

A Brief Glance at
SINDHI
LITERATURE



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Straight from the heart.....

سٽي ساٿييم ڳالهڙي، لهي ويا لوھ،
اندر جا اندوھ لتا ڏک، سُک ٿيا
شاهه عبداللطيف

*“hearing the news of my homeland,
my iron shackles fell away,
the inner darkness of my
heart vanished,
sorrows vanished
joy arrived.”*

This is how our parents, grand parents, great grand parents all victims of the dreaded partition must have felt at the mention of Sind, their homeland.

Freedom at midnight was not for the Sindhi community who had to run empty handed , heavy hearted from their own watan and start their life anew, right from scratch once again, without any resources. It speaks volumes of the Sindhi community's spirit and resilience. In this struggle for survival somewhere down the line we lost our cultural roots and language.

Our cultural roots are not just an anchor to the past but they are the original blueprint of our identity. To remain confident in the present and to face the challenges of the future, one must first know exactly his or her roots. These roots provide a sense of self

and fulfillment. Understanding one's lineage, language, literature and ancestral stories instills a unique pride in ourselves. A culture's literature, poetry and history are like a survival compass for us provided we know how to navigate. The burden of preservation of our mother tongue Sindhi, literature and culture gradually fell on the writers and poets, not that they minded it. They were waiting with open arms to welcome the next few generations and happily handover the treasure of the literature to them.

That is exactly what Mr Mohan Gehani, writer, educationist, research scholar has started doing. He is building a bridge between Sindhi and English languages to make it easier for the younger generation to learn about Sindhi language, literature and culture. He knows and has understood that it is not necessary that every Sindhi youth will know or should know Sindhi language or the scripts or reading and writing it, being a Sindhi is a qualification for them and he has decided to help them know Sind and Sindhi through English language which is the most read language today. It is remarkable that a person of his calibre has taken this task of educating the youth about Sindhi language through English as a medium of instruction. Gehani has a strong foresight and knows that it is the need of the hour and is optimistic that it will lead to the youth exploring and wanting to learn Sindhi language in the long run. Sindhi vocal music and Sufi kalaams have been enthralling the audience for so many centuries, similarly Sindhi literature and language aren't far behind. In this e book he has left no stone unturned to meet the needs of the Sindhi youth and serves all his life's experiences, expertise, writings, emotions on a platter to them. Every question or challenge today's Sindhi youngster faces Mr Gehani has a readymade answer to it. One just has to go through this book to know all about Sindhi language and in his mega endeavour he has not forgotten the distinguished writers,

poets, historians, music directors, singers, dramatists and their contributions to the Sindhi community at large. This book is a summary and essence of all his writings and his contribution towards his mother tongue.

I am humbled for his trust in me to go through the book and impressed that he who has seen pre-partition days, faced the partition and now post partition phase is open minded and large hearted enough to handover the reins of Sindhi culture to the youth. Go grab it, all Sindhi youth scattered all over the world.

Mr Gehani is not an armchair philosopher, his writings, advice, perspectives, maxims, thoughts, insights, uniqueness of his writings and life are inspiring and waiting to be explored.

As Marcus Garvey has rightly said,

“A people without knowledge of their past history, original and culture is like a tree without roots.”

I am reminded of Shah Abdul Latif's couplet for him,

ماڻهو سڀ نه سٺا،
پکي سڀ نه هنج
ڪنهن ڪنهن ماڻهوءَ منجه
اچي بوءِ بهار جي

*“Not all humans are beautiful,
not all birds are swans,
The fragrance of spring
arises from some special people.”*

Barkha Khushalani
Mumbai

EVOLUTION OF INDIAN LITERATURE SINCE INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE : SINDHI

Literature in the Sindhi language moves on quite different trajectories and planes from those of other contemporary Indian languages. The reason is not difficult to see. While the rest of India celebrates Independence Day on the 15th of August each year, in the collective psyche of the Sindhi community, this day is remembered as a day of partition. It marks a historical watershed in their collective memory. Every reference point is either pre-partition or post-partition. The main thrust of this essay is on the changed context of Sindhi society and its shifting contours as they run parallel through Sindhi literature — a departure from the conventional structured inquiry into various literary aspects.

There is no intention here of revisiting the horrors that partition brought, the arousal of the most basic instinct for physical survival, or the grim struggle that followed. In that dark hour of despair, the political leadership of the community advised its members to merge their distinct identity among the people wherever they found themselves. At that same time, the then Relief and Rehabilitation Minister, Mr K C Neogy, observed: “The important point to remember is that Sindhis are threatened with extinction as a separate people with their peculiar and distinctive customs and qualities. Thinly spread over India, with no place to call their own,

they cannot hope to retain their language and culture.” Fortunately, history was to prove him wrong.

The partition of the country was abrupt, to say the least. As the community slowly recovered from its stunned stupor, its members found themselves in a different milieu. Their past identities — of family, community ties, neighbours, and even geography — had all been lost. Historically, the axis of Sindhi society was not the caste system; it was not a caste-based society as is the case with other Indian societies. Instead, Sindhi society had a strong sense of geographical identity tied to places such as Shikarpur, Larkana, and Hyderabad. That geographical sense of identity was entirely lost. New bearings were yet to be found.

Over seventy-five years, Sindhis have since acquired new geographical identities as Sindhis of Mumbai, Ulhasnagar, Ahmedabad, and Jaipur, and as Non-Resident Sindhis (NRS) living across the globe, from Hong Kong and Dubai to communities in Europe and the America.

THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF A DISPLACED COMMUNITY

The society that migrated to India was only a narrow strand of a complete one. This strand consisted mostly of middle-class shopkeepers and businessmen with keen entrepreneurial skills, professionals, and some landowners with their own value structures. Such a narrow band carries obvious limitations, but it holds potential too. The peasants, workers, artisans, and the broader masses remained on the other side. Through centuries of Muslim rule, many of them had converted to Islam. Thus, the strand that migrated to India bore distinct class characteristics. Along with businessmen, it included educationists, students, journalists, and writers. The absence of peasants and workers placed clear

limitations on the wider scope of the literature it could produce. The language was not spoken in markets or offices; it received no state patronage, and for the purposes of education was even classified as a “Foreign Language” in states such as Uttar Pradesh. What future could it hold? There were deep apprehensions about the language even among its own speakers.

The life force proved stronger. As the threads of daily existence began to be gathered and rhythm slowly returned, education took its place right after bare survival. Schools were started in the verandahs of existing institutions; classes were held in morning hours before regular school hours began. Soon, textbooks had to be provided, printing presses established, journalists revived their papers, and writers began writing again. In Bombay and Ulhasnagar, a group of writers — old and new — would meet weekly to share and discuss their recent work, inspiring one another in turn. Out of these gatherings, the Sindhi Sahit Mandal came into being. The veteran writer Prof. M U Malkani (1896–1980) served as its patriarch with considerable zeal. In this period of utter despondency, young writers who had come under Marxist influence in Sind and had been part of the Progressive Writers’ Movement came to the fore, bringing a ray of hope through the prospect of a revolution that would wipe away their miseries — though the revolution itself proved truant. Their writings struck a receptive chord in readers who were hungry for a better future.

The complete disruption of the community had another significant consequence. The position of women in society changed. No longer confined to home and hearth, women had to step out and supplement their family incomes for survival. This shift was reflected in the literary field as well. Whereas in Sind, only one female writer — Guli Sadarangani (1906–84) — had

contributed a novel, *Itihad* (1941), dwelling on the Gandhian philosophy of religious unity, a host of women writers emerged after partition and made significant contributions. Among them were Tara Mirchandani (b.1930), Sundri Uttamchandani (1924–2013), Kala Prakash (1934–2018), Paru Chawla (1932–2016) who wrote poetry in Sindhi and later on switched to spiritual writing and Popati Hiranandani (1924–2005).

The first story to mirror the reality of those times came from the pen of Tara Mirchandani, entitled “Gopu.” It depicts camp life rather than normal village or town life, with the local train as a symbol of urbanisation and all its attendant horrors. It records the grim struggle for survival: a child who, after school hours, sells peppermints on the local train, loses his life while moving between compartments. Another significant story is “Bhoori” by Sundri Uttamchandani. Bhoori, once the beauty and heart-throb of many youngsters in her native town, is found haggard and worn out while selling papads in Bombay’s neighbourhoods. Yet a sense of the dignity of labour has invested her with inner beauty and quiet pride. The short stories of those times carry the refugee camp as their backdrop. Mohan Kalpana’s (1930–94) stories and novels mirror a life of grim poverty and the pain of unemployment; his autobiography, *Bookha Ishaq ain Adab* (Hunger, Love and Literature), is a significant contribution, as is the first part of Lal Pushap’s (1935–2009) autobiography. Many stories of that era use the camp as their locale. When Sindhis arrived in India, they were herded into various barracks vacated by the departing British troops, referred to as “refugee camps.” The locale and milieu of the refugee camp was the first defining setting to manifest in post-partition Sindhi literature.

THE NOSTALGIA FOR SIND

The trend of nostalgia for Sind — a land left behind — in the genre of the novel was initiated by Gobind Malhi (1921–2001) with his work *PakhiaraValran Khna Vichrya* (1953), or *Birds Separated from the Flock*. As his generation had come of age in Sind, the novel portrays vivid memories of Sindhi village life. Its protagonist refuses to leave his homeland, prepared to face all consequences even as his friends, relatives, and the entire village rush to seek safety in India. His other novel, *Jin Soori Bhaeen Sej* (1959) — those who considered the gallows a restful mattress — is also rooted in Sindhi soil, drawing on the first Sindhi short story, “Hur Makhi a Ja,” written by Lalchand Amardinomal in 1914. The last novel by Krishin Khatwani (1927–2008), *Tarandar Baadala* (*Floating Clouds*), written in 1998, ends with its intellectual protagonist walking into the Kutch desert in quest of his roots.

Mohan Kalpana’s novels too carry a nostalgic flavour, and three of them engage with the Sindhi nationalist *Jiye Sind* movement. His novel *Mao* (*Mother*) recalls shades of Maxim Gorky’s *Mother*, while *Kaaon ain Samund* (*Crow and the Sea*) has a similar background. Hari Motwani’s (1929–2006) novel *Abo* (*Father*) also carries significant nostalgic content about Sind. Moti Prakash’s (1931–2015) travelogue of Sind, *Se Sabu Saandium Saah seen*, which won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1988, is deeply nostalgic. Kala Prakash’s novel *Pakhanjee Preet* also ends in Sind. The autobiographies of Mohan Kalpana and Lachman Komal, the latter’s *Vahee Khateja Panna* (*Pages of an Accounts Book*), have been reprinted in Sind. Books by Mohan Kalpana, Sundri Uttamchandani, and Kala Prakash have seen multiple reprints there. The early stories of Loknath Jetley, “*WisaryanaWisran*” (*Those Whom I Wish to Forget Yet Cannot Forget*), written in the

late 1950s on unforgettable characters of Sindhi village life, are deeply nostalgic in their content.

WRITERS ACROSS BORDERS

The relationship between Sindhi writers of India and those of Sind has moved through uneven phases, depending on the state of relations between the two governments. Whenever relations thawed and peace overtures were underway, this literary connection thrived. In the early period, when borders between the two countries were still porous, Dr Murlidhar Jetley (1930-2023) managed to visit Hyderabad and bring back his home library containing many rare books. At that time, exchange of literature and personal letters was possible as the postal systems of both countries still functioned. As the years passed, relations became more rigid. A J Uttam and Sundri Uttamchandani were the first writers to visit Sind in a personal capacity, in 1964. That same year, Sheikh Ayaz and Rashid Bhati visited India. Their accounts of these visits were published and generated considerable goodwill among the writers of both countries. They were followed by personal visits from Hiro Thakur and Hari Motwani, who brought back tales of warmth and goodwill. Mrs Mahatab Mehboob visited India and wrote a travelogue recording her pleasant interactions with Sindhi writers and their activities.

The first formal delegation of Indian Sindhi writers visited Sind in 1989, under the auspices of the Sind Graduates Association on the occasion of the Sachal Conference. This was attended, among others, by stalwarts such as Gobind Malhi and Krishin Khatwani. Gobind Malhi wrote a travelogue of the visit and Krishin Khatwani penned touching memories of it. In 1987, the women's organisation Maruee, headed by Veena Shringi (b.1948), invited writers from Sind to mark the anniversary of Shah Latif. The event

was repeated in 2014. In 2004, Sindhi Academy Delhi, jointly with Sahitya Akademi, invited a small delegation of six writers from Sind for a Peace and Literature Conference. Papers read at that seminar were subsequently published by Sahitya Akademi.

In 2005, during the confidence-building measures initiated under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a delegation of about twenty Sindhi writers visited Sind, where literary seminars and mushairas were held and the delegation received a rousing reception at various cities. Mr Suresh Keswani, a Member of Parliament, led this delegation. As a reciprocal gesture, a delegation of writers from Sind visited India in March 2008, touring many cities with welcome functions organised at each stop. A literary seminar was held at Jaipur in collaboration with Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha.

In 2009, Sahitya Akademi organised an exclusive symposium on Sindhi literature of Sind, where papers on various literary genres were presented by fifteen scholars, including Satish Rohra, Hiro Shewkani, Kala Prakash, Vasdev Mohi, and Namdev Tarachandani (b.1946). All papers were published by Sahitya Akademi in 2011, edited by Namdev Tarachandani. A joint selection of short stories by writers from India and Sind was published by Sindhi Academy Delhi in 2018, with Indian writers' stories selected by Prem Prakash (1946-2024) and Sind stories by Shoukat Shoro. It is also significant that Sheikh Ayaz (1923–1997), a towering poet of twentieth-century Sind, composed an elegy titled “Sur Narayan Shyam” (1989) on the death of Narayan Shyam, an important Sindhi poet of India.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

Returning to the immediate post-Independence period: the Constitution of India was promulgated in 1952. Sindhi did not find a place in the Eighth Schedule, and for all practical purposes, inclusion in that Schedule was equated with official recognition. Sindhi Language thus did not receive even its most basic and legitimate due. Significantly, Sahitya Akademi had included Sindhi in its activities as early as 1958. All India Radio also gave meagre airtime to Sindhi-language broadcasts. Exclusion from the Eighth Schedule was reason enough for systematic discrimination, most visible in the sphere of school education, and it was felt that the very roots of the language were under attack. An outcry followed, and a strong demand for constitutional recognition was launched — a movement that came to be called the Sindhiyat Movement. Groups of writers emerged at many centres: Ahmedabad, Ajmer, Delhi, Jaipur, Bhopal. Writers were the backbone of this movement and its vanguard. Many who emerged during those years have continued to contribute significantly to Sindhi literature, and a number have since received the Sahitya Akademi Award. Sindhi Language was eventually recognised by an amendment to the Indian Constitution on 10 April 1967. By then, much had changed in Sindhi society.

THE NOSTALGIC IMPULSE AND ITS LITERATURE

The genesis of nostalgic literature lies in the immediate post-Independence period. When both governments acknowledged that evacuees from both sides were an irreversible consequence of partition, a token compensation process was initiated. To avail themselves of the paltry sums offered in lieu of properties left behind, displaced persons had to file claims. When the realisation that there would be no return finally sank in, a flood of memories

poured forth — of the life left behind, the bonds of friendship that had endured every misfortune. This produced a wave of nostalgic writing.

The response of the eminent poet Lekhraj “Aziz” was characteristic. In his poem, he declared: “What are they asking me to do — file a claim for property left behind? I have a claim over Sindh, and all of Sindh belongs to me.” Narain Bharti’s short stories “Dastavez” (A Document) and “Claim” mirror the life of harmony, friendship, and good-neighbourly relations that Hindus and Muslims alike had shared in Sindh. There are numerous such stories. The poet Khialdas “Fani” wrote a poem remembering his Muslim fellow poets in Sindh, which was promptly reciprocated across the border. When during the 1965 war Sheikh Ayaz wrote the symbolic lines, “Narayan Shyam stands before me — how can I aim a gun at him?” — he faced years of imprisonment in Pakistan as a consequence.

That the community was forced to leave its homes and hearths because of religion did not extinguish the memory of centuries of harmonious co-existence. It is here that culture and its attendant values triumphed over political reality. Sindhi literature and culture have remained secular across the borders of both countries. The legendary Narayan “Shyam” declared in one of his poems: “Ganga, Jamuna are all nectar — it is the Sindhu that is mother’s milk.” Krishin Rahi penned the soul-stirring “Sindh and Sindhis,” which brought tears to those who heard it in the voice of Bhagwanti Nawani, a singer who toured India and abroad to propagate Sindhi vocal culture with missionary zeal. Moti Prakash composed the song “Aandhi e mein Jyot Jagaenwara Sindhi” to assert Sindhi pride.

Unlike communities organised around other Indian languages, Sindhi society is not structured around caste. Sindhi literature does not, therefore, produce Dalit literature as such; instead, nostalgic literature about Sind cuts across all generations of writers.

LITERARY TRENDS AND MOVEMENTS

With the passage of time, another dimension was added to the sentimental one. It became clear to Sindhis in India that this language had no land to nurture it. It was not the language of the marketplace; it would not secure a government job. The practical utility of Sindhi was invisible in a society preoccupied with meeting bare necessities. To complicate matters further, the political leaders of the Sindhi community decided to change the Sindhi script to Devanagari. This decision arose from a misreading of the future political dynamics of the newly independent country. Partition had been an abrupt and total repudiation of the founding ideal of the freedom movement: Hindu-Muslim unity. As Pakistan was created on a theocratic basis, Sindhi Congress leaders who were Hindu found themselves transformed overnight from leaders of a minority community in undivided India to presumed leaders of a majority, and believed the attendant political benefits would follow. They therefore advised the Sindhi community to merge into local societies wherever they found themselves. In this process, the Persian-Arabic script of Sindhi was seen as a tell-tale sign of Muslim identity and had to be discarded. The change to Devanagari was made without any standardisation plan, without facilities for transliteration, and without adequate follow-up. This added to the sense of the language's redundancy, and many families abandoned Sindhi, choosing instead to educate their children in Hindi or English. In the post-liberalisation phase and the emergence of consumer society, this phenomenon has spread across all languages, with upper-income groups opting for English-medium

education over mother-tongue instruction. The Sindhi case, however, is further complicated by the fact that while other languages have villages and a hinterland as a living backyard where language and culture are sustained, Sindhis in India have no such reserve.

In the absence of a territorial base, scattered across India and constituting less than half a percent of the population, language alone guarantees a distinct identity. Nostalgic literature and literature asserting a distinct Sindhi identity have thus remained important strands in Sindhi writing. The fear of losing that identity is brought out in sharp relief in Harish Vaswani's (1940–2013) story "Ghanti." An aged parent has been given a bell to signal any emergency. When his son's friend visits and speaks to him in Sindhi, the old man, as the guest is about to leave, rings the emergency bell, saying: "Perhaps this is the last time I am seeing anyone speaking my language!" Vasdev Mohi (1944–2021) mourns in one of his poems: "One is left without any language; even a camel has a bell around his neck — now perhaps that bell will also disappear." In another poem he writes: "I like languages. English provides me bread, Hindi connects me to land, and Sindhi gives me dreams."

For the generation that grew up immediately after partition, earning a livelihood after matriculation was near-compulsory. Young Sindhis filled clerical positions in railways, government offices, banks, and insurance companies. This gave rise to a phenomenon of learning while earning. Morning colleges were started, and young students would leave home at six in the morning, attend college, work a full-time job, and return by eight at night. Remarkably, many of them continued writing even through this grind, attending literary gatherings on Saturday evenings and Sundays. Sindhi associations were established in western and

central railways, banks, and many other offices, and their main activity was to bring out annual literary issues of considerable merit.

Against this social and economic backdrop, short stories emerged with the poorly paid clerk as their central character. Ishwar Chander's (1937–1992) stories mirror the reality of a young man torn between duty to elderly dependent parents and the demands and aspirations of his own family. His story "Na maran jo dukh" (Grief of Not Dying) presents a character who takes a loan from his office to meet the expenses of his mother's impending death. Relatives visit; the mother recovers. His money is spent but his mother lives, leaving him with a terrible fear — and a shameful, involuntary relief — at the prospect of the actual death when it eventually comes. Prior to this, and in keeping with progressive thought, A J Uttam (1922–2005) had written "Raja," in which he contrasted the independence of a mere peon against the constrained life of a white-collared clerk. Kirat Babani's (1922–2015) stories deal with a low-paid employee in a private firm. With the passage of time, Shyam Jaisinghani's (1937–2009) fiction replaces the clerk with the young executive and the nuclear family. His story "Another Day" (1988) captures the roller-coaster of a young working couple's varied experiences, while "Adai Ghar" uses the chess board as a metaphor to portray the world of a young overseas family and the shattering of established moral codes. The protagonist has a wife in Hong Kong, a mistress in Tokyo, and a parental home in Pune.

It is significant to note that during this period, the majority of Sindhi society was occupied with a single-point agenda: making money. This single-minded pursuit of material wealth, like that of the newly rich everywhere, bred an ostentatious contempt for

traditional values, customs, culture, and lifestyle. It had no concern for literature, language, or cultural heritage. This reality is mirrored in the stories of Krishin Khatwani and Lakhmi Khilnani (b.1935), and has been underlined by Vasdev Mohi in a poem where he says that the community has the heart of Leela and the feet of Sasui — a reference to the folk tales of Leela Chanesar and Sasui Punhoon, where Leela is attracted to pearls and Sasui wanders restlessly in the desert.

Prem Prakash has invoked the traditional folk form of the Bhagat to create a mini-epic of one-to-one dialogue that explores and negotiates multiple identities. He is a pioneer of Sindhi experimental theatre. Ramesh Jhanjani and Anand Matai trained in dramatics at the National School of Drama under the doyen of theatre, Alkazi. Moti Prakash and Madan Jumanani obtained diplomas in theatre from Bombay. Dramatic groups emerged across the country: Jeewan Gurshani (1928–1994) at Delhi, Sunder Agnani (1936–2023) at Jaipur, S P Meghnani (1934–2017) and Madan Jumanani at Mumbai gave impetus to drama writing. Gobind Malhi, who had moved from IPTA to serve the Sindhi stage, alone wrote approximately forty one-act plays. His contribution as a novelist remains unmatched in India. He has also contributed significantly to the short story, and his autobiography mirrors the turbulent times in which he grew up and spent his life as a literary and cultural activist.

Another facet of Sindhi language deserves attention. Apart from those who migrated from Sind, there are pockets within India — in Kutch (Gujarat) and in Jaisalmer and Barmer (Rajasthan) — where Sindhi has continued to be spoken. One part of the Kutch border region is known as “Bani.” Its inhabitants are mainly a Muslim pastoral community. Kaldhar Mutwa (b.1967) has emerged from among them as a mature writer, producing short stories rooted

in pastoral village life. He currently serves as a member of the Advisory Board for Sindhi Language at Sahitya Akademi. Jetho Lalwani (b.1945) has obtained his doctorate by researching folk songs of Bani. The Indian Institute of Sindhology has recorded many hours of such folk songs, awaiting transcription, and Komal Kothari's institute holds a treasure of folk songs yet to see the light of day.

It would be erroneous to believe that Sindhi literature has remained insular. All the literary trends reflected in other Indian languages are present in Sindhi as well. For more than two decades immediately after partition, the progressive trend dominated. Writers who had grown up and been educated in Sind drew their further reading from English and Urdu (with a few exceptions in Persian). Those who came to India in their teens drew on Hindi. Many Sindhi students had passed the Sahitya Ratan examination conducted by the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti of Wardha; drawn to literature early, some began writing in Sindhi at a very young age.

This literary climate intersected with the raging Cold War between two ideological blocs, and the intellectual space was not immune to it. This contest was reflected to a considerable extent in Hindi literature, and its impact was felt in Sindhi literature too. Works by Agaiya, Dharamveer Bharti, and their contemporaries were translated into Sindhi. This trend placed the individual and inner life at the centre, removing characters from social context — whereas the progressive trend had portrayed the individual as part of social reality. Literature became more introspective, focused on the exploration of individual relationships.

These influences prompted the next generation to carve a distinct position by outgrowing the shadow of the progressive

writers. Three names emerged: Mohan Kalpana, Guno Samtani, and Lal Pushap. Their literature was individual-centred rather than placing the individual within a social milieu. Their writing was largely about romantic man-woman relationships, so they came to be called “Romantics” to distinguish them from the progressives — though they had no connection with the English Romantic poets, their philosophy, or their aesthetics. Mohan Kalpana wrote in an inimitable style marked by wit; Guno Samtani gave his stories a classical veneer through the use of Hindi words and mythological metaphors; and Lal Pushap embellished his stories with philosophical passages.

As in other Indian languages, Sindhi was also influenced by the New Wave or Modernist trend. This absorbed elements of stream of consciousness, the absurdity of Camus, the existentialism of Sartre, the surrealism and fantasy of Kafka, and a range of other non-Marxist literary philosophies. All were gathered under the rubric of “New Wave” writing with a “new sensibility.” In the Hindi heartland, it gained ground largely through the sense of alienation experienced in the shift from village to the nameless, faceless city. It came like a flood into Sindhi literature, creating writers overnight, and even established writers could not fully resist it. Yet, with the benefit of hindsight, it may be said that while this school gave Sindhi literature a few genuinely gifted writers, the bulk of what it produced has not survived the test of time. Experimental plays by Prem Prakash from that period are exceptional; the poetry of Harish Vaswani remains significant; and Vasdev Mohi moved forward on uncharted paths, weaving multi-layered textures in both poetry and prose. Prof. Hiro Shewkani’s story “Bashe Mal Jo Bathroom” portrays the neo-rich who believe that even education can be purchased with bribes.

Post-modernism is discussed in literary and critical circles, but at the creative level it has yet to make a significant impact in Sindhi. Prem Abhichandani, Anand Khemani, and Lal Pushp — who traversed all trends in Sindhi literature and possessed a highly impressionable mind — are adherents of this tendency. Theories of New Historicism and Magic Realism remain to be meaningfully engaged. It has increasingly been recognised that all tools of literary criticism and literary theory concern the critic more than the creative writer. The force of creation is too strong to be straitjacketed by any literary theory.

Despite all adverse conditions, writers continue to write, perhaps in the spirit of a time capsule. Literary experiments in new forms continue. In poetry, a form called *Tanha* — a one-line poem — has evolved. Vasdev Mohi experiments with the picture ghazal and creative uses of the *radif* in his poetry, and has moved into the short story form, taking characters from the margins of society. He successfully experimented with a long poem built around a single character, “Mankoo” (1992), a migrant labourer, which won him universal applause. Gopal Thakur (1940–2013) introduced the *Char-akhra*, a poem of just four words. Arjan Hassid has abandoned the conventional contradiction at the core of the ghazal and moved towards a straight-line sensibility. New writers are entering the fold — curiously, many of them are writers who have already established themselves in Hindi or other languages, a phenomenon that may be attributed to the fact that creative writing is an exploration of self-identity, and the mother tongue lies at the core of that identity.

All this has resulted in two or three generations of the Sindhi community being severed from Sindhi language, literature, and life. In the long arc of any people’s history, a century or two is not insurmountable. What matters is to build bridges for future

generations to return to, whenever they are inclined to search for their roots. With this aim in view, books in English about the history of Sind — such as *Roots and Rituals* by Dayal Harjani of Hong Kong — and about Sindhi literature are being provided for the English-literate diaspora. The first book on Sindhi culture was by U T Thakur (1909–1994). Sahitya Akademi assigned the writing of a *History of Sindhi Literature* to Prof L H Ajwani (1896–1976), which remains an important reference work to this day. Sahitya Akademi also brought out an English translation of Sindhi poetry, *Partition Fissures*, edited by Arjan Shad (1924–2006) and assisted by Anju Makhija and Menka Shivdasani. Many individual books of poetry, short stories, and other genres have been translated. Vasdev Mohi's English translation of his short stories, *Cheque Book* (2012), won him the Saraswati Samman Award.

More recently, a book edited by Saaz Agarwal, *Sindhi Tapestry: Reflections on Sindhi Identity — An Anthology*, has been published. It carries contributions by fifty-nine persons cutting across generations — three are in their twenties, one is a spirited ninety-year-old, and the rest range across their thirties and forties. Thirty-three contributors are from India, while others are from East Asia, one is partly Filipino, one is Chilean, and others are from Europe. They relate the travails of partition as family history passed down verbally, while simultaneously expressing love and fascination for the land of their ancestors. The search for roots is an ongoing process, though it is now conducted in English. This creates a hope that, when the time is opportune, the bridges being built will allow the Sindhi language to reclaim its future generations.

In the past seventy-five years, more than six thousand literary books have been published in Sindhi — a remarkable achievement for a community constituting less than half a percent of India's population, scattered across many states and countries. This would not have been possible without the support of community-based and governmental organisations. Literary magazines and periodicals, sustained by the community and various institutions, have served as vital support structures in the absence of any linguistic state. These organisations merit a brief account.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha

The Sabha's genesis lies in the Sindhi Sahit Mandal of Bombay. In 1949, while the community was still in the midst of migration, a group of Sindhi writer-friends began meeting every Saturday afternoon to share their writings and invite criticism. Soon, writers of the older generation joined them. Initially, meetings were held in a public park; later, when the veteran writer Prof. M U Malkani was appointed warden of Jai Hind College Hostel on Pedder Road, Bombay, meetings were conducted there. The organisation was named Sindhi Sahit Mandal. Its moving spirit was the trio of progressive writers who had pioneered the Progressive Literary Movement in Sind: Gobind Malhi, A J Uttam, and Kirat Babani. They were soon joined by aspiring writers who were then in their teens. The monthly magazine *Naeen Duniya* was the vehicle that carried contemporary writing of that period; many Sindhi writers cut their teeth at Sindhi Sahit Mandal and first established themselves through its pages. The organisation's main aim was the retention of Sindhi identity through language and literature.

Emulating this model, organisations came up in various parts of India. When Sindhi Language did not find its place in the Indian

Constitution, all local organisations demanded that this wrong be corrected. By 1957, the political landscape had changed with the formation of linguistic states, underscoring the importance of language. The community leaders who had earlier counselled merger with local populations now found themselves without any linguistic constituency. They veered towards the struggle being waged by Sindhi intellectuals, writers, and educationists, and encouraged Sindhu Samaj of Delhi to call the first all-India convention. This convention was graced by the President of India, Dr S Radhakrishnan. At the cultural event, the classical singer Swami Brahmanand Goswami performed poetry of Sami, and the Education Minister of Sind, Pirzada Abdul Sattar — himself a gifted singer — performed poetry of Shah Latif, laying the secular foundation on which the movement would continue to rest.

Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2007. During this period, twenty all-India meets have been held at various places, with participation ranging from two hundred at the first Delhi convention in 1957 to four thousand at the Samelan at Ulhasnagar in 1978. Prominent national figures such as Prof. Humayun Kabir, Mohanlal Sukhadia, Kailash Nath Katju, and Bhairon Singh Shekhawat have graced its functions.

The Sabha has held twenty-two literary seminars at various centres, addressing questions of literary trends and genres in depth. In 2005, it organised a joint seminar of Indian writers with the visiting delegation from Sind, co-sponsored by the National Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language. Cultural activities have not been neglected: drama festivals at various cities have encouraged original play writing, and drama workshops have also been organised. From 1982 onwards, annual awards are given for the best book of the year. From 2005, awards are also given to writers from Sind, cementing fraternal ties between Sindhi writers

on both sides. Awards have been presented by eminent personalities including former Prime Minister I K Gujral, Anshuman Singh as Governor of Rajasthan, Naval Kishore Sharma as Governor of Gujarat, and L K Advani as former Deputy Prime Minister of India.

According to Grierson's linguistic survey of India, Kutchi is a dialect of Sindhi. In the aftermath of partition, Bhai Pratap had envisaged settling a large number of displaced persons from Sind in Kutch, for which purpose the Maharao of Kutch graciously granted land. The twin cities of Gandhidham and Adipur were built near Kandla port to settle refugees from Sind. Though this dream of settling a concentrated Sindhi population in one place could not be fully realised, Kutch remains natural soil for the preservation and promotion of Sindhi Language. The Indian Institute of Sindhology was therefore established at Adipur.

Following the inclusion of Sindhi in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 1967, writers, intellectuals, and educationists recognised that Sindhi historical, cultural, and literary heritage needed to be preserved for future generations, and that a permanent institution was necessary for the purpose. The Indian Institute of Sindhology was established in 1989 and began functioning in 1990. Its achievements have been impressive. It houses more than 30,000 books in Sindhi, or books pertaining to Sind and its literature. It holds rare literary manuscripts and has become an important resource centre for research scholars. Its library contains all issues of literary magazines published in India over the past seventy-five years. The literary magazine *Rachna*, started under its auspices in 1979, continues to be published.

The Institute has the distinction of publishing the Sindhi translation of the Indian Constitution, which was unveiled by Prime

Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It has also published an English-Sindhi-Hindi Dictionary and serves as the nodal centre for Sindhi Language under the National Translation Mission in Mysore. Approximately seventy seminars and workshops have been organised jointly with Sahitya Akademi, the Gujarat Sindhi Academy, and the National Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language. The Institute has published fifty books, some of them reprints of works from the last century, and has undertaken the digitisation of early nineteenth-century Sindhi literature. A gallery of distinction displays photographs of Sahitya Akademi awardees alongside artefacts of historical and cultural importance.

To engage the younger generation with Sindhi, the Institute has established the Sadhu Hiranand Navalrai Academy, named after two brothers who were pioneers of education in Sind in the nineteenth century. Recognising that the usual linguistic pathway — from language to culture — has been disrupted by the loss of two generations, efforts are now directed at bringing young people back to their language through culture. Regular events of music and drama are organised, and a dramatic club dedicated to the memory of Prof M U Malkani has been established, which has in turn spurred new drama writing.

Both Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha and the Indian Institute of Sindhology are funded entirely by Sindhi philanthropists and receive no governmental aid.

Sahitya Akademi

Sahitya Akademi was established in 1954 as an autonomous national academy of letters. Though the first Chairman happened to be Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, he was accepted in that role as a writer rather than as a Prime Minister — a distinction he himself

expressed at the inaugural occasion. The aim of the Akademi, beyond honouring writers in the various Indian languages, was to act as a means of dialogue between those literatures. Sindhi was included in its activities in 1958, even before the language had been included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

In the case of Sindhi language, fifty-three writers have so far been conferred the prestigious annual award. These include twenty-two awards for poetry, five for novels, nine for short stories, seven for literary criticism and prose history (including Prof M U Malkani's History of Sindhi Prose), five for plays, and one each for a travelogue, biography, autobiography, and memoirs.

Sahitya Akademi has published Sindhi translations of twenty-two novels from various Indian languages, eighteen collections of short stories, eight books of drama, and twenty-four books of poetry. General books relating to literary history and criticism number more than thirty. In its Makers of Indian Literature series, twenty-eight monographs have been published covering stalwarts of Indian and Sindhi literature alike, with separate monographs in Hindi and English. Regular seminars are held, including joint seminars between writers from the North-East and the western region, bridging the literary divide between those areas. Prof M U Malkani and poet Arjan Hassid (1930–2019) have had the distinction of being Fellows of Sahitya Akademi.

National Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language

After the linguistic reorganisation of India, all languages deservedly received support from their respective state governments. This was not the case with Sindhi. Its position was comparable to that of Urdu, whose speakers were similarly

scattered across the country; the Board for Promotion of Urdu Language had been established on that basis. The demand for an equivalent body for Sindhi was voiced for a long time. It was only in 1994 that the National Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language was established, with its office initially at Vadodara and subsequently shifted to Delhi.

The Council's mandate is broad; its focus extends beyond literature. It has supported twenty-two literary seminars and seven workshops in 2016–17 alone, along with five lecture series. These activities continued until the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council conducts Sindhi teaching classes at various centres, with nearly ten thousand students enrolled in recent years, thereby nurturing a potential future readership. Partial financial aid has been given for the publication of books: during the last five years, 121 books have been supported. A scheme of bulk purchase of books has spurred publishing activity, with 389 books purchased under this scheme in the same period, and literary magazines are also bulk-purchased for wider distribution.

Two Lifetime Achievement Awards of Rs 5,00,000 each have been instituted: one for Promotion of Sindhi Language, given to a noted activist, and one for Contribution to Sindhi Literature, given to a prominent writer. In addition, four to six writers are bestowed with annual awards of Rs 1,00,000 each for significant books published in the relevant year.

Sindhi Academy Delhi

Established in 1994 with the aim of the all-round development and propagation of Sindhi language and literature, the Academy has over the years expanded its scope to aid Sindhi

panchayats of various localities in creating awareness about Sindhi culture and identity. It conducts monthly literary gatherings where local writers present their recent compositions and invite suggestions. The quarterly magazine *Sindhu Jyot* has maintained a good literary standard, with established Sindhi writers from across India contributing alongside local talent. Seventy-three issues have been brought out, including sixteen special issues on various literary genres and on the evolution of Sindhi literature within particular time frames. Some of these issues recover pre-Independence literature not readily available elsewhere. The Academy has published fifty-nine books, including basic works on classical Sindhi poets and on the history of Sindh. Financial aid has been given to sixteen manuscripts to facilitate their publication. A Lifetime Achievement Award of Rs 1,50,000 has been given annually from 2009 to 2019 to prominent Sindhi writers from across India, alongside a parallel Lifetime Award in the field of Culture and awards for fiction, non-fiction, and contribution to the promotion of Sindhi language and culture.

Maharashtra State Sindhi Sahitya Academy, Mumbai

Established in 1983, this Academy's activities are primarily concentrated on organising Sindhi cultural events to create awareness about Sindhi language and to sustain a distinct Sindhi identity. To encourage Sindhi literature, it has instituted several awards. From 2015–16, Lifetime Achievement Awards are given to three writers; Literature Awards to twelve writers; Poetry Awards to three; and awards to three debutant writers.

Sindhi Sahitya Academy Gujarat

Established in 1988, this Academy set out with the aim of fostering exchange between Sindhi literature and other Indian languages. It has done commendable work in the fields of Sindhi folk literature and children's literature. Its activities have remained centred largely on research and language rather than creative literature per se. It has published a new Sindhi dictionary incorporating the latest vocabulary, prepared by the veteran Satramdas "Sayal" (1914), known as the Sayal Kosh. It has also published a dictionary of words from the dialects of Sindhi — Sodki, Mewadi, Jatki, and Kutchi — a rare contribution to Sindhi linguistics. A monthly pension of Rs 5,000 is extended to deserving elderly Sindhi writers. The Academy also provided financial aid to the late Jayant Relwani for his research project on cultural relations between Saurashtra, Kutch, and Sind.

A Lifetime Achievement Award of Rs 1,00,000 has been instituted for outstanding Sindhi writers residing in Gujarat; three writers have been honoured since 2016. A Yuva Award of Rs 50,000 for young writers has been given to six writers from 2008 to 2016. The Academy has conducted memorial seminars on Hundraj "Dukhayal," Hari "Dilgir," and Narayan Shyam, and publishes the magazine *Adbi Chaman*, which maintains a good literary standard and encourages budding local talent alongside established writers. A publication list of forty-four books up to 2020 includes, notably, *Sindh to Hind* by Ramsingh Soda, the autobiography of a Sindhi Rajput living in the desert. This Academy also organised a meeting of all state-level Sindhi Academies to bring about coordination among institutions spread across India.

Rajasthan Sindhi Academy

Established in 1979, this organisation is more socially oriented than exclusively devoted to literature. It celebrates the anniversaries of noted Sindhi writers and publishes a yearly literary journal, *Rihan*, inviting contributions from writers across India alongside local talent. The *Sindhu Ratna Award* has been instituted, along with a *Lifetime Achievement Award* named after Sami, given so far to ten state writers. Awards for short stories, named after the late *Ishwar Chander*; for drama, named after *M U Malkani*; and for poetry, named after *Narayan Shyam*, have also been instituted.

Madhya Pradesh Sindhi Academy

This Academy publishes a literary magazine, *Mashal*, and gives financial aid to writers for the publication of manuscripts. Annual awards for prose and poetry are given, and a *Lifetime Achievement Award* of Rs 50,000 has so far been conferred on five Sindhi writers, the first being the veteran *Krishin Khatwani*. The Academy organises seminars, workshops, and literary events, and works to create awareness about Sindhi language and culture.

Sita Sindhu Bhavan, Mumbai

Sita Sindhu Bhavan, Mumbai a cultural centre for the Sindhis initiated and established by Prof Ram Panjwani in 1969 with the help and contributions of Mr R J Advani, Ludhani family of Evershine Builders fame and many Sindhis from all over the world is a centre for Sindhi language, vocal music, dance and literature. It has been running Sindhi Sangeet programs where artistes are offered a platform to perform and have organized more than 700 shows. Dada Ram Panjwani, Thakur Chawla and Paru Chawla were the pillars of this place. Shobha Lalchandani and her sister Barkha Khushalani took over the arrangements in 2024 and have

been going strong by the constant support of the large hearted Mr Lachman Ludhani (Managing Trustee).

Dada Ram Panjwani's granddaughter Kaajal Chandiramani performs at Sita Sindhu Bhavan every year as a tribute to him and Mahesh Chander, Ghanshyam Vaswani and his family and many singers have performed here.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITIES

Doctoral research, though not normally counted as part of literature, merits mention in the case of Sindhi, as most theses pertain to research in literature and language. Forty-five scholars have been awarded doctorates in this field. Initial research focused on Sindhi culture; Dr T U Thakur's extensive study of Sindhi culture was among the first. Linguistics soon attracted the majority of researchers. Among the early scholars, Lachman Khubchandani (1932–2015) obtained his doctorate from Pennsylvania, and eight scholars in total have obtained doctorates covering various aspects of Sindhi linguistics. Dr Satish Rohra (1929–2021) emerged from this group as an important short story writer, critic, and activist — one of the founders and first director of the Indian Institute of Sindhology. Four early researchers focused on Sufi poets of Sind. More than twenty-five scholars have worked on other aspects of Sindhi literature. Even relatively recent figures such as Ram Panjwani, Gobind Malhi, Popati Hiranandani, Sundri Uttamchandani, Hari Dilgir, and the living writer Jetho Lalwani have been subjects of doctoral research.

THE LITERARY MAGAZINES

The editors of literary magazines, who dedicated their lives with missionary zeal to the promotion of Sindhi letters, deserve particular recognition. Their role is inseparable from the story of the literature itself.

Naeen Duniya

This magazine was started in Sind before Independence to disseminate progressive ideology and to pioneer a realistic and progressive literature in Sindhi. After Independence, it moved to Bombay and resumed publication in 1948. Under a Marxist editorial collective, it flourished until 1957, when financial difficulties threatened its closure. A J Uttam came forward to sustain it on an individual basis. Most of the post-Independence generation of Sindhi writers were first published in Naeen Duniya; to find a place in its pages was a matter of pride for any emerging writer. In the twenty years since Independence, the magazine had published five hundred short stories, a thousand poems, four hundred essays, and approximately fifty plays, along with twenty-five special issues on literary subjects. The special issue on international short stories and the issue contributed entirely by Sindhi women writers remain milestones in Sindhi literary history.

The Hindvasi (Sindhi Weekly)

The Hindvasi is oldest Arabic Sindhi weekly. This was launched in the year 1917 in Sindh initially. The Hindvasi has played pivotal role in movement of Independence. The Weekly Hindvasi, from the day it was born, has used this strength of words to hold the pulse of the cultured society and has become not only the mirror but a torch to light the way and show the correct path to the common man.

The choice of words in the newspaper is always perfect, and vulgar or obscene language that can astray the youth, is never used. Neither are any hypothetical or delusive thoughts shared, but personal experiences of writers and real incidences of life, with elaborate examples, that are published, nourish one's soul and ease

one's mind.

Shri Mangharam Sipahimalani was the Editor-in-Chief for more than 50 years. After his demise the reins were taken over by Thakur Chawla, Ram Lalchandani and Shobha Lalchandani. After the former two left for heavenly abode, Shobha took over as the Editor-in-Chief and continued to edit and publish the newspaper for more than 16 years till her passing away in May 2024. Presently it is being edited and published by her sister Barkha Khushalani and her son Anand Lalchandani.

In due course of time, the number of readers might have reduced, but still this weekly newspaper is awaited by its loyal readers.

Suhini

It was launched in 1949 by Thakur Chawla but no written evidence is available. It was a weekly magazine for the masses with a touch of glamour. Some copies of this elite magazine are available with Indian Institute of Sindhology from the year 1956 to 1960. Unfortunately a magazine of such a great calibre died a natural death due to paucity of funds.

Sipoon

Thakur Chawla, after the closure of Suhini magazine, once again became the editor of Sipoon magazine under Ram Panjwani Charitable Trust, Mumbai and it became one of the most popular literary magazine of Sindhi language and carried articles from Sindh and Hind. After the demise of Thakur Chawla (2013), his daughter Shobha Lalchandani took over the reins of the Sipoon magazine and was the Editor of the magazine till her demise in 2024. Sadly Sipoon had to be discontinued due to insufficient funds, dwindling readers and the advent of social media.

Koonj

Launched in 1960 initially to counter the influence of the progressive writers, this magazine changed hands and direction more than once, eventually becoming broad-based in order to survive. It is the only Sindhi literary magazine that has continued to be published regularly to the present day. A notable innovation of Koonj was its practice of evaluating important writers while they were still living, through special issues in which the writers themselves contributed autobiographical details and reflections on their creative philosophy, alongside peer evaluation. These forty-nine issues have become invaluable sources for subsequent research. Hari Motwani, its long-serving editor, was a frequent visitor to Sind, and the magazine has continued to reprint literature from Sind, serving as a bridge between the literary communities of India and Pakistan. After Motwani's passing, the magazine is ably edited and published by Nand Chugani (b.1945).

Rachna

This magazine was launched in 1979 to provide a platform for New Wave writers. It was edited by Lakhmi Khilnani (based at Calcutta) and Vasdev Mohi and Prem Prakash (based at Ahmedabad). When Vasdev Mohi left for Dubai in 1986 and the New Wave had ebbed, Rachna became broad-based. In 1992 it was taken over as an organ of the Indian Institute of Sindhology; Lakhmi Khilnani continued as editor and it is published from Adipur to the present day, now under the editorship of Mukesh Tilokani (b.1975). The magazine has brought out thirty-five special issues that are of great value to researchers.

LOOKING AHEAD

It will be evident that, on the supply side, Sindhi literature remains quite robust. The very fact of its being scattered across various linguistic regions may, in time, give it a pan-India face. The literary traits and traditions peculiar to those regions may enrich Sindhi literature in ways difficult to foresee. Yet the stark reality on the demand side is alarming. There is only a miniscule readership, as most Sindhi speakers have drifted from their mother tongue. This tendency is not confined to Sindhi — the aspiring urban middle class across all Indian languages increasingly prefers English-medium education in the era of globalisation. The difference, in the Sindhi case, is that other languages have employment opportunities in their respective states and a village hinterland to sustain them. Those factors are absent for Sindhi in India. The Sindhi population is concentrated in urban areas and is predominantly middle class; a poor Sindhi is the exception. This has created a crisis for the survival of the language itself. And yet, a window of opportunity exists. The cyberspace has eliminated all kinds of boundaries. The political borders drawn at partition have been rendered redundant in the digital realm, even as linguistic boundaries — created by nature and by centuries of shared experience — remain constant. Exchange of literature between Sind and India, long restricted to personal channels, has now been liberated. E-libraries in Sindhi have come into existence; the recently launched site sindhssalamat.com makes more than four hundred books published in Sind freely available, and more sites related to Sindhi culture and literature are appearing rapidly. The Unicode system has made Sindhi emails and chat possible. Sindhi television shows are available on YouTube, songs on iTunes, and cultural programmes and teleplays at sindhisingat.com. Twenty-four-hour Sindhi programming is beamed by various private channels from Sind. In this environment, Sindhi literature is expected to benefit positively, and there is reason to believe

that the Sindhi diaspora, mentally connected across geographical distance, may yet find a new coherence in the digital age. Globalisation and consumer culture have brought serious concerns shared with all other Indian languages: the steamrolling of dissent and the enforcing of uniformity in the realm of ideas; the exploitation by media chasing sensationalism for ratings; the growing conflation of literacy and education; the disappearance of the mentor; the reduction of the teacher-student relationship to a transaction across a counter, with students passively receiving knowledge capsules as prescriptions for passing examinations. In an era of super-specialisation, holistic and interdisciplinary thinking has become a casualty. In consumer society, the only dominant relationship is that of producer and consumer, mediated by advertising that promotes only brands. In the West, publishing has become an industry in which the writer is merely one component, alongside publishing agents, book makeover teams, marketing strategists, and marketing machines. Is it any wonder that writers, too, become brands?

There are questions, and more questions, and from tentative answers, still more questions arise. Can there ever be a final word in the sphere of ideas and creativity?

A BIRD’S EYE VIEW- SINDHI PROSE

Speaking about Contemporary Sindhi prose in context of literature it may be taken to be prose written in Sindhi Language after migration of Sindhi Community in India in the wake of the partition of the country in 1947. While presenting a bird’s eye view it is inevitable that many details may be missed and obscured for that I offer my apologies to all those writers whose important works do not find mention in the presentation. In the context of the migration of Sindhi community in India it is necessary to bear certain facts about the composition of the community. It is only a band of Hindu population that mainly consisted of trading community and professional middle class with a sprinkling of land owning gentry that migrated to India. The big landlords, peasants and workers and artisans mainly stayed back and in this way the Sindhi community in India is not complete society as is the case of other Languages in India. This fact along with it being scattered in many states and being linguistic minority in all states imposed obvious limitations. In spite of all the limitation that the community faces it can boast of vibrant literature at par with other Indian Languages. All the literary trends that are present in the languages of other literature of India are reflected in Sindhi Literature also.

After the partition of the country the life of Sindhi people was woeful in refugee camps. There was utter sense of despondency and despair. At that time the progressive trend of literature was predominant. It promised a revolution with which all disparities and miseries would vanish as if with a magic wand. This literature struck a chord with the readers at that time as literature was considered as a means to convey the message of hope for better future.

Prominent writers of this trend were Gobind Malhi, AJ Uttam and Kirat Babani. They were joined by senior writers of the community for the struggle for survival. Gobind Malhi gave Sindhi literature more than 2 Dozen Novels, 40 one Act Plays and many significant short stories. At that time Anand Golani also contributed significant chunk to the early corpus of Sindhi Short Stories. A J Uttam apart from an ideologue- literary critic and creative writer of the movement contributed in significant manner as an Editor of Naeen Duniya literary magazine that has a distinction of giving many writers to Sindhi Literature. Many writers such as Gobind Punjabi, Moti Prakash apart from being a good poet contributed stories and a Novel. Before partition of the country we come across one woman writer Guli Sadarangani after partition of the country number important female writers increased to include Tara Mirchandani, Sundri Uttamchandani, Kala Prakash, Poati Hirandani as significant early writers. It is not possible to write about all writers writing at that time.

After life started moving on even keel the progressive writing that portrayed characters as a part of Social milieu and an oppressive social order was sought to be portrayed as an individual and Man-Woman relationship with inner working of mind and heart came to be portrayed. In This respect Mohan

Kalpana, Lal Pushp and Guno samtani led the way. Incidentally all of them had started writing as Progressive writers.

This was soon followed by 'New Wave' literature that was sweeping other literatures at that time. Sindhi Literature did not remain immune to this trend. This was much pronounced in poetry though this is reflected in prose also. By seventh decade the process of urbanization in India was evident. The migrants from villages felt alienated from their roots and tradition and were passing through a painful phase. This sense of alienation and being lost in torrent was articulated in all Indian Languages and the literary theories that dominated in war time in Europe found ready acceptance in Indian Languages. When one is gripped in the sense of falling into an abyss at that time all the formats of literary genres are shattered and expression is convoluted. This trend did not last for a long time but when it ebbed it left many a priceless literary pearls on the shore. Important writers of Sindhi Language that significantly contributed were Hiro Shewkani, mostly as literary critic, Shyam jaisinghani, Lal Pushp, Vishnu Bhatia, Namdev Tarchandani, Prem Prakash mostly in field of drama, and many others at various cities. Many literary periodicals also came up in this period.

There have been discussions and debates about Jaque Derida's theory of deconstruction and reconstruction. Param Abhichandani and Anand Khemani have tried to contribute literature along those lines. Their credo is 'Naked Truth' and its portrayal through characters in their writings.

One significant fact that sets Sindhi society as distinct from other societies of India is that whereas other Indian societies are based on the caste system the Sindhi society is conspicuous by its absence. Other Languages have a strong presence of Dalit literature

as a trend we do not have any Dalit literature in Sindhi Language. Instead we have strong presence of Literature of Sindhi Nostalgia. This trend was entwined with movement to retain the distinct linguistic and cultural identity of Sindhi Community in India popularly known as “SINDHYAT MOVEMENT” which had the issue of inclusion of Sindhi Language in the Indian constitution which could be achieved after the struggle of two decades.

At the time of migration to India many writers had spent their youth in Sind. Therefore the depiction of composite Sindhi society while in Sind and the harmonious living with Muslim neighbors and friends were also depicted. They had loving memories of the times spent together tinged with a sense of loss. Many who left were made to believe that they would soon return back to their homes and hearths of their ancestors. This gave rise to literature of nostalgia. This trend continues to cut across all other literary trends and Generations.

In this respect two short stories of Narayan Bharti ‘Claim’ and ‘Dastawaz’ are important. In Dastawez the main character reminisces about his peasant Muslim friend who had mortgaged his land to him against loan. Tears induced by his fond fellowship with him fall on the document and document is destroyed. Popati Hiranandani’s Story ‘Muhiji Nani’ (My maternal Grandmother) is another piece of nostalgic literature about bygone times. Sundri Uttamchandani’s Story ‘BHOORI’ (A porcelain Doll) describes youthful beautiful girl of Hyderabad Sind reduced to poverty to sell Papads at various households. Though she has lost her physical beauty but is now endowed with beauty of self confidence born out of dignity of labour. Kala Prakash’s Khanwan speaks about life in native village Khanwan and a small child is looking forward to see that same life in India as he does not grasp the reality of the

partition. Kirat Babani's 'Toon Pucheen tho maan Cho Udhas aahiyaan?' (You ask me why I am sad) is evocative story. Whereas Loknath Jetly's entire collection of Short Stories 'Visara na Visran' (Though I like to forget but cannot) is about characters set in rural Sindhi life. Whereas the Story 'Ghanti' (A bell) by Harish Vaswani dwells on the precarious condition of Sindhi Language in the wake of globalization when most of aspiring class is abandoning its language and in case of Sindhi language the situation has become very serious.

Gobind Malhi's Novel 'Pakhiara Valran Khan Vichrya' (Birds separated from the flock) occupies an iconic place in Sindhi Literature. It is set in rural Sind before partition of the country. Its protagonist refuses to leave his mother land while all others are leaving for safety. It shows unflinching commitment to soil of the birth.

In Contrast the Novel of Krishin Khatwani 'Tarander Badala' (Floating Clouds) written nearly six decades after the Novel of Gobind Malhi depicts the character HEM as one with exceptional intellectual capabilities who comes to India but in the end he realizes that it is not Sind that needs me but I need the Sind and embarks on a journey to Sind through desert. Mohan Kalpana and Hari Motwani has also written powerfully nostalgic novels on background of Sind.

Travelogues of Moti Paraksh and Kala Prakash and Dodeja also strongly evoke the nostalgic feeling.

Many important writers have written their autobiographies who grew in Sind at the bloom of their youth and continued to write in India also. Notable autobiographies are those of Hari 'Dilgir', Kirat Babani, Mohan Kalpana, Lachamn Bhatia 'Komal' and Popati Hiranadani. Whereas the autobiographies of Mohan Kalpana and

Lachaman Bhatia 'Komal' have been published in Sind and proved to be immensely popular it is autobiography of Poapti Hiranadani that poignantly pens the departure from Sind. It is so compelling that I cannot resist but quote a few sentences from that book:

“That night we visited every room of our house and carry with us in our minds, not only rooms we touched every piece in the room with longing tinged with despair. We said good bye not only to our rooms but standing in the courtyard we wanted to carry that patch of sky also in our heart and bid it good bye. We looked at the familiar streets with a twitch in our hearts. We did not miss say good bye to even a white dog pup of our lane. A gust of wind that was blowing from nearby hillock was also not overlooked nor the tank of water for horses to drink water from. We remembered even a nest built by birds outside our house. 17th September happened to be my birth day but it proved to be a day of death of one phase of my life. We left home at 2-30 am at pitch dark. I with my mother and sister along with my three brothers constantly looked back with apprehension if at all we would be able to see all those sights again!

Heart was weeping. Windows of lorry were shut and moved and speedily moved on. We were leaving our own land as thieves.”

(Paper presented on 1st March 2023 at International Book Fair at New Delhi under the auspices of National Council for promotion of Sindhi Language.)

Essays

DIWAN DAYARAM GIDUMAL

(1857 - 1927)

Before advent of British Indian society was steeped in feudalism. The new thinking spurred by Industrial revolution in the west had just started entering into Indian social consciousness and orthodox beliefs came to be challenged. Social reform movement led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen with Brahmo Samaj as an organized force was sweeping across the Bengal Hindu society. Sind was last province to be annexed by British in 1843. At that time Calcutta was Capital of British India and first batch youth from Sind to seek modern higher education went to Calcutta and were inspired by ideals of Brahmo Samaj. When they returned to Hyderabad (Sind) they engaged themselves in social reform in Sindhi Hindu society. This way the social reforms started in Sind only by end of 19th century. This movement was initiated by Sadhu Hiranand and Navalrai and joined by Diwan Dayaram and Kouromal Chandanmal.

Diwan Dayaram was born at the Historic time when the history of India was in convulsion and he was destined to adequately meet the challenge of his times. He set an example for the entire Sindhi Community. His life and his ideals will continue to inspire Sindhi society for a very long time. He was born in 1857 and passed away in 1927. In his life span of 70 years he contributed to many

spheres of Sindhi society be it in field of Literature, Social reform or Education. At one place he has mentioned “I was born in the year of rebellion so that I may rebel against my own heart and mind that is filled with dirt.” In fact he revolted against social ills and illness afflicting human beings. The aim of his life was, “I may be able to clean at least a corner of this world created by almighty.”

Like all great persons he was ahead of his times and he had to face many challenges but he faced them head on. That way he forged ahead along with his mission of social reform. He very well realized that education is key to progress of any community and he devoted most of his energies to this cause. If he may be called as a leading figure in spread of education it will not be an exaggeration. Before advent of British conquest of Sind the education was imparted by ‘Aakhund’ (Teacher) in a Madrasa or some pandit in personal capacity and by some missionaries. Regular education in schools for common people started only after British conquest of Sind by social reformers like Sadhu Hiranand and Navalrai. There was no provision in Sind for higher education. Parents had to send their wards to Calcutta or Bombay to have higher education. The mode of travel was often irksome that dissuaded the parents to send their wards for higher education. This resulted in very small number of students who could go for higher education. Dayaram did his best to see that the College for higher education is established in Sind itself. He issued an appeal for establishment of College in Sind with detailed arguments but it was not an easy task strangely he had to encounter opposition from his own people for such a proposal. In 1885 he issued another appeal rebutting the arguments put forward by his opponents. He gave examples of Bombay, Madras and Bengal provinces and argued that higher education does not detract young people from

their religion and encourage them against the rulers but instead of blind faith they adopt the enlightened path of religion and instill a sense of responsible and informed loyalty.” This way Sind Arts College was established that subsequently was named as D J Sind College and at Hyderabad the National College was named after him as Dayaram Gidumal National College. At one place he writes, “Schools are our gardens where humans bloom as fragrant flowers.” In his book “Our Education System” he writes, “Save time of students, give everyone education according to their aptitude and impart education through mother tongue.”

Union Academy that subsequently was named as “Navalrai Hiranad Academy” was also established with his efforts. He initiated the movement for female education and was instrumental in establishing a school for them.

His roles as a social reformer and writer are intertwined. He used his pen for improvement of social and educational causes apart from the spiritual path that he pursued. His important books are written on the burning social topics of his times. He found condition of women in Hindu society to be pitiable. Looking to their prevailing condition he came up with a book “Seven Sins against Women”.

In this book he criticized the existing custom of child marriage, Widow-remarriage and many such atrocities that women of the time were subjected to. He showed that right from the birth till the death a woman has to bear injustice and cruelty. He did not confine his opposition to mere writings but gave his ideas a practical shape by founding “Samaj Sudhar Sabha”. Along with fighting against other ills he strove to prevent dowry system also.

His vision was not confined only to social ills but he sought economic independence also for women as he realized that without

economic independence the upliftment of women would remain like building castles of sand. Till then some philanthropists were content to help one needy person but that did not eradicate poverty in society and economic social condition did not improve. He instead established on modern lines ‘Skill Centers’ that catered to development of a person according to his/her aptitude. He was of the opinion, “That charity should be made in a way that it is institutionalized and may continue on its own to benefit large number of deserving persons. Charity should be done with understanding and pure spirit.” He subscribed to trusteeship concept of rich much before Gandhiji spoke about it. He considered all production and profit due to human labour. At one place he says, “A rich does not feel that he owns a responsibility and a scholar never thinks he indebted both have failed in their duty to own responsibility and redeem indebtedness. They do not consider themselves as servants and do not realize that hold wealth in TRUST and not for their personal comfort.”

Most important thing is to note that his vision was not confined only for improvement of the middle class but it extended to lower class and peasants also. In a letter addressed to Rai Bhadur Murlidhar on 30th January 1930 he writes, “My ambition is to create a band of ‘Mobile Warriors’ to improve the lot of peasants and serve them and save them from atrocities.”

From literary point of view his first book is “Kujh Sindri a Baabat” (Something about dear Sindh). This book contains chapters about Shah Abdul Latif and his grandfather Shah Abdul Karim. It also speaks about Sehwan, Kafir Qila, Sava Lakh Pira (one hundred and twenty five thousand Holy men) Bagho Thoro and Subhin Sindhu (Beautiful Indus)”. All are written in an exemplary prose. It appears that in this book he has unveiled the soul of Sind.

He has written most of his books in English but he has significantly contributed to Sindhi literature too. Since childhood he was of spiritual disposition but he was free from any kind of rigidity or bigotry. In a way, in those times his views were progressive as at that time even Social reform was a means to progressive society. His first religious book is “Jap Sahib” (A Sikh religious scripture) in which he has explained the meaning of every verse and given his commentary of that ‘Holy Book’. It is an example of comparative study as it contains verses from Sami, Kabir and even Omer Khayam. In a similar manner he wrote on Bhagwat Gita, Yoga Darshan and Raj Yoga in which he has lucidly explained the subtle and complex concepts of Vedanta. His books are free of Mythological and magical elements. All has been explained in simple Sindhi language.

He had imbibed the habit of maintaining a daily Diary from Sadhu Hiranand. His daily diaries are in three parts. From 1902 to 1912, 1912 to 1920 and 1920 to 1927. They were published in “East and West” magazine. Subsequently they were published as “Patit je dairy maan ke warq” (Some pages from a Sinner) and “Hika Hindu Bhagat je Wahi man ke warq” (Some pages from dairy of Hindu devotee). He used to mention his spiritual experiences in his diaries some of them are ordinary while some of them are profound. He speaks in them about religion, spirituality and at times even about social and economic situation. In one entry he mentions, “Government is being run by bureaucracy and rich only worship wealth. They do not care even when people are crushed under machines... There is no value of human life they only bother about their accounts (Balance sheets). Gladstone has mentioned that it is only freedom that makes people worthy of freedom but many native rulers believe let people deserve freedom then only freedom may be bestowed on them.”

From 1923 he started writing his daily diary in Sindhi and he named them “Chabuk mana lai and Rihan” (Whiplashes for self and Self- talk). He has shared his spiritual experiences in poetic form. Entries of three years are available in printed form and every volume has been divided in 7 chapters thus total 21 chapters are available with different headings. Though he calls his renderings as poetry but from literary point of view it falls short as the main element of poetry is imagination which is missing and they do not conform to required metric system. At the most it may be considered as good poetic prose.

Some observations in his above books are note worthy. He rightly mentions, “It is judgment of History- war will not be eradicated by war.” Like Shah Latif he also has invoked divine blessings for Sind. “God! light the lamp of your mercy on Sind/ God ! let poor Sind have sweet luck for everyone.”

His other books are “Lobh jo Mahatam” (Meaning of Avarice), “Maaoin Deea” (Mother and daughter), “Sata Sahilyoon” (Seven friends - for female) they are literary works but used as a weapon of social reform.

Principle Ajwani has rightfully observed “His prose has a flight as well as depth and after reading his preface to Sami’s Shaloka and Rubais of Omar Khyam as well as his “Yog Darshan” no one can say that Sindhi language lacks in expression for deep as well as delicate thought or emotion or they can not be rendered in Sindhi Language.”

In fact Dayaram Gidumal was a man of his age and forward looking. His vision is often clouded by idealism though his analysis is rational and some times reverse is the case. In any way his contribution as early pioneers of Sindhi prose can be disputed.

(Based on original Sindhi article published in Sahit Sughand in 1958).

Note: The scope of the above article was limited to assessment of Diwan Gidumal as a writer of first Generation who were pillars of Sindhi Prose. In the above article his role as Session Judge, a promoter of higher education in Sind and his efforts to Establish D J Sind College, his role as a social reformer, who along with Beharamji Malbari established Seva Sadan at Bombay which played such an active role so that Gandhiji himself came and visited him but could not carry on any conversation with him as on that day Dayaram was observing 'Moun Vrit' (A Vow of silence). During last years of his life remaining true to his conviction and love he married a young lady that created a vast chasm between him and his earlier family -(A fact he was disowned by them but he remained true to call of his heart.) While in India Prof: M U Malkani wrote a one act play "Hoogly a je Kinare" (On banks of Hoolgy river) in which he depicts his last days.

LALCHAND AMARDINOMAL

(1855 - 1954)

A hot and humid after noon of 17th April of 1955 at Bombay. One person is lying on a cot. His body is weak and wrinkled yet it bears a testimony to being healthy and strong some time ago. His pale face yet gleaming eyes and smile playing on his lips...

"Karachi... Hyderabad... Bank of Sindhu... Bhit Sahrif of Shah Latif... poor villagers rooted to soil... Bhmbhor...Malir... Swaying sand dunes... Camel Caravans... lilting folk music... and faces of his friends..."

A person wants to capture for ever all these scenes in his eyes. All these scenes are etched in his soul. Music that has seeped in

his soul and is now coursing through his veins as a pain. From nowhere this music has erupted and all these scenes have appeared before him. He wants to cherish them for ever and closes his eyes..
FOR EVER.

69 year old Lalchand Amaradininomal closed his forever. This way one era of Sindhi literature came to an end. It is now 10 years since that era came to an end and now it is time to understand that era and its significance.

It must be acknowledged that our present institutions, Values and prose literary genres are product of western education. This does not mean that we do not have our own traditions at the same time it is also a truism that any though cannot be contained or limited in any particular country. Trough education and literature it spreads in other countries and leaves its impact. Sind was last state to be conquered by British as a result Sind was comparatively influenced by the impact of English education and new thoughts compared late in time frame. Sind was directly influenced by English education as well as through literature of other languages.

At the time British conquest of Sind Queen Victoria reigned over British Empire. The period of Queen Victoria in History represents a particular thinking and Values. It was a period of acceptance of traditional values without any question in a way it was a conservative and traditional society. All things were predetermined according to tradition. The church had a final say in religious matters. All values were accepted on the basis of idealist philosophy. This idealism was in fact not reflected in actual life experience therefore subsequent thinkers called this period as period of hypocrisy also. At the end of 19 century and beginning of 20th century the age of reason started creeping in. All was tested on the touchstone of rationality. Nothing was accepted on basis of

traditional authority on social- moral plane. At this time Darwin's scientific theories shattered the shell of traditional- religious thinking and brought about a revolution at looking at things that were hitherto thought to be truisms.

The conflict between imperialism and capitalism unleashed first world war. This war had impact on western as well as Indian intellectuals and writers. It is also a fact that any thought cannot remain alien or new for all the time. The thought is replanted in a new soil and in process it acquires some of the characteristics of native soil also and undergoes a change. This way that thought is adopted as that of that soil and its people. At the time of British conquest of Sind the conservative values upheld during reign of Queen Victoria merged with Indian orthodox values thus they were reinforced yet values of Industrial era due to modern exposure had unleashed numerous reform movements in Indian society. In this way Indian society remained a complicated contradiction. In reform movements intellectuals of the time were in vanguard. Due to acute contradictions at various levels Indian intellectuals were highly influenced by new winds.

This became evident in Sind also. Early Sindhi writers were mainly involved with social reform movements but the generation of Jethmal Parsram, Lalchand Amardinomal were social reformers as well as political conscious activists where as Behrimal Meharchand mainly was engaged in research and travelogues. To use Gorky's words they had, "Zest for life, Wide perspective and harmonious attitude to world." They used their writings as a weapon of social reform and creating political consciousness. Art for Art's sake was alien to them. They used their pen for a purpose. Political climate of those times may be mentioned in the words of lalchand himself. "For first years of life masses were as if dead. They opened their eyes slowly in the first decade of twentieth

century and the main spark happened to Division of Bengal in 1905. Sind also did not remain immune to this change.”

His first political step was establishment of ‘VANDE MATRAM MANDI’ at Hyderabad. He exposes British rule in these words,” They have usurped our wealth for more than 150 years and enjoyed life of luxury and we are even deprived of basic human rights! National bias apart, discrimination on basis of colour of skin apart but even a demand for human dignity and raising voice for dear motherland is declared as TREASON”.

He was the first writer to pioneer Nationalist writing in Sindhi. His plays Hind Ja Jawa (Born as Indians) and Swadeshi (Made in One’s Own Country)—as their names suggest—were written to spread the message of nationalism. One song he composed in 1908 became immensely popular, and its lyrics appear to mirror the present reality:

*"People die without any reason;
What a calamity has befallen.
In spite of having plenty of grain and butter,
Prices keep on rising;
The stomachs of the masses have shrunk to touch their
backs."*

In another song, he heaped satire upon the Moderate group within the Congress party:

*"We said with folded hands,
'We have come before you, our ruler.'
They said, 'So what? We shall not hear your plea.'
We said, 'Here you have been sent by God;
Bring peace to our sorry plight.'
They said, 'With peace, we will milk this country.'"*

It is not difficult to guess his sympathy for the radical group within the Congress. In 1922, during the Non-Cooperation Movement, he suffered imprisonment and was later appointed Secretary of the Karachi Congress Committee. However, he soon distanced himself from active politics, feeling he was not "clever" enough for the field.

He adhered strictly to the truth in both his speech and his lifestyle. He was proud to be called a "Dakar" (Hard Hitter).

Note: Dakar refers to a game where a small, pointed wooden piece (iti) is kept over a small pit in the mud and hit by a larger handle. That hitting handle is called the Dakar. This game was commonly played by boys in the streets.

His love for the land eventually found another outlet. He became the "Wordsworth of Sindhi literature." Taking a cue from the English poet, he began writing in the language of the common villagers, bringing a distinct, earthy flavor to the written word with proverbs and folk sayings

In a way he depicted the lives of the people. While his work was not easily understood by the urban elite, it was the "language of the soil," spoken by simple, uneducated village folk whose sayings contained raw wisdom accumulated over time. It laid bare the soul and the life of the Sindhi masses.

His use of the Sindhi language and his unique style provide a befitting reply to the present generation, which argues that it is necessary to use Hindi words to lend sweetness to Sindhi expression. The flexibility, rhythm, and delicate expression that can be conveyed through the Sindhi language are proven by his book, Sada Gulab (Rose Forever). Some examples are provided below:

“Friend! I tell you the truth. As the first sight of a love-bud, your lips are just as sweet. As the spring moves, your limbs ooze fragrance like sandalwood. When you move your feet, this earth sings like a stringed instrument! I tell the truth: the rays of dawn are happy to see you. Friend! On this lonely path, I wander this earth in all directions, seized by your love alone.” (Note: I concede that the English translation suffers from enormous loss.)

Or:

“As I come to say goodbye, I see a twinkle in your eyes. You understand that he will return very soon, as this has become my habit.”

As far as the use of language is concerned, his story “HUR MAKHI JA” (Hurs of Makhi)—published in 1914, the same year the first Hindi story by Guleri was published—speaks volumes. (This story has been translated by me and published in Sahitya Akademi’s Indian Literature.) He intended for this story to be expanded into a novel. Many years later in India, Gobind Malhi tried his hand at converting this story into his novel, JIN SOORI BHANEE SEJA (Who Considered the Gallows as resting mattress). It should be mentioned that, as far as the use of language is concerned, Gobind Malhi’s creations are no match for it. After Partition, Mohmed Usman Diplai wrote a long novel, “Sanghar”, in an episodic style of a Qisa, but that also did not meet expectations.

His description of Makhi Lake and its banks is very impressive. He mentions various fruits and exotic vegetables (in the Sindhi language) that normally grow on the banks of Makhi Lake; however, during the rains when the banks are inundated, more types of tasty vegetation grow.

His book Phulan Mooth (A Handful of Flowers) is a collection of essays written in the style of the English essayist Francis Bacon. His essays are full of worldly wisdom and contain moral lessons. He has written many essays of both historical and literary importance that provide a clear idea of his intellectual depth. In one of his essays, "Bukha Ja Chakka" ("Pangs of Hunger"), it is evident that he desired to banish poverty. He writes: "Now, such a system may be established that would banish poverty. As things stand now, it is not possible to eradicate poverty. Some say that the system should envisage a process in which everyone may get according to his need and work according to his capacity. That system would bring justice to society."

Thereafter, his idealistic viewpoint and the principle of incentive enshrined in the capitalist system prevent him from reaching the logical conclusion of accepting socialism. He nevertheless laments, "What is to be done? Both sides are difficult to achieve." His idealist view is evident from his writings about human nature and the inevitability of warfare. He says, "To imagine that all will be fine and harmony will prevail would be like containing wind to make rain." Evidently, this essay was written in 1927, and thereafter the post-Independence era reflects a humanity that has witnessed the absurdity of the Second World War and the aftermath of the atom bomb; consequently, the desire for peace is more evident across a large part of humanity today.

In spite of being an idealist and enthusiastically endorsing the theory of incentives for private property, the author expresses strong views against exploitation. He says, "Those who would sacrifice a whole goat for mere liver are, in fact, even beyond butchers."

He contradicts himself, however, when he observes: "Man becomes greedy due to the opportunities he gets. Man is so weak

that he promptly seizes any opportunity offered for his benefit. It would be a rare person in this world who is free from such temptation."

In his short story "Nandri Nina" (Small Nina), he remarks at one point, "Life may be full of pain and troubles, yet it is very beautiful." Despite his idealism, he did not close his mind to progressive ideas. It should be mentioned, however, that he was full of contradictions and lacked consistency; his ideas are often spread in an uneven manner. His own daughter, Kekai, mentions that her father was an optimist who moved along with the changing world. According to her, he was not orthodox in any way and possessed a "large heart."

Chouth Jo Chand (Moon of the Fourth Day / Crescent Moon): This is among the early novels of Sindhi literature penned by him

In it, he has depicted the life of Hindu Sindhis in Hyderabad. Today, this novel holds primarily historical importance. From a literary standpoint, the plot is somewhat uneven and the characterization is a bit weak. Literary Style: In spite of these flaws, it cannot be denied that his use of language remains unparalleled.

Kishni a Kashat (Agony of Kishni): This work may be termed a novelette rather than a short story. While he claims it to be an original creation, some scholars believe it was inspired by an English story.

Books written or translated by him include 'Sacha taan Sadqe' (Sacrifice for Truth), 'Sona Varnu Dilyoon' (Hearts Made of Gold), 'Boodoon' (Drops), 'Dukhan Dadhi Zindagi' (Life Full of Grief), 'Ram Badshah' (King Ram), 'Matimun khe Dildari' (Solace for Those Who Are Grieved), 'Hazarat Mohmed Rasool' (Respected Messenger Mohamed), 'Shahano Shah' (Royal Shah

Latif), 'Sachal Sarmast'(Sachal the Divinely Intoxicated), 'Musafri a Mazo' (Pleasure of Travel), 'Sindhi Chaman' (Sindhi Garden), 'Sena kin Vena' (Relationship Between In-laws—Sweet or Bitter), 'Sur Kedarao' (Sur Relating to War at Karbala), and 'Naqad Dharam'(Religion of Cash).

He also wrote two plays: 'Umer Marwi'and 'Sohini Mehar'. Regarding the play Sohini Mehar, it is said that the original writer was Dingomal Thadani; he accepted the fact that it was given to him solely to improve the language of the script. His book 'Sindhi Sahit Jo Nichor: (Essence of Sindhi Literature) remains unpublished.

He was not simply a "pen pusher," but actively participated in organizations dedicated to the upliftment of Sindhi literature. He was among the pioneers of the Sindhi Sahit Society and the Tagore Natak Mandli. Before the partition of the country, he was a member of the Sindhi Adabi Board and served as the editor of its prestigious organ, "Mehran". Additionally, he was a member of the committee formed to prepare a new Sindhi dictionary. He was also a member of PEN; ironically, while his paper was being presented at the Madras Conference by Prof. M. U. Malkani, he breathed his last in Bombay.

At a time when community leaders were advising Sindhi immigrants in India to merge into local communities and many writers silenced their pens, he—despite severe financial hardships—led the movement for a distinct identity and the preservation of the Sindhi language in India. He stood firmly and expressed solidarity with the young writers who had initiated that movement. He lauded their efforts, though he maintained that while the literature they produced may not be "fine art," it contained positive sentiment and the promise of a better future.

When he heard that the mortal remains of Jethmal Parsram had been consigned to the River Godavari at Nasik, he was outraged; he willed that his own remains be submerged in the River Sindhu. In accordance with his wishes, his remains were merged into the River Sindhu on April 17, 1956.

*(Based on original Sindhi article of writer
published in Naeen Duniya in 1965)*

BEHERMAL MEHARCHAND (1875-1950)

Key Note:

It is heartening to observe that today Sahitya Akademi in collaboration with Indian Institute of Sindhology at Adipur has organized a seminar in memory of 150th year of Behermal Meharchand. This very fact belies the prophets of doom who had predicted that Sindhi Language in India will perish and It will vanish for ever. You all need to be congratulated for being present on this event. To mark 150 years of any writer is not an ordinary event for any language or Community. It would not be out of place to mention here that while political power is momentary like a flash of lightning that has immense power to destroy but literature endures for centuries. While political power is gained through division and wars the power of the word is to unite and that is the strength of literature. It moves to promote brotherhood and empathy.

It is a historical fact that Sindhi prose came to be written only after the British conquest of Sind and standardization of Sindhi script. This led to a movement for education for common people and the natural requirement was preparation of Standard text books, books of Grammar and Dictionaries. In this endeavour the teacher of those times rendered exemplary service. Apart from the text books the first generation of prose writers Like Mirza Qalich Beg, Kouromal Chandanmal, Dayaram Gidumal, and Paramanand

Mewaram set quite a high standard for following generations through their prose writings. As happens with any literature, the first phase involves the translation of masterpieces from other languages; this was true of Sindhi literature as well. Mirza Qalich Beg alone is said to have written, translated, or adapted more than 400 books.

The second generation of Sindhi prose writers consisted of Jethmal Parsram, Lalchand Amardinomal, and Behermal Meharchand. While Jethmal Parsram and Lalchand Amardinomal primarily wrote literature concerning social reform and were aligned with the freedom movement, Behermal Meharchand mainly contributed to historical research, informative literature, the travels of Shah Latif, and his own travelogue through Sind. He also contributed early nursery rhymes to the educational texts.

It would only be proper on this occasion to quote him from his preface to *History of Sindhi Hindus*. He speaks about himself in that preface, and it is a fitting occasion to learn about him in his own words. He writes:

“In or around 1895–96, at the age of 20, I joined the Salt Excise Department of Sind on a salary of Rs. 25 per month, and retired as an Excise Inspector in 1924 when I was drawing a salary of Rs. 200 per month. Before this time, students could appear for their examinations only up to Matric, as there was no college in Sind at that time.

It was only in 1924 that Sindhi was introduced on an experimental basis into the curriculum of Bombay University for B.A. examinations. At that time, colleges in Shikarpur and Hyderabad had not yet been established. It was decided that if more students offered Sindhi as a subject, it would continue; otherwise, it would be discontinued. For the first term, Dawood

Poto (who is now the Director of Education, Sind) was appointed at a salary of Rs. 100 per month, as he had qualified as a postgraduate. After the first term, he had to move to London to pursue his doctorate. In this situation, I was offered his [post/position]... to head the Sindhi department.”

He continues writing,

“I was appointed during the second term in November 1924 as a lecturer at a salary of Rs. 100 per month, eventually rising to head the Sindhi Department. Having retired from the Salt Department, and because I genuinely liked this work, I accepted the offer. With all my heart, I tried to inculcate a deep interest in Sindhi among the students, with the result that Sindhi was accepted as a language of study for all classes. I felt deeply satisfied that my efforts had yielded the desired results. In total, I worked in the Salt Department for 28 years and at the college for 13 years. By the age of 71, I had written 45 books. Since 1905, I have contributed more than one hundred lessons and poems to school textbooks. Popular children’s poems such as ‘Mother’s Love’, ‘About the Harvest’, ‘About the Month of Aashad’, ‘The Honey Bee’, and ‘Time Says: I Am the King’ were all written by me. I have always been a serious student of history, and because I love to travel, I have journeyed extensively throughout the length and breadth of Sindh.”

His profound love for the Sindhi language is vividly evident in the fact that he wrote “A History of the Sindhi Language” after exhaustive study and research. In the same vein, he contributed monumental books to the region’s historiography, such as “History of Hindu Sindhis” and “Qadeem Sindh” (Ancient Sindh).

He also authored a unique book on the study of the mystic poet Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai titled “Sair-e-Latifi” (Travels of

Latif), in which he meticulously retraced the spiritual journeys undertaken by the saint during his lifetime. Meanwhile, his own celebrated travelogue,

“Sindh Jo Sailani” (A Traveler Through Sindh), was likely born out of the extensive travels required of him during his tenure as an excise inspector in the Salt Department. In my view, this stands as the very first proper travelogue in Sindhi. It cannot be denied that he was an unusually gifted writer, anxious to share his vast experience and knowledge with others. I hope that the scholars gathered here at this meet will delve deep into all the facets of his contributions. Remembering him on the momentous occasion of his 150th birth anniversary is a truly befitting tribute to his memorable legacy.

It cannot be denied that he was an unusually gifted writer and was anxious to share his experience and knowledge with others that remained a great driving force as is the case with all arts that the artistes feels uneasy and often in pain till he or she has not shared his experience with others. This keen need to the extent of restlessness for sharing the emotional/mental experience continues to create all art forms including literature.

Behramal Meharchand's Books list for Sahib Bijani

1. My story.
2. How did I study Rassalo* Of Shah
3. My Books
4. How Text books were prepared?

* *Rasalo is complete poetry of Shah Abdul Latif*

5. Difficulties faced by students in olden days-1

6. Difficulties faced by students

7. Difficulties faced by students in olden days-2.

8. High Schools of Hyderabad-1

9. .High Schools of Hyderabad-2

10. High Schools of Hyderabad -3

(Behermal Meherchand was also known as Bherumal Meherchand Advani)

**PROGRESSIVE LITERARY TREND
IN SINDHI LITERATURE
ROLE OF A J UTTAM, GOBIND MALHI
AND KIRAT BABANI
A BRIEF**

Historical Background:

The Evolution of Thought

Before speaking about any literary trend, it is necessary to briefly delve into the historical fundamentals of its underlying philosophy and the value structure it espouses.

The march of human civilization has been astounding over the millennia. The initial discovery of fire, the invention of the wheel, and the coupling of that technology with the energy of animals to augment speed—shifting humanity from being food hunters and gatherers to practicing agriculture—are all taken for granted today.

It is widely agreed that until about five centuries ago, the earth was the primary source of all livelihood, art, and power; consequently, all human relations were earthbound. Gradually, the socioeconomic order that emerged from this reality was the era of feudalism.

Historically speaking, it is only recently that humanity witnessed the “Industrial Revolution,” and we have now entered

the phase of the “Space Revolution.” Although the spread of these advancements has been rather uneven, their effects are apparent all over the world. The advent of the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent breakup of the feudal social structure led to the emergence of new ideologies that directly challenged old philosophies based on religion and idealism on one side and philosophy of rationality and materialism on the other side. It was a period of fierce and acrimonious debates of idealist philosophers at one hand and rationalist- materialistic philosophies on the other hand. One of the materialistic philosophers, Karl Marx (1818-1883) with his friend Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) was to have a profound impact on human society and history. He borrowed the tool of dialectics of Hegel (1770-1831) an idealist philosopher and applied it through the prism of economic development and came up with ‘Notion’ of Capital formation. He attributed all human ills and misery to ‘Capital’ formation and use of it as tools of exploitation. He argued that it was surplus value that created Capital and that surplus value came through exploitation of labour. He was not an armchair philosopher but he advocated active political action. Inspired by his philosophy Communist parties came into existence all over the world to replace the old order and usher in new order of the ‘Dictatorship of Proletariat.’ (the working class that is the proletariat holds political power to abolish class distinctions). A society that promised to be based on the principles of social and economic justice.

One of the side effects of Industrial revolution was the advent of the Printing press and consequent spread of literacy among the common people. Previously knowledge was limited as books used to be in manuscript form and only a handful of aristocrats could have access to literacy that situation dramatically changed.

The slogan of Liberty, Equality and fraternity was raised during the French Revolution.

Inspired by these ideals the State of USSR came into existence in erstwhile Russian Empire and adjacent republics in 1917. This was the period when the colonial nations were waking up to the idea of Nationalism and the war between European Powers to share the spoils of Colonial wealth was underway. That way at places Nationalist movement was fused with ideology of Scientific socialism or in other words communism in colonial countries.

Particularly in India, the National movement was led by the Congress party which was an umbrella organization, a sort of federation of many diverse ideologies.

This ideology stressed the collective way of working as part of its ethos and even literature was a tool of bringing about political-Social- Economic consciousness. A movement based on these ideals arose across all the countries.

In Indian Context:

First conference of writers and intellectuals was held at Paris where London based Indian intellectuals and writers were also present, amongst them prominent personalities were Mulkraj Anand and Sajad Zaheer. They organized the first conference of Progressive writers in 1936. The conference was held under the prominent Hindi writer Munshi Premchand and an organization of Progressive writers came into existence to spread this message and movement in all other Indian languages. The ideals enunciated in the manifesto were in sync with humanistic traditions of Indian literature and could be well aligned with the freedom movement and it found a ready response in other Indian languages also. Here it would not be out of place to reproduce the manifesto issued at

the conclusion of the first meeting held in 1936.

The manifesto stated:

“It is the responsibility of the Indian writers to portray changing reality in their writings. They should spread awareness among the masses and the scientific and rational temper of modern times. All traditions and rituals to be examined on the criteria of rationality.

They should uphold the forces of change that bring about problems of poor, hungry, exploited and backward classes. It should be depicted in literature and it should carry a message of hope of a better future by aligning with the forces to fight for freedom of the country.”

As all above was already present in Indian literature and the trend of realistic literature was very much in place the principles laid down in the manifesto were readily accepted by the writers of the various languages and Sindhi Language was also influenced by it in the early decade of forties.

In Context of Sindhi Literature:

In 1942 Gandhiji gave a call for Quit India movement and many young students were drawn towards the freedom movement in Sind and as consequences had to face imprisonment. While in prison, they had lot of time to study the social and political theory and philosophy. With the result that many of them entered jails as Congress men but they came out as convinced Marxists and some of them even joined Communist Party of India and became pioneering members of that party. At that time even writing was a part of creating awareness and a political tool. In this way The Progressive writers Group emerged in Sind itself. At political level they envisaged India as a Union of many Nation States with distinct

cultures, languages and literature having a distinct identity. It may be mentioned that before the partition of the country differences between Mohamed Ali Jinnah and G M Sayed were at peak a Marxist Mohmed Ibrahim Joyo wrote a Pamphlet “Save Sind and save the sub-continent.” This became the basis for eventual movement of Sindhi Nationalism that was to come much after the creation of Pakistan and was at its peak during a movement for the break up of “ONE UNIT” in Pakistan and continues to simmer till this day.

Pre Partiton Period:

In order to maintain a sense of continuity it would not be out of place to mention briefly about the Progressive literary movement in Sindhi literature before the partition of the country. Here it would suffice to give an account presented in Book “Karachi Sind ji Maruee” by Gul Hassan Kalamati published in 2007.

Post partition scenario in Indian content and Role of Gobind Malhi, A J. Uttam and Kirat Babani in Progressive literary movement and in Sindhyat Movement: The partition of the country was unexpected and sudden. The leaders of the Nation has not planned to face such an eventuality.

It went against the very foundations of Hindu- Muslim unity on which the movement for freedom was conducted by Indian National Congress the main party leading the movement. It was an outcome of the frenzy and hatred unleashed by communal forces.

Both communities fell prey to this frenzy of hatred leading to communal riots in most parts of the country. The atmosphere of insecurity and and uncertainty prevailed all over. It may be mentioned that compared to Bengal and Punjab, Sind did not see

much bloodshed. In Sind it was more of the panic that seized minds of Hindu population and that led to mass exodus of Sindhi Hindu population from Sind and it was accentuated by an engineered mob attacks by 'Indian Refugees' at Karachi on 6th January 1948.

The Hindu population mainly consisted of shopkeepers and middle class intellectuals engaged in various occupations. This segment of population had its own peculiar values and requirements that were being met for centuries in composite culture of Sind. This obviously led to an unbalance in Sindhi native population in Sind as most of the artisans and peasants who were Muslims were left behind and an important segment of population just vanished. On personal level, the relations had remained cordial among both sections of Sindhi Population.

On political level, the thinking was at a different wave length. It may be mentioned that after the British conquest of Sind it was annexed to Bombay presidency thus on the basis of religion for politicians they became part of a majority. Sind was declared a separate Province in 1935 again making Sindhi Hindus in minority.

After the elections of 1936 Congress leaders were reduced to being leaders of Minority and in Elections only Congress Hindu candidates could be elected to Sind Assembly and all Muslim dominated seats were won by Muslim League and at political level the Hindu- Muslim divide was a political reality. In this way Sindhi Hindu (Congress) leaders were harboring the under the pressure of being leaders of a minority community as far as religion is concerned.

As the partition of the country was done on religious basis the Congress leadership of Sind thought that the future politics of India would move along Hindu religious lines and they being a part of religious majority would find recognition and acquire power on

that basis. They did not attach much importance to the question of language being a strand of core distinct identity therefore in spite of being present in the constituent assembly they did not raise the question of Sindhi language being included in the 8th schedule of the constitution. Strangely enough when Sindhi population was being displaced they advised the community to merge their identity in the region or place wherever they found themselves.

In this misplaced zeal they decided to change the script of Sindhi Language to Devnagiri script as they thought that Persio-Arabic based script was a clear give away. This was much against the ground reality. The fact was that the community that migrated had students, teachers, writers of text books and writers and intellectuals amongst it and life moved on at its own continuous pace.

The students had been hitherto taught in Persio-Arabic script and for the sake of continuity it had to be continued. Newspapers and literature continued to be published in the Persio-Arabic script and even the Government of India by issuing a subsequent circular washed its hands off this unsavoury controversy in the Sindhi Community. They recognized even Persio-Arabic based script and left the matter in the hands of Sindhi parents.

The neglect of the language proved to be counter-productive for the leadership then as a strong movement of “SINDHYAT” led by Sindhi writers, Educationists, Journalists and Cultural Workers swept across the community among Sindhi speaking persons wherever they lived. The movement was centered around inclusion of Sindhi in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution. It may be mentioned that even on the national level the question of language was very much in the centre of the political discourse

at that time as various Indian states were clamoring for re-organization of Indian States on a Linguistic basis. The linguistic based states were established in 1955 and the leadership found itself without any constituency. This led to their realization of importance of language and first All India Convention for inclusion of Sindhi Language was called in 1957 at New Delhi. It was followed by at other cities like Mumbai and Nagpur and was constituted as “AKHIL BHARAT SINDHI SAHIT SABHA” at Adipur (Kutch) in 1960. A J Uttam who was the General Secretary of the interim Body was elected as General Secretary of the “Sabha” as well. During this period A J Uttam, Gobind Malhi and Kirat Babani remained leading lights of the Sindhyat Movement.

A J Uttam (Birth 16 December 1923 at Hyderabad (Sind) and demise 3rd January 2005 at Mumbai. His full name was Assan Jethanand Uttamchandani) I have already mentioned in my writings that Uttam was a true communist writer. All Marxists adhere to the principle that it is not proper for any committed intellectual or writer to create an ivory tower and inhabit it but they have to work on all the fronts wherever they are required to.

At the same time they had to keep working in the field of their own choice. In Europe many of the writers wedded to this ideology had taken up arms during the Spanish civil war. Uttam did not fall short in this respect, He adhered to his convictions that collective efforts and organization are very effective tools in the class war and literature was not an exception to this rule. This school firmly believed in literature and art for the sake of life and did not accept the dictum of ‘Art for Arts sake’. In fact as far as Sindhi prose is concerned it has been so. In initial stages it was a vehicle for social change and subsequently this purpose continued along with the ‘Freedom movement’. There was never any scope of escapism in Sindhi literature. It may be admitted that at that time some religious

texts did preach the virtues of ‘renunciation’. Literature has never been accepted only as means of entertainment. A J Uttam while at Hyderabad as a student was an Editor of College Literary Magazine “Phuleley” and he organized literary meets where young and old writers would meet and present their writings for evaluation by their peers. After partition of the country he felt that in that ‘Era of despondency’ masses had to be infused with hope and dissemination of progressive literature was the only way available at that time. He got in touch with like minded Sindhi writers like Gobind Malhi and Gobind Punjabi and some others and organised weekly meetings in the lawns of some garden in Bombay.

This was named as “Naoen (New) Sahit Mandal but the name was soon changed to Sindhi Sahit Mandal and after Prof: M U Malkani was appointed as warden of Jai Hind College Hostel situated at Pedder Road that location continued to be the venue of meeting of the writers for about two decades. This organization helped to contribute many new writers to Sindhi Literature many of whom rose to be awarded by “Sahitya Akademi.” The role of Mr M U Malkani as the president stands out in the history of Sindhi literature.

During that period the writers would visit refugee camps and read out to them their short stories and poems to infuse hope among them and console them that the time would certainly change for the better as a revolution was ‘round the corner’. As inhabitants of camps had nothing to do at that time they would meet in hundreds to listen to them. On such occasions the songs that were translated into Sindhi from Songs sung at IPTA (Indian Peoples Theatre) were sung by Shivo Ramnani and others. People had never seen such a combination of poetry, short stories and music at one place ever before.

As much as literature was being written it was necessary that it be published too and “Naeen Duniya” was revived. In the beginning, for some time it was edited by Bihari Chabria, and then it was taken over by Laxman Ripal and it continued to be published by a collective board of editors till 1957. Due to paucity of funds, it was decided to discontinue it. Uttam himself volunteered to take up this responsibility in his personal capacity and continued it as an organ of Progressive literature for more than two decades. This proved to be a starting point for many writers across India. In those 20 years the contribution of this magazine had been immense towards the community.

It has published about 500 original Sindhi Short stories, 200 Essays and more than 1000 poems. (It is hoped that in time to come some research scholar would earn his Doctorate doing research on such a unique contribution of one Literary Magazine). Ten special issues of “Naeen Duniya” devoted to special occasions are indeed very special and worthy to be cherished by scholars of Sindhi literature.

Similarly when weekly “SINDHU DHARA” that was an organ for the Sindhyat movement and it faced imminent closure, Uttam came forward and with his inspiring zeal continued publishing it for many more years with the help of his friends and well wishers.

When The Editor of ‘Jhulelal’ weekly from Ahmadabad became infirm to continue it Uttam took up the responsibility to see that it continued to be regularly published till the editor recovered to discharge his responsibility and for this Uttam had to travel often to Ahmedabad.

Books published by “Naeen Duniya” Kitab Ghar (Publication) continued to be published and he was also a pioneer General Secretary of Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Ain Sahit Sabha. He

steered the organization in its initial years as a capable captain facing a stormy weather. (At that time Sabha was a joint platform for supporters of Devanagari script for Sindhi Language and those who advocated retention of Persio-Arabic script therefore the balancing act was necessary.) After 1966 for many years the annual meet of Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha convened and many of the writers and intellectuals thought that with inclusion of Sindhi Language in the 8th schedule the organization had lost its relevance. He firmly opposed such an idea and came forward to lend all his energies to convene the conference at Alwar in 1971, and thus revived that organization which was to celebrate its Golden Jubilee in year 2007.

Apart from devoting his energies as an editor and literary activist he did not neglect his creative work and his role as an eminent literary critic. He has two collection of short stories to his credit. “Kashamkash” (1972) and “Hu Jahan Hi Manu” (1991). He wrote monographs on M U Malkani, Lekhraj Aziz and Kalyan Advani. Further he has written five books of literary criticism. “Tagore Hika Jhalaka”, “Sindhi sahit ain tanqueed” (In two parts) “Sahit and Sahityakar”, “Sujag Sind”, “Sindhi Natak – Kahani tanqueed”. He contributed books of journalistic nature and remained committed to his ideology. Those books were “Soviet Surgu”, “Naon Chin”, “Bharat Rusu Dosti”, “Mahtama ain Lenin”, “Bharat jo Dost Lenin”. He briefly worked as an editor of short lived Sindhi daily papers too.

In 1951 when he realized that in India he did not have any opportunity to engage in political activity and he chose to work in literary field, he set some ideals for himself. I consider that as his manifesto which in fact brings in focus the view of most of the progressive writers.

1. Society and literature are intimately linked. According to the Greek philosopher, Aristotle only animals and Gods are above society and are not bound by it.
2. It is the human mind that is the source of all thoughts but it does not depend on any abstract entity and is nurtured by its own experience and social environment. As the experience and knowledge of a writer increases so is the case with his consciousness. This advanced understanding is reflected in his literature. Therefore it will be wrong to assume that literature has no purpose. In this way the writer consciously or unconsciously is aligned to progressive or reactionary values of his time. The question of the writer being neutral doesn't arise.
3. Progressive elements encourage love for life and reactionary elements promote hatred.
4. Society is divided into various classes of production. In every age progressive elements have tried to create a better world and society.
5. Life of masses provides raw material for any creative writer and with his imagination and craft he creates abiding art and literature. While portraying his age and needs of the society the writer has to be mindful that his creation may not degenerate simply to the level of being a tool of propaganda. Any writer may present any lofty thought bereft of artistic quality but it will never pass the test of good literature.

(These points have been taken from his book "Adab ain tanqueed" published in 1951. Numbering of the paragraphs and sequence has been given by me.)

He resigned from his Government job in 1960 and devoted the rest of his life to Sindhyat Movement and Sindhi Literature. Kirat Babani (3rd January 1922 at Nawabsha Sind and demise 7th

May 2015 at Mumbai.)

KIrat Babani did not leave Sind immediately in the aftermath of the partition of the country instead he continued with political activities in Sind with the result he had to face imprisonment for

11 months in Pakistan jail. After his release he continued to be hounded by intelligence agencies of Pakistan state which made it difficult for him to engage in any political activity yet after some time he was deported from Pakistan. He came to India some time at the end of 1950 or beginning of 1951. He has written in his autobiography “Kujh Budhayum - Kujh Likayum” (Said some things- yet hid others). His mental struggle at the time of leaving Sind is vividly described and here it needs to be quoted at length.

“While traveling in this ship, I am thinking about the unfortunate partition of the country. What an irony of History and cruelty of politics!

People who have inhabited this land have been uprooted ruthlessly from their soil. Those innocent people who did not even commit any crime do not know the reason of this catastrophe.

Even their future is uncertain and they do not know anything about their destination. Who owes them an answer? Those who have the answer will never confess as they themselves are the culprits. Cruelty of religion and communal mentality of politicians has twisted and turned their minds beyond repair!”

Initially, when he came to Bombay he continued to pursue his education to clear L L B and worked for the students front of Communist party. He soon realized that he owed his first duty to the struggle of his own community and his own people. Soon he joined the movement of Sindhyat and Progressive literature. He had already contributed some short stories for progressive literary

magazines of Pre- partition time. In his autobiography he speaks of that phase in following words:

“History had presented a big challenge before intellectuals and writers of Sindhi community. They had lost their land but had carried with them a rich language, literature and culture they all were under threat as the leaders had advised them to forget everything and merge their identity with local population wherever they found refuge. In this situation young and some old writers rose to the occasion to face the challenge to save their distinct identity. Even educationalists and journalists made a common cause with them. I continued to be an active part of this movement.”

He was a convinced Marxist and continued to adhere that philosophy during his entire life but he was not dogmatic he was rather pragmatic in his approach. He continued to be associated with all progressive movements and associations at Sindhi as well as at the National level. About his commitment to the Marxist philosophy he has this to say:

“In all my actions and thinking the most important criteria of its acceptance or rejection has been its rational approach. I feel free from all and any man made limitations. I am not prepared to accept any false man made limitation. I reject all superstition and illogical traditions. I do not bow before any individual and do not blindly follow any philosophy though I have been highly influenced by the philosophy of Marx.”

His deep study of history led him to the realization that linguistic regions are made by nature whereas political boundaries have been an ever changing pattern in history. People inhabiting the same linguist region share a common historical experience and value structure as well as culture. They constitute the same people irrespective of their beliefs and varied life styles. Establishment of Pakistan is unnatural. Sindhis of India as well as

Sindhis of Pakistan are one family. They have to co-operate in their fight against injustice.

For Indian Sindhis he gave a memorandum to the then Prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi about political demands of the Sindhi community in India. In his memorandum he argued that though an elected person may be Sindhi speaking yet he represents a particular constituency. Sindhi Community by itself due to its distinct language and culture forms a distinct 'constituency' and its political voice does not find place at any level. There are some community concerns that need to be brought at political level and they need to be addressed at political level only. Thus a demand for political rights for Sindhi minority community is needed to rehabilitate it politically and it still remains an unfinished work after the partition of the country. At the same time he was an ardent supporter of Jiye-Sind Movement launched by G M Sayed in Pakistan for Free Sindhu Desh. He speaks about that movement in Sind in his autobiography as follows:

“I have given my energies and I am committed to Jiye Sind movement as I believe that the Sindhyat movement in India and Jiye Sind movement in Pakistan are two sides of the same coin.

They both aim to uphold the distinct Sindhi identity and its glorious historical heritage. Sindhi people of both the sides are trying to fight for the same cause. Though at a political level they move along as separate trajectories.”

He was connected with the literary movement and journalism even during pre partition period. He was the editor of “Sadaqat” paper in 1946-47. He was on the editorial board of “Naeen Duniya” from 1950 to 1955. He was in charge Editor of the weekly “Sindhu Dhara” from 1959 to 1972. As stated earlier he was intimately connected to “Jiye Sind” movement at Sind and in order to promote

that movement and create awareness of the same at International level and at local level he published “Sind Rises” in English and “Sind Sujag” in Sindhi and continued to publish and edit both monthly papers from 1991 to 2004. He was a co-author of a book giving an account of the Sindhi movement and the establishment of Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit on the occasion of Golden Jubilee of the Sabha. Other co-authors of the book were also present along with the writer Hari ‘Pankaj’.

In spite of his multifarious activities he contributed 15 books to Sindhi literature. Four books are of Short stories, Two books of one act plays, four books of literary criticism, one book of Folk tales, one travelogue, and a biography of Lenin. He also translated 3 books as an assignment from Sahitya Akademi. He was active in Sindhi Sahit Mandal and remained a President of Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha from 1972 to 1980 and later from 1987 to 1997.

During his tenure he gave a new direction to the Sabha and organized Sindhi Educational Conferences at various places and literary Seminars at various places. Sabha held drama festivals too from their platform and raised the question of political rights of the Sindhi community in India through the dramas.

He was not only active in the Sindhi literary and cultural field but he continued his association with other socialist oriented organizations at All India level and promoted amity, friendship and world peace. He was the vice president of Indo- Soviet friendship Society, He was the president of Indo-Poland friendship Society too. He visited Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia and was felicitated there. He visited United States of America as an observer of Jiye Sind movement.

In the end as a person who was externed from Sind and whose passport to visit Sind was cancelled within 15 minutes of being issued by Pakistan High Commissioner, his death was condoled by Sind legislative Assembly. Such is a historical irony of politics!

Gobind Malhi

(5-8- 1921- at Tharushah (Sind) Death 10-6-2001 at Mumbai)

His political and early literary activities have already been mentioned above. After the partition of the country he did not participate directly in any political activity. He became very active in organizing Sindhi Sahit Mandal and its activities. All through his life he adhered to progressive values. In his early novels he portrayed characters from margins of the society. One of his early Novels “Pakhira Valran Khaan Vichiriya” (Birds separated from mates) is first of its kind on nostalgic Sindhi literature.

By 1955 he became an active member of Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA). This association comprised mainly of the artistes and writers to promote progressive values and awareness amongst the masses and many eminent personalities of those days were associated with it. Here he came in contact with the top film director Ritwik Ghatak and Balraj Sahani. He translated Gorky’s “Lower Depths” into Hindi and it was presented by IPTA. In that play even Balraj Sahani played a role. He had joined IPTA with two young artists J. Ishu and Madan Jumaní who used to perform in plays. Younger Sister of J. Ishu at that time was a student of Gobind Malhi who used to teach at High school for Sindhis, her name was Bhagwanti Nawani and she was a budding singer. She joined Kanu Ghosh’s youth choir as a singer.

Once during the course of a conversation Balraj Sahani advised Gobind Malhi that he should work among Sindhi community to preserve their oral cultural heritage. Gobind Malhi heeded his wise counsel and along with stage artistes J. Ishu and Madan Jumaní staged a one act play in Sindhi based on Munshi Premchand's short story 'Kafan'. That play till this day is a watershed mark in the history of growth of Sindhi drama in India. He formed Sindhi Kalakar Mandal and along with another budding singer Satram Rohra and stage artistes presented Sindhi musical programmes all over India. In the course of this period he wrote about 40 one act plays and most of them were staged because they had minimal setting that could be provided anywhere, in this way it took a form of a mobile theater. The talented duo of Bhagwanti Nawani and Satram Rohra would regale audience with their traditional songs and songs written mostly by Govardhan Bharti.

With the passage of time the dramatic element of the group was dropped and it remained a group of singers and a few accompanists (mainly musicians). Gobind Malhi would format the programme and conduct it. He along with Bhagwanti Nawani and Satram Rohra traveled all over India as a Sindhi musical troupe.

They would visit even the farthest corners of India wherever Sindhis had settled to spread the message of Sindhiyat through Sindhi Sufi and folk music. He believed that the partition was a temporary one and would end his programme with a hope that next programme of 'Cheti- Chand' (Signifying Sindhi New Year) would be celebrated at Sind. He is known for reviving various extinct forms of Sindhi Music. Before him Master Chander stuck to his familiar style, Ram Panjwani would sing Sufi songs but he introduced marriage songs, other songs dedicated to mother Goddess which were sung at the time of affliction by measles (Orana). Lullabys and other songs sung at various socio-religious

occasions.

It is really surprising that although Gobind Malhi had a busy schedule he managed to enrich Sindhi literature by contributing 24 Novels and rightly earned the title of ‘Novel Samrat’ from the Sindhi readers and not to forget the 40 one act plays penned by him which I have mentioned earlier. It is a superhuman feat indeed!

I have learnt a lot from such unusual personalities. I am lucky that I have got their love and their company. I also continue to cherish the same values. I have dreamt the same dreams about the future of humanity. I cannot say anything about my contribution but I know that I am simply a link of this precious chain.

I am the last person left of that progressive school. I feel a stunning silence within. Yet I continue to have faith. I am convinced that the slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity will resound in every age.

*“I am a setting sun
soon
I will plunge into
dark depths of
the ocean
but
from the dark depths
after a long journey
I will arise
smiling with the sun
You must know it
for certain.”*

*(Based on a paper presented at Sahitya Akademi Seminar held at
Mumbai on 4th August 2019)*

IDEA OF INDIA

The idea of India is multifaceted and multilayered to say the least. It may be explored from Historical, Geographical, Cultural and multiple perspectives. Its antiquity lends to it many diverse interpretations beset with the contradictions just like life, which itself is full of inconsistency.

Looking at my passport I found two different words for India. Whereas the English version speaks of 'India' the Hindi version speaks of 'Bharat'. This description lends itself to bipolarity. History demands proof whereas mythology is a matter of faith. On one plane the identity of India is based on the historical and geographical connotation given by others, as is the case with the name of an individual that one carries as his/her identity for a life time. At the same time the identity of mythology tends to be one that one carries as a self image of himself/herself that makes an individual what he considers one to be. One is the self image and the other is objective – social identity that one assumes.

The idea of India through all complexities and contradictions has to be explored from these two different perspectives. In a way this is a bipolar situation that we are confronted with.

In a state of being mere sapiens as hunters and foragers ‘Man’ had no sense of ‘Country’. It was all geographical sense about rivers, valleys and mountains.

Even in the early stages of civilization there was no concept of any country and the tribes would move from one place to another and simply occupy it. There was no concept of ownership and belonging to any specific country. The concept of country and ownership of the land by an individual, group, tribe or a king came much later when man became a food producer due to discovery of agriculture which process in itself was uneven over the lands and time span.

In this manner when some tribes came to fertile plains of mighty river Sindhu it was identified as the land of Sindhu. They were so overawed by the mighty river that in the oldest text of Rigveda we find that eight stanzas are dedicated to the mighty Sindhu river and how it survived the ravages of the time. Over a period many tribes continue to pour in which often resulted in initial consent and eventual merger.

Due to the geographical proximity, Persians were next to come into contact with that area and due to linguistic reasons as they could not pronounce “S” and “S” turned to “H” and the land was identified as Hindustan and the inhabitants of the land were given identity as Hindu. It must be noted that the word Hindu does not carry the same connotation as religion. It was erroneously given religious connotation much later by foreigners who came with the concept of organized religion with one Holy book, a Prophet and organized religious establishment. Whereas till this day we do not have any specific definition of the word “Hindu”. As a religion it lends itself to multiple interpretations. It may be conceded the people of the country have a rich mythology in the forms of Puranas

and Epics. They contain the historical remnants and descriptions of various tribes that came to occupy this land at different times. The continuity that is presently given to many episodes of Puranas is a process of adaptation, interpolation, elimination and merging of many narratives that came at a very later date.

It may be conceded that many of these puranic- mythological, traditions and rituals connected to the narratives continue to influence thinking and imagination of the majority of the population till this day and many rituals are observed in day to day life. The country that we call today as India has seen the rise of many mighty empires that may be envy of other empires in the world and India has made splendid contributions to culture ,art and knowledge including many other fields. It has also seen fragmentation of empires into various kingdoms and fiefdoms continuously at war with each other causing an untold misery. It has a lofty tradition of highly speculative philosophy and advance in sciences as well as suffers from ridiculous superstitions. It is a society beset with numerous contradictions as life itself is filled with dichotomy. The society in this country in essence mirrors the nature of 'Man-kind'.

Another aspect that needs to be stressed is that while political boundaries have been changing with kaleidoscopic pace in history whereas the linguistic boundaries are natural and have remained constant. No doubt the numerous invasions have left their imprint on the language but their distinctness has survived the language may change but it never dies. In fact language is the oldest tradition of the man and every language is a living capsule of collective historical experience of that region. People belonging to that region share unique traits and cultural traditions. It has to be acknowledged that the variety of the languages spoken in India is staggering so is the cultural diversity.

Another fact that cannot be denied is that the symbol of political power is a sword that divides and the power grows with that division. Though sometimes foisted as imperial uniformity it gives an illusion of unity but it is the language that unites. In this way language- culture (Not to be confused with court culture) and political power move along conflicting trajectories.

It is this mute multitude that continues to grow as grass of the soil, that is trodden under the feet of marching armies and hooves of horses that unites them in their perpetual hunger and suffering. It is in order to address this factor that we find emergence of Bhakti-Sufi era poetry cutting along the religious establishments and priestly class-and the so called guardians of religions to act like a soothing balm to them. Bhakti-Sufi poets emerged in all the languages, sang with unfettered joy and compassion bridging all faiths and administering solace to the wounded souls. The Sufi poetry articulated the defiance against orthodox clergy and Bhakti poets defied the monopoly of brahmins and shattered caste distinctions.

This movement swept across the subcontinent called India and spoke in multiple languages and voices diverse and distinct as the languages spoken across the land. This gave the uniqueness to India and spoke about common man without distinction of caste, creed and region and religion. It is this complexity and multiplicity that is at the core of consciousness of sense of India and any measure to impose uniformity in the name of unity is doomed to fail as variety is the very essence of the NATURE.

*(A Talk presented on 3rd August 2023 at the
'Unmesha' A Festival of letters- International Writers' meet
3-6th August 2023 organized at Bhopal by Sahitya Akademi)*

IMPACT OF PARTITION ON SINDHI LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Sindhi Language is rich in vocabulary it is copious and expressive like any other advanced languages of the world. It has a rich heritage of literature that can compete with any other world literature.

For a long time it was believed that like other north Indian languages it has been derived from Sanskrit but recent research traced its origin to ancient language of Indo Iranian Linguistic family that was contemporary of Sanskrit language hence a close proximity to Sanskrit language.

After partition of the country the Hindu population that migrated to India consisted mainly of trading community and professionals and some landowners. Peasantry and artisans-musicians who over a period of time had converted to Islam remained on their soil. In this way Sindhi language in India lost the world's connect with agriculture, flora and fauna as well as various trades of artisans living in Sind.

In India Sindhi Language has lost the utility aspect. It is not spoken in markets; it has no use in courts or offices. It does not help to build a career (Except in rare cases). Now it remains only a vehicle of recognition of a distinct cultural and literary identity of the community.

The Sindhi language was not recognized as one of the Indian language along with other Indian languages in the Indian constitution and it took a struggle for nearly two decades to get it included in the Indian constitution.

Today, the language is only being practiced by a few writers and academicians in India. It is not taught in schools nor spoken at homes. This is mainly due to globalization to which all the languages have fallen prey to but in case of other languages they have state governments to support and villages as hinterland to support whereas all these are missing in case of Sindhi Language and makes its future very vulnerable.

To add to the woes of the Sindhi Language in India the political leaders thought of changing the script of Sindhi Language To Devnagiri script without understanding long term linguistic implications and not bothering to standardize Devnagiri script or making any attempts at transliteration of the existing literature. This has divided the community and this tiny community is facing odds stacked against Sindhi Language.

A few attempts have been made to establish Sindhi Academies in states where Sindhi speaking people live in a sizeable number but they are also victims of political power play hence not in a position to contribute in any substantial manner to the cause of Sindhi Language.

Yet the silver lining is that internet recognizes no borders and there is a likelihood of a literary revolution taking place soon as far as Sindhi language is concerned.

SYNCRETISM IN SINDHI CULTURE

After the partition of the country, Jhulelal from among many pantheons of Hindu Gods has been adopted by the Sindhi Community as a symbol of their distinct community identity (IshtDev). Jhulelal, in fact represents an ancient cult of water worship. It is referred to as 'Varun' in old scriptures. In Sind the same deity is worshiped by Muslims as Zindah Pir or Khwaja Khizir.

William Dalrymple in his book on Delhi named "City of Djinns" A year in Delhi mentions that Khwaja Khizir is mentioned in an old Babylonian sacred book, "Epic of Gilgamesh" as well as It finds mention in the old Testament.

According to Hindu mythology the early incarnation of Lord Vishnu is 'Matsya Avtar' that has a connection with great flood 'and man left after the flood was 'Manu' (the character of Manu is viewed as the ancestor of humanity and a lawgiver). Interestingly the mount of Jhulelal is also shown as a fish (Palla). In a way the oldest tradition of water worship is kept alive even in present times by Hindus and Muslims of Sind.

Richard F Burton (1821-1890) in his Book "Sindh, and the races that inhabit the valley of the Indus" writes, "There certainly is a wonderful resemblance between Taswwuf (Arabic term for

Sufism) and Vedantic system; and modern efficacy of Jog (penance and abstinence) exactly contains the Sufi's ideas of "Riyazar." (Page 199).

Shah Abdul Latif(1689-1752) whose poetry flows in the veins of every Sindhi as a blood stream, in Sur Sri Raag or Sur amkali has dwelt on the practices of Jogis in whose company he went to a pilgrimage of Temple of Mata Hinglaj. Sachal Sarmast also speaks about Japji Saheb and Hanuman. At the same time Sami has no compunction in invoking Allah.

No wonder that monotheistic Sikh religion found ready acceptance in Sind as it has Sufi ethos at its core. It speaks of "EKO ANKAR" as Holy Quran speaks of "ILLA ALLAH". It would be interesting to observe that the foundation of the Golden Temple at Amritsar was laid by none else than Hazrat Mian Mir(1550-1635) a renowned Muslim Sufi saint of his times. Sindhis are open to all external religious practices . These days they happily participate in Ganesh Utsav in Maharashtra, Navratri in Gujarat as well as Durga Puja at Kolkatta. Such openness is a core of the value system of Sindhi community.

L K Advani who was projected as a hard-line Hindu leader has this to say in his autobiography while speaking about his visit to Pakistan he mentions," ... in the case of my wife Kamla, she had the darshan of Saaeen Noor Hussain Shah, the Sufi Saint who specially flew down from Dubai to meet her." (Page 809).

What more could be said about syncretism culture of Sind.

IMPORTANCE OF MOTHER TONGUE

Before we come to think of mother tongue it would not be out of place to consider the basic relationship between mother and child and relationship of child with his or her mother tongue. A child depends on his mother for the very basic physical survival for nourishment. Though the umbilical cord is severed at the birth but the emotional cord of the child with the mother continues throughout his or her life. In order to provide emotional nurturing to her child a mother expresses her deep emotions through words and utters inane endearing words, sings lullaby to her child in which many words are improvised. These first sounds that a child hears builds the reservoir of an unconscious mind of an individual. The child also hears the sounds of those who are immediately in touch with him and absorbs the sounds and after a certain growth tries to imitate those sounds as gibberish. Mother tongue is the stage where mimicking the sounds happens and is the age of exploration of the objects and relationships that the child identifies. Thus the first building blocks of the world are built. The language is like a *samskara* (I cannot find an equivalent word for this in the English language) that conditions behaviour throughout and eventually shapes the world view and value structure of an individual. Without any doubt, the language of communicating with the mother is the

bedrock for the first meaningful and intimate relationship in an individual's life.

It would be important to bear in mind that the language is the oldest tradition of man and linguistic areas are carved by nature that remain constant. Language is like a river that is enriched by many tributaries in its historical movement at the same time and turns into various flows. It would be a fallacy to treat language as a biological process and say that a particular language is born out of a particular stock. The inhabitants of the area share the same historical experience and in a way language is a capsule of the historical experience of that area. The literature and culture of that area reflect the ethos and value structure of that region. It becomes an important force to weld people together. Language does not change with political boundaries and is not limited to any religion. Max Muller or William Jones did not have to convert to Hinduism to learn Sanskrit language nor did Indians convert to Christianity to know English Language.

Particularly in the case of Sindhi Language, in India the situation is quite exceptional. In the aftermath of the partition the Hindu population of Sind migrated to India and was strewn all across India like leaves of a tree after a severe storm. In fact it was not the full society as it existed in Sind. It was like a ribbon of society consisting mainly of middle class professionals, shopkeepers and a few landowners. A vast population that happened to be Muslims consisting of Landlords, Peasants and artisans remained back. This resulted not only in a loss of vocabulary related to agriculture, flora and fauna of the land but also of the pastoral life and the words used in many trades like those of blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, masons and many other artisans were forgotten. Thus the partition of the country in a way resulted in constriction of our vocabulary for the generation that

had grown up in India.

At the same time our creative literature is devoid of rural background. It must be admitted that the words of various languages where Sindhi population resides in sizeable numbers have adopted many local colloquial words and expressions but they remain limited to that region and do not form the part of mainstream language vocabulary.

In India, Sindhi speaking population is less than 0.5% of Indian population and that too spread all over India not to speak of Sindhi diaspora across the globe. In India the population is mainly settled in cities and towns and not in villages. The urbanization in its wake comes with the loss of many facets of life. The joint family no longer remains normal and nuclear families have come into vogue. In this situation the tradition of grandparents sharing the tales with their grandchildren in the courtyard at night in their mother tongue are lost. A story of a prince riding a white horse with shining armor to save captives vanishes and with it vanish innocence-imagination and eager expectations. Over a period of time many such stories are lost.

This phenomenon is common with all other languages but in case of other languages they have villages to support those and other oral historic traditions. There used to be a tradition that family would sleep in the open courtyard during summer and elders would show pole star and other constellations like ‘Sapt-rishi’ to children.

It is only two generations ago that children of neighbourhood would play outdoor games like “Gilli-Danda”, hide and seek, seven tiles or lagori and many other games. In urban life we have not only lost the land but also part of our sky. It is not a mere loss of language but entire mode of living. Now in cities

we have a culture of closed gymnasiums and vast stadiums for the elite in the place of neighbourhood open spaces for children to play.

It is a fact the clock of History cannot be turned back yet we have to make efforts to preserve what is most precious to us. Do we want to preserve the childhood of our future generations?

It may be argued that in India, Sindhi language has mostly lost its utility aspect and its speakers have become indifferent to its survival. In this context I would like to bring out the fact that a person is born with two eyes, two ears, two kidneys but if due to any accident one of these is lost a person continues to live with one organ alone but that is an unnatural state of being. The mother tongue is a natural state of a being and now the most pressing question that stares at us is that by depriving our future generations of our mother tongue do we want to condemn our coming generations to such an unnatural state?

In a space age, it is the planet earth that is going to remain as a reference point to find their bearings for the earthlings in the vast space and while even in space a person would continue to be bound to a particular linguistic region like an invisible umbilical cord of his mother and thus remain connected to it.

But that is like only a flicker of hope in the grim situation...

I have hopes in the emerging power of artificial intelligence where physical and Geographical distance would be rendered irrelevant and space age does not recognize National boundaries. As artificial and physical boundaries matter less and less, it may be emphasized that man will have to remain rooted to the earth and mother tongue – to find his identity. Politics and political

power has and will always remain transitory. History bears testimony to this fact.

*(Presented at Sahitya Akademi's festival of literature held at New Delhi on 12th march 2024 as a chairman of session on ,
"Importance of Mother tongue".)*

NEED FOR SPACE AGE PHILOSOPHY RELEVANCE OF TASWWUF IN MODERN WORLD

BACK GROUND:

The very construction of the language we now understand is based on binary or bipolar concepts. For example if one removes the concept of light the concept of darkness itself vanishes and with removal of the concept of right the concept of right will also disappear. This value structure has been reflected in our ancient scriptures also. This bipolarity has been more manifested in pursuit of power. Powerless all the times is ranged against powerful and vice versa. This held true as long as only land was a source of all production and consequent wealth and its accumulation as well as distribution. Here it becomes necessary to understand the construction of power structure itself. It is like a triangle on the apex its political power rests on two pillars of muscle power and money power.

Essentially all these are easily convertible powers into each other and they feed on each other. The bottom of the pyramid consists of masses and they are the custodians of moral power. In a traditional structure in the form of religion, this moral power is concentrated in establishment of priestly class that also often aligns itself to the ruling political power at the apex. This has continued for many centuries without a break.

Reformation of the church before the advent of industrial revolution was a tectonic shift in understanding of the world itself. It not only resulted in the disintegration of the 'Holy Roman Empire' and creation of many states, but unleashed a power of renaissance in every sphere, leading to an age of discoveries in the geographical sense and in the field of science and arts too. In fact it was all very embarrassing. All this opened a way for Industrial revolution leading to colonization, competition and nationalism culminating in two world wars that ended in the process of decolonization and subsequent period of cold war between two power blocks with arsenal of nuclear destructive weapons. This process of creating lethal weapons led to space age that opened up many unexpected doors and it was a quantum leap in human history that condensed the very concept of time and space. Opening doors to exploration of the extraterrestrial space age and communication.

It is not very far in time that we may come into contact with intelligence from other galaxies. In that case our prime identity will change to mere earthlings. In order to establish a communication we may have to relook at the very roots of our language as the very concept of polarity will undergo a drastic change.

SIND AND INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

The journey of the Independence of India has been marked by some landmarks that will remain etched in the collective memory of Indians for a long time. The first war of Independence in 1857 and partition of Bengal in 1905 and as a consequence the movement that rose to undo that partition, when many young people suffered and faced the gallows with slogans of “Vande Matram” and “Bharat Mata ki Jai”. In fact the slogan “Vande Matram” was an echo from the song composed in a novel by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee 150 years ago and we have gathered here to commemorate that occasion. It must be mentioned that along with “Vande Matram” the slogan of ‘Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ became synonymous. This way the patriotic sentiment was concertized in entity of the mother. It is in this background that I will trace the freedom movement in far flung province of Sind. It is a very fascinating narrative of selfless sacrifice at the struggle for freedom.

Sind was the last territory in India to be conquered by British in 1843. Yet 1857 war of independence found its echo in Sind in such a short period. Soldiers at Shikarpur, Sukkar and Hyderabad rose in revolt. On 14th September 1857, 21st Regiment of Native infantry rose in revolt at Karachi . They were tied at the mouth of cannons and executed.

In 1885 Indian national Congress was established and two delegates from Sindhi attended it. In 1895 the meeting of Bombay Province Congress was held at Karachi. (At that time Sind was a part of Bombay Presidency).

In 1905 after the partition of Bengal the Congress session held at Calcutta in 1906 called for a boycott of foreign made goods.

In Hyderabad some young people became active. Those youth included Lalchand Amardinomal (who later in life became a prominent Sindhi writer) Jiwatram B Kriplani established “VANDE MATRAM MANDLI” that perhaps was the first freedom organization with that name found in India.

Jiwatram Kriplani subsequently rose to be the president of Indian National Congress and a close associate of Gandhiji. Tolaram Balani, a young man wielded his pen as well as eloquent skills to create awareness for the freedom movement among the masses. He established a paper titled “MATA” in 1906 (This could be linked to the concept of Bharat Mata). He died at a young age of 29 by taking Jal Samadhi.

First political case in Sind arose in 1909 when three young persons conspired against the British Government. Goverdhan Sharma translated and published a booklet of “THOUGHTS OF BAL GANGADHAR TILAK”. The publisher was Viroomal Begraj and printer was Chetumal Hariram. First was sent to jail for five years, the rest two were sent to jail for three years each.

During the freedom movement the annual sessions of Indian National Congress was held twice. First one was held in 1913 and second was held in 1931.

Jethmal Parsram, an eminent writer and fearless journalist wrote an article on the massacre of ‘Jalianawala Baug’. Gave a

title to his lead article from one of the verses of Shah Abdul Latif. He was tried and was sent to 3 years imprisonment. H T Sorley the Judge who tried him during the trial heard so much about Shah Abdul Latif that he became curious to know more about him and after his deep study he did his doctorate on Shah Latif and that book till day remains an authoritative book on Shah Latif. Such are the ironies of history.

A Gandhian Shewak Bhajraj wrote a Novel “Ashirwad”, N R Malkani a well known freedom fighter contributed three books including “Jailee Jiwni”. A trail blazer poet “BEWA” who has many generations of poets following him wrote patriotic songs.

In 1926 Jairamdas Doulatram a scholar resigned as an Editor of ‘HINDUSTAN TIMES’ and joined Congress. He rose to be the General Secretary of All India Congress. After independence he was a member of the Constituent Assembly to draft the Indian constitution.

He became the Food Minister in the first ministry and later on was the Governor of Assam. He was also a member of Rajya Sabha for two terms. Anand Hingorani accompanied Gandhiji during the salt Satyagraha. Whereas N R Malkani continued with Gandhij’s constructive programme about untouchability.

Dr Choithram Gidwani was the president of Sind Congress Committee. He played an important role in resettlement of Sindhis after the partition of the country.

Bard of the freedom movement, Hundraj Dukhayal continued his association with Vinobha Bhave in Bhoodhan movement for many years.

Jethi Sipahimalani rose to be the Vice Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council.

After 1942 quit India movement many young persons were attracted to revolutionary activities. Parcho Vidyarthi was given a prison term of more than 140 years. His biography has been written by Mohan Kalpana, a renowned Sindhi writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee.

In fight for the independence of India, Hemu Kalani became the youngest martyr of India. He faced gallows with slogan of Bharat Mata ki Jai on his lips. He became a source of inspiration for many revolutionary activities. It is hoped that the community and country will celebrate the centenary year of this illustrious son of the soil from Sind that unfortunately lies beyond the borders. Let us remember that in History no border has remained permanent. He inspired many writings on his life and sacrifice.

Achyut Patwardhan and Aruna Asaf Ali along with many other activists found underground shelters in Sind.

Even after the partition of India, Sindhis in India who comprise only 0.5% of population yet as party workers of BJP (For obvious reasons they cannot have a mass base of their own) continue to play their political role after independence.. Sindhis have occupied important positions and two outstanding examples are of L K Advani and Ram Jethmalani. K R Malkani who edited with dedication "ORGANISER" the organ of erstwhile Jan Sangh rose to be Lt. Governor of Pudduchery.

Now Shanker Lalwani is member of Parliament from Indore as a BJP member and Mahesh Jethmalani has been nominated to Rajya sabha.

That way the spirit of Vande Matram and Bharat mata ki jai continues to flow in the veins of Sindhis like flow of the blood itself

ON CHANGE OF SCRIPT FOR SINDHI LANGUAGE TO ROMAN BASED SCRIPT

A brief Note:

Before we speak of change of script for the Sindhi language in view of the technological advance in the recent times, it would be necessary to think about the nature of the present script. Before the present Persio -Arabic script was adopted there were more than 13 scripts prevalent for writing Sindhi. It was at that time when language was committed to writing in a manuscript form and literacy was a personal privilege and printing technology and mass education had not come into vogue. At that time the nature of writing was phonetic, one would write as one would pronounce.

As the pronunciations of various words differed from region to region or rather from person to person the old manuscripts have come to us with the same words spelled differently by various copiers of the texts. In the age when the printing technology and mass education was introduced the need arose for the standardization of the script. In 1854 the committee appointed by

East India Company taking into consideration the various languages as a source for Sindhi vocabulary introduced the script with 52 letters so as not to lose philological source of the words

and ensure correct pronunciation. In this way Sindhi script like English script changed from phonetic to ideographic script making it standard writing irrespective of the way any word is pronounced at various places by the people. The written word conveys the same connotation and denotation in whichever way it may be pronounced.

It may be noted that an eminent English writer, Bernard Shaw left a considerable amount in his will to simplify the present English Language script but the will has not been implemented for reasons of tradition and it would render it phonetic thereby making the literature already published in English language as obsolete.

On change of script for any language it would be pertinent to quote a profound observation of Jawharlal Nehru:

“A change in script is a very vital change for any Language with a rich past, for script is the intimate part of literature. Change the script and a different word and a picture arises, different sounds and different ideas- an almost insurmountable barrier is put between the old literature and the new and it becomes a foreign language that is dead.”

When the present script was devised it was estimated by the said committee that Sindhi language had 12000 words of Sanskrit origin, 3500 indigenous, 2500 Arabic and 2000 of Persian origin apart from various tribes like Greeks, Scythians and host of other tribes that invaded or migrated to Sind from time to time.

To represent every sound an alphabet of 52 letters (36 Consonants and 16 Vowels) was devised that continues till this day.

Unfortunately, in the Indian context the misguided efforts of political leaders to change the script of Sindhi Language to

Devnagiri script has proved to be disastrous as it was introduced without being standardized and no plan for transliteration of the existing literature. (Efforts by Government sponsored organizations and of some zealots of this move have been woefully inadequate) with the result that the new generation has grown with scant knowledge of the rich literary heritage. This division has led to the loss of almost two generations of Indian Sindhi speaking people from their mother tongue.

Now due to advanced technology easily available and vast Sindhi Diaspora there have emerged voices for Roman based script for Sindhi Language. In this respect if any additional script (May it be Roman based) may not be dismissed but before such a venture is attempted the following prerequisites are UTMOST necessary.

- A Committee consisting of experts in the field of language and phonology be formed to devise the script of 52 letters representing the present script.
- The script may be mandated by an authority for enforcement in a uniform manner. It would be necessary to publish a dictionary of Sindhi words as representative spelling so that it does not degenerate into phonetic mode leading to chaos.
- A time bound phased plan of transliteration of existing Sindhi Literature be drawn up.
- It should be ensured that the development of the transliteration soft ware is made.
- The present software in case of translation is in an infancy stage and often the translations are atrocious or hilarious. Such a situation has to be avoided.
- All this calls for huge resources and a mandate that could be

implemented at a state level.

- In this field the experience gained by other countries like China- Japan in their quest for Romanization of script may prove to be useful.

PUBLISHING SCENARIO IN SINDHI LANGUAGE (HISTORICALLY AND NOW)

(Note: Year 1947 marks an important watershed for Sindhi speaking community as that year due to partition of the country many Sindhi Hindus had to seek refuge in India. It is beyond the scope of this presentation to dwell on the trauma and horrors of the partition. However the present paper for historical perspective will have to be divided in two distinct parts i.e. Pre- partition and post Partition)

Background before 1947:

While speaking about publishing in Sindhi from historical perspective following factors need to be taken into consideration. Sind was the last territory to be conquered by British in this subcontinent in 1843 and it was annexed to Bombay Presidency for administrative purpose. Before the advent of the British rule the court language was Persian and Sindhi language became the official language of Sind only after the British rule. By that time Sindhi was a well developed language and had a rich literature in poetry but it did not have any significant prose literature. The script for the Sindhi Language was neither formalized nor standardized. British rulers were confronted with a bewildering situation as Sindhi language was being written in 13/14 different scripts. A

Committee was set up consisting of Sindhi scholars from both the communities that formalized the present Persio-Arabic based script with various changes of 52 letters in 1854.

Education of Sindhi language on modern lines started only thereafter. At that initial phase, text books and books from other Indian Languages were translated in a large number. The books of academic nature were also published during this initial period. At that time various social reform movements like that of Brahmo Samaj and others made a strong impact on the original creative literature published in Sindhi language and books translated from English and other languages. This was followed by the influence of Freedom movement on literature. During the decade of 1940 as with other Indian languages the literature of Sindhi language also came under the influence of 'Progressive movement of Literature'.

All these books were published by publishers based in various important towns of Sind but Hyderabad (Sind) continued to be main center of Publications.

The main Publishing houses in that period were:

(1)Sunder Sahit Mandal (2) Ratan Sahit Mala. (3) Sind Muslim Society (4) Sikh Tract Society (5) Zindagi Sahit Mala (6) Naeen Duniya Kitab Ghar.

First Literary Magazine 'Saraswati' started its publication in 1890. First original Novel 'ZEENAT' by Mirza Qaleech Beg was also written in 1890.

The first original short story 'Hura Makhi a Ja' written by Lalchand Amardinomal was published in 1914.

Till 1947 about 3000 books were published by various publishers in Sindhi language.

Post 1947:

Due to partition of the country Sindhi speaking people found themselves scattered in various parts of India. As they settled as a community in the camps that were left by the army in the aftermath of the Second World War, they could identify themselves as a distinct 'Refugee Community'. The band of the population that migrated to India consisted mainly of middle class businessmen or people in various professions and services and sprinkling of landed gentry that had been rendered landless. The working class, peasantry and artisans had converted to Islam during the past centuries and remained back in Pakistan. Fortunately this section of the community proved to be the most resilient as it had in its fold small traders, students, teachers and other professionals.

As the life force asserted itself students and teachers resumed their activities in the new environment and this called for Publications and other teaching material and books of knowledge.

Thus initially text books and related books were published on the pattern that was in vogue before 1947 thus continuity was maintained and no loss in education occurred in spite of a great upheaval.

Another blow was soon to strike the community. As the Indian constitution of India came into existence Sindhi Language did not find its place in the constitution. This led to widespread discrimination in the field of education and all fields related to language thus a strong movement for inclusion of Sindhi Language in the eighth schedule of Indian Constitution started in which all sections of the community participated. This upsurge led to realization of language being a part of the core identity of any Community.

This movement was led by writers, educationist and artistes of the community. This was called a movement of “Sindhyaat”.

This demand was met after 20 years of struggle on 10th April 1967, Sindhi Language found its place in the Eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution.

During this process many magazines were published from various parts of the country wherever Sindhi people resided in a sizeable number. In Indian context, the publication of literature is often linked to the publishers of literary magazines. It is not possible to list all the magazines that were published during that period but only those could be mentioned that had publishing activity also as its adjunct.

Mr. Jethanand Bhavandas Lalwani from Bombay started his popular monthly Magazine ‘Raj Filmstan’ and continued to publish books too under the banner of “Bharat Jeewan Sahit Mandal” and during his time he is reckoned to have published about 500 books on various subjects. Most of the books by Prof Ram Panjwani, (Sahitya Akademi Awardee and Padam Shri) have been published by them. Another important writer whose main body of books continued to be published by them was Chandulal Jaisinghani who wrote his series of books “Bagoo Barrister” on the lines of Perry Mason mysteries. He published religious books too and published The GURU GRANTH SAHIB in Sindhi script which is truly noteworthy.

Mr. Jagat Advani started his ‘Kahani Sahit Mandal’ in Sind itself in 1939 and published 17 books of fiction mostly translated by him. He resumed that publication in Bombay in 1949 and is said to have published fiction mostly translated by him. He was a prolific translator and has translated about 60 books. He introduced in Sindhi literature Hindi writers like Dharamvir Bharti and

Agyeya. During his last phase he was influenced by philosophy of Satya Sai Baba and started Sai Publication under whose auspices he published 6 books. He translated books for other publications like ‘Pirha Phuti’ and translated two books for Sahitya Akademi.

Dr, Narayan Bharti, 1932-20 (published a weekly Magazine Sindhi Times from Ulhasnagar. Under the banner of ‘Sindhi Times Publications’ he published about 200 books of various genres of literature. Some of the books published by this publication include the autobiographies of some prominent writer.

During early 1950’s Mr. Tej Parwani from Poona Started “Nargis” magazine as well as established “ Nargis Publication” he is said to have published more than 100 books mostly translated by him. Unfortunately this venture did not continue for a long time. Before partition of the country Progressive Writers Movement had made inroads into Sindhi literature and a magazine ‘Naeen Duniya’ and “Naeen Duniya Kitab Ghar” were established.

Before partition of the country handful of books were published under this banner. After the partition of the country the magazine resumed publication and became a rallying venture for writers to struggle for inclusion of Sindhi Language in 8th Schedule of Indian Constitution. It introduced many new writers to Sindhi Language and continued to uphold the values of Progressive literature. It in its span of 25 years published 500 poems, 200 short Stories and many literary articles. Most of the matter published was compiled and published in book form and it published about 75 books that are valued today by scholars as well doing research on Sindhi Literature in various Universities.

“Koonj” literary magazine was started by late Hari Motwani (1929-2006) and now is being edited by Mr. Nand Chughani. Under the auspices also about 200 books have been published. The special

issues devoted to then various living writers have proved to be a valuable reference material for research scholars while writing monographs on them as assigned by Sahitya Akademi under the series makers of Modern Indian Literature.

Hindustan was a daily newspaper that in early days had a large readership and weekly issue Hindvasi (On Sundays) socio-cultural paper is 109 years old now. It was started in 1917 much sought after paper then and now under the banner of “Hinduatan Kitab Ghar” they published about 50 books. Books were mostly translated they are of motivating nature covering topics like health and spirituality. ‘How to win Friends and Influence people’ was translated by late Prof Ram Panjwani which proved to be very popular and the books of complete poetry of Shah Abdul Latif has set a bench mark.

Due to the generational shift in last 75 years the reader base in Sindhi language has considerably been eroded. The fact remains that Sindhi speaking people account for only about. 0.5% of the population of India and that too scattered all across the country.

Sindhi language is not an official language of any state in India. It is not spoken in markets and it is not a language of trade and commerce. Therefore In this situation the utility aspect of the language is missing. So the centralized distribution channel for Sindhi books is also absent.. It has only relevance of being distinct literary and cultural identity of the community. Without any state support it would not be possible to promote and preserve this language therefore some community sponsored and Government sponsored support structures have been created.

Indian Institute of Sindhology at Adipur (Kutch) is a community effort by intelligentsia of the community aimed at preserving and furtherance of Sindhi Literature and Culture. They

have established a library of books and magazines that has about 30000 books on its shelves all dealing with Sind and most of the books published in Sindhi. They have showcased Sindhi History and Culture in a specially created gallery. They have been publishing 'Rachna' a literary magazine from 1979 and have published 50 books, the most important being Sindhi Translation of the Constitution of India and the trilingual dictionary.

Sahitya Akademi was established by Government of India in 1954 as an autonomous body of Indian writers of Indian Languages. It adopted Sindhi Language for its activities in 1959. It has so far published Sindhi Translation of 22 novels from various languages. 18 collections of short stories, 8 books of drama, 24 books of poetry and 30 books on other literary subjects. It has published 28 monographs of Sindhi writers under the series "Makers of Indian Literature".

National Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language was established by Central Government under the Education Ministry only after a great struggle by Sindhi writers and activists in 1994. In absence of any linguistic state and absence of a distribution channel it encourages writers to publish their own books and gives partial aid for publication of the books in last 5 years financial aid has been given for 121 books. Further among its activities is the Bulk Purchase Scheme. It purchases about 150 copies at a discounted rate from the author or publishers and distributes to schools, libraries and institutions. In last 5 years it has purchased 389 books. In order to promote Sindhi Language it conducts regular vacation classes too.

Wherever Sindhi speaking population is in a sizeable number the state concerned have established Sindhi Academies to cater to local needs and encourage writers of those states.

Sindhi Sahitya Academy Gujarat: It has done commendable work in the field of Sindhi Folk literature and Children's literature. It has published 44 books till 2020.

Delhi Sindhi Academi: It was established in 1994. It regularly publishes the magazine "Sindhu Jyot" so far 73 issues have been published and it has published 60 books.

After 1947, about 4000 books in various genres are published in Sindhi Language. Due to globalization all languages are being deserted by urban elite and aspiring middle class is in favor of English language. Audio-Visual content has edged over the printed word. This is the challenge that all

Indian Languages are facing but for Sindhi speaking people in India this challenge assumes a grave threat as other languages have villages to preserve their language, in case of Sindhi Language that factor is missing as most of the Sindhi population is concentrated in urban centers.

Yet every challenge has an opportunity also in its womb. In cyber world all boundaries have been rendered redundant. Thus the handicap imposed by partition of the country may no longer remain a defining factor for growth and enrichment of literature and cross border exchange of Sindhi literature.

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FREEDOM

What freedom means to me? Economic power and political power are interchangeable. The power of individual conscience is circumscribed by conditioning and ethos of time. Thus “Freedom” remains elusive.

The concept of “Freedom” is irretrievable and is connected with the concept of “Discipline”. Outwardly discipline manifests in two ways. One is discipline of military kind that is imposed by coercion and other one is discipline attained by a YOGI. Imposed discipline has the knack of breaking the straitjacket but the discipline of a Yogi is self evolved with rigorous training of mind and body. Is it possible that in any future time mankind may evolve collectively to that stage to invest in the concept of freedom with a concrete meaning?

It may happen in the distant future. In the present stage, in space age MAN is confronted with many challenges. The challenge is to clean air- water, the ecological damage that Industrial age has wrought is incalculable.

The internet and satellite communications have made the distance and the National boundaries redundant as cyber space does not recognize any National boundaries. Nationalism has remained only a hangover of the past. Our identity will remain

only as earthlings. The genetic engineering may prove to be a boon or bane.

The Artificial Intelligence could be a tool of service but not of domination.

The choice is vital. (I will skip the philosophical aspects of Evolution of Indian Literature since India's Independence : Sindhi determinism or free will. For me the concept of freedom is circumscribed by these factors. The concept of absolute freedom is as elusive as the concept of Nirvana-Moksha- Salvation. This concept is as bewitching as a colourful horizon you try to reach there and another horizon opens up.

SIND AND BENGAL A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

No two parts of this subcontinent could be more different than Sind and Bengal. They share no contiguous borders; one lies in the extreme west and the other in the east. The vast desert of Thar separates Sind from the larger land mass of India. It is inconceivable that they would share a common political history. Yet, the strange fact that stares us in the face is that in the domains of philosophy, culture and value systems, they could be so similar. Culture is like subterranean streams, unseen by the naked eye, flowing and intermingling without being seen in the depths of the earth. Culture can also be like an iceberg whose only tip is visible while much remains submerged at a deeper level. We do not know how and where the various streams mix and mingle. Bengal was the first province to be colonised by Britain, and Sind was the last in 1843. Colonial rule over Sind lasted for less than a century, whereas Bengal had to endure it for more than two centuries. But that falls in the realm of political history.

The similarities between the two cultures of western and eastern India began in the mythological era. Though it must be admitted that this narrative has been interrupted often, it has resumed time and again. Bengal is a gift of the Ganges and many rivers; at the same time, Sind owes its culture and civilisation to the Indus and it is the land of Great lakes. In Sind, the oldest tradition has been

one of water worship, whose historically recent incarnation has been Jhulelal, emphasizing a distinct Sindhi cultural identity. This deity is said to be a direct descendant of the Matsya Avatar of Lord Vishnu.

Mother worship in the form of the Goddess is perhaps one of the oldest traditions in world civilizations. This trait has remained a potent force in Sind as well as in Bengal. Whereas in Bengal the tradition of Durga Puja is known throughout the world, in Sind this aspect has not received the same degree of attention.

There is a temple of Hinglaj Mata nestled in the hillocks on the border between Sind and Balochistan. According to mythological accounts, when Sati immolated herself in the Havan Kund, Shiva, overcome with anguish, performed the cosmic dance (Nritya) while carrying her body on his shoulders. During that dance, the head of her body, smeared with sindoor, fell upon this spot. Thereafter, this place came to be regarded as an important pilgrimage site for devotees of the Mother Goddess.

Over the centuries, mendicants from all parts of India have visited this shrine, and many from Bengal have also travelled to this site through Sind. With them, they brought the ethos and culture of Bengal to Sind.

The greatest poet of Sind, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, visited the shrine of Hinglaj Mata in the company of yogis and sanyasis. He mentions many of his companions from Bengal. In his *Sur Ramkali*, he speaks of their austerities and practices of penance, remembering them fondly. In this way, those who came from Bengal left an undeniable imprint on the Sindhi psyche through the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif.

Another thread connecting Sind and Bengal is Sufi thought.

Bengal has been home to many Sufi saints, and its people have been deeply influenced by this spiritual tradition. In India, Sufi thought acquired a distinctive flavour, and the two streams of Bhakti and Sufism often flowed together. The Sufi doctrine of Ana'l-Haq ("I am the Truth"), most famously associated with Mansur al-Hallaj, found resonance with the devotional currents of Bhakti, creating a unique spiritual synthesis across the subcontinent.

In every particle of the Universe, That is the Truth) seems to have merged, thereby challenging the orthodoxy and priestly stranglehold of both religions. These two movements have been a powerful current in creating an idea of India. Whereas politics has always remained a divisive force, it is culture that has always remained a uniting and healing force for the masses of India.

Therefore, while the changes induced by politics are superficial, the changes wrought by culture endure for centuries. Bengal has a robust tradition of Vaishnavite poets and poetry which endures to this day. Sind has a rich tradition of poetry steeped in Sufi thought, and the Sikh religion gave the world the Holy Book Guru Granth Sahib, which is a culmination of what is finest in the Bhakti poetry of India. The people of Sind and Bengal share a similar value structure built on an inclusive mindset and generous attitudes towards life.

As mentioned earlier, Sind was the last province to be conquered and annexed by the British. They gave the Sindhi language a common script in 1854. Only after that was a formal modern education system adopted, and a middle-class Hindu professional class began to emerge. At that time Calcutta was the capital of India and attracted many young Sindhis for further studies. During this time Keshab Chander Sen, who was in the

forefront of the Brahmo Samaj movement, came into contact with an influential Amil family in Hyderabad, Sind, and their chief (Mukhi) Navalrai came under his influence and initiated a social reform movement in Sind aimed at the emancipation of women.

In this movement Kouromal Chandanmal, one of the pioneers of modern Sindhi education, and Raj Rishi Dayaram Gidumal, who was a judge at that time, joined him in this noble cause. In 1875, the first Brahmo temple was inaugurated at Hyderabad, Sind, by Navalrai. His son Hiranand completed his matriculation and graduation from Calcutta and was greatly influenced by the stalwarts of that time, remaining a family member of Keshab Chander Sen and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. He was also drawn to Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Along with Narendra, who later became famous across the world as Swami Vivekananda, his favourite disciple was Hiranand Navalrai. It is on record that Ramakrishna Paramahansa, comparing his two disciples, observed: "Narendra is a human being of tall stature. Hiranand is also of that same stature. What an endearing personality he has! What innocence..."

As Hiranand was already married, he could not pursue the path of worldly renunciation, but after returning to Sind he plunged himself into the social reform movement. He devoted himself to the cause of female literacy, a better status for poor and widowed women, and spoke out against mismatched marriages, in which often young girls were married to older men, and against the scourge of the dowry system that, alas, continues to bedevil the community to this day, despite the efforts of social reformers for over a century.

On his return from Calcutta to Sind, Sadhu Hiranand started two papers to propagate the reforms. One was Sind Sudhaar (Sind

Reform) in Sindhi, and the other Sind Times in English. As he could not manage the work of two papers simultaneously, he requested his friend in Calcutta to send a helping hand for the English-language paper, and Mr Nagendranath Gupta was sent to join him as the editor of Sind Times. In this way, in the infancy of journalism in Sind, Bengal contributed its talent in considerable measure.

Sind was connected with the freedom struggle of India from the very inception of the Indian National Congress. The partition of Bengal in 1905 created a storm across the country, and Sind was not immune to it. A “Vande Mataram” Mandli was established in Hyderabad, Sind. Lalchand Amardinomal, an eminent writer of that time, J.B. Kripalani, who later became President of the Indian National Congress just before the partition of the country and was an avowed Gandhian, and many others joined this organisation.

At that time, in the wake of the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, when Rabindranath Tagore renounced his Knighthood in protest against the atrocities, the veteran writer and intellectual Jethmal Parsram wrote an editorial with a heading drawn from a verse of Shah Abdul Latif. He was tried for treason and bore imprisonment for three years. In this way the course of the freedom struggle in Sind was greatly inspired by Bengal.

It is in the field of literature and arts that Sind was most profoundly influenced by Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore’s brother had been appointed a Sessions Judge at Hyderabad, Sind, and while there he developed social and family ties with many Sindhis. When Rabindranath Tagore came to Sind in 1923, he was welcomed with open hearts as one of their own. He was felicitated at many places by writers, artists and the public alike.

College students started a dramatic club dedicated to his name, and his play *Chitra* was performed in his presence, for which they were lauded by Tagore himself. All his works were translated into Sindhi, and translations of the works of other writers such as Bankimchandra and Saratchandra, as well as many other Bengali writers followed. In fact, an entire generation of Sindhi readers was brought up on these translations and carried vivid images of Bengal, its fascinating landscape and its people. Sind owes much to Santiniketan. Mr. Uttamchand was one of its first students and is said to have taught at the institution for some years as well. He was followed by Girdhari Kripalani and Krishna Kripalani.

Krishna Kripalani was claimed by Bengal as one of its own when he married the niece of Gurudev Tagore and continued to teach at Santiniketan for a considerable time.

Eventually he became the first Secretary of the Sahitya Akademi and was later nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Sobho Gianchandani, whom Gurudev called the “Man from Mohenjodaro,” sat at the feet of Gurudev, to whom he opened his personal library.

Sobho Gianchandani refused to leave his motherland after the division of the country and remained a lighthouse for all progressive causes in Sind, Pakistan, braving imprisonment for many years on account of his convictions.

Krishin Khatwani was studying at Santiniketan at the time of the partition. Despite being burdened with the responsibility of looking after his family's needs, he continued to write and significantly contributed to the corpus of Sindhi literature. He won the Sahitya Akademi award, was a member of its executive body and served as a convener for the Sindhi language. He also played

an important role in the movement for retaining a distinct Sindhi identity by promoting Sindhi language and culture.

Today in India, the Sindhi community does not own even an inch of land under its feet, yet when we hear “Sind” in our National Anthem, our heads bow before Gurudev Tagore.

THE NEED FOR VISION DOCUMENT FOR SINDHI COMMUNITY FOR NEXT 25 YEARS

In this fast changing world enriched with scientific temper it has become customary for organisations and Nations to have a vision document to give it necessary direction and provide support system towards those goals. In such an endeavour the need for flexibility and changing goal posts in the aftermath of unforeseen circumstances has to be inbuilt. The very diverse factors affecting Sindhi society scattered throughout India and abroad the need for such a document will not be over emphasised. It goes without saying that such an exercise has to be multifaceted and comprehensive at the same time.

In order to attempt to produce such a document following steps should be taken and are essential.

1. It will be necessary to know the figures of Sindhi population (Preferably age wise- taking census methodology as a model) in the cities where Sindhi people reside in sizeable number in India and abroad. In this the help of many social organizations at various places may be enlisted. With that data the community profile at local level may be prepared which may be later on be integrated in a large frame.
2. It has to be noted that before partition of the country in Sind people had geographical identity like Shikarpuri,

Hyderabadi, Sahiti, Larkana as against caste identity prevalent in rest of India. After 70 years now new Geographical identities are emerging like Sindhis of Mumbai, Delhi, Ajmer etc. Even among sindhi Diaspora this trend from being from USA, Hongkong and other places are emerging and at various levels due to their different type of exposure their concept of Sindhi identity too varies. The distinction between salaried/ professional class and business class is also pronounced. This also colours the sense of identity.

3. A draft as under as questionnaire is proposed. (May be altered and additions made)
4. Name
5. Place of residence:
6. Age:
7. Education (In which medium)
8. Present work
9. Joint family or nuclear family.
10. Have you heard from your parents from which place they are from In Sind?
11. If yes indicate the name:
12. Would you like to visit that place once again?
13. How many changes you have seen in last ten years?
14. Are you adapt at use of fast developing technology?
15. What are your experiences (In short) during your struggling years?

16. Do you feel socially and financially secure enough?
17. Give details about your family members?
18. Do you feel concerned about the marriage of your daughters?
19. Do you give the same type of education to sons and daughters?
20. How do you envision your future in ten years?
21. What are your aspirations for your children?
22. Would you like your children to be proud of sindhi Identity?
23. What are the technological changes that you expect in next ten years?
24. Do you celebrate Sindhi festival like cheti Chand.
25. Are you a member of any Sindhi organisation?
26. What are the bad customs that irritate you and some you would like to preserve?
27. Write a brief note about the future of your children as you envisage.
28. What makes a happy life and a happy family? (A short note)
29. What are your relations with the local population? Are some envious?
30. What would make you a proud Sindhi and a proud Indian?

Some questions may be deleted and some more may be added as per discussion with specialist agencies in survey conducting agencies.

The results may be analysed to frame a vision document.

TRANSLATION MEET DOCUMENT

A ‘word’ in verbal communication is invested with emotion through voice, facial expression and body language but when that word comes in cold print those attributes are absent and word stands alone. It is left to the reader to get its full import from the context in which that ‘word’ is used. It is the only facet left of many which has originally been invested. In this way the printed word becomes reader centric to drive its full meaning. Often this leads to communication loss and the subtler shades of the meaning of the ‘word’ are lost. This is inevitable at the level of creative process but it is more than made up by the experience, association of ideas and imagination of the reader.

The translation of creative literature into other languages poses challenges at quite different levels. It is about these challenges that I propose to dwell on briefly here.

In one of the interactive sessions after listening to English translation of Bengali Poems of Ms. Taslima Nasreen I asked her about the translation loss of her poems. To this she replied “In poetry translation loss is 80% and in prose it is 60%.”

Late Prof: M. U. Malkani was the first writer from Sindhi Language and was the first fellow of Sahitya Akademi. When his

article on literature of Tagore was published in ‘Indian Literature’ a note had been appended to make it clear that these were the views of the scholar who has read Tagore only in English translations. Thus the question of translocation loss from the language other than the original one has to be understood.

I shall very briefly try to give few pointers as to the reason for this loss in the process of translation.

First I shall deal with this loss when the literature is translated from one language to another. It has to be noted that every language emerges through sharing of common history, beliefs, mythology and milieu. Every language has its unique tradition and expression.

In the dictionary one may get many words for one word but all words convey different shades in different contexts. Therefore the work of translation is not to translate one word into another word in any other language. It involves deeper understanding of the society and literary traditions of the source language and the language in which the text is sought to be translated. Translation becomes doubly complex if the work is not translated directly from the original language. In most of the cases the Indian works are translated either through Hindi or English therefore the authenticity of the text becomes twice removed and no wonder the reader has to experience the translation loss. Particularly in poetry, subtle nuances are lost.

When we come to translation of books from European languages, which is mostly through English language as a source language to Indian languages the problem of translation becomes more complex. At a deeper level the problems arise from the fact that there is a difference in the plane at which these languages emerge.

Without attributing any value judgment I have to submit that two main concepts of time and space differ and consequently all the concepts that flow as corollary from those two basic concepts that exist at different planes. In Indian philosophy the concept of time is limitless whereas according to western ethos the time is limited to doom's day. According to our philosophy the space is limitless and the seventh heaven appears to be ultimate. In this background, it is rather difficult to get synonyms but we merely get equivalents.

Thus there being basic differences at the level at the very emergence of concepts a translator has to do many compromises. He has to try to transplant rather than translate the text. In this case also the level of translation loss is much more.

In spite of all this the stories have been translated since times immemorial. It is in nature of stories to wander like clouds and there are no boundaries in the skies. Braving all these difficulties and limitations translations have remained inevitable for all the languages of the world. Stories do not recognize any boundaries and they move from one region to another and this all involves translation. In a way translation has remained linked to creation itself and the translator undertakes the journey as a co-creator and walks along with him. More often than not the translation becomes trans-creation.

It is also a fact that most of the modern prose genres in Indian languages are phenomena of post English education and have come from English literature in the nineteenth century. Sind was the last region to be captured by the British and in this language the prose genres mostly entered through translation. Initially there was a considerable period when translations of various forms of literature from English and other European languages was undertaken by

Sindhi pioneers in prose. In this period we see the emergence of great scholars who set the standard for literature that continued to guide future generations of writers. Mirza Qaleech Beg is said to have produced more than 400 books most of them being translations.

Many more notables joined the ranks and this process continues to this day. Today we have translations of the best literature in Indian language as well as of the world. Translators were not driven by any other consideration but to share the beauty and pleasure of what they read and their undying devotion to their mother tongue.

Today is the day to bow our heads in reverence to all those who selflessly devoted themselves to enrich the literature of our language without expecting anything in return.

REVISITING SINDHI SHORT STORIES

A Concept Note:

Literature is convergence of all fields like, Philosophy, Psychology, Economics, Politics, Sociology, Art and History or Histories connected with any of the disciplines of human endeavor.

The categorization of study of human life into various compartments is an analytical exercise aimed at specialization or rather super specialization where one tends to learn more and more of less and less. Thus a holistic view of human life is narrowed down and often lost in compartments in an era of super specialization. My exercise shall be aimed to analyze the emergence of various schools and trends in literature, in background of all the forces that work at the root emergence of different schools, trends in literature. Pieces of fragmented and multiple identities would be sought to be put together to have a holistic view. My exercise would be a reconstructive endeavor, one aimed at synthesis to arrive at the holistic view that literature seeks to present. It will be an exercise at convergence of various disciplines that merge to create literature. Literary schools and trends have deeper contexts which remain in the background which have to be explored. My exercise shall be limited only to the genre of short stories in Sindhi language.

Initially phenomena of creativity are to be probed. Its two distinct facets, spontaneity and restraint are to be discussed at length. These two attitudes lead to different schools and trends in arts and literature. This ground is to be briefly covered.

- Prose in Sindhi started after the standardization of the script in 1854. Education and mass literacy in Sindhi started only thereafter. The priority was to provide school Text Books.
- Publishing of the General and literary books and periodicals was stated under the influence of the reform movement by students who had returned from Calcutta as it was the capital at that time. This reform movement In Sindh was started under the influence of Brahmo Samaj.
- This period saw translation of many significant books and literary books. The various genres of literature like Essay, Short Story and Novel came to be written in the beginning of 20th century. In this period the foundation prose literature was laid on a sound footing.
- Short story has traversed through following identifiable phases/trends.

(a) Initial formative period.

(b) Social reform period.

(c) Continuation of Sufi ethos in rural Sind.

(d) Period of Freedom Movement.

(e) Period of Progressive literature. (This includes before partition and post partition)

(f) Period of modern literature.

(g) Nostalgic literary trend and question of Sindhi identity.

(h) Trends discernable in the post globalization period.

- First Short story "Hura Makhi a Ja "was written in 1913 by Lalchand Amardinomal.
- As most of the writers were teachers and were supposed to be ideal for society they were idealistic and their literature was moralistic. This attitude could be attributed to the influence of erstwhile Muslim orthodox influence and Victorian moralistic attitudes.
- A representative short story of this period is to be reproduced and studied which mirrors the problems and ethos of times. (representative story ' NAON JAWAL LADAL BAARU' from Chamra Posh Joon kahaniyoon by Jethmal Parsram) Stories reflecting the Sufi ethos of life in the villages and countryside of Sindh where people of various faiths lived in harmony and the values which were embedded in their psyche. (Ado Abdul Rahman to be reproduced and analyzed at length. Stories of Assanand Mamtora particularly 'Kiki' to be studied in the context of emerging middle class and advance in the Education)
- Stories of freedom struggle. Hashoo Kewalramani's story Padma to be examined.
- Progressive trend in literature had started before partition. A collection of short stories 'Reg hastani Phoola' to be read and commented upon with one representative story.
- During the post partition period only the stories written In India can be taken for obvious reasons.
- Progressive period in post partition period to be analyzed and

the stories produced during this period to be revisited and one representative story of this period may be taken and discussed at length. Story of Sundri Uttamchandani ‘Bhoori’ to be examined.

- In the post progressive period the emergence of individualistic to be discussed and one story from the famous trio of writers of that phase Mohan Kalpana, Guno Samtani and Lal Pushp be taken as representative and commented upon. Guno samtani’s Story ‘Pralaya’ to be examined.
- Emergence of trend of ‘MODERN’ Literature and significant stories written in that phase may be revisited, a representative story of this period to be selected and discussed. ‘Another day’ a story by Shyam Jaisinghani to be examined.
- The Nostalgic literature in Sindhi about remembrances of Sindhi life and subsequently about the Sindhi identity to be revisited and one representative story of this trend to be reproduced and discussed. This trend spans the time period from partition to this day. Story “Ghanti” to be examined.
- Sindhi short story in post economic reform period – emergence of neo rich values to be discussed. ‘Bashomal Jo Bathroom’ by Prof: Hiro Shewkani to be examined.
- Future pointers.
- (As it is a research and creative work during the actual writings the above concept may be enriched and many acquire different counters and may chart its own course.)

Following books have been identified for reference purposes and notes have been taken from most of them.

1. History of Sindhi Hindus. By Behroomal Meherchand (Two Parts).
2. Sindh Our Heritage. By Motiram Ramwani. (Two Parts)
3. 'Vande Mataram 'Nationalist Stories.' Compiled by Deepchand Tilokchand.
4. Early Published Sindhi folk tales. By Dr. Murlidhar Jetley.
5. A Survey of Sindhi literature in post partition period. By Prof: M.U. Malkani.
6. Nationalist Stories. Published By Jethanand Bhawandas Lalwani.
7. National Revolt. By Ashok Mehta. Translated by. Bhavan Panjwani and Mohan Punjabi.
8. Sindh's Role in Freedom Struggle. By Baldev Gajria.
9. Nationalist Flame By Khemchand Detaram Vaswani.
10. Rishi Dayaram Gidumal(A Biography) By Prof: Tarachand Shokiram Pherwani
11. White Brute. By Sheikh Ayaz.
12. Desert flowers. By progressive writers.
13. Those were the days. By Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi.
14. With whom I lived my life. By G. M. Sayed.
15. Evaluation. By Kirat Babani.
16. August Revolution. published by Beharilal Chabria.
17. Brother Abdul Rehman by Amarlal Hingorani.
18. Intellectual content of literature. By Allahdad Bohio.

19. Sindh of Meers. By Naraindas Malkani.
 20. My natives- those were the days. By Pir Hissamudin Rashdi.
 21. Stories of one in disguise. By Jethmal Parsram.
 22. History of Sindhi Prose. By Prof: M.U. Malkani.
 23. Anthology of Hindi Short Stories. English Transaltion.
Compiled by Bisham Sahani. (Sahitya Akademi Publication)
 24. Consciousness(Chetna). By Anand Khemani.
 25. Sindhi Journalism.
 26. Sindhi Story, Drama, and criticism. By. A.J. Uttam.
 27. Evolution of Art of Sindhi Short Story. By. Lal Pushp.
 28. Concept of 'Modernism'. By Prof: Hiro Shewkani.
 29. Sindhi Short Story after Partition. By Kirat Babani.
 30. Creation of literature. By Dr. Satish Rohra.
 31. From Story to Story. By Dr. Satish Rohra.
 32. 40-84. By Harish Vaswani.
 33. Crisis of Creation and Sindhi Short story- A Collection.
 34. People may follow a trend but you should move in opposite
direction. By Prof: Hiro Shewkani.
 35. Special Issues on Short story of various literary periodicals
Sahit Dhara, Priha Phuti, Sangita Etc.
- (Note: The titles of the above books have been translated for
convenience)
36. Identity and Violence- The illusion of destiny. By Amartya
Sen

37. India as an Emerging Power. Edited by Sumit Ganguly.
38. The Routledge Companion to POST MODERNISM. Edited by Stuart Sim.
39. The great Indian Middle class by Pavan Varma.
40. Cultural Pasts by Ms. Romila Thapar.
41. Million Mutinies by V S Naipaul.
42. An Idea of India by Prof: Sunil Khilnani

PS. As this is an ongoing process during the period many more books will have to be referred.

ENTRIES FOR ENCYCLOPEDIA

Manuscripts: (Sindhi). The art of writing flourished in ancient civilizations. From the Indus valley civilization site of Mohen Jo Daro (Sind) we have got many seals, the script of that time yet remains to be deciphered and from Mesopotamian civilization we have got clay tablets, from Egypt we have got writings on papyrus.

In India, with the advent of Aryans this art of writing seems to have disappeared for some time. The oldest Holy book Rig Veda which is said to have been created on the banks of the river Sindhu for a long time was preserved in oral traditions and so were other books. Knowledge of that time was transmitted to the future generations through Shruti and Smriti for a long time.

The Arab conquest of Sind in the beginning of Seventh century when Islam was still in the initial stage is an important watershed in history. At that time many scholars flourished in Sind and with their books were taken to Arabia where they translated many books of knowledge ranging from Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology, Medical science and many other disciplines. From there along with the Empire they travelled to the west. Till that time apparently Sind had a robust tradition of writing and must have had many manuscripts. At this point and time again a rupture is witnessed of this tradition.

At this juncture it becomes obvious to delineate the limitations that Sind and Sindhi language are subject to. The court language continued to be Arabic in the initial stage and in the latter period it continued to be Persian till 1844. Until the British conquest of Sind, Persian language was used for official purpose and for teaching purpose and for any expression of literary talent as well. Though at a popular level Sindhi language attained glorious heights in eighteenth century in realm of poetry.

When British conquered Sind, the scholarship being an individual asset the Sindhi language was being written in many scripts. At the time of occupation 13 main scripts were identified which were in vogue in Sind by British rulers.. Sami, one of the most important poets of the Sindhi 'Trimurti' of "Shah, Sachal and Sami", (the trio of classical poets), wrote his shalokas in Gurmukhi script on slips of paper and deposited them in an earthen pot. They were discovered much after his death and were brought to light much later by Chandanmal Kouromal Khilnani, a pioneer of Sindhi education.

Earlier one of the scripts adopted by Abdul Hassan was being used for Sindhi language that was based on the Persian script. As Sindhi language has 36 consonants and sixteen vowels this script was ill suited to Sindhi language. East India Company appointed a committee of expert linguistic scholars from Hindu as well as well Muslim communities. They devised a script based on Persio-Arabic script of 52 letters and their recommendation was accepted by the board of East India Company in July 1853 and regular teaching in Sindhi schools started thereafter. The modern genres of prose literature came into Sindhi language through the printing press.

In spite of above limitations, the tradition of scholarship and

writing has remained strong in Sind. Initially it was necessary to were printed which inspired many original writings in various genres of literature. The manuscripts of only important poets were retrieved for the purpose of printing.. It is only after the partition of the country that the hunt for manuscripts in public libraries and private collections started in the right earnest.

In 2005 the first volume of the Bibliography of manuscripts in Sind was published by Sindhi Adbi Board, Jam Shoro Sind and 2nd Volume of Bibliography of manuscripts has been published in 2010. Both Volumes give details of 16000 manuscripts but the Editor, Mr Makhdoom Salim Allah Sidiqui maintains that the number could rise to 20000 as in one volume more than one manuscript is bound. Most of these books are in Arabic and Persian languages with some books being in Turki language also. This is in spite of the fact that there was a huge fire at Paat (An important seat of learning) which destroyed many libraries. In the course of time many invaders have plundered the books. It is said that Nadir Shah (AD1762) took away with him considerable rare books as war booty.

On going through the two volumes that contain a bibliography of more than 16000 books most of which are either in Arabic and in Persian, out of those listed are only 1575 manuscripts that are in Sindhi language. 400 manuscripts of Sindhi language are housed at the Research Library, Institute of Sindhology, University of Sind.

Sind Archives at Karachi has 291 Volumes and among private collection of Dr. Nabi Bux Khan Baloch are 102 volumes whereas at Village Khair, Mohamed Areja near Larkana has 150 volumes. Others are scattered in various private collections and wait to be scientifically restored. The subjects of the Sindhi volumes cover a

wide spectrum essentially from Religion, Islamic jurisprudence, Sermons, Islamic mysticism, Taswauif (Sufi Philosophy) Tib, (Medicine), Botany and Agriculture, reports of various expeditions, poetry and other subjects. There is one book on treatment of diseases of birds too. Collections of poetry of various Sufi poets of Sind are also found in sufficient numbers.

Interestingly some of the Persian works are by Sindhi Hindus and among the Persian translations we find Manuscripts on Bhagwat Gita, Tulsi Mata, Yoga Vashist, Shivpuran and Krishna Sudhama. Persian translations of some Hindu Holy books by Dara Shikoh are also found in the libraries of Sind.

Movements literary: (Sindhi) In Early Sindhi literature we get some verses of ‘Maomoe’ which were considered as prophesies foretelling events that would befall Sind. These are followed by religious instructions ‘GInana’. The early and most significant Sindhi literature emerged is that of Sufi poetry. As in Sind majority of population practiced Islam as a religion it was a counterpart of a same Bhakti movement sweeping across the subcontinent. Stalwarts of this Sufi poetic movement were Shah Abdul Latif, Abdul Wahab ‘Sachal Sarmast’ and Chainrai ‘Sami (Who preached Vedantic philosophy) they were preceded by Qazi Qadan, Shah Inayat of Jhok and many others. They were followed by other significant poets and this trend continues even today.

Persian was the court language till 1844 and many practiced the craft of poetry in Persian language in Sind. After the conquest of Sind, British declared Sindhi Language to be the official language of the land though Sind was annexed with Bombay presidency for administrative purpose. Though first ‘Diwan’ of Sindhi Ghazal was brought out by Akhund Gul Mohmed who lived about two centuries ago but the Sindhi Ghazal and Persian poetic

forms continued in Sindhi Language and many contributed to this trend. In this period the subjects and often vocabulary was heavily tilted in favour of Persian language.

Sindhi prose came in its own only after the script of Sindhi provide books for education and many books through translations language was standardized as prevailing based on Persio-Arabic scripts and education in Sindhi language commenced. During the initial period when young students from Sind went to Calcutta for higher studies they were influenced by social reform movements sweeping across the country then. Thus, the initial trend that manifested in Sindhi prose was along with the movement for education and the Social Reform Movement. Sadhu Hiranand and Sadhu Navalrai along with Rishi Dayaram Gidumal were the pioneers of this trend and important writers of this period were Kouromal Chandanmal Khilnani, Mirza Qaleech Baig and Dayaram Gidumal. They were followed by Lalchand Amardinomal and Jethmal Parsram (He had to face imprisonment for his 'seditious' writing). He quoted a verse from Shah Abdul Latif as a heading to his article criticising the Jalianwala baug massacre. Parmanand Mewaram was an important writer of these times. Lalachand Amardinomal as an activist used to sell khadi door to door carrying bolts on his shoulders. His plays Umer Marvi and Aazadi Ji Kodi inspired patriotic fervour. The latter group played an important role in a trend of Freedom Movement in Literature. Significantly later on Dada Shewak Bhojraj with his Novel 'Ashirwad' and first woman writer Guli Sadarangani played an important role by writing A Novel 'Ithihaad' (Unity) on question of inter faith marriage between Hindu and Muslim.

In field of poetry Kishinchand 'Bewas' played an important role of a catalyst.

He broke away from the traditional forms of poetry and introduced a language of common man and took up the subjects of wails and woes of the common man and he set a trend of writing on nature. His poetry was infused with patriotic feelings, social reform, faith in God and optimism. He attracted a band of disciples who followed him. One of his disciples was Hundraj 'Dukhayal' who emerged as a National poet in Sind and suffered imprisonment for his songs. His other disciples were Hari 'Dilgir', Prabhu 'Wafa' Ram Panjwani and Khialdas 'Fani' who also contributed to literature wedded to his ideology. They were to make substantial contribution to Sindhi literature in years to come.

A few years before partition of the country and during the freedom struggle the Progressive Literary Movement made inroads in Sindhi literature. Regular literary classes were held where many writers would participate. Gobind Punjabi, Gobind Malhi, Kirat Babani, Sobho Gianchandani, Mohmed Ibrahim Joyo and Sheikh 'Ayaz' were some of the pioneers of this trend.

After partition of the country in India 'Trimurti' of Gobind Malhi, Kirat Babani and A J Uttam emerged as significant voices of Sindhi progressive literature. They were joined by many more writers. Sundri Uttamchandani and Kala Prakash emerged as significant women writers of this trend. Popati Hiranadani wrote about the emancipation of women and was the first feminist writer in this period. This trend continued to rein for nearly two decades. A band of mainly three writers Guno Samtani, Mohan Kalpana and Lal Pushp broke away from this trend and were inspired by trend of 'Proyogwad' prevalent in Hindi literature. In place of a collective character in context of social milieu they portrayed character as an individual and man woman relationship remained their main subject of stories. This trend was mistakenly called as 'Romantic trend' also in Sindhi literature.

This trio was soon overtaken by the trend in literature which emerged as 'New Literature'. This was inspired by post world war trends in Europe and spoke of alienation, absurdity- futility and Psycho-analysis and crumbling spirit of man. In Indian context the agrarian reforms transferred the life in villages and process of urbanization created a middle class which felt alienated from all the known contexts and emerging middle class was in throes of insecurity – anxiety. This trend made rapid strides in Sindhi literature too. Harish Vaswani, Vasdev Mohi, Prem Prakash were leading and enduring voices of this trend. In poetic form they have left an undeniable mark and have given an altogether new face to Sindhi poetry. In prose also experiments were made but this trend could not get connected with Sindhi readers. Mr. Prem Abhichandani and Anand Khemani in time to come did initiate discussions about post modern literature also but at creative level they have not been able to leave their desired effect.

After the partition many writers who came to India had live memories of their friends of childhood, generous neighbors with whom they had shared their happy or sad experiences. Thus a sense of loss of the land and cordial relationship was reflected in literature also. As Sindhi language was not included in the list of languages in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution it came to be discriminated against by officials and this led to powerful movement for inclusion of Sindhi language in the Indian Constitution, this was called the 'Sindhyaat movement'. This created many new writers in various cities of India wherever Sindhis lived in sizable numbers. Many Literary magazines came into existence.

The literature of this loss of soil and cordial relationship with people on the other side became the main trend in Sindhi literature. This trend was reinforced by the fact that such literature was being

produced by Sindhi Muslims from across the border. Now this trend has crystallized into a movement for retention of distinct

Sindhi identity as with the impact of globalization every language is losing its elite class and without a backdrop of villages, peasantry, artisans and working class Sindhis find themselves at a loss. Now it is being strongly recognized that while the study of trends could be a convenient tool for a critic but for a creative writer it should not become a straightjacket.

Nath Sahitya: (Sindhi). Sindhi Wani of Mahamati Prannath (1618-1694) from his Collection of book “Kajalam Saroop’ which is referred to as ‘Taartam Wani’ also was collected and edited by Mr. Jhamu Chhugani in 1999. Where as Sindhi Poetry of Dadu Dayal (whose sect is very popular) was published in 1926 that contained poems composed in Sindhi language. It was also edited and separately published in a book form by Mr. Jhamatmal Bhawnani in 1980.

Previously only seven poetic compositions were known to have been written by Qazi Qazan (1463-1551) his compositions in Sindhi were found in a monastery in Haryana at a village situated near Rohtak as part of a manuscript compiled as “Santon Ki Wani” in 1972. In that manuscript were found 112 compositions by him. Mr. Hiro Thakur edited and published them. They have evoked great interest among Sindhi scholars in Sind and now they are looking forward to compositions of some other Sindhi poets of medieval period in Sindhi speaking areas like Kutch Barmer and Jaisalmer which now form a part of India.

Sindh was strategically placed in the main through fare of the ancient world and had to bear the brunt of innumerable invasions. Though invasions destroyed a lot but on cultural and literary front it left some undeniable footprints. For a long time many Jogis and

mendicants traversed through this region to pilgrimage of ancient Shrine of 'Hinglaj Devi' situated at the foothills of Balochistan.

It is in this region that the best strands of Sufi thought and Bhakti movement fused to give it a unique character. This bloomed at its best in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif(1698 -1768).Shah Latif went to pilgrimage to the shrine of ' Hinglaj Devi' in the company of such Jogis. In Sindh this was a common practice that Muslims would go for pilgrimage to places of worship of Hindus and Hindus would go to Muslim Mazars. The same place would be known only by different name by flowers of both religions. In this case Hinglaj Devi was called 'NANI' (Maternal grandmother) by Muslims. Shah Latif speaks of various sects of Jogis he came across and interacted with. He names some of the sects as Bairagis, Lahootis, Kapdis (There as a big Temple dedicated to Kapdi sect at Kutch), Knaotia, Kana cheer,Ragaridia (Those who would smear only Ash on their body). Others observing a vow of silence. All would carry only the name of Rama in their hearts and follow their Nath.

His entire Sur Ramkali has been dedicated to these Jogis and his attachment and love for them. He minutely describes their austerities and practices. His entire poetry though couched in idiom of Sufi thought has been influenced by the discourse he had with them.

Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib of Sikh religion which contains Banis of various poets of Bhakti period had immense influence in Sind. There was not any place in Sind where Sindhi Hindus resided that did not have 'Tikana' (A place of worship where Guru Granth Sahib was not installed.) Sadno, a Sindh based poet whose verses of Hindi poetry find place in Adi Granth, his Sindhi poetry is still waiting to emerge from some monstary,

Even another eminent poet Sachal ‘Sarmast’ (1739- 1829) (Intoxicated- whose real name was Abdul Wahab) in his poetry exhorts to recite ‘Jap Sahib’ and speaks of ‘Guru’ and ‘Gobind’. As Sind had Muslims as a majority population and in absence of caste system among Hindus the tyranny of mulla and his oppression was keenly felt. Sachal challenged and ridiculed this class thus played a role of reformer like the role played by Bhakti poets.

Sami (1743-1850): (Chainrai Bachomal Lund) wrote Shalokas as a reverence to his preceptor (Guru). He left his compositions in an earthen pot while he was alive it is only after his death that this treasure was found and edited and compiled by Kouromal Chandanmal in 1885-92 in three volumes. Subsequently his work has been further edited by Prof. B H Nagrani in three volumes in 1955-1958 and 1967. His writing combines fine elements of Sufi and Vedanta thought. This trend has been followed by Bedil, Bekas, Rohal and many other poets. It continues to be a perennial stream in Sindhi poetry.

One Act Play: (Sindhi). The origins of Sindhi one act play are surrounded in its uniqueness on two counts. Normally it is believed that the one Act play came into existence as a curtain raiser for the main play. In Sind it was the other way round. Initially the theater groups would come in Sind with religious stories as their narrative.. In an open field a part would be excavated which would form a slope for audience to sit and at the end would be a pit where artists would perform. The plays would be long and continue for the entire night. As most of the plays would be tragic in the end to lift the mood of audience a light humorous play would be performed to lift their mood so that they start their day in a happy mood.

First original Sindhi play is said to be written by Mirza Qaleech Baig in 1880. Regular Sindhi dramatic societies came into existence in colleges. In 1894 In D J College of Karachi D J Sind College amateur Society was established. In Hyderabad (Sind) too it was established in presence of Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Whereas the first Sindhi full length play was staged in 1894 the One act play as a distinct genre came into existence nearly 20 years later. This also in unique circumstances it emerged as a tool of Social reform and in a way it was a precursor of modern Street Play. Three groups emerged as 'Aasa Joon Mandloon' (Groups of hope) One group staged a play on roof corner of a busy market while the other group placed some wooden platforms in a garden and created a stage. They sent messages for social reform like evil of dowry system and against ill treatment of women and other social evils like drinking liquor etc. This genre flourished in Schools in various parts of Sind.

Before 1947 (In pre partition period) 100 one act plays are on record. Out of these 100 one Act plays 77 are original plays in Sindhi 9 are adaptations and 14 are translations. These plays have been written by 35 writers. Important contributors as writers to this form are Prof: M U Malkani, Lalchand Amardinomal, Mirza Qaleech Baig, Jethanand Nagrani, Behrumal Meharchand, Nanikram Dharamdas, Khushiram Vaswani, Kishichand Bewas, Mohmed Usman Diplai. 23 one act plays have been contributed alone by M U Malkani and 11 plays by Lalchand Amardinomal.

These plays were staged by the following groups: Sind College Dramatic society, Deti Leti (Dowry) Natak Mandli, New High School Karachi, Sindhi Sahit Society, Shewa Mandal. (Hyderabad), Shahani School, Karachi, Rabindrath Dramatic Club

(Hydrerabad), N J High School, Hyderabad Natak Mandli and Vande Maatram Mandli.

After partition of the country Sindhi Hindu community migrated to India and settled in various parts of India. In many cities the clusters of the Sindhi community came into existence. The threads of life began to be picked up again. Schools /colleges were stated in buildings of existing school/ college premises as a shifts. Once again schools and colleges had started presenting

One Act plays as a part their annual day functions. These activities were first recorded in Mumbai and Delhi.

In Mumbai a literary organization Sindhi Sahit Mandal (mainly consisting of writers) also started stage performances with along with musicand One Act plays were performed.

During the mid-fifties Sindhi cultural events were relayed from All India radio for half an hour weekly from Mumbai. Radio plays were also written during that period. They also were capable of being staged with slight changes. One Act Plays were staged on the occasion of annual All India Sindhi language Sammelans organized by Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha by artistes from all across India.

In these situations many young people emerged at various places who took to performing stage plays and mostly one act plays. At Delhi Jiwan Gursahani and Hem Nagwani, At Jaipur Sunder Agnani, Lachaman Bhambhani and Vasdev Sindhu Bharti,

At Ahmedabad Chandur Sawlani organized a group and Prem Prakash introduced Sindhi experimental Theater, At Ajmer Goverdhan Bharti, and many others at various Sindhi clusters , all helped to give impetus to staging of Sindhi one Act plays.

From 1952 to 1980, 25 collections of one act plays of various writers have been published. These collections contain 96 One Act plays out of them 24 had already been written in Sind while in India new 73 one act plays have been written and one is an adaptation. Besides 9 collection of plays by various writers have also been published which contains 37 plays by various writers.

The significant writers who have contributed to this genre are Prof: M U Malkani, Vasdev Nirmal, Harikant, Kirat Babani, Gobind Malhi, Prem Prakash, M. Kamal and others.

At Calcutta, Youth Association organized a two day drama competition in which groups from all across participated. For last many years Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha has also been organizing one Act play Festivals. At Adipur under the auspices of Indian Institute of Sindhology, Mr. Sahib Bijani has established M U Malkani Memorial Dramatic Club where regular performances of one act plays are staged.

Opera: (Sindhi) In this predominantly western (Italian) inspired form in the Indian context it has come to symbolize a performance in which drama, dance and music are fused for the performance. In Pre partition Sind, Prof Ram Panjwani performed seven folk tales of Sind on the stage of D J Sind College at Karachi.

After partition these were repeated in Bombay on the stage of Jai Hind College. In Sind, Sheikh Ayaz wrote two poetic operas based on history of Sind 'Dodo Chanesar' and 'Bhagat Singh khe Phasi'. Arjan Hasid presented a musical narration of 'Umar Maruee' for All India Radio, Dr Arjan 'Shad' wrote "Daahiyoon Dukha Disan". The most notable contribution in this genre has been of Anila Sunder, a noted danseuse of International stature she has presented eight ballets.

Shah Joon Soormiyoon, ‘Jaagu Sindhi Jaagu,’ ‘Sindhu Dhara,’ ‘Thi Jaani na Juda,’ Zala zer Zabara’ which have been repeated all cross India and the world wherever Sindhis live in sizable numbers. Her Performance of” Sind Muhinji Amma” (Sind my mother) scripted by Popati Hiranadani has seen more than fifty performances. Other scripts also have been written by eminent Sindhi writers like Goverdhan Bharti and Mohan Gehani. Lyrics have been set to music by famous music directors like C Arjun, C Lakhmichand, Ghanshyam Vaswani and others. Leading, Sindhi poet Naryan ‘Shyam’ has distinction of writing ‘Roop- Maya’ a puranic story based on enticement of Rishi Vishhwamