

Why Learn Arabic: An Indian Perspective Post- Globalization

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Abstract: This article explores the increasing relevance of Arabic in contemporary India and elaborates on its civilizational, cultural, historical, and economic significance. Being one of the widely spoken language of the world, proficiency in Arabic has advantages beyond measure. It not only provides direct access to a rich intellectual heritage but also offers huge career opportunities in India and abroad. With strong and deep-rooted Indo-Arab relations dating back to antiquity, Arabic has always been regarded in India as one of the most important and strategically significant language. It enhances employability across sectors such as education, diplomacy, IT, tourism, and media, etc. The article also sheds some light on the rising demand for Arabic in MNCs, BPOs, and freelance markets, urging curricular reforms to better align with the job market needs and cater to the rising demands of the language.

Key Words: Arabic Language in India, Globalization and Language, Arabic and Employability, Multilingualism in India, Arabic for Employment, Business & Technology.

Brief Introduction: Arabic is perhaps the only semitic language which survived through the ages and protected its original form from any foreign influence and impurities. Ever since the advent of Islam, the rise of Arabic language and literature has been phenomenal as it crossed its old geographical confinement and opened up to some of the greatest world civilizations. In the Medieval

Ages, the Muslims established a grand empire with its seat of power in Baghdad. Under the aegis of that empire, some of the great intellectual and scientific traditions, like that of Persia, Rome, Greek and India, came together, ushering in a new era of knowledge marked by the development of scientific temper and scholarly pursuit. The Arabs assimilated all existing knowledge from the past and expanded it further to make its own mark in the history of knowledge and science. Arabic language was instrumental in the evolution of that great civilization and hence acquired vital importance. **The history of that period is of great interest to the scholars even today. Learning Arabic may offer its learners a great delight and sense of fulfilment by enjoying direct access to the treasure trove of knowledge and scholarly works of great Arab scholars and authors from that period and beyond.**

Currently Arabic is the 4th most spoken language of the world and approximately 420 million people speak this language on a daily basis, including non-native Arabic speakers.³ At present there are 26 countries, mainly in West Asia, North Africa and a few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where Arabic is an official or co-official language.⁴ They include all six countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia, Djibouti, Chad, Yemen, Mauritania, Somalia, etc. Besides that, Arabic is one of the six official languages of UNO, and all its important documents – resolutions and decisions – are published in Arabic as well.

3 Worlddata.info

4 https://simplefacts.net/arab-world-and-arabic-speaking-countries/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Arabic Holds Economic and Strategic Importance for India

India has traditionally enjoyed very close and friendly relationship with the Arabs from the ancient time and always looked for avenues to strengthen that further. India maintained its bilateral relations with the Arab nations in various fields such as trade and investment, cultural exchange, knowledge transfer, education, and military etc. As per the official data, India's total bilateral trade with the Arab world stands at over US\$ 240 billion, and it is home to more than 9 million Indians".⁵ According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the majority of NRIs are concentrated in the Middle East and India receives its large chunk of inward remittance from the Middle Eastern countries. The UAE alone accounts for about 19.2% of the total remittances to India, which roughly amounts to 21.6 billion—making it the second-largest source globally after the United States.⁶

For India, Arabic is a language of strategic importance and that's why it is promoted by the state and central governments at different levels and "taught in more than three thousand Islamic madrasas and government schools at the secondary certificate level, and in more than 70 colleges and 35 universities at the bachelor, postgraduate and doctoral levels."⁷

5 Emirates News Agency, July 19, 2023, <https://www.wam.ae/en/details/1395303178705>

6 Remittance boom: UAE leads GCC as India hits record \$129.4b in 2024, Khalij Times, 7 April, 2025. <https://www.khaleejtimes.com>

7 Nadwi, Mohammad Ayyub; PROBLEMS IN TEACHING ARABIC IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA; MIQOT Vol. 46 No. 2 July-December 2022; Page 302.

If we take only Delhi for example, courses in Arabic are offered by all its premier educational institutions, like DU, JNU, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Hamdard University, IGNOU, Zakir Hussain College, St. Stephen's College, A&U Tibbiya College, National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) etc, besides thousands of religious seminaries. Apart from them, and given the increasing demand of professionals fluent in Arabic, some of the private institutions have entered the foray to cater ever-increasing need for this language such as Oracle International Language Institute, Langma School of Languages, Cosmolingua Institute of Foreign Languages, and Delhi School of Foreign Languages etc. Some of the private universities and business schools, such as Amity, are offering Arabic to their students in order for them to have an edge over their competitors in the job market. The list is not exhaustive but sufficient to bring home the point.

Arabic and Career Opportunities in India

Learning Arabic makes one look cleverer, more sophisticated and truly a global citizen. Proficiency in Arabic opens huge opportunities of business, employment, education, cultural relations etc not only in India but also abroad.

Most of the countries in the Arab world are highly affluent and abundantly rich in natural resources. There are plenty of untapped economic potentials and unexplored opportunities of career and business. Knowledge of Arabic enables a person to gain insight into the cultural, political and religious values and sensitivities of the Arabs and establish emotional connection with them as they have ever been very particular about their identity, language, religion, heritage and culture. It will also help bridge the gaps and promote business and people to people contact, enhancing bilateral relations between the two sides and taking that to new heights.

Apart from doing business with the Arab world, an Arabic knowing person may get very inspiring and highly-paid job offers both in India and abroad. In India, there are plenty of jobs in public and private sectors for Arabic graduates and academicians.

Many educational institutions – schools, colleges and universities –, radio, television, internet, journalism, tourism, particularly medical tourism and hospitality etc, offer most respected and highly-paid career breakthrough to the Arabic graduates and academicians.

Arabic experts are required in the various departments of central government like PMO, Ministry of Indian Overseas Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Service etc. The Arab embassies and consulates located in Delhi and other metropolitan cities of India hire Arabic Translators and people with the knowledge of Arabic. And the same is true for the Indian embassies and missions functioning abroad in the Arab land.

India's Technological Rise Increases Employability of Arabic Graduates

The advancement in technology and different means of social media helped the world become truly a 'global village' and transformed completely how we view, perceive and connect with the entire world. The rise of globalism (turning world into a global village) came up with huge opportunities of business and employment for the countries ready for them. India is one of such countries which made most of it by deploying adequate resources in an innovative and thoughtful manner. A very large number of multi-national companies started operations in Indian cities and hired youngsters for their technical skill, language expertise and being low-cost, inter alia.

Besides the traditional job opportunities, the presence of foreign companies in India and ever-increasing number of India's own startups have unleashed a myriad of job opportunities we never ever thought existed. The demand for Arabic language experts is at record high and expected to grow even further over the coming years. **BPOs, KPOs, MNCs, for example but not limited to, Google, Wipro, Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Genpact, Infosys, Dataflow Group, First Cry, Cognizant, TCS, Amazon, WNS, Accenture, Concentrix, etc, are offering a plethora of job opportunities to the candidates with just workable knowledge of Arabic.**

A short survey conducted by the author of this article of the Arabic graduates working in such companies revealed that notwithstanding the levels of language proficiency – basic, intermediate or high, there is a slice of the cake for everyone according to his/her abilities. When asked about the types of jobs available to the Arabic graduates in the market, the respondent replied by saying that there were jobs for language experts, Quality Assurance (QA) Manager, Operations Officer, Data Analyst, Business Analyst, Human Resource (HR), User Acceptance Testing (UAT), Filtration, Data Entry, Typing, Typesetting, Media Analyst, Translator/Interpreter, Verification Associate, etc. Towards end of the survey, they expressed need for some modifications in the study curriculum offered by the universities and educational institutes to make their products more efficient, competent and ready for the job market. They wished they had some technical skills, know-how of computer and different software required in their respective fields. Some of the respondents who worked in call centres and had to make conversation with the Arabs as part of their job responsibility wanted more conducive atmosphere for spoken Arabic in university campuses.

The competent authorities and people at the helm of affairs must pay attention and mull over the issue to see if they really lack in any respect and if they do, they should revisit their curriculum and make amendments to enable and equip their graduates with the workplace skills that they earnestly need.

Arabic offers career opportunities abroad in the Middle East and elsewhere

As mentioned earlier, there are huge opportunities of business and employment in the Arab world in almost every field of human activity.

If a person is bilingual and fluent in both Arabic and English, he may find it easier to establish his own business or partner with local companies in the Middle East. Professionals with fluency in Arabic and English may be employed as Translator / Interpreter or Bilingual Secretaries with different sorts of organizations, local as well as international companies functioning over there, and get high salaries, perks and social status.

If you are not as highly skilled in Arabic to make your livelihood out of it but you know Arabic, the knowledge of Arabic will always be an advantage for you and you will still have an edge over other jobseekers.

Career Opportunities as Freelancers

Arabic is the most popular West Asian language with global footprint. Arabic translators and interpreters are in great demand across the world. Thanks to the technological advancement, many of the Arabic translators are working as freelancers for their global clients and making a good earning

out of it. There is a huge network of translation agencies even in India which receive outsourced Arabic translation assignments from different continents, primarily from UK, USA and Europe, where a considerable number of Arab population is located.

There is a scope of freelancing even in publication and typesetting jobs which are outsourced to India and accomplished by the individuals with just working knowledge of Arabic.

Conclusion Therefore, and in the light of the facts outlined herein-above, it can safely be concluded that apart from its massive liturgical use and being one of the most eloquent languages of the world which played a significant role in the evolution of a great civilization in the Middle Ages, called the Golden Age of Islam, and besides the fact that it holds an invaluable treasure trove of knowledge, Arabic has currently taken the centre stage for completely different reason and being seen as a great support in earning grand positions in the job market and making wealth, and thereby commanding respect and admiration of everyone.

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