have to find ways to translate their cultural world into a language that they don't speak at home. This may even weaken their ability to communicate with their own community.

This predicament of writing in a language that is not spoken at home jeopardise the connection the writers share with their language people. The Tulu, Kodava, Lambani, Marathi and Konkani writers who write in Kannada face this problem. But there is no religious angle to their predicament. D. R. Bendre and Sham Ba Joshi wrote in Kannada though their home language was Marathi. Masthi Venkatesh Iyyengar and D. V. Gundappa

with their Tamil background wrote in Kannada. The recent writers of Konkani background – Girish Karnad, Jayanth Kaikini and Vivek Shanbhag write in Kannada. N. Disoza and Fakir Muhammad Katpadi with their Malayalam background write in Kannada. Their choice does not create a fault line between the readers and the writers. This choice however creates another astonishing possibility—these writers share the unique socio-religious experience of their community with people of other community and culture. Thereby, they act as bridges between the two cultural worlds. Though we publicly proclaim that India is a multi-religious and multi-cultural country, there is a drastic decline in inter-linguistic, inter-religious and inter-cultural communication in recent times. The role played by the Hindu communalists and the Muslim fundamentalists in stoking this divide cannot be ignored. An atmosphere of communal tension enhances a feeling of cultural alienation. The effect of writings that bridge cultures leads to empathy and cultural sensitivity among the readers. This is the education that literature is capable of imparting and the writers who choose to write in Kannada have performed it better than the writers who chose to write in Urdu. This difference can be noticed between the writings of *Tanaha* Timmapuri who wrote in Urdu and Nisar Ahmed who wrote in Kannada. Writers like Nisar Ahmed share an intimate connection with the mainstream Kannada literature and readers. His choice of language for his literary expression enhanced his ability to transmit cultural nuances of his community to others. Poets who have been bridges between culture are—Sanadi, Akbar Ali, Ramzan Darga, Shareefa, Peer Basha and Arif Raja. Prose writers like Boluvar Mohammed Kunhi, Sara Aboobekar, Banu Mushtaq, Abdul Rasheed, Mirza Basheer and others have played a proactive role in connecting two cultures. Though both the genres bridge cultures, there is an interesting difference between the emotionally charged thought process of these poets and explanation of social life in prose by these writers.

The Byary, Konkani and Urdu writers share a stronger connect with their community in comparison with the writers who have chosen to write in Kannada. Hence, the Kannada writers of Muslim community have been more critical of socio-religious issues plaguing the community than the ones who write in Byary, Urdu and Konkani. Religious fundamentalism, patriarchy, illiteracy, militancy, are some important problems that the Muslim community is facing. Within this historical framework, the self-critical role these writers play becomes crucial. Their self-criticism is essential in a society where a certain religion has to share the social space with many other religions and religious communities. Writers who choose to write in a language that is not spoken at home develop camaraderie with writers

and readers of other religious groups. These writers in turn are under pressure to write on subjects that deal with inter-religious issues from a non-religious point of view. As a rebound they have been more ruthless in writing on the problems that are internal to the community than the Urdu writers. Due to the uncompromising critical stand they take, their writings in turn have evoked opposition and have even been banned. This critical insider approach to their own religion pressurises the writers to project themselves as secularists. They address the evils within the community with more vehemence. Compared to poetry that is symbolic, prose tends to explicitly address problems of the community like *talaaq*, polygamy, patriarchy and fundamentalism.

