

Sandria B. Freitag, editor, *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community Performance, and Environment, 1800–1980* (Berkeley, 1989), especially pp. 190–2.

65. Govind Narain, *Munshi Prem Chand* (Boston, 1978), chapters 2 and 3, *passim*. See also Amrit Rai, *Premchand: Kalam kā Sipāhī [Soldier of the Pen]*, (Allahabad, 1962), and Madan Gopal, 'What Price Premchand?' *The Statesman Weekly*, (7 July 1984), p. 12.
66. See King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 207, 210, 273–82, 452–4.
67. Eastern NWP here means all those districts east of a north–south line drawn through the eastern boundary of Kanpur district.
68. Western NWP here means all those districts west of a north–south line drawn through the eastern boundary of Kanpur district.

CHAPTER III

Government Language Policy

It is highly important that justice should be administered in a language familiar to the judge, but it is of no less importance that it should be administered in a language familiar . . . to the people at large; and it is easier for the judge to acquire the language of the people than for the people to acquire the language of the judge.'

Introduction

The linguistic history of North India showed a remarkable continuity in the area of administration for several centuries before British rule. Muslim rule brought Persian as the official language and the chief vehicle of culture in Muslim courts. During the eighteenth century the prestige of Persian continued unabated despite the rapid decline of the Mughal Empire. As the British East India Company rose to power, Persian remained the official language of administration well into the nineteenth century.

British dominion, however, eventually brought about significant linguistic changes. In the 1830s English took the place of Persian on the higher levels of administration, and Indian vernaculars on the lower. In much of north India, Hindustani (i.e., Urdu) in the Persian script² became the official vernacular, while Hindi and the Nagari script failed to reach a similar status, except for a few isolated instances, until late in the century. In the 1870s and 1880s Hindi, in turn, began to replace Urdu in the Central Provinces and Bihar, and by 1900 in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. In the Punjab, however, which came under British control in the late 1840s, Urdu dominated the vernacular level of administration throughout the century and well into the next.

In the gradual process of linguistic change, a complex set of relationships developed among the language attitudes of the British and the Indians, British language policy, Indian reactions to that policy, Indian initiatives towards that policy, and British reactions to Indian reactions and initiatives. This chapter emphasizes the British contribution, while Chapter V emphasizes the Indian role. Although both were parts of a single process, convenience dictates their partial separation for analytical purposes.

The British contribution displayed several noteworthy features. British attitudes towards Indian languages did not form a monolithic whole, but rather, often showed ignorance, inconsistencies, and contradictions. Different officials often had widely differing views. All this was reflected in inconsistent and even contradictory policies. Moreover, the enforcement of these policies fluctuated, depending on the zeal of the enforcing officer and the strength of Indian resistance or support. In the various memoranda, circulars, despatches, letters, and reports dealing with language policy, one finds many of the same arguments and counter-arguments turning up again and again. In short, British language policy during our period resembled a choked and tangled maze with a bewildering variety of paths, that must be approached with care.

Yet the very inconsistencies and contradictions of British language policy not only reflected a complex and confusing situation, but also served to accelerate important changes. This policy intensified the underlying differentiation between the two great religious groups of north India, Hindus and Muslims, by supporting an educational system³ that encouraged two different styles of the same linguistic continuum, Hindi-Urdu.⁴ Moreover, this policy fostered a Hindi-speaking elite by providing Hindi speakers with employment in the educational system, and simultaneously favoured an Urdu-speaking elite by retaining Urdu as the only official vernacular for many years. British officials attempted to shape the objective characteristic⁵ of language, though with little success, by experimenting with scripts and regulating styles. Like a well-meaning but confused midwife, British language policy assisted in the birth of a community from an ethnic group⁶ as the Hindi movement developed.

The Replacement of Persian

The liberal sentiments expressed by the Court of Directors of the East India Company in the opening quotation furnished one motive for considering the replacement of Persian. The concern of the Directors to effect economies in the administration of justice supplied another.⁷ In the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras, English and Indian vernaculars had replaced Persian by 1832.⁸ In the Presidency of Bengal a lengthy inquiry resulted in Act XXIX of 1837, which gave the Governor-General the power to dispense with any regulation of the Bengal Code requiring the use of Persian for judicial or revenue proceedings, and to prescribe any other language and script as a replacement.⁹

The officials involved in this inquiry expressed a wide range of

opinions favouring or opposing various languages and scripts. These included: Persian and the Persian script, a modified form of which served as the script for Hindustani; Hindustani, i.e., Urdu; Hindi and the Nagari script; English and the Roman script; and Bengali and the Bengali script. Their arguments, several of which appeared over and over again in the course of future controversies, fell into two broad categories: technical and administrative, and social and linguistic.¹⁰

Under the first category, the issues of standardization and efficiency drew special attention. The Sadar Court¹¹ of Bengal, for example, pointed out that a multiplicity of dialects rendered Bengali unfit to be a court language; the Court would require as many readers as dialects. Moreover, to record judicial proceedings in Bengali or Hindi would take at least a third more time than in Persian, the Court asserted, presumably because of their supposedly more slowly written scripts.¹² The Sadar Court of the North-Western Provinces echoed this reasoning: Hindustani in the Nagari script had a great variety of dialects, differing from district to district and sometimes even within a single district, and hence was unsuitable for a court language.¹³ Moreover, the Nagari script was also disqualified as a court script because of slowness in writing and extreme difficulty in reading.¹⁴ Another critic called Nagari 'crabbed and impracticable', and even a proponent had to admit that the script showed variations in the form of some letters and that different forms were used in different provinces.¹⁵ The Kaithi script received an even harsher appraisal from the same critic, who noted that people wrote this cursive form of the Nagari so irregularly that 'you shall rarely find two hands agree'.¹⁶

None of the officials involved in the inquiry, not even those who advocated the introduction of other languages, disparaged Persian as unstandardized or inefficient. Had technical advantages and administrative convenience been the primary consideration, Persian might well have remained the official language for an indefinite period. Indeed some officials urged the retention of the status quo for social and linguistic reasons. They contended that most respectable Muslims understood Persian as did many among the higher classes of Hindus. Moreover, many people depended on their proficiency in this language to earn their living, and to change the official language would throw them into poverty. In addition, Persian had spread more widely over Bengal Presidency than any other language. Should the government introduce English as a substitute, these officials continued, to find enough persons to conduct judicial business would prove impossible.

Finally, while having no more claim to be indigenous than English, Persian had mingled with the languages of India and become prevalent through centuries of use, something English could not hope to achieve for a very long time.¹⁷

The few officials who argued for English assumed that the full benefits of British rule could not be enjoyed by the general public until it had become sufficiently acquainted with English. One of them proposed a measure which, applied to various languages and scripts, proved to be a basic instrument of British language policy: let knowledge of English be made an essential condition of public service after a suitable lapse of time, and all those classes who looked to government or law for their livelihood would begin the study of English.¹⁸ Another official favoured the introduction of the Roman script for the vernaculars: this would not only help to naturalize English but would also aid Europeans to read Indian languages more easily.¹⁹

Those officials who favoured the introduction of the vernaculars placed the greatest emphasis on social and linguistic reasons.²⁰ Many of them, including Sir Charles Metcalfe, Lieutenant-Governor of the NWP, believed that the language of the people should be the language of the courts. Though their opinions varied as to which vernacular and which script should be used in different areas of north India, all agreed that the convenience of the people outweighed the convenience of their rulers.²¹ One of the clearest statements of the utilitarian principle guiding those who endorsed the vernaculars came, ironically, from an advocate of Persian, Judge Morris of the Patna City Court. Should Persian be done away with, he wrote, the choice would lie between Urdu in the Persian script or Hindi in the Nagari or Kaithi script. In that case, the government should adopt Hindi 'upon the principle of studying the convenience of the *larger body* of the people'.²²

Let us pause at this point to examine the validity of some of these arguments and to reflect on their implications. The claim that the Nagari script could be written only slowly persisted for many decades, and provoked leaders of the Hindi movement to frequent assertions and occasional demonstrations to the contrary. Yet administrative experience had shown (in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories and in the hill districts of the NWP)²³ that Nagari could function adequately as an official script, whatever its precise speed of writing. Those who criticized the vernaculars for their variety of dialects, while correct, had overlooked the obvious truth that one of the most powerful incentives toward standardization would be the status of official language. Those who

argued that the replacement of Persian would throw numbers of Indian officials out of work correctly perceived the relationship between jealously protected language skills and government service. Yet once again, experience had shown (in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories)²⁴ that where the government took a firm stand on language requirements, those classes with a vested interest in government service would eventually comply.

Another feature of the inquiry deserves special consideration, namely, the obvious assumption by many officials that language and script had no necessary connection. Thus some officials proposed that Hindustani (i.e., Urdu) in the Persian script become the official vernacular, while others supported Hindustani in the Nagari script. From a technical linguistic viewpoint they were largely correct: one can write Urdu in the Nagari or Roman scripts, and Hindi in the Persian or Roman with the addition of a few diacriticals or other special symbols. But as the controversy between Hindi and Urdu developed, Hindi and Urdu partisans increasingly identified language and script. For example, the word 'Nagari' came to refer not only to the script but also to the Hindi language.²⁵ Furthermore, the inescapable existence of two radically different scripts for the Hindi-Urdu continuum did much to render intractable the language problems of north India, while the identification of language and script further exacerbated them. Here was at least one 'objective characteristic' which could *not* be altered to suit the convenience of those who might wish to assimilate Hindi into Urdu, or Urdu into Hindi.

