

The Development of Bengali Literature during Muslim Rule



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1. Background

1.1. Outline of the history of Bengal: History reveals that there was no definite border of ancient Bengal.¹ Nevertheless, it can be said that the ancient Bengal was constituted of the East Bengal (present Bangladesh), West Bengal, Gawalpara and Kachar of Asam, Purnia, Manbhum, Singbhum of Bihar and Sawntal Pargana. In this connection Srimanta Kumar Zana referring to R. C. Majumdar observes: ‘different parts of the then Bengal were being introduced with different nomenclatures. Such as: Pundua and Borendra in North Bengal; Radh and Tamrolipti in West Bengal; Samatat and Harikal in South Bengal and Bangala in East Bengle’ (Zana, 1994, p. 5).²

In lexicographic point of view, Bangala, a geographical term, derived from the word Bang, originally denoting a non-Aryan tribe of this name and later applied to their homeland in the southern and eastern parts of Bengal that is now included in Bangladesh (*The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1979, p. p. 1015). This statement also appeared in Veda, the first religious scripture of Hindu religion and ancient Hindu epics like *Mahabharata* (*The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1988,, p. 85.). The scholars, however, conceded that the aborigines of Bengal were not the Aryans. The founding structure of this Bengali society was Quoma. Among them the Pundra, Bang and Radh etceteras were in leading position.

The Aryans inhabited Bengal during the post-Vedic period (1500-1200BC). Many dynasties exercised their control over Bengal. The Palas, Pundras, the Senas etc were a few whose rule was noteworthy. The economy, arts and culture of this region developed immensely during the Palas. From historical evidences it is perceivable that during this period Bengal had a good intellectual and cultural contact with Iran that we find comments on Dharmapala in contemporary Persian book. As Professor Abdul Momin Choudhary in *Dynastic History of Bengal* observe:

Hudud – ul – Alam a Persian work written in 982-83 A.D., also mentioned about Bengal under Dharmapala (Dahum) who is said not to regard anybody as greater than himself and to have had an army of 300000 (Chawdhury, 1967, pp. 40-41.).

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Ethnically, Bangladesh is a melting pot of races. The longheaded, flat-nosed and dark brown in complexion proto-Australoids, were one of the earliest groups to enter the area. With the coming of Muslims new elements were introduced. Persons of Iran, Arab and Turkish origin migrated numerically to the sub-continent and later, gradually entered what is now Bangladesh (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1943-1973, p. 690.).³ The political synthesis of Bangala led to the cultural integration of the people who were called Bangali, a term also applied to the local language which developed its literature during this period

1.2. Muslim rule and socio-cultural infusion in Bengal: In 1203 A.D.⁴ Ikhtiyar Uddin Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khalji, a leading army officer of Kutub Uddin Eibek, the Emperor of Delhi, conquered Nadia and Gouda the then Lakhnauti and made his capital there. Later, he spread his domain over all the Northern Bengal. He established a number of mosques and *madrasas* there (Karim, 1959, pp. 40 and 84-139.).⁵ By the end of the thirteenth century AD, Muslim rule was extended over whole Bengal region. After all, the Muslim rulers had adapted the language, customs, conventions and mannerisms of the Iranians, and had modelled their court ceremonials and administration of justice on the Iranian style. These adventurers were racially, indeed, Turko-Afghan but culturally Iranian.

The Muslim rule in Bengal, however, changed the entire course of history. Where, once the Hindu and Buddhist culture were most influential, gradually evolved the Islamic culture. The importance of the Brahmins along with their Sanskrit language gradually obscured, and Persian as the Muslim court language, appeared to be the most influential language. The Muslim victory and its sway over Bengal created a permanent Muslim community here. The conquerors and the nobles who followed them evolved an aristocratic class. Unlike the Hindu Brahmins they were liberal in their outlook. The absence of class-priority based on caste system and the strict adherence to the doctrine of equality practised by the Muslim progressively brought a social revolution. The Muslim rulers patronised education and encouraged the masses to it, whereas, earlier it was reserved only for the Brahmins and upper classes.