Writers, who belong to this category, are undoubtedly self-exploring, honest and bold. But they face two problems. Their writings that concentrate on the problems of Muslims and Islam constrict the space that is open for a natural and nuanced expression. This is a serious issue where the writings limit the possibility of expanding the social space of the community. The writings of Masti, Shivarama Karantha, Kuvempu, Mirji Annaraya, Rao Bahaddur, Devanooru Mahdeva, Lankesh and others portray the fears and aspirations of their communities. The same spatiality is visible in Vaikom Basheer's writings in Malayalam. His home language and the language of literary expression are the same. Barring a few writers like Abdul Rasheed and B.M. Basheer, most other writers don't seem to concentrate on topics which can spill over to a broader framework. The self-exploratory stand these writers take, subjects their writings to convenient ideological interpretation both by the Right and the Left. This in turn is used by communal forces and mass media to legitimise a biased opinion about Islam and Muslims among the half literate people. There are reports that some of the writings of Sara Abubakar are used to criminalise Islam in the classrooms. Such a reading of her writings has negative fallout among the Muslims. The fundamentalists in the community have branded her as 'anti-religious' and 'community hater'.

When the writers are under an unnatural pressure to prove themselves as non-religious or secular, they end up painting a unilateral view of their community. When writers choose a language other than home language, the cultural distance that is created aids the communal forces to use their writings to stoke more hatred against the community. This is a strange predicament that writers who choose to write in a different language face. At this juncture, it is not wrong to raise a hypothetical question – what if Salman Rushdie had written in Urdu. But the case of Taslima Nasrin who wrote in the language of her people is totally different. Dalith writers, women writers and the African writers who write in English face the same problem.

In comparison with the writers who write in their home

language, the ones who write in the language of their environment are under a pressure to explain the cultural nuances of their community. Though poetry and plays escape this pressure, stories and novels cannot. It is then that such writings take a sociological angle. The glossary of used words and meaning given at the end of prose is an example of such a cultural inevitability. All writers who strive to paint the regional or community based experiential world face this difficulty. The challenges Christian and Muslim writers who write in Kannada face is not a regional issue, but cultural and religious. The other reason for the sociological angle in their writings is that the readership comes from literate middle class concentrated in the urban areas. When compared to the give and take and cultural exchange among the various communities of rural population, there is very little exchange among these people. The Hindu communalists and the Muslim fundamentalists have polarised the urban middle class. When writers write in their home language for readers of the same language, the sociological angle is not necessary. Again, this sociological angle is unnecessary for the folk 'Shahira' singers of Muslim religious background. There are thousands of Muslims who sing ballads and Moharrum songs. They are not under a pressure to impart cultural or religious awareness to their audience through their songs are based on religion and history. This knowledge is a part of their life and is known to the audience prior to the singing itself. They also exhibit a natural accommodative behaviour about other religions and cultural worlds. At the level of oral tradition, there seems to be a greater acceptance of diversity.

The writers who write in Kannada but have Byary, Konkani and Urdu as home languages have to construct the religious and cultural world not only for the readers of other religions but also to the readers of their own community. In their effort to construct this world of theirs for others, they have to address the problem of cultural unfamiliarity. If the writers from coastal areas address north Karnataka readers or if the writers from Kalaburgi address the readers from the coastal region, the problem of unfamiliarity with culture represented in the writings crops up. The reason for this is the regional differences among the Muslims of Karnataka. The lifestyle, language and religious expressions of Pinjara, Navayath, Byary, Moplah and Urdu (Dakhni) speaking Muslims of South Karnataka are not the same. The celebration of Moharrum in a syncretic manner in the North Karnataka is not found in the coastal areas. Urdu speaking Muslims of Karnataka belong to the Hanafi sect. The Byary and the Konkani speaking Muslims belong to the Shafi sect. The economy of North Karnataka Muslims is dependent on agriculture and Muslims of Central and South Karnataka are traders. This diversity among the Muslims of Karnataka gets extended to the political stand they take.