In the 1830s, however, these difficulties lay some decades ahead, and the replacement of Persian proceeded apace. In January of 1838, the Deputy-Governor of Bengal, having received all the powers given to the Governor-General by Act XXIX of 1837, ordered the substitution of the vernacular language for Persian in all those districts included in his jurisdiction, i.e., Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. The change was to take place gradually over the calendar year 1838.²⁶ In the North-Western Provinces the process had started even earlier. In November 1835 the Board had given permission to the Officiating Commissioner of the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories,²⁷ F. J. Shore, to introduce Hindustani (i.e., Urdu) in place of Persian²⁸ and in Kumaun (hill districts of the NWP) officials were already conducting most of their business using Hindustani in the Nagari script by 1835.²⁹ In July 1836 the Sadar (Chief) Board of Revenue issued a circular ordering the substitution of the 'Hindoostany language' (Urdu) in the Persian script for Persian as the medium of official transactions in the Revenue Department.³⁰

Indian Reactions to the Replacement of Persian

Early in 1839 nearly five hundred residents of Dacca district in eastern Bengal petitioned the government in favour of Persian and against Bengali. The petitioners (of whom nearly two hundred were Hindus and most of the rest Muslims) used arguments practically identical to those of the British officials who had supported Persian in the recent inquiry: the Bengali script varied from place to place, one line of Persian could do the work of ten lines of Bengali, the awkward written style of Bengali read more slowly than that of Persian, people from one district could not understand the dialect of those from another, no previous government had ever kept records in Bengali, Persian had spread over a wide area and did not vary from place to place, people of all classes could understand Persian when read to them, and both Hindus and Muslims wanted to keep Persian.³¹

The Sadar Court of Bengal responded quickly to the petition, softening the rigour of the earlier orders replacing Persian by issuing a resolution allowing parties in all civil and criminal courts to present their petitions and pleadings in any language they wished in districts where either Urdu or Bengali was the current language. Any document not in Persian, Urdu, or Bengali, however, had to be accompanied by a translation in one of these three languages.³² The resolution changed the effect of the earlier orders from the *replacement* of Persian by the vernaculars to the *addition* of the vernaculars to Persian.

In the same resolution and in circular orders a few months later, the Court required the authorities of districts in which Urdu was current to begin the introduction of the Nagari script. This soon brought strenuous protests from some residents of Bihar (mainly Muslims) in the form of two petitions. The first appealed to the government to continue as the protector of Islam and patron of Persian by maintaining the Persian script in Bihar. The second, representing mainly landholders and lawyers, went so far as to insinuate that the government meant to attack the Muslim faith by abolishing Persian and its script.³³ They sounded a note that was to be repeated innumerable times in the years ahead, namely, the identification of language and script with religion, part of the process of multi-symbol congruence.³⁴

In other portions of the petitions, the Biharis reiterated several of the arguments used earlier by the Dacca petitioners: one line of Persian script could do the work of ten lines of Nagari; the Nagari script varied from place to place; the disconnectedness of Hindi letters, unlike Persian, gave the reader difficulty in joining them together and led to

confusion and waste of time. More important, they noted that both Hindus and Muslims opposed the change and went on to add that the generality of Hindus, especially landholders and those concerned with the courts, understood Persian and Arabic expressions connected with their business far better than any Sanskrit phrases.³⁵ Opponents of Hindi and the Nagari script were to repeat this theme of Hindu and Muslim participation in a joint culture over and over again. In other words, they advocated those tendencies towards assimilation which had led to the formation of an Urdu-speaking elite³⁶ including both religious groups, and resisted those tendencies towards differentiation which threatened to lead to the creation of an opposing language elite excluding one religious group.

These petitions stimulated the Government of India to review the question with the Government of Bengal. As a result, the Sadar Court of Bengal issued a fresh circular late in 1839 which directed the officials earlier charged to introduce the Nagari script to do so most carefully and gradually. Further pressure from the Government of India brought yet another circular early in 1840 which discouraged the introduction of the Nagari script by any judicial officer without the special sanction of the government. Correspondence between the Government of India and the Government of the North-Western Provinces on the matter, which revealed that a large majority of the judges in the latter jurisdiction preferred Urdu in the Persian script, further strengthened the government's gradually stiffening opposition to the Nagari script.³⁷

Thus the vocal opposition of both Hindus and Muslims with vested interests in the continued use of the Persian script, and the marked preference of most British officials for this script (though not the Persian language), combined to bring about the rapid disappearance of the Nagari script as a potential competitor. In the first half of the nineteenth century no organized Hindi-speaking elite existed to assert the worth of the Hindi language and the Nagari script as symbols of a Hindu community. Moreover, the Nagari script faced a rival in one of its own progeny, the Kaithi script.³⁸ Finally, one can cogently argue that Hindi, in the sense of modern Khari Boli Hindi,³⁹ had not yet come into existence. To differentiate Hindi from Urdu (and by implication Hindu from Muslim) meant among other things the deliberate creation of a new language style, '*shuddh* [pure] Hindi', or what one might call the 'Sanskritization' of Urdu. In other words, we can interpret the rise of modern Khari Boli Hindi as the creation of an objective characteristic.⁴⁰

The Nagari Script in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories

In one area of north India an energetic British official, F. J. Shore, Officiating Commissioner of the Saugor and Nerbudda (Sagar and Narmada) Territories, succeeded in establishing Nagari as the official vernacular script for several years. Shore's success suggests that the government could easily have made Nagari the official script all over north India. His ultimate failure implies that only a highly-organized popular movement could overcome the combined influences of British preference for Urdu and the Persian script and Indian opposition to Hindi and the Nagari script. A brief glance at the history of Shore's experiment vividly illustrates some of the obstacles to the adoption of a new official script and some of the social and political implications of such a change.

As we have seen, in November 1835 Shore received permission from the Sadar Board of Revenue of the North-Western Provinces to introduce Hindustani (i.e., Urdu) in place of Persian as the official language. Although the Board's letter did not specify the script, Shore took the initiative. In a letter written a month previously to judicial and revenue officials, he had argued convincingly for the introduction of Hindustani and the Nagari script in place of Persian. Soon after receiving the Board's permission, he instructed his district officers to gradually introduce Hindustani. While the Persian script was to be kept for the meantime, Shore ordered that all court officials must learn to read and write the Nagari script. Once the officials had thus qualified themselves, the people should be encouraged to submit their petitions in the new script.⁴¹

Shore had several reasons for his new policy. In his letter he noted that prior to British rule the people of the area had conducted all their business in Hindustani and Marathi using the Nagari and Marathi scripts.⁴² British rule had introduced the Persian language and script, and filled the higher administrative posts 'with a set of harpies from the [North-Western] Provinces', to the near total exclusion of the local inhabitants. Still, even at present, he remarked, the people frequently used the Nagari script for papers and petitions to government courts and offices. To introduce Nagari would require no additional staff, for the present court officials only need be told to learn Nagari or make way for others who would. The current situation left much to be desired, Shore added, since a messenger sent into a district with an order to arrest certain people, to search their homes, or the like could do almost anything he wanted, for neither he nor anyone else for miles around

could read a single word of his order. To clinch his argument, Shore pointed out that in Kumaun most official business was conducted in Hindustani and the Nagari script without any difficulty.⁴³

In August 1836 Shore summed up the success of his efforts in a letter to the Sadar Board of Revenue. Nearly half the business of the Territories was now conducted in the Nagari script, and not a single court official had lost his position as a result. The new state of affairs delighted the public, Shore observed, which could now write its own petitions and understand papers received from the offices. The new prospects for government employment had wonderfully increased the desire for education; even the court menials had begun to learn to read. Had the Persian script been adopted—which people found much more difficult to learn and also disliked as foreign—these happy results would not have followed. Shore countered the common criticism of the Nagari script as inefficient by asserting that adequate practice would soon enable writers of the new official script to equal the speed of Persian or English writers. As for the objection that the Nagari script lacked standards for the form of letters and for spelling, Shore reported that he had drawn up and circulated a standard alphabet in consultation with knowledgeable persons, and that he was in the process of preparing a dictionary which he would publish at his own expense if necessary.⁴⁴

Shore conceded that he had not brought about these changes without opposition, not only from the court officials but also from one or two of his own officers. He and his officers had to pay constant attention to prevent the court officials from using 'the Persian idiom'.⁴⁵ Naturally enough, these officials disliked and to a man opposed the new system because their monopoly of knowledge of the Persian script had been destroyed, and they had been forced to learn a new script. Their belief that he would eventually be succeeded by an officer who would bring back the old system strengthened their resistance, Shore noted, and described some of their dilatory tactics:

I may state that for a considerable time after the permission had been given to present petitions in Nagree [Nagari], they were nevertheless all written in the Persian Character. Being surprised at this I one day questioned some respectable looking people whether they could write, and on receiving a reply that they could write Nagree very well, why they did not write their own petitions instead of paying a Petition Writer; on which I discovered that the Amlah [court officials] & Petition Writers who were connected with the former had given out that although the Language might be Oordoo [Urdu] the character must be Persian, in order to preserve their monopoly.⁴⁶

The majority of those holding government offices, Shore added, were Hindus, mostly Kayasths, who could not possibly have any 'hereditary respect of feeling' for Persian. If the government were to intimate that after a certain period of time, all of the official business of Bengal Presidency (excepting Bengal proper and Orissa) and the North-Western Provinces would be carried on in the Nagari script, such people would soon learn the new road to employment.⁴⁷

Four aspects of Shore's remarks deserve particular attention. First, the merely *permissive* use of a new script did not suffice to guarantee the replacement of the previous script; the government needed to order the *exclusive* use of the newcomer. Second, a close relationship existed between education, widely regarded by Indians as a stepping-stone to government employment, and the official language and script. Changes in government language policy were likely to be followed by changes in patterns of language study.⁴⁸ Third, many Hindus had strong economic if not cultural reasons for the maintenance of an important part of the Muslim heritage. As the Hindi movement gained momentum later in the century, and the use of Hindi and the Nagari script became increasingly identified with being Hindu, these Hindu members of the Urdu-speaking elite would find themselves in a more and more ambivalent position. On the one hand, Hindi and Nagari threatened the linguistic basis of their livelihood, exposing them to the competition of other Hindus not versed in Islamic languages. On the other hand, insofar as their membership in the Hindu community depended on recognizing the worth of Hindi and Nagari, they had to give at least lip service to this part of their Hindu heritage. Finally, the use of Urdu in the Persian script, while certainly not identical to the use of Persian in the Persian script, meant a high degree of continuity in practice. As one contemporary observer remarked, since retaining Urdu would necessitate retaining the Persian idiom for technical modes of expression and phraseology, the only noticeable changes would be different grammatical inflections and Urdu instead of Persian verbs.⁴⁹

The Sadar Board of Revenue, responding to Shore's report, noted that he had full authorization to use the Nagari script and that the Board had never considered any other script for the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories.⁵⁰ The prospects for the continued use of the Nagari script seemed bright. Yet less than a decade later, the Government of India, responding to Indian and British officials in the Territories who had been recruited from the NWP, ordered a complete reversal of language policy. These officials, who had opposed the abolition of Persian,

persuaded the supreme government to order that office papers and records be kept in Persian or Urdu, though Hindi and the Nagari script should be used for papers issued to people in the outlying districts. Eventually the latter part of this order fell into disuse, and when the Central Provinces were created from the Territories in 1861, government courts and offices in all districts used Persian and Urdu.⁵¹ The court officials who opposed Shore had won in the end.