Finally, the Islamic system of education was introduced in places where the followers of Islam settled. The proliferation of the traditional centres of instruction and learning, i.e., mosques, *madrasas* and *maktabs* created a congenial atmosphere for the development of literary writings in both Arabic and Persian. These institutions were directly responsible for local efforts at original composition in Persian both in the religious and secular fields of learning. Apart from extending their munificent patronage and encouragement to writers and poets, the reigning Sultans of the day themselves took part in the intellectual pursuits. Among the reputed centres of learning Gaud, Pandua, Darasbari, Rangpur, Sonargaon, Dhaka, Sylhet, Bogra and Chittagong were famous. Even the number of *madrasas* in Bengal when the British rule commenced stood nearly at 80,000 (*History of Bangladesh*, 1992, pp. 434 – 435 and 440).⁶

For more than 600 years (from 1203-1837AD) Persian was the official language in Bengal. During this vast period thousands of books had written in Persian and hundreds of poets had been composed their poems in Persian. The excellent copies of these unique contributions have been preserved in different libraries of Bengal as well as in the sub-continent either in books or in manuscript forms.

In spite of this, from the mid-18th to the end of 19th century, including *Sultanul Akhbar* and *Durbin* a number of Persian Dailies had been published regularly from Kolkata. It proved that Persian still existed as a language of the educated mass, in this locality.

This process of development, however, took many centuries with the obvious result that life in this part of the sub-continent in particular and in India in general was profoundly influenced by Persian or Iranian culture. In this regard Tara Chand observes:

Thus after the first shock of conquest was over, the Hindu and Muslims prepared to find a via-media whereby to live as neighbours. The effort to seek a new life led to the development of a new culture which was neither exclusively Hindu nor purely Muslims, It was indeed a Muslim-Hindu culture. Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were also altered (Ahmad, 1984, p. 2.).

It may however be mentioned that what came to be known as the Muslim culture was predominantly a Persian culture.

2. Development of Bengali language: we know that sometime after 1500 B.C., the Aryans, a people who spoke an early Indo-European tongue, invaded India from the north-west. In the course of time, their language developed into *Vedic*⁷ *Sanskrit*, which becomes the language of the upper classes of the then society. By 500 B.C. *Vedic Sanskrit* declined to a spoken language and was gradually replaced by regional dialects. Following this decline, *Panini*, a celebrated Indian Grammarian created a standard form of Sanskrit. Writing had also been introduced by that time, and written *Sanskrit* got developed (*The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 17, pp. 110-111.).

However, from 1250 B.C. up to 500 B.C. are called the era of Ancient Indian Aryan Language. Later, this very Sanskrit language spread rapidly by the Aryans in many parts of the Sub-continent as well as in Bengal. Numerous books on different subjects like: Epic, Drama, Prose, Poetry, Novel, Grammar, Rhetoric and Prosody etc had been written in this language (Zana, op. cit., p. 10). The Aryans were gradually spread all over the Sub-continent, which caused the *Sanskrit* language to become influential on the non-Aryan local languages for a long period. In consequence, originated a new language called *Pali*, and later, *Prakrit*, another new form of language. That is why *Pali* called ancient *Prakrit*.

Finally, *Prakrit* itself got various shape such as: Moharashtri, Shawrashani, Magadhi, Goudi, Lati etc. (Zana, Ibid., p. 11). On the basis of an excavated inscription in Goudi or Purbi *Prakrit*, which related to the period of the reign of the Mowrya emperor Aoshoka, at Mahasthan Garh, Bogra, historians assumed that *Goudi Prakrit* was in vogue in this locality (Anissuzzaman, 1987, p. 305).

Later, *Prakrit* at the edge of its final development evolved as *Apabhramsha*. Philologists called, the phase of origin and development of *Pali*, *Prakrit* and *Apabhramsha*, as the phase of Middle Indian Aryan Language. The sample of these languages is apparent in the ordinances of the Emperor Aoshoka and in many other inscriptions. The period of this phase was from 600 B.C. up to 500 A.D. (Shahidullah, 1965, p. 22).

No doubt, in course of time, *Apabhramsha* was accepted by the local peoples, as a medium of poetical and dramatic works (Anissuzzaman, op. cit., p. 350.), meanwhile, Hindi, Gujrati, Marathi, Sindhi, Oriya, Maithila, Bangla etc was originated and was spread among the mass people and gradually the classical Bengali got shaped. By this process of evolution classical Bengali passed the Middle phase and reached the Modern stage, which is extended from 650 A.D. unto the present day (Ibid., p. 350.) .