Hence, the concerns and problems that the writers of coastal Karnataka address are unfamiliar to the Muslims of inland and north Karnataka. But the issues addressed in the writings from the coastal region are familiar to the Muslims of Kerala. The Muslims of Kerala and the Muslims of coastal Karnataka share religious, political and cultural affinity. The cultural world of both these people is an admixture of Arab and Malayalam worlds. This is the reason why the writers who write in Byary language have maintained a more intimate contact with the Malayalam writers than the Urdu writers of Karnataka. Vaikom Mohammad Basheer or Shivashnakar Pillai have a greater impact on them than the old Mysore poets like Nisar Ahmed or Ramzan Darga of Bijapur. Sara Aboobaker's translations from Malayalam or Fakir Muhamaed Katpadi's writings on Vaikom have to be viewed under this light. The religious cultural world of the Muslims of the princely state of Mysore and of north Karnataka is built on the foundation of Bahamani and Adilshahi kingdoms which in turn had their roots in the Persian and Urdu traditions. This background has to be contrasted with the Arab-Malayalam cultural roots.

There are two important factors in this discussion on the problems diversity of religion and language pose to literary expression. They are- the possibility of reading any literature of the world without being aware of the civilization, culture, time, place and the possibility of readers constructing and internalising the life experience and socio-cultural world through literature. Chinua Achebe, Kafka, Marquez, Tolstoy, Shakespeare and others transcended their geo-cultural boundaries and became a part of the universal experiential world and shaped the sensibilities of their readers all over the world. Such being the reality, it is not surprising to find diversity among the writers belonging to the same religion but from various regions of Karnataka. But the construct that these unique qualities, diversity and difference are a part of certain socio-religious community, is a myth that has to be destroyed. The literature that sets out to universalise human experiences also exposes the socio-cultural and regional diversity.

This argument about the religious cultural variety and diversity applies to the Urdu and Konkani writers of Karnataka. The Urdu writers share an intimate camaraderie with the pan Indian Urdu writers. The Konkani writers share an intimacy with the Konkani writers of Goa and Maharashtra. It is the language of literary expression they choose that enables them to strike a connection with the writers of neighbouring states. They are not able to do the same with the Kannada writers of their own state. How do we account for this connect with the same language people of the neighbouring states within the paradigm of linguistic states? The Urdu readership of Karnataka needs a mention here. Unlike the North Indian Urdu readership that is a

cross section of all communities, the Karnataka readership of Urdu literature is confined to Muslim community. The truth this discussion unravels is that it is the writer's choice of language and not his religion that decides the readership of his work. This choice of language of literary expression also decides the interpersonal relationship between the writers.

#### WRITERS WHO WRITE BOTH IN HOME LANGUAGE AS WELL AS IN THE LANGUAGE OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Very few Kannada writers have made this choice. Muddanna Manzar, Raghavendra Rao Jujb, Maher Mansoor, Samvartha Sahil write in Kannada and Urdu. Fakir Muhammad Katpadi and others write in Kannada and Byary. There are writers in coastal region who write in Tulu and Kannada. Writers of Hyderabad Karnataka chose to write in Kannada and Urdu as they were the administrative languages too. There is no religious dimension to this choice. When the writers from the Muslim community chose to write in Kannada-Urdu and Kannada-Byary as the language of their literary expression, Kannada is not only the language of environment but also the administrative and official language. To communicate the religious experiences of a community through Kannada is to face the hurdles the language itself poses. Writers have found many strategies to overcome these hurdles-Inter mixing Urdu, Persian and Arabic words with the language of their literary expression. Nisar Ahmed wrote the state song and devotional songs on 'Hindu' Goddesses in Sanskritized Kannada. At some point of time he resorted to mixing Urdu and Persian words with Kannada. For those who have observed his poetic track, this change looks like 'ghar vapasi' phase triggered by conscious guilt of moving away from the cultural symbols of the community. During this code mixing phase, Nisar Ahmed composed poems like- '*Amma Naanumattu Achaara* (Mother, Rituals and I), '*Nimmodaniddoo Nimmantagaade*' (With you but Unlike you), and '*Savathimakkala haage kaadabeda*' (Spare the Step Child Treatment). They seem like a criticism of the right-wing - a discourse which reflects the cultural stand he takes.