The Persianization of Urdu

About the same time the Sadar Board sanctioned the use of the Nagari script in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories, the same body warned against the excessive Persianization of Hindustani (i.e., Urdu). In the same circular of July 1836 which ordered the replacement of Persian by Hindustani, the Board explained that officers should avoid 'the mere substitution of Hindee verbs and affixes, while the words and idiom remain exclusively Persian'.⁵² Governments continued to inveigh against, and observers continued to complain of the evils of excessive Persianization for the rest of the century. In June 1876, for example, the Government of the NWP ordered district and divisional officials to end the 'highly improper' state of affairs in which most offices conducted public business in a language so full of Persian and Arabic words that those most concerned could not understand the proceedings. Although this highly Persianized style stemmed from long tradition so that to effect any change required constant attention, continued the circular, the importance of the subject demanded special attention. As far as possible, the official style should approach the Urdu of ordinary conversation, though not at the expense of those legal and technical terms presently in use.⁵³

These pious injunctions accomplished little, however, for in 1882 Bharatendu Harishchandra of Banaras, testifying before the Hunter Commission,⁵⁴ furnished several examples of the pedantry of court officials, who used long-winded Persian phrases for ordinary vernacular terms.⁵⁵ In 1897, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a lawyer at the High Court of Allahabad, noted that the unnecessary use of Persian and Arabic words and phrases rendered official records in the vernacular only partially intelligible.⁵⁶ One critic with a fine sense of irony remarked that the Urdu translations of the government orders attempting to remedy the situation often displayed the very faults they decried!⁵⁷

The evidence has indicated that both the highly Persianized language of the courts and offices and the resistance to any change came from

court officials, mainly Muslims and Kayasths, whose education and training gave them a near-monopoly of government service. Their attitudes may well have engendered or reinforced similar attitudes in their British superiors. In 1875 S. C. Bayly, the Commissioner of Patna Division, noted that the opposition of these officials to making Hindi the official vernacular of Bihar carried over to their British superiors, who unconsciously imbibed the prejudices of their subordinates.⁵⁸ Two decades earlier the Sadar Board of Revenue of the NWP had commented on an interesting difference between the style of Urdu used in the ordinary dealings of the Revenue Department and that used in the business of the civil courts. The former, employed by officers whose duties brought them into frequent contact with landholders and their tenants, consisted of simple and idiomatic Urdu, free from the extremes of Persianization or Sanskritization. The latter, utilized by officers whose functions brought them into daily contact with court officials, consisted of Urdu unintelligible to those not thoroughly acquainted with Persian. This suggests that the language attitudes and capabilities of the Indians with whom British officials regularly dealt shaped and reinforced their own language attitudes.⁵⁹

The pro-Persian attitudes of many British officials and the personal economic interests of Indian officials combined to ensure continuity in the nature of the official vernacular, and to make a mockery of the chief reasons for replacing Persian with the vernaculars in the first place. Wherever Urdu replaced Persian, little change took place in the character of the court language. Bayly noted that Urdu law papers showed hardly any difference from those written four decades earlier in Persian. He did not object to the use of the technical terms of law or civil business, but rather to the unintelligible jargon used in the body of court documents whose writers used the longest Arabic words known to them.⁶⁰ In sum, just as Persian dominated the beginnings of Urdu literature, so it overshadowed the introduction of Urdu as the official vernacular. Persian and Urdu, powerful symbols of the former cultural, political, and economic supremacy of Muslims, continued to flourish under British rule. The perception of Urdu- and Persian-educated Muslims and Hindus as unfairly advantaged in the competition for government service helped to stimulate the development of group consciousness among Hindi-educated Hindus.

The Kaithi Script

In a Hindi drama written near the end of the nineteenth century, the Nagari script, personified as Queen Devanagari, pleads her case against Begam Urdu, the daughter of Persian, who has usurped the Queen's rightful place.⁶¹ The author might well have added another character named Princess Kaithi, for this cursive variant of the Nagari script attempted to oust her own mother on several occasions. Government policy towards Kaithi⁶² showed considerable inconsistency: officials in the NWP generally, though not always, opposed, those in Oudh, with one notable exception, opposed, while those in Bihar commonly favoured this script. Indian advocates of Hindi seldom mentioned Nagari's daughter, and then only in disparaging terms. In the long run the Kaithi script lost out to the Nagari, but the outcome long remained in doubt. The pool of symbols from which the Hindi-speaking elite was to draw included some that proved unacceptable.

The opposition of the Government of the NWP to Kaithi can be traced back as far as 1847, when Nagari, not Kaithi, became the official script in the village schools of Agra district.⁶³ In 1852 the Sadar Board of Revenue directed that Nagari be used for all annual village papers written in Hindi.⁶⁴ Education reports from the 1870s and 1880s indicate that the government would not appoint *patwārīs* (village record keepers) who knew only Kaithi.⁶⁵ The same reports show that government schools, with very occasional exceptions, did not teach any of the various cursive forms of Nagari.⁶⁶ When the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Antony MacDonnell, issued a resolution concerning the official provincial script in 1900, he ignored the advice of his Board of Revenue to consider the inclusion of the widely-used Kaithi, and referred only to the Nagari.⁶⁷

In Oudh, government policy exhibited more inconsistency.⁶⁸ In 1871 the Director of Public Instruction for Oudh, Colin Browning, officially prohibited the study of Kaithi in village schools until the second class, in town schools until the third, and in district schools until the sixth. Parents who wished their children to study Kaithi before Nagari would have to pay a fee. Browning did not wish to ban the teaching of Kaithi, but rather to ensure that pupils would leave school knowing something more than the Kaithi script and the multiplication table.⁶⁹

A few years later, however, Kaithi found a vigorous proponent in Browning's successor, J. C. Nesfield. In 1875 Nesfield reported that he was about to change the curriculum of the government schools of Oudh to include Kaithi writing and Kaithi arithmetic along with Nagari in the lowest classes.⁷⁰ In the same year, he set about the creation of an

improved Kaithi script. He had samples of Kaithi writing collected from every *tahsil* (revenue subdivision of a district) in Oudh, and ordered an Indian education official to devise a new script. A year later the Chief Commissioner of Oudh directed that the new script be taught in vernacular schools to anyone who preferred it to the Persian script. By 1881 textbooks (transliterations of various business manuals) in the improved Kaithi script had appeared in primary and middle vernacular schools, and had begun to be used for the instruction and examination of *patwārīs*. Candidates for the village teachership examination had to qualify in three different scripts: the Persian, the Nagari, and the Kaithi.⁷¹

Nesfield explained the reasons for his policy in some detail. In Oudh, he declared, no one used the Nagari script for either public or private business. Even Brahmans did not use Nagari for business matters, but only for copying out Sanskrit manuscripts. Though government schools in Oudh taught Nagari, in Nesfield's opinion, they were wasting their time, for the students abandoned the script as soon as they left school. The government might as usefully introduce Chinese! Should the government desire a second script for court documents in Oudh, Kaithi rather than Nagari deserved the honour.⁷² Nesfield's eager partisanship for Kaithi, reminds us of Shore's enthusiasm for Nagari. Like Shore's experiment too, Nesfield's attempt came to nothing, for after 1888 the education reports of Oudh contain no mention of the teaching of Kaithi.