Indeed, the classical Bengali language is derived from *Apabhramsha*. Nevertheless, from which Prakrit and which *Apabhramsha* Bengali language developed on this issue scholars have different opinions. According to Mr. G. A. Grierson, Bengali language has developed from - *Magadhi Prakrit Apabhramsha*. Suniti Kumar Chatterji also supports this idea. Mohammad Shahidullah, on the other hand, proved that Bengali language developed from *Goudi Prakrit-Apabhramsha* (Ibid., p. 352.).

The most ancient specimen of Bengali language and literature is the verses of *Charyyagitika*, which was written in *Apabhramsha*, the initial stage of the formulation of Bengali language. Before this stage people were used to compose in Sanskrit, Prakrit languages. Actually, the verses of *Charyyagitika* are religion-based compilations, composed by a liberal group of the Buddhist priests under the patronisation of the Kings of the Pala Courts. At the beginning of the second half of the eleventh century, the Senas invaded Bengal and successfully overthrown the Pal dynasty and established the Sen dynasty in Bengal (Ibid., p. 53.). The Senas were in believed of *Brahmin* culture as well as of Hinduism. Sanskrit was a sacred language to them. So the Brahmins contravened the usage of local vernaculars. Even they pronounced a judgement against the mass usage of native Bengali language. This Brahminic propaganda, especially after the translation of *Ramayana* by Krittibas under the patronage of a Muslim ruler became more obvious. In this connection Shaikh A. T. M. Ruhul Amin gives a comprehensive analysis while he quotes from Dinesh Chandra Sen (Amin, 1985, pp. 198-199.).⁸

i) *aṣṭadaś puraṇāni ramasya caritanic/
bhasayaṃ manabḥśrutva raurabḥ narakḥ brajet//*

ii) *krittibese kashideshe ar bamun ghese –
ei tin sarbbneshe//*

The above two quotations provide a clear picture on how Hindu Brahmin discharged the expansion of Bengali in the region. They gave their verdict to Krittibas and Kashidas blaming them as *sarbbneshe*, one who causes complete or total destruction, for their translation of *Ramayana* into Bengali.

After the downfall of the Pala dynasty and rise of the Senas as well as the destruction of numerous Buddhist monuments and massacre of many Buddhist priests the flow of the evolutionary process of the Bengali language disrupted seriously and lost its rising path. Many Buddhist priests fled to the neighbouring countries. Scholars assume that, at that time the *Charyyagitika* was brought to Nepal by some of the monks who took shelter there ; and that is why the copy of *Charyyagitika* found at the Royal court of Nepal.

Some scholars including Sukumar Sen say that the development of Bengali literature was impeded by the Muslim invasion in the region (Sen, 1992, pp. 34-36.).⁹ In regard to the main argument of Sukumar Sen that not a single specimen of Bengali literary composition can be assigned with assurance to the early Muslim period (Ibid. p. 35.),¹⁰

the question can be raised that, was there any proof of the presence of Bengali literary activities during Hindu rule? He elsewhere refers to Jayadeva's *Gita-Govindam* as the most important contribution in neo-classical literature written in Sanskrit just before the Turki (Khalji) impact and, according to him, the main fountainhead of Bengali lyric poetry (Ibid., p. 15.). A further question can be raised – if the whole of Bengali literature was destroyed by the invaders or, as he says, the intellectual activities of Bengal were extinguished for about a couple of centuries then how does the Sanskrit *Gita-Govindam* still exist? The existence of the Sanskrit *Gita-Govindam*, as well as *Caryyagitika*, suggests that there was no Bengali literary activity during the period of Laksmansena. In this regard Dinesh Chandra Sen, a great scholar of Bengali literary historiography, observes:

The Bengali literature of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries was the counter-part of the genre-art of our day... One may remember that these were the centuries of Hindu revivalism when the new Hindu cult of the day had to vie with a decadent Buddhism and rising Islam. An egalitarian culture would not do to protect the common herd from the tentacles Islam and Buddhism. So the *Maṅgalkabya* came to fill a real literary and cultural want of the low-brow (Sen, 1996, p. 46.).