Nisar Ahmed also uses words that have cultural and religious connotations – *namaz*, *jannath*, *talaq*, *iddah*, *vazu* (ablution), *sheerkhurma*, etc. After using these words, meaning is provided within parenthesis to eliminate the linguistic and cultural unfamiliarity. Some writers do not provide meanings in brackets. They create a situation where the readers are compelled to find out the meaning. Devanooru Mahadeva's '*Kusuma baale*' is one such example. Some others switch over to home language by abandoning the language of the environment. Hamza

Malar, Mohammed Kulai, Fakir Muhammad Katpadi and others have been writing in Kannada and their home language- Byary. There are no examples of language shift from Kannada to Urdu. The reasons for this could be that Kannada and Urdu have two different scripts. Generally, the shift seems to be from smaller languages to regional languages or from foreign language to the home language. Many African writers who wrote on the lived experiences and the unique cultural ethos of their communities in Portuguese, French and English abandoned them in favour of their home languages. Ngugi wa Thiango, in his '*The Decolonialised Mind*' has elaborately discussed the problematic relationship between these Afro-European writers who write in European languages and their relationship with their communities. This is the challenge Tamil writers like R. K. Narayan and Hassan Rajarao faced when they chose to write in English for an international readership. They did not consider language choice as a question of identity of their community like Ngugi) did. Muslim writers of Bengali, Tamil and Malayalam do not face this problem of dichotomy between language of experience and language of expression-their home language and the language of expression is the same.

Some writers also chose to translate literature of home language to the language of environment. There have been translations from Tulu, Konkani and Byary to Kannada and from Kannada to these languages. Similarly, Tamil speaking writers like M.G. Krishnamurthy, A.K. Ramanujan, M.N. Srinivas and others have written in English and their writings have been translated into Kannada. This seems like a circumlocutory route to the home language-from a foreign language to a regional language. Translation from Tulu to Kannada involves two local languages. Going by the history of translation, there has been a religious persuasion in translation from foreign language to the regional language. Such a motive is missing in translations from one regional language to the other. Among Dalith writers, there has been an attempt to convert written texts of languages of the community or environment to orality. This mode reminds us of the Dalith writers who composed songs to communicate with their unlettered community. Through orality, the mode of communication is changed without changing the language of communication. This mode is a cultural and political strategy too. We see the same strategy utilised by Konkani and Byary poets who compose and sing their poems which are released as audio albums. This method is reaching the language speakers abroad without the written word. This strategy bypasses script and translation to broaden the reach of communication. Few other writers also chose to write in two scripts to reach the home language speakers and also the speakers of regional language. Shabbir Baidya-the Bhatkal Navayath poet who

writes in Konkani, uses Kannada and Devanagari scripts. Iqbal Sayeed used Devanagari and Nastaliq (Persio-Arabic) scripts for his anthologies. It is perhaps much easier to publish in multiple scripts on the social media. Riyaz Ahmed Bode of Gulbarga is publishing his father's Urdu poems in multiple scripts.

The writers who choose to write of two religions in multiple scripts to portray multi-cultural and multi-lingual worlds face many hurdles. However, this has led to a possibility of reaching the home language and the regional language readers at the same time. Their writings have been culturally enriched by this choice of multi-language and multi-scripts. Look at this Kannada sentence- '*shukravaarada namajannu maadidanu*' (He performed the Friday prayer). '*Shukravaara*' is a Sanskrit word, '*namaz*' is an Arabic word and '*maadidanu*' is a Kannada word. The writers cultivate to express cultural richness and diversity. This comes effortlessly to the bilingual Urdu poets of Urdu-Kannada, Urdu-Telugu, Urdu-Marathi who are followers of oral tradition. The folk tradition of Karnataka has innumerable bilingual 'Shahirs' (composers) who compose Moharrum songs and ballads. Shishunala Shareefa, Channuru Jalasaab, Gurupeera Khadri, Motnahalli Hassan *saab* and other post-mystic poets who call themselves 'shahirs' are multilingual composers. There is no dichotomy between home language and the language of environment in their compositions. Some of them have even syncretised the home language and the other languages in a single composition. But then, this has not been attempted by the writers who are dependent on print.