Although the reports give no reasons for this change, we can easily guess the underlying attitudes of the British officials responsible from previous criticisms of Kaithi. In the NWP the Inspector of the Third Circle of the Department of Public Instruction, Ralph Griffith, wrote in 1858 that the replacement of the 'illegible' Kaithi and other cursive forms of Nagari had proven most beneficial to education. As long as government had allowed village papers to be written in Kaithi, village schoolmasters had continued to teach the script, thus excluding the Hindi school books of the Department printed in the Nagari script.⁷³ In 1862 T. B. Cann, another Inspector, reported that the government's village schools owed much of their success to the regulation that village accounts and all papers submitted to district officers had to use the Urdu or the Nagari scripts, and not the undecipherable Kaithi.⁷⁴ In Oudh, a Senior Inspector of Schools in Oudh, A. Thomson, referred to Kaithi in 1870 as 'a barbarous system of writing'.⁷⁵ Browning had asserted that the Kaithi script would never lead students to higher learning.⁷⁶

The attitudes of Indian supporters of the Nagari script, though seldom expressed, paralleled those of British officials. In 1883 the editor of the *Hindi Pradip* of Allahabad noted that the provincial government was considering the question of substituting the Nagari script for the Persian. Unfortunately, several officers had recommended the use of Kaithi on the grounds of greater ease in writing and more widespread use than the Nagari. The editor asserted the opposite, claiming that only *patwārīs* used Kaithi while other classes of people used Nagari.⁷⁷ In the same year the Hindi *Brahman* of Kanpur observed that the local government had queried district officers as to whether court documents should be written in Hindi as well as in Urdu, and if so, in the Nagari or Kaithi script, and disparaged Kaithi as being no better than the Persian script.⁷⁸ In 1900 the Hindi *Bharat Jivan* of Banaras criticized as ambiguous the *mūḍiyā* script (another cursive variant of Nagari) used by Hindu trading classes.⁷⁹ These classes could never hope to better their condition until they adopted and received their education through the Nagari script. In 1902 the annual report of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of Nagari), the foremost Hindi organization of the day, declared that no letters were more excellent than the Nagari, and that the Sabha could not display any enthusiasm for or lend any support to the promotion of Kaithi.⁸⁰ Religious and social considerations may well have influenced the attitudes of the Sabha and other Indian promoters of Nagari: while Kaithi and other cursive scripts had strong associations with business and trading classes, Nagari had strong links with Brahmans and the sacred Sanskrit literature of Hinduism. Moreover, one piece of evidence suggests that Kaithi had some sort of association with Hindustani (Urdu). Nesfield wrote in 1876 that 'no such association [like that of Nagari] exists between Kaithi and Sanskrit. On the contrary, there is a counter association already established between the Kaithi character and the Hindustani vocabulary. . . .'⁸¹ Thus, Kaithi may not have been *shuddh* [pure] enough for *shuddh* [here, highly Sanskritized] Hindi in the eyes of Nagari's partisans.

In Bihar, unlike the NWP&O, official policy by 1880 had begun to promote both the Nagari and Kaithi scripts. In that year the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden, ordered the *exclusive* use of Nagari or Kaithi in much of Bihar.⁸² The government intended the Nagari and Kaithi scripts to take the place of the Persian script in printed and hand-written documents respectively.⁸³ Soon measures were taken to create a font of Kaithi type, however, borrowing the

improved script created in Oudh by the efforts of Nesfield. By 1881 this new version of Kaithi had been prescribed for general use in the primary vernacular schools of Bihar, and had begun to appear in printed textbooks.⁸⁴

The government of Bengal justified the new policy by contending that Kaithi was the 'popular character' of Bihar, and evidenced the flourishing condition of the indigenous schools which taught this script.⁸⁵ Kaithi continued to flourish in Bihar for at least three more decades. In 1912, for example, the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Arrah (in western Bihar) sent a memorial to the Government of Bihar asking that textbooks for lower primary classes be printed in the Nagari script.⁸⁶ In 1913 the Hindi *Abhyudaya* of Allahabad urged the government to make Nagari the court script of Bihar in place of Kaithi.⁸⁷ To Hindi supporters, the Kaithi script did not possess the proper qualities to join the 'pool of symbols' suitable to differentiate Hindi from Urdu.

The Bihar government's policy towards Kaithi met with severe criticism from a distinguished Bengali educator, Dr Rajendralal Mitra, Fellow of Calcutta University, President of the Central Textbook Committee, Director of the Government Wards' Institution, and holder of other distinctions. Speaking before the Hunter Commission in 1882,⁸⁸ Mitra referred to the new script as the 'absurd and ludicrous consummation' of the government's promises to give the people of Bihar their own languages and scripts for their legal business. Previously, he stated, textbooks for Bihar schools, printed in the Nagari script and the Hindi language, had come from Banaras. This procedure had involved no special expense for the preparation of textbooks. Moreover, for each book that Bihar could produce, the North-Western Provinces could produce a hundred. Most important, the Banaras texts helped to keep the people of Bihar 'linguistically united with those with whom they were one in race, religion and close relationship', while the government's policy would eventually deprive them 'of the literature bequeathed them by their ancestors and of the literature which their kinsmen in the North-West will continue to rear up'.⁸⁹

The fate of Kaithi illustrates a number of important particulars about British language attitudes and policies, and the corresponding Indian attitudes and reactions. Local officials had a surprising degree of freedom to experiment, while provincial governments saw little need to coordinate their policies. A few years or a few miles could separate radically opposed measures. One official might labour to bring about what his successors would undo. Though the benefit of the masses was

the supposed touchstone of British efforts, officials found no difficulty in ignoring rather than taking advantage of the widespread popularity of Kaithi. Indian attitudes corresponded to those of the authorities who denigrated this variant of Nagari. To the Hindi-speaking elite, Kaithi could not possibly have matched the social, religious, and literary associations so richly exhibited by Nagari, and moreover had suspect connections with Hindustani vocabulary. Despite its derivation from Nagari, Kaithi merited no more consideration than the Persian script. In the process of multi-symbol congruence, some symbols are rejected, not only because of their associations with the opposing group, but also because of their inadequacy to embody the master symbol of the elite. Both Kaithi and Braj Bhasha,⁹⁰ for different reasons, proved unacceptable to the Hindi-speaking elite.

The Nagari Script in the Central Provinces

In August 1871 a public meeting took place in Jabalpur in the Central Provinces,⁹¹ under the auspices of the Hitkarini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of the General Welfare), to discuss the question of the proper court language for the province. Ten prominent citizens, nine Hindus and one Muslim, addressed the meeting; eight of them (including the Muslim) advocated Hindi, the other two Urdu. Those who spoke for Hindi depicted a language easy to learn and necessary for the temporal and spiritual improvement of the masses, and portrayed Urdu as foreign, difficult to learn, and a barrier to government employment. Those who spoke for Urdu described a language euphonious and beautiful, and spurned Hindi as a rude dialect which made people dull and stupid. Those attending the meeting voted in favour of Hindi and agreed to send a memorial to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces asking for Hindi to be made the language of the law courts.⁹²

The memorialists, who directed their remarks at a provincial conference of civil officials to be held the following month, echoed the words of Shore more than three decades earlier when they argued that good government necessarily required courts of law to carry on their proceedings in the language read and understood by the people. The general public, not knowing Urdu, was at the mercy of court officials. Despite the inducement of government employment offered by the study of the official language, the number of those studying Urdu had declined during the last several years, while the number of those studying Hindi had increased.⁹³

If the government abolished Urdu, the memorialists continued,

education officials could concentrate their efforts on encouraging Hindi, thereby giving a great impetus to popular education. Claims of the connection between language policy and education appeared at frequent intervals as the Hindi movement developed. While such a connection certainly existed,⁹⁴ those who argued thus frequently served their own interests. The memorial bore nearly fifty signatures, many of them Bengali. English and Bengali had ousted Persian in the courts, schools, newspapers and literature of Bengal by 1840.⁹⁵ Hence educated Bengalis, who made up a significant percentage of the expanding bureaucracy of British rule outside Bengal, naturally found Hindi and the Nagari script far more compatible than Persianized Urdu.⁹⁶

In September 1871 the conference of civil officials duly met in Nagpur and discussed, among other matters, the question of the official language of the province. Most of the officers agreed on the desirability of a change, and the Acting Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, Colonel R. H. Keatinge, laid the matter before the Government of India in a minute which included a copy of the Hitkarini Sabha's memorial. Keatinge traced—inaccurately—the history of language policy in the province, declaring that the Persian language and script had enjoyed official status in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories before 1835, when Shore had ordered the gradual abolition of Persian and the substitution of Hindi in the Nagari script.⁹⁷ He went on to describe the eventual triumph of Urdu, attributing the tendency to excessive Persianization to the great importance which 'Native bureaucrats' gave to maintaining the Persian script. These bureaucrats no doubt had some 'genuine feeling' for the script, but they also keenly appreciated the enormous advantage they held in being the 'sole interpreters between the governing class and the people'.⁹⁸ Between 1861 and 1871, however, Marathi had become the official court language of four districts in the south, Oriya of one district in the extreme east, and Telugu of another district in the extreme south. Hindi had received the same status in four districts, one in the extreme west and three in the east. In the remaining nine districts, the Divisions of Jabalpur and Nerbudda, Urdu had maintained official status.⁹⁹

Keatinge argued convincingly for a change from Urdu to Hindi, or at least from the Persian script to the Nagari in these nine districts. He marshalled statistics to defend his case which showed that the vast majority of *patwārīs* and landholders in the area concerned knew only Hindi. In addition, nearly 85 per cent of the schools teaching Hindi or Urdu taught Hindi exclusively, while fewer than 8 per cent taught only

Urdu.¹⁰⁰ The Government of India accepted his arguments and in 1872 authorized 'the Hindi character' (the Nagari script) for processes, notifications, proclamations, and other types of official documents. In addition, 'Hindi' was to take the place of Urdu in police offices.¹⁰¹

One would think that these orders secured the place of Nagari. The Government of India, however, had not authorized the *exclusive* use of Nagari, but only the *permissive* use. Hence a decade later we find Ambica Charan Banerji, head clerk of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Jabalpur, testifying before the Hunter Commission that Hindi had not yet become the language of the courts in the nine districts in question. Though he and other members of the Hitkarini Sabha had submitted a memorial on the matter, the government had only partially carried out the change of court language.¹⁰² Banerji did not mention the fact that the local government had put out a fresh circular in 1881. This directed that petitions might be presented in the Nagari script and the Hindi language in all those districts in which Urdu now had the status of court language. Furthermore, courts must give all copies of decrees, orders, judgements and proceedings in Hindi unless the applicant asked for them in Urdu. Finally, no one should receive any judicial appointment thereafter unless he could read and write Nagari fluently.¹⁰³

These last orders seemed to move the government well towards the exclusive use of Hindi and Nagari on the policy spectrum. Yet four years later a resident of Hoshangabad (in the Nerbudda Division of the Central Provinces) complained in the Hindi *Bharat Jivan* (Banaras) that although Hindi had become the court language of his district, most of the old Urdu-knowing court officials could not write it properly.¹⁰⁴ Other evidence indicates that though the Nagari script did finally become established in the courts of the Central Provinces, Hindi did not. In 1900, C. J. Lyall, then the Secretary of the Judicial and Public Department of the India Office, and author of a work on Hindustani (i.e., Urdu) grammar, observed that though the courts in the Central Provinces had used the Nagari script for years, the language was 'not a whit less Persianized than it is in the NWP & Oudh, where the Persian character is in use'.¹⁰⁵ A change of script did not necessarily bring a change of language, not only because of the vested interests of court officials, but also due to the force of linguistic continuity and the lack of generally accepted Hindi legal and technical terms.