Many scholars of Bengali literary historiography believe that Muslim rulers had always been supportive of the development of Bengali language and literature, and this is well echoed in the following comments of Dinesh Chandra Sen:

This elevation of Bengali to a literary status was brought about by several influences, of which the Mohammedan's conquest was undoubtedly one of the foremost. If the Hindu kings had continued to enjoy independence, Bengali would scarcely have got an opportunity to find its way to the courts of kings (Sen, 1911, p. 5.).

Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, In this regard, further observes:

Muslim rule in Bengal was the most important formative period of Bengali literature, and of the evolution of the language itself (Qanungo, 1968, p. 45.).

The above quotations and analysis strongly suggest that there were no Bengali literary activities in the pre-Muslim Bengali and the Bengali language reach a literary stage during the early Muslim rule.

3. Development of Bengali literature: After the establishment of Muslim rule in the region, a large number of local people embraced Islam. They were in need of some knowledge about their new religion such as the lives of Prophets, principles of Islam, history of Islam, new culture, especially, romantic traditions and so on. Accordingly, the Muslim writer and intelligentsia got initiated to translate some Persian texts into Bengali under the patronisation of Muslim rulers and at the same time they wrote lots of books based on Persian themes, which resulted in the introduction of numerous Persian words and theme into the Bengali literature. *Shek Subhodaya*, a Sanskrit hagiology on Shaykh Dialal al-Din Tabrizi (d.1225 AD), and *Niranjaneer Rushma*, a Bengali ballad by Ramai Pandit, contain sufficient materials indicative of the growing Islamic atmosphere in Bengal (*The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 1168.). On the other hand, Muslim Sultans especially, Sultans of Hussain Shahi Bengal, had given more impetus to develop Bengali literature frequented by both Hindu and Muslim. As Encyclopaedia of Islam points out:

The Sultans of Pandua and Gaud identified themselves with the people and extended their patronage liberally to Bengali literature irrespective of caste and creed. The *Bhaguvata*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were translated into Bengali under their direct patronage; the great poets Vidyapati and Candidas flourished; and Muslims, participating with their Hindu neighbours, opened up new avenues of literary themes primarily derived from Perso-Arabic culture (Ibid.).

3.1. Rikhta tradition: The first attempt at popularising Bengali among Muslim scholars was conceivably made by the saint-poet Nur Kutb-i Alam (d. 1416 AD) of Pandua, who introduced the *Rikhta* Style in Bengali, in which half the hemstitch was composed in pure Persian and the other half in simple Bengali. The saint was a class-mate of Ghiyath al-Din Azam Shah and a life-long friend of the Sultan, under whose patronage Vidyapati of Mithila and Muhammad Saghir of Bengal, the author of the first Bengali romance *Yusuf-Zulaykha*, flourished. Other writers of romances, like Bahram Khan with his *Layla-Madjnun*, Sabirid Khan with his *Hanifa-Kayrapari*, Donaghazi with his *Sayf al-Mulk* and Muhammad kabir with his *Madhumalati* (1583-1588), followed Saghir in quick succession (Ibid.).

3.2. Invocations: No doubt, from the very beginning of the development of Bengali language, the Muslims replaced the invocations to *sraraswati* gods and goddesses by *Hamd* and *Nat*. This was a consistent practice of all Muslim writers of epics and long narratives like Firdawsi, Sadi, Attar of Iran. Even when *Alaol* was writing *Padmavati*, the story of a Hindu princess or when Daulat Qazi was writing the story of *Sati* Mayna, another Hindu princess, they started by hymning the praises of Allah and His Prophet. Muslim Writers got rid of the possibility of such incongruities and made the form more appropriate for the romances of human life.

3.3. Romantic tradition: The most significant writers in the field of romanticism, were Shah Muhammad Saghir, the author of *Yusuf-Zuleikha*, an conversion of celebrated Iranian poet Firdowsi or Jami's poem of that title; Daulat Uzir Bahram Khan, the writer of *Laily-Majnu*; Daulat Qazi of Arakan (1600-1638A.D.), author of *Ior Chandrani* or *Sati Maina*; Alaol (1607-1680AD), the most famous writer of *Padmavati*, *Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal*, *Haft Paikar* and *Sikander Nama*; Abdul Hakim (1620-1680AD), author of *Yusuf-Zuleikah*; Querishi Magan, author of *Mrigavati*.

3.4. Dobhasi tradition: Lexicographic view of *Dobhasi* literature, which is not less important than thematic traditions. Even today the practice of using Arabic and Persian words to describe typically Muslim context is a very common thing. Muslim writers were being habituated with this practice from early days to develop Bengali nomenclatures. For instance: '*Kitab*', '*aliman* Muslims of this period. '*Allah*', '*Rasule Khuda*', '*Noore Muhammadi*', '*peer paigambar*' '*alim*' used by Shah Muhammad Saghir, (1389-1409 AD), Zainuddin, (15th century AD) used '*Taj*', '*sawar*', '*dada*' etc. Among Dobhasi Puthis followed this tradition, *Yusuf-Zulaikha*, *Amir Hamza* (1st part) and *Hatem Tai* of Ghribullah; '*Madhumalati*', '*Amir Hamza*' (2nd part), '*Jaiguner Puthi*' and '*Hatem Tai*' of Syed Hamza; '*Mrigavati*' and '*Shahnama*' of Arif; '*Shaheede Karbala*' of Janab Ali. Moreover, Adaptation of the Arabian Nights, which is derived from the stories of *Hazar Dastan* of Sassanide Iran to this linguistic and thematic style, was in practice by the local composers. There were at least three such versions: '*Keccha Alif-Laila*', of Mafizuddin Ahmad, '*Alif Laila*' of Raushan Ali and Syeed Nasir Ali, Habibul Hossain and Aizuddin

Ahmed's third and the most popular and effective version published after 1850 AD (Bgattacharya, 1958, pp.35-36.)¹¹

Nevertheless, each of these writings had unique characteristics; they have certain common features of humanistic love-story, which indicated Muslim contribution to the thematic traditions of Bengali literature.

3.5. Heroic tradition: Meanwhile by the early eighteenth century this tradition of writing almost practically on human life got mixed up with the tradition of writing on the fantastic exploits of heroes in '*Vijay Kavyas*' or heroic verse hence they relate the '*vijay*' or the victories of the Holy Prophet over his infidel adversaries. Zainuddin's '*Rasul Vijay*', Shah Barid's '*Rasul Vijay*' and '*Hanifer Digvijay*', Muhammad Khan's '*Hanifar Ladai*', Gharibullah's '*Janganama*', Heyat Mohammad's '*Jangnama*' and Syed Hamza's '*Amir Hamza*' are the known works in this area. (Ashraf, 1983, pp. 47-48.). It was substituted in most of the narratives by a growing tradition of escapism, fairy tales, romance and fantastic adventures, which is known as *Dobhashi* literature.

3.6. Elegiac tradition: A good elegiac literature developed centring round the tragedy of Karbala. It tries to portray the life and history of the prophet from the origin of creation till the death of the grandson of the Prophet, Imam Hussain, at Kerbala. The most important works in this tradition are: *Navivangsha* of Sayyid Sultan (1555-1648 A.D), *Maktul Hussain* (1645 AD), of Mohammad Khan, *Maktul Hussain* (1694 AD) of Muhammad Yaqub and *Janganama* (1723 AD), of Abdul Hakim (*The Encyclopedia of Islam*, op. cit.). Kaikobad in his '*Muharram Shareef*' wrote a long wailing '*Marsia*', following the death of Imam Hussain. The chief characteristic of this lamentation is the freedom with which the imagination of the poets roams from earth to heaven and describes not only the lamentation of trees and the skies and the earth, but also of the angels and departed souls. This type expression is very much apparent in *Vishad Sindhu* of Mir Musharraf Hussain.

3.7. Religious tradition: In the field of religion it must be remembered that the Middle age was the period of Muslim cultural expansion. Sayyid Sultan's *Navibangsha*, *Shab-i-Miraj*, *Ofat-i-Rasul* and Muhammad Khan's *Maqtul Hussain* and *Kiyamatnama* describe the Muslim concept of the origin, evolution, and destruction of the Earth and of the final judgement of good and wicked souls. It was an attempt, to enlighten the ignorant local people who did not know Arabic and Persian and to purify their souls. The other important works of this tradition are: *Neeti-Shahstravasta* of Muzammil (1430 AD), *Nesehatnama*, of Afzal Ali, *Shariatnama* of Nasrullah Khan (1560-1625AD). Nevertheless, Shaikh Muttalib expresses the rules and regulations of '*Namaz*', '*Roza*', '*Hajj*', '*Zakaat*' and such other essentials of Islam in his *Kifayat-ul-Musalleen*.¹²

3.8. Mystic tradition: In mystic literary tradition Sufis fall into two categories such as, the tradition of philosophical expositions of the theory and practices of Mysticism, and the tradition of songs, mainly '*padavalis*'. '*baool*' and '*Murshidi*' also popular songs. It describes through symbols the different stages, while a disciple should pass through in order to reach the final stage of illumination and self-i-annihilation. Indeed, most of the '*murshidi*' songs, found in Bengal, followed by the thematic expressions of the *Mathnavi* of Maulana Jalal Uddin Rumi and of the *Mantiq- ut- Taier* of Shaikh Fariduddin Attar. They were intended as instructions or descriptions of mystic processes. As Sayyid Sultan explicitly says in his *Janan Pradeep*, no spiritual and or internal Knowledge is possible without the routine instructions of the peer. He not only tells his readers about '*Shariat*' in the first part of the book, but also goes deep into the philosophical expositions of different theories about '*wahdatul wuzud*' i.e. unity of being. The theories of Ibn-ul-

Arabi, and Mujaddid-i-Alf-e-Sani have also been discussed by him. Like the former traditions, it has become a common feature at the same instance.

4. Conclusion:

The Bengali language got its final shape and reached a literary status during the Muslim rule which encouraged local poets and composers to write their literary works in Bengali taking materials from Perso-Arabic and local sources. Muslim Sultans provided assistance to both Muslim and Hindu poets, scholars and writers which enabled them to produce a huge number of poems in different genres mentioned above. This trend was continued until the fall of Nawwab Siraj uddaula, Nawwab of Bengal, at the Battle of Palasy in 1757 AD.

¹ The term Bengal is an anglicised form and the West knows the region accordingly.

² See also Majumdar, R. C., *History of ancient Bengal*, G. Bhardwaj and Co., Kolkata, 1971, pp. 1, 6-14; Blochmann gives some more details on ancient Bengal see Blochmann, H. F., *Contribution to the geography and history of Bengal (Muhammedan period)*, Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 1968, p.3.

³ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1943-1973, Vol. 2, p. 690.

⁴ There are speculations due to the silence of the *Tabaqat-i-nasiri* over the date in Bakhtiyar's invasion in Bengal. Some historian on the basis of *Taju'l mathir* and other accounts have reached the conclusions that the incident took place in 1201-1203 [see Qanungo, K. R., 'Race, patronage and dates of Md. Bakhtyar Khilji' (Appendix A.), *The history of Bengal*, Muslim period 1200-1757, Vol. II., ed. Sarkar, Jadunath, The University of Dhaka, 1948, p. 8; Qanungo, K. R., 'Muslim conquest of Bengal', *The history of Bengal*, Ibid., 32-33.]; some other, on the other hand, mentioned it in 1203 [see Blochmann, op. cit., p. 3.]; However, 1203 is generally accepted by most of the scholars of the date.

⁵ See also *Islami vishvakos*, Vol. III., Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1987, p. 352.

⁶ see, also *Islami Vishakosh*, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1987, Vol. III, p. 352.

⁷ The term *Vedic* refers to the Vedas, the oldest sacred scriptures of Hinduism.

⁸ see also Sen, Dinesh Chandra,, *History of Bengali language and literature*, Calcutta University, 1911, p. 5.

⁹ See for example, Sen, Sukumar, *History of Bengali literature*, Sahitya Academy, Kolkata, reprint in 1992, pp. 34-36.

¹⁰ Ahmed Sharif gives a detailed analysis encountering this idea, see Sharif Ahmed, *Nirbācita prabandha*, Osman Gani Agami Prakashani, Dhaka, 1999, pp. 34-39.

¹¹ For details on medieval Bengali literature see Mannan, Qazi Abdul, *The emergence and development of Dobhāṣī literature in Bengal (upto 1855 A.D.)*, Department of Bengal and Sanskrit, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, 1966; Billah, Abu Musa Mohammad Arif, 'Persian', *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, ed. Sirajul Islam, Vol., 8, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2003, pp. 47-49.

¹² For further details see *Puthi Parichiti*, Abdul Karim Sahityyo Partisad, ed. Ahmad Sharif, Dhaka University, 1958.

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