Pre-modern Karnataka was home to many bilingual poets; who wrote in Dakhani and Persian. Then, the binary was not between home language and the language of the environment. The difference was between home language and the language of administration. Persian was not the home language of these poets but the language of the rulers—same as English was to us. During the Nizam's rule in Hyderabad many writers wrote simultaneously in Kannada and Urdu. Urdu was not only the administrative language but also the language of the Muslims who lived around them. They added Persian-Urdu pen names to their Kannada or Sanskrit first names which in itself is a narrative. The space that held these poets had Kannada and Urdu as people's day today languages and also the languages of mystic poets. The audience of the oral poets were bilingual and possessed a multi-religious and multi-cultural shared sensibility.

#### WRITING ONLY IN ENGLISH

Not many Muslim writers choose English for their literary expression. The few who do, belong to the middle and

upper middle classes which distance them from the felt experiences of common people. Some write in newspapers on broader cultural issues. The few who attempt to express in English, reflect a cosmopolitan world which is in no way connected with any religion. Their writings lack regional flavour and are primarily read outside Karnataka. I suspect that the readership in Karnataka prefers a classical and reformist approach to literature. I would put such writers under a hybrid variety without local roots.

There are Muslim writers who write academic books and papers in English. Scholars like Sheik Ali, A.M. Pathan, Akhil Ahmed, Muzaffar Assadi, Khiser Khan, Khalid Javeed, Khiser Jahan, Mushtari Begum, Asma Urooj, Arabi, A.M. Khan, Waheeda Sultana, Shakira Jabeen and other academicians, working in universities, colleges and research centres write in English. They are experts from many disciplines of pure science, applied science and social science. Most of them are from Urdu speaking background. They publish their research papers in various national and International journals. Their papers are read for the research content. The language they choose is a non-issue. The scientific papers usually do not address local and cultural issues of the community. Their papers on culture too have a broader framework based on an internationally accepted theoretical frameworks which tends to locate local issues within a broad structure. Sheik Ali is well versed in Urdu too and is bilingual in his writings and speeches. His research on Tipu Sultan does not get the following it deserves—not because of the language he writes in but because of the sensitivity of the subject. The language in which these academicians write is not by choice but a natural continuation of their expertise in their respective areas and is secondary to the content matter of their research. The theoretical scanner applied to creative writers cannot be applied to these academic writings as English continues to be the language of higher education in India.

The role of language in education is also fraught with problems. Education in mother tongue, however desirable it might be, has practical problems under the hegemonic language paradigm we follow. To admit a child in an Urdu medium school is to prepare him to drop out before he reaches higher education. Therefore, Urdu schools are closing down. The closure of Urdu schools or the opportunity to be educated in Urdu upto the lower primary level does not affect Urdu as a home language. This reality has serious ramifications for our understanding of the relationship between language and medium of instruction. Simultaneously, many middle-class Muslims are switching over to English at home. This in turn reduces the readership of Urdu newspapers and literature as they are the main readers of it. The shift to English at home is converting middle class Muslims into readers of English literature.

There is another problem that the Urdu writers will have to face. The language choice that the writers make is one thing, but the choice of language in education and the choice of English for a pan Indian or a global movement has more serious ramifications. English bypasses both home language and the language of the environment. This in turn leads to a reduction in the creation of literature and readership in these languages. Then, there won't be any struggle or need

to represent cultural crisis or its outreach. But then, these struggles, crisis and the possibility of outreach are more important than the creation of rootless English readership and writers. My travel through the length and breadth of India has unravelled one truth- language, culture and knowledge systems are all interwoven. Displacement of any one would result in the collapse of the rest.