The Nagari and Kaithi Scripts in Bihar

The replacement of the Persian script by Nagari and Kaithi in Bihar¹⁰⁶ paralleled that in the Central Provinces in several respects. Both processes began in the 1870s and resulted in significant changes by the early 1880s. In both cases, no substantial change took place until the government ordered the exclusive rather than the permissive use of new scripts. In both cases, Indian petitioners, notably Bengalis, played important roles. Lastly, the language attitudes of the British officials concerned largely determined the key features of the policies they advocated. Those who saw Urdu and Hindi as distinct languages (e.g., Keatinge) tended to favour a change of language as well as a change of script, while those who saw them as one language (e.g., some Bihar officials) tended to support a change of script only.¹⁰⁷

Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, began a vigorous attack on Urdu late in 1871. While on a tour of Bihar, he had found to his astonishment that 'the bastard, hybrid language of which the old Persian writers were too fond' (i.e., Urdu) still held sway not only in the courts and offices but also in the schools despite earlier efforts to root it out. Impressed by the claims of some education officers that the large majority of Hindus did not accept Urdu, he ordered Urdu 'absolutely abolished' in all schools. He followed this with a decree in 1873 making the use of 'the Hindi character' obligatory for certain purposes, and allowing district officers to use their discretion in introducing Hindi into court proceedings as much as possible.¹⁰⁸ Campbell's orders included both the Nagari and Kaithi scripts as well as the Hindi language, suggesting that he not only recognized the popularity of the latter script but also regarded Hindi as a separate language.¹⁰⁹

Though further orders on behalf of the new language and scripts materialized in 1874 and 1875, apparently little change resulted, for in the latter year residents of Patna and Bhagalpur (both in northern Bihar) addressed a petition to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Richard Temple. They asked that the various orders directing the introduction of the Nagari script and Hindi into courts and offices actually be carried out. They also added some new twists to the time-worn arguments for and against Hindi and Nagari. Although antagonists castigated Hindi as a rude language with neither literature nor grammar, in reality Hindi was a branch of Sanskrit, recognized by the principal English and German scholars as the best language in the world and the source of all other languages. One could learn Nagari in only three or four months,

while the Persian script required one or two years, and also could far more easily be altered for nefarious purposes.¹¹⁰

Temple assured the petitioners that the government intended to carry out the orders already in existence. These orders enjoined that all processes, notifications, and proclamations should be made in Hindi; that official records should be kept in Hindi; that petitions should be received in either Hindi or Hindustani; and that police officers and court officials should have a knowledge of 'the Hindi character'.¹¹¹ He could not agree to their request that Hindi become the exclusive court language, however, since his predecessor had opposed such a change. Moreover, the Lieutenant-Governor had no desire to pass any orders which would appear to indicate that Hindi and Urdu were two distinct languages. He recognized the tendency of some Hindi writers to reject all words not Sanskrit in origin and of some Urdu writers to confine themselves to words of Persian origin, but wished to combine these two separate and discordant elements into one full and harmonious language. To this end, he proposed to require candidates for employment in all but the lowest government offices to know both the Nagari and Persian scripts equally well.¹¹²

Many British officials shared Temple's views on the nature of Urdu and Hindi. Thus in the same year, the Government of India expressed support for any measures to reduce the antagonism between Urdu and Hindi, and opposition to any instruction in 'an artificial, Sanskritized language' under the name of Hindi in government or government-aided schools.¹¹³ J. C. Nesfield, reporting on education in Oudh in 1876, contended that the province had two different scripts, Persian and Nagari, but only one language, Hindustani (i.e., Urdu). He deplored the tendency of Hindi schoolbooks to use 'obsolete' words of Sanskrit origin, and called Hindi 'a language which no one speaks, and which no one, unless he has been specially educated, can interpret'.¹¹⁴ Temple's successor, Sir Ashley Eden, believed that Hindi and Urdu were 'identical languages' and hence his 1880 resolution (see above) had directed a change of script only, and not a change of language.¹¹⁵ These and many other officials regarded Hindi (i.e., Sanskritized Khari Boli Hindi) as a manufactured language with no real basis in popular usage.

The Patna and Bhagalpur petitioners used the same highly Sanskritized Hindi to which these officials objected. A. W. Croft, Inspector of Schools in Bihar, found their zeal for Sanskrit words as ludicrous as the ardour of a hypothetical writer of pure English who would replace the 'impenetrability of matter' with the 'unthroughforcesomeness [sic] of

stuff'.¹¹⁶ Education officials in Oudh, to whom the Government of India had referred the issue for comment, had little doubt that the petition reflected the desire of Bengalis to enhance their prospects for government employment outside their native province. Since Bengalis had better opportunities for learning English than their fellow countrymen in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh or the Punjab, these officials maintained, a good knowledge of the vernacular in addition would increase their opportunities for the public service in these provinces. Because the Persian script and Arabic vocabulary of Urdu presented difficulties, Bengalis naturally inclined to the more familiar script and Sanskrit vocabulary of Hindi believing they could learn this more easily. Their motives, claimed the officials, had nothing to do with the superiority of one language over the other or the welfare of the people. On the contrary, as long as the English schools and colleges of Bengal continued to turn out about 2,000 men each year who could not find government service in overcrowded Bengal, the question of the substitution of Hindi for Urdu as the court language of the Upper Provinces (Bihar, the NWP&O, and the Punjab) would continue to be raised.¹¹⁷

Eden's resolution of 1880, ordering the exclusive use of Nagari or Kaithi in much of Bihar, elicited several responses, most of which supported the measure.¹¹⁸ The most significant opposition came from the National Muhammadan Association of Calcutta in 1882, more than a year after the Lieutenant-Governor's decision had come into effect. In a memorial addressed to the Governor-General Lord Ripon, complaining about the general condition of Muslims in India, the Association referred to the recent change in Bihar. The introduction of the new scripts, insisted the memorialists, echoing the petitioners of Dacca nearly fifty years earlier,¹¹⁹ had proved unpopular with all the educated classes of Bihar, Hindus and Muslims alike. Moreover, the majority of Hindus in Bihar were 'in their manners, their customs, and their modes of amusement, Muhammadans' who took pride in speaking 'pure Urdu'.¹²⁰ This language, the Association declared, had been the language of the province for several centuries which everybody spoke in one form or another. The antagonists of Hindi consistently reiterated the plea that Muslims and Hindus shared a joint culture of which Islamic languages were an important part. Urdu supporters stressed assimilation, represented by the equation Urdu = Hindu + Muslim; Hindi partisans emphasized differentiation, embodied by the equations Urdu = Muslim and Hindi = Hindu.

Several months later, A. P. MacDonnell, the Officiating Secretary to

the Government of Bengal, and later to preside over the official recognition of the Nagari script as the Lieutenant-Governor of the NWP&O, rebutted the arguments of the Association. Writing to the Government of India, MacDonnell noted that the latest administrative report of the Commissioner of the Patna Division of Bihar gave sufficient answer to the objections of the memorialists. According to the Commissioner, the change had gone smoothly and had considerably benefited the public. A new class of court officials and legal practitioners acquainted with Hindi was springing up, and the government had considered the claims of the existing incumbents. Subordinate officials and law agents knew some Hindi; all of them could speak and most of them could write it. The Lieutenant-Governor, remarked MacDonnell, considered the Association's protests a matter of 'fictitious sentiment' since Muslims in Calcutta, unaffected by the change, were making far more strenuous objections than the supposedly suffering Muslims in Bihar.¹²¹

MacDonnell's letter showed a confusion of thought that characterized much of British language policy in north India in the nineteenth century and beyond. Eden's resolution of 1880 had specifically referred to script only, yet the letter referred to language. This tendency to confuse language and script, or to identify them, not only muddled the thinking of Indian partisans but also darkened the counsels of British administrators.¹²² British language policy suffered from another notable weakness, evident in the failure to eliminate excessively Persianized Urdu and in the slow progress of the Nagari script in the Central Provinces, namely, the lack of systematic and vigorous enforcement. Even in Bihar, despite the apparent firmness of the 1880 resolution, in 1893 we find the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal yet again directing the use of Hindi and Nagari and forbidding the use of the Persian script in the courts.¹²³ More than two decades of efforts had not succeeded in completely banishing the Persian script.

An Analysis of Language Policy

In 1874 F. S. Growse, a British civil servant and language scholar, wrote a perceptive analysis of the language biases of his countrymen in India. British officials, he noted, had become so used to communicating with their subordinates in Urdu, that most of them regarded Urdu as the vernacular of the country. This familiarity with the speech of the Muslim minority rather than that of the Hindu majority, meant that Arabic and Persian received a great deal of attention while Sanskrit

received little. While the former two classical languages were considered 'proper to the country' the latter was viewed as 'utterly dead'.¹²⁴ Several years later while giving evidence before the Hunter Commission, Growse adduced another reason for the prejudice of Englishmen for Urdu and against Hindi. Many district officers, unacquainted with Hindi literature, though having a fair knowledge of Urdu literature, on encountering Hindi schoolbooks and their highly pedantic style, naturally concluded that such a language must be 'a grotesque unreality'. Unfortunately, many of the authors were pandits who considered long words preferable to short, and the display of their own erudition more important than the edification of their readers.¹²⁵

Growse's observations go far to explain the strong distaste for Sanskritized Hindi of many British officials in north India, and underline the importance of historical continuity. Had the British found Sanskrit, not Persian, the language of administration of their predecessors, their language policies would very probably have favoured Sanskritized vernaculars and the Nagari or related scripts. Another major factor in the relative permanence of the Persian tradition in language policy arose from the unique blend of elements represented by Urdu. In other parts of India Persianized vernaculars written in the Persian script did not become major literary or administrative languages.¹²⁶ Even in Bengal, where Persian had become the language of state by the sixteenth century, only a few examples of Bengali written in the Persian script have come to light; Bengali Muslims generally used the Bengali script to write Bengali.¹²⁷ Had Persianized Khari Boli in the Persian script (i.e., Urdu) not existed, then British officials would almost certainly have replaced Persian in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Bihar, the Central Provinces and elsewhere in north India with some form of Hindi in the Nagari script, just as they replaced Persian with Bengali and the Bengali script in Bengal.

The convenient existence of Urdu, ideally suited for continuing the hegemony of Persian in north India, goes far to explain British language policy. We need to add another equally necessary factor, however, for a fuller explanation: the presence of Muslims as a large or politically important element of society. Wherever we find these two factors conjoined, British policy generally favoured Urdu; wherever we find one or the other missing, policy favoured other languages. From this admittedly oversimplified perspective north India forms a spectrum of the increasing importance of Urdu from east to west. In Bengal, neither Urdu nor an analogous form of Persianized Bengali existed, though

Muslims made up a large percentage of the population. As a result, the government never seriously considered using Urdu as the official vernacular. In Bihar and the Central Provinces, while Urdu existed, the Muslim element of the population lacked size or importance. Here the Nagari script took root before the end of the century, though not without difficulty.

In the North-Western Provinces and especially in Oudh, where Urdu thrived and Muslims had political importance far out of proportion to their numbers, British policy inclined strongly towards Urdu, though without actively suppressing Hindi and Nagari. Here conditions were ripe for a long and protracted struggle as the Urdu-speaking elite faced an increasing challenge from Hindi and Nagari partisans intent on differentiating themselves. By the end of the century Nagari had won an inconclusive and largely symbolic victory. In the Punjab, where Urdu flourished and Muslims formed the largest and most politically powerful part of the population, British policy unequivocally supported Urdu. Here Urdu remained the official vernacular right up to independence, while Hindi and Nagari remained in a very subordinate position. So complete was the dominance of Urdu, that Hindi was not even a medium of instruction in primary schools for boys.¹²⁸ The existence of other contenders, Punjabi, and for Sikhs the Gurmukhi script, further complicated the language situation in the Punjab.

British language policy often clearly reflected the wish of the government not to antagonize Muslims where they were politically powerful through any change of language or script which could be interpreted as an attack on their faith or their livelihood. For example, in 1875 an Oudh official warned the government that to support Hindi against Urdu would be 'very hazardous' and that 'political danger' could be expected from the disaffection of Muslims thereby ousted from the public service.¹²⁹ In 1898 Sir Antony Macdonnell, Lieutenant-Governor of the NWP&O, cautioned a delegation in support of the Nagari script not to expect rapid change. He knew from personal experience, he told them, the difficulties which had attended the introduction of Kaithi in Bihar, where Muslims exercised far less influence and composed a far smaller proportion of those in government service than in their own province. Therefore the delegation could well imagine the greater difficulties of effecting a similar change in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.¹³⁰

The inconsistencies and contradictions of British language policy mirrored inconsistent and contradictory language situations in different

provinces of north India, the lack of linguistic sophistication of many officials, and the basic fact of differentiation outstripping assimilation as the pace of social mobilization increased during the nineteenth century. We have seen these two processes reflected in the development of vernacular literature and publication in the preceding chapter, and in the next we will survey them in the areas of education and government employment. British language policy both resulted from and contributed to the larger political processes which eventually led to the partition of British India into India and Pakistan, an outcome almost exactly paralleled by the linguistic partition of the Hindi-Urdu continuum into highly Sanskritized Hindi and highly Persianized Urdu.

Each of the three major protagonists in the language controversy—Muslims, Hindus and British—had differing attitudes towards the twin processes of assimilation and differentiation. Educated Muslims, for the most part supporters of Urdu, rejected the Hindu linguistic heritage and emphasized the joint Hindu-Muslim origins of Urdu. In an 1873 issue of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, for example, a Muslim commenting on the recent government language decisions in Bihar insisted that Muslims had a 'natural antipathy' to studying Hindi which they considered 'quite alien' to them.¹³¹

Those educated Hindus who were partisans of Hindi turned their backs on languages and scripts associated with Islam, and promoted Hindi in the Nagari script. In 1882 *The Calcutta Review* carried an article by Babu Syamacharan Ganguli who asked Muslims to accept the fact that Urdu 'is Hindi in its basis, just as they themselves are largely Hindu by race'.¹³² He urged Muslims to merge into the Hindu mainstream of Indian culture, for the Hindus would never consider the reverse. Contrary to Ganguli's dictum, however, many educated Hindus, however, *did* consider the reverse, and willingly included at least part of Muslim culture as a legitimate current in the mainstream of Indian culture.

Muslims and some Hindus, then, each offered assimilation to the other, as it were, but at the same time maintained or increased their own differentiation. Other Hindus found no contradictions in assimilation to a blend of Muslim and Hindu traditions. The third party, the British, showed the most ambivalence, sometimes championing one of the competing linguistic traditions, sometimes the other, and sometimes trying to tread a narrow path between them. The third of these alternatives emerged most frequently when the forces of Hindi and Urdu were relatively equal, as in the North-Western Provinces and

Oudh. A. W. Croft, an Inspector of Schools in Bihar, eloquently summed up this approach when he wrote in 1875:

To call Hindi and Urdu two languages, is to perpetuate a vicious error, originally due to the antagonism of Pandits and Maulavis. They have the same accidence and syntax, and the same stock of words for most simple objects and conceptions; they only diverge when it is necessary to express the language of compliment, of science, or of complex ideas in general. This is not to have two languages, but to have a language capable of being enriched from two different sources; and I conceive that it is the object of Government to destroy or to diminish this antagonism.¹³³

Such an object was doomed to failure, however, for no government could counteract the powerful social forces reflected in the growing differentiation between Hindi and Urdu. Hindus willing to include both traditions found themselves in an increasingly difficult position as the forces of Hindi became more powerful. Muslims found themselves falling behind as larger and larger numbers of a socially mobilizing population assimilated to the equation of Hindi = Hindu equation rather than that of Urdu = Muslim + Hindu. Differentiation into two separate linguistic and religious traditions outpaced assimilation into one joint Hindu-Muslim Hindi-Urdu tradition.

NOTES

1. Madan Mohan Malaviya, *Court Character and Primary Education in N.-W. P. and Oudh* (Allahabad, 1897), p. 497, quoting *Printed Parliamentary Papers relating to the Affairs of India: General, Appendix I: Public* (1832).
2. More precisely, Hindustani (Urdu) in a modified version of the Persian script replaced Persian; this modified version contained several letters to represent sounds indigenous to Indian languages but not occurring in Persian, especially the retroflex consonants.
3. Chapter IV describes this educational system in considerable detail.
4. See the Glossary for the meaning of this term.
5. See Chapter I as well as the Glossary for an explanation of this term.
6. See Chapter I and the Glossary for the meaning of these two terms.
7. J. K. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian as Court Language in British India', *Bombay University Journal*, XVI (September 1947), p. 131; Ramesh Chandra Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System in India under the East India Company 1833-1858* (Lucknow, 1971), p. 108.
8. Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 107-8.
9. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', p. 136; Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 120-3.
10. For a more extensive review of contemporary British opinions on language, see

- Christopher R. King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of the Nagari Script and Language) of Benares 1893-1914: A Study in the Social and Political History of the Hindi Language*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1974, pp. 57-62.
11. This court, in both Calcutta and the N.W.P., was the chief court of appeal from the district courts until 1862 when it was amalgamated with a parallel court to form a High Court. Col. Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive*, New Edition (London, 1903, reissued 1968), p. 862.
 12. Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 115-17; Dayal Dass, 'Language Controversy a Century Ago', *Indian Historical Records Commission. Proceedings Volume XXXII, Part II* (February 1956), p. 103.
 13. The Board may have been referring to the several regional standards or even to local dialects; see the section of Chapter I entitled 'Linguistic and Social Background'.
 14. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', p. 132; Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, p. 118, quoting Letter No. 696 of July 29, 1836 from the N.W.P. Sadar Court to the Government of N.W.P., *Government of India Proceedings, Home Department*, Judicial Branch Consultations No. 74 of 10 October 1836.
 15. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 135-6, quoting a letter from Morris of 9 January 1837 enclosed in a letter of 4 March 1837 from the Registrar of the Court, Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, Fort William, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the *Judicial Department, Judicial Consultations (Civil)*, 21 March, 1837, No. 26; Madan Mohan Malaviya, *Court Character and Primary Education in N.-W.P. and Oudh* (Allahabad, 1897), Appendix, p. 15, quoting F. J. Shore, *Notes on Indian Affairs*, Volume I (London, 1837), p. 36.
 16. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 135-6.
 17. Dass, 'Language Controversy', p. 103; Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', p. 132; Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, p. 115-17, 118.
 18. Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 113-14, quoting Letter No. 9 of 13 January 1836 to Registrar, Sadar Nizam Adalat, Allahabad, *Government of India Proceedings, Home Department*, Judicial Branch Consultations No. 85 of 10 October 1836.
 19. Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, p. 111.
 20. Nearly half of the 125 officials consulted during the inquiry favoured the replacement of Persian by a vernacular, nearly half preferred the status quo, and the small remainder opted for English. As indicated above, both English and the vernaculars eventually replaced Persian, but at different levels. Dass, 'Language Controversy', p. 105; Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 108-9.
 21. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 132-3, 135-6; Malaviya, *Court Character*, Appendix, p. 15; *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 19 July to 2 August 1836, Range 221, 77, No. 52; Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 118-19, quoting Minute of 14 July 1836, *Government of India Proceedings, Home Department*, Judicial Branch Consultations, No. 74 of 10 October 1836.
 22. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 135-6.
 23. See the section of this chapter entitled 'The Nagari Script in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories'.
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. Shri Ray Krishna Das, Interview, Banaras, 6 April 1972.
 26. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 136-7.
 27. These territories, acquired by the British early in the nineteenth century, lay in the hilly plateau region of central India. They came first under the control of the Presidency of Bengal, then under the North-Western Provinces on the formation of this province in 1836, then from 1843 were separately administered until 1853, when they were reattached to the North-Western Provinces until 1861, when they became part of the newly-formed Central Provinces. C. Collin Davies, *An Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula*, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1959), pp. 52-5, 58-61, 66-7, 72-3; Douglas Dewar, *A Handbook to the English Pre-Mutiny Records in the Government Record Rooms of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (N.P., [c. 1919]), p. 484; *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Volume XXIV, New Edition (Oxford, 1908), pp. 158-9; R. C. Majumdar et al. *An Advanced History of India*, 2nd edition (London, 1963), pp. 694, 705-6, 720-1.
 28. Letter of 21 November 1835 from Shore to the Three Principal and Three Junior Assistants, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 2 to 16 September 1836, Range 221, Volume 79, No. 1678.
 29. Letter of 29 October 1835 from Shore to Secretary to the Government Judicial and Revenue Departments, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 2 to 16 September 1836, Range 221, Volume 79, No. 1603.
 30. *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 19 July to 2 August 1836, Range 221, 77, No. 52.
 31. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 137-8.
 32. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 139-40.
 33. Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, p. 125, quoting *Government of India Proceedings, Home Department*, Judicial Branch Consultations, No. 12 of 28 June 1841; p. 199, quoting from the translation of the petition in *Government of India Proceedings, Home Department*, Judicial Branch Consultations, No. 7 of 28 June 1841.
 34. See the section of Chapter I entitled 'Theoretical Background' and also the Glossary for the meaning of this term.
 35. Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 199-201.
 36. See Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims* (Cambridge, 1974) for an extended discussion of the Urdu-speaking elite.
 37. Srivastava, *Development of the Judicial System*, pp. 126-7.
 38. See Glossary.
 39. See Glossary.
 40. See Chapter I and the Glossary for an explanation of the term 'objective characteristic'. See also the section of Chapter IV entitled 'The Language of School Textbooks', for a discussion of 'Sanskritization'.

41. Letter of 29 October 1835 from Shore to Secretary to the Government, Judicial and Revenue Departments, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 2 to 16 September 1836, Range 221, Volume 79, No. 1603; Letter of 21 November 1835 from Shore to the Three Principal and Three Junior Assistants, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 2 to 16 September 1836, Range 221, Volume 79, No. 1678.
42. At present both Hindi and Marathi use practically identical versions of the Nagari script. The Marathi version includes one or two letters and diacritical marks not in the Hindi version or used in a different way. Shore may have been referring to some cursive variety of the Nagari script used for Marathi at the time.
43. Letter of 29 October 1835 from Shore to Secretary to the Government, Judicial and Revenue Departments, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 2 to 16 September 1836, Range 221, Volume 79, No. 1603. The use of Nagari in Kumaun continued: see Nandalal Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude to Hindi-Urdu Hindusthani in the Post-Mutiny Period', *Journal of the Uttar Pradesh Historical Society*, New Series, III (1955), p. 26, and *NWP Educ Rpt*, 1873-74, Orders of Government, p. 15.
44. Letter from Shore to Sadar Board of Revenue, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 2 to 16 September 1836, Range 221, Volume 79, No. 84.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. See Chapter IV for an extensive discussion of this matter.
49. Majumdar, 'The Abolition of Persian', pp. 135-6, quoting a letter from Morris of 9 January 1837 enclosed in a letter of 4 March 1837 from the Registrar of the Court, Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, Fort William, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the *Judicial Department, Judicial Consultations (Civil)*, 21 March 1837, No. 26.
50. Letter from Sudder Board of Revenue, NWP, to Shore, 9 September 1836, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 2 to 16 September 1836, Range 221, Volume 79, No. 58.
51. *Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces for the Year 1871-72*, pp. xvi-xvii; *CP Home Proceedings*, March 1872, No. 39, p. 50.
52. Circular from the Sudder Board of Revenue to Division Commissioners of the N.-W. Provinces, 29 July 1836, *NWP Lieutenant-Governor's Proceedings in the Sudder Board of Revenue Department*, 19 July to 2 August 1836, Range 221, Volume 77, No. 52.
53. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', pp. 15, 21. See Malaviya, *Court Character*, p. 8, Appendix, pp. 50-51, quoting portions of the Sadar Dewani Adalat's Circular Order No. 33, 19 April 1839 and of the Sadar Board of Revenue's Circular Order No. III, 28 August 1840; Appendix, p. 52, quoting letter from the Secretary to the Government of the NWP to the Registrar, Sadar Dewani and Nizamat Adalat, NWP, 5 January 1854; Appendix, pp. 52-3, quoting letter from the Secretary to the Sudder Board of Revenue, NWP, to the Secretary to the Government, NWP, 10 January 1854.
54. See the section of Chapter V entitled 'The Hindi-Nagari Campaign of 1882' for more details on the Hunter Commission.
55. *Educ Comm Rpt NWP&O*, pp. 201-2.
56. Malaviya, *Court Character*, p. 8.
57. Malaviya, *Court Character*, p. 10, quoting the *Pioneer* (Allahabad) of 10 January 1873.
58. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', p. 20.
59. Malaviya, *Court Character*, Appendix, pp. 52-3, quoting letter from the Secretary to the Sudder Board of Revenue, NWP, to the Secretary to the Government, NWP, 10 January 1854.
60. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', pp. 15, 21.
61. Pandit Gauri Datta, *Nāgarī aur Urdū kā Swāng arthāt Nāgarī aur Urdū kā ek Nāṭak [A Mime of Nagari and Urdu namely A Play of Nagari and Urdu]* (Meerut, n.d.), p. 1. See the section of Chapter V entitled 'The Hindi-Nagari Movement in Vernacular Literature' for an extensive discussion of this play. See also a complete translation of and a thorough discussion of this play in Christopher R. King, 'Images of Virtue and Vice: The Hindi-Urdu Controversy in Two Nineteenth-century Hindi Plays', in Kenneth W. Johnes, editor, *Religious Controversy in British India: Dialogues in South Asian Languages*, (Albany, 1992).
62. The Kaithi script had several cousins, including Mahajani, Muria, and Sarafi. They shared several characteristics: business castes used them; their letters, simplified for rapid writing, derived from Nagari; and their illegibility had achieved notoriety.
63. *NWP Educ Rpt*, 1847-48, Extract of Orders of Government, footnote on pp. xcv-xcvi.
64. *NWP Educ Rpt*, 1856-57/1857-58, pp. 32-3. The government's policy towards scripts, not surprisingly, influenced both educational and administrative practices at the village level. Practices in Bihar differed considerably from those in the NWP&O, partly because of differing systems of the settlement of land revenue as the following extract from the *Education Commission: Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee* (Calcutta, 1884, pp. 46-7) makes clear:
 'The discovery of large numbers of village pathshalas [schools] in Behar gave prominence to one important fact. It was found that the character (Kaithi) which the indigenous pathshalas taught their pupils to read and write, and which had not been recognised in the pathshalas previously brought under Government supervision, was the only one which could be employed with any hope of success, if the system of instruction was to be kept on the really broad and popular basis on which it rested. The Persian character was much affected by the higher classes of Muhammadans and learned Hindus; but the Kaithi character was known and used in every village in Behar by Hindus and Muhammadans alike. . . .
 'It was known, of course, from the commencement of education operations in Behar, that Kaithi was the popular character. But it was also known that Kaithi was the popular character not of Behar only, but likewise of Oudh and the North-Western Provinces. Now, in devising their system of popular Elementary

84 *One Language, Two Scripts*

- schools, the authorities of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh had entirely discarded the Kaithi and adopted the Devanagiri. It was therefore concluded that the same ought to be done in Behar. What was not generally known was this, that it was the complete expulsion of Kaithi from the village records (Patwari papers) of the North-Western Provinces that had led to the weakening of the Indigenous schools of those parts, and the easy substitution to some extent of the Hulkabundi [Government] schools in their place. In Behar, where the settlement of the land revenue was permanent, and the Government had no concern with the Patwari papers, no force like that which had acted in the North-Western Provinces was employed to thrust the popular character out of use. The Indigenous pathsalas of Behar had thus been able to hold their own. It was considered a great boon, therefore, when the Government of Bengal, after ruling in April 1880 that the character thenceforward to be used in the Courts should be Nagri or Kaithi and not Persian, sanctioned and carried out measures for casting a fount of Kaithi type. Thus has originated an impetus to Vernacular education in Behar, which may be expected to yield results little short of those which followed in Bengal on the abolition of Persian and the introduction of Bengali in 1839.²
65. One explanation for the separate policies of the governments of the North-Western Provinces and of Oudh towards the Kaithi script lay in their different approaches towards the appointment of *patwāris*. In the NWP the government appointed these village officials, and never selected those who knew only Kaithi. In Oudh, on the other hand, local landholders, with no aversion to Kaithi, appointed them. Similar conditions obtained in Bihar, where the permanent settlement of the land revenue meant the government had no concern with *patwārī* papers; there too *patwāris* continued to use the Kaithi script. *Educ Comm Rpt Bengal*, pp. 46-7; *Oudh Educ Rpt*, 1873-74, p. 150; *NWP&O Educ Rpt*, 1880-81, pp. 77-8.
 66. I could find only one mention of a government school teaching any such script in any of the annual education reports for the NWP&O throughout the entire period of their publication (1843-44 to 1946-47): a municipal school in Pilibhit (western NWP&O) was reported to have a Mahajani department. *NWP&O Educ Rpt*, 1879-80, p. 19.
 67. *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs*, October 1900, pp. 93-4, 102. See D. T. Roberts, *Report on the Revision of Records of Part of Ballia District. 1882-1885 A.D.* (Allahabad, 1886) for a lengthy discussion of the value of the Kaithi script by one member of the Board of Revenue.
 68. See Note 64.
 69. *Oudh Educ Rpt*, 1871-72, Appendix E, p. i.
 70. *Ibid.*, 1874-75, Appendix I, p. xiii.
 71. *NWP&O Educ Rpt*, 1879-80, p. 57; *Ibid.*, 1881-82, p. 75. No mention of the teaching of Kaithi in Oudh appeared in any of the annual education reports of the NWP&O after the 1887-88 report. See also Note 64.
 72. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', p. 25.
 73. *NWP&O Educ Rpt*, 1856-57/1857-58, pp. 32-3. See also Note 64 in this chapter.

74. *NWP Educ Rpt*, 1861-62, pp. 21-2.
75. *Oudh Educ Rpt*, 1869-70, p. 21.
76. *Ibid.*, 1871-72, Appendix E, p. i.
77. *NWP&O SVN*, 1883, p. 663.
78. *Ibid.*, 1883, p. 887.
79. *Ibid.*, 1900, p. 283. The name of the script given in this source is 'Muria' which I have taken to be '*mūḍiyā*'. The latter word means 'shaven-headed' as does the word '*mūḍā*', which also means a script which leaves out the special diacriticals used to indicate consonant-vowel combinations in the Nagari script.
80. *NPS 9th Ann Rpt*, pp. 14-15.
81. Nesfield added: '... and this is an additional argument for having Kaithi taught in our schools.' Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', p. 30, quoting letter from the Director of Public Instruction Oudh to the Junior Secretary of the Chief Commissioner Oudh, 26 March 1876.
82. *The Calcutta Gazette*, 16 June 1880, p. 503.
83. George A. Grierson, *A Handbook of the Kayathi Character* (Calcutta, 1881), p. 1.
84. *Appendix to The Calcutta Gazette*, 9 January 1884, pp. 38-9; *Bengal Quarterly Pubs Rpt*, 1882; *Educ Comm Rpt Bengal*, pp. 117, 334; *NWP&O Educ Rpt*, 1880-81, p. 75.
85. *Educ Comm Rpt Bengal*, pp. 46-7. Also see the section of Chapter V entitled 'Indigenous Schools in the North-Western Provinces'.
86. *UP SVN*, 1912, p. 1072.
87. *Ibid.*, 1913, p. 715.
88. See Chapter V for a discussion of the role of the Hunter Commission in the Hindi-Nagari campaign.
89. *Educ Comm Rpt Bengal*, p. 334. At the time of his testimony before the Commission, Dr Mitra had been a member of the Calcutta Schoolbook Society for 27 years, the Director of the Government Wards' Institution for 25, a Fellow of Calcutta University for 25, as well as being the President of the Central Textbook Committee, and Joint Secretary and Treasurer to the Industrial Art School. *Educ Comm Rpt Bengal*, p. 329.
90. See the section of Chapter II entitled 'The Language of Poetry: Braj Bhasha vs. Khari Boli'. See also Christopher R. King, 'Forging a New Linguistic Identity: The Hindi Movement in Banaras 1868-1914', in Sandria B. Freitag, editor, *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800-1980* (Berkeley, 1989), especially pp. 189-93.
91. The Central Provinces, which came into existence in 1861 and incorporated the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories, lay in the hilly plateau region of central India to the south of the NWP&O. This area is now divided largely between the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. See also Note 27.
92. R. M. Sinha, 'An Old Document Dealing with Hindi-Urdu Controversy', *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, XXXIV, Part II (1958), pp. 91-3.
93. *CP Home Progs*, March 1872, No. 37, p. 47.
94. See Chapter IV, especially the section entitled 'The Relationship of Education and Employment'.

95. T. W. Clark, 'The Languages of Calcutta, 1760-1840', London University, School of Oriental and African Studies, *Bulletin*, XVIII (1956), pp. 473-4.
96. The Bengali and Nagari scripts have both descended from a common ancestor. The shapes of the letters and their order of occurrence in the two alphabets, while not identical, show strong resemblances. Equally important, both languages have borrowed heavily from Sanskrit. Also see the section entitled 'The Language of School Textbooks' in Chapter IV.
97. Keatinge did not make it clear that Hindustani and Marathi in the Nagari and Marathi scripts respectively had been the languages and scripts used in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories before British rule. He also erroneously described Shore's language policy as a change from Persian to *Hindi*, rather than *Hindustani*, in the Nagari script. See the section entitled 'The Nagari Script in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories' in this chapter.
98. *CP Admin Rpt*, 1871-72, xvi-xvii; *CP Home Progs*, March 1872, No. 39, p. 50.
99. *CP Home Progs*, March 1872, No. 39, pp. 50-1.
100. *Ibid.*, March 1872, No. 39, pp. 50-2.
101. *CP Admin Rpt*, 1871-72, p. xviii. The use of 'the Hindi character' in the one case, and 'Hindi' in the other suggests a confusion between language and script which sometimes plagued British policy at even the highest levels. See the section of Chapter V entitled 'The 1900 Decision: The Machinery of Deliberation', for a particularly glaring example of this on the part of the Government of India.
102. *Educ Comm Rpt CP*, pp. 173-4.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
104. *NWP&O SVN*, 1885, p. 489.
105. Handwritten comments of C. J. Lyall on a Minute Paper, subject Home Department Judicial Proceedings for June 1900, *Judicial and Public Papers*, 555 (21-71); C. J. Lyall, *A Sketch of the Hindustani Language* (Edinburgh, 1880).
106. Bihar became a separate province in 1912; prior to that it was a sub-province of Bengal.
107. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', *passim*.
108. *Bengal Gen Progs Misc*, March 1881, p. 7; Rafiq A. Zakaria, 'Foreword', in N. S. Gorekar, *Glimpses of Urdu Literature* (Bombay, 1961), p. xix.
109. *NWP SVN*, 1873, p. 581; Zakaria, 'Foreword', p. xix.
110. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', pp. 19-20.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
112. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
114. *Oudh Educ Rpt*, 1875-76, pp. 4-5.
115. *The Calcutta Gazette*, 16 June 1880, p. 503.
116. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', p. 16.
117. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2, 31-2.
118. *Bengal Gen Progs Misc*, March 1881, p. 8; Zakaria, 'Foreword', p. xxii.
119. See the section of this chapter entitled 'Indian Reactions to the Replacement of Persian'.
120. 'Correspondence on the Subject of the Education of the Muhammadan

- Community in British India and Their Employment in the Public Service Generally', *SRGI, Home Department*, No. CCV, Home Department Serial No. 2 (Calcutta, 1886), pp. 243-4.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
122. See the section of Chapter V entitled 'The 1900 Decision: The Machinery of Deliberation', for an extended discussion of the confused thinking surrounding the NWP&O resolution of 1900 officially recognizing the Nagari script.
123. *Bharat Jivan* (Banaras), 10 April 1893, pp. 3-4.
124. F. S. Growse, 'The Etymology of Local Names in Northern India, as Exemplified in the District of Mathura', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XLIII, Part I (1874), pp. 320, 326; *Educ Comm Rpt NWP&O*, p. 436. One can judge from the Sanskrit publishing statistics in Table 1 just how inaccurate this perception proved to be.
125. *Educ Comm Rpt NWP&O*, p. 437.
126. The princely state of Hyderabad in south India, a stronghold of Urdu, might seem to be an exception. The Urdu of Hyderabad, however, did not derive from the local vernaculars, though its earlier Dakani form borrowed heavily from their vocabulary, but rather from the same Khari Boli base as Urdu in north India. In other words, the grammatical basis of Hyderabad Urdu was imported from north India.
127. S. K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, 2nd edition (Calcutta, 1960), p. 325; T. W. Clark, 'The Languages of Calcutta', p. 454.
128. Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 287-8; Raghunandan Shastri, *Panjāb mē Hindī kī Pragati, passim*.
129. Nandalal Chatterji, 'A Forgotten Official Enquiry on the Hindi-Urdu Controversy', Indian Historical Records Commission, *Proceedings*, XXX (1954), p. 31.
130. *Kāśī-Nāgarīpracārīnī Sabbā kā Arddhśatābdi-Itihās [The Fiftieth Anniversary History of the Kashi Society for the Promotion of Nagari]* (Kāśī, [1943]), pp. 127-9.
131. *NWP SVN*, 1873, pp. 580-1.
132. Syamacharan Ganguli, 'Hindi, Hindustani, and the Behar Dialects', *The Calcutta Review*, LXXV (1882), p. 36. Between 1880 and 1883 Ganguli and George A. Grierson, a Bengal civil servant later to become renowned as the author of the huge *Linguistic Survey of India*, carried on a heated debate on the issue of the proper official language of Bihar in the pages of the *Review*. Grierson maintained that the three major regional dialects of Bihar—Maithili, Magadhi and Bhojpuri—should be the official languages of Bihar. Ganguli objected on the basis that such a policy would prevent the natural spread of 'Hindustani', which took the form of Urdu among Muslims and Hindi among Hindus, as the lingua franca of India. Were the same principles to be applied in Europe, he concluded Italy would have two cultivated languages, Spain several, and Provencal would be revived in France. Ganguli, 'Hindi', pp. 29-33.
133. Chatterji, 'The Government's Attitude', p. 14, quoting A. W. Croft, 'Hindi as the Court Language of Behar', 16 June 1875. Chatterji gives no further information on the source of the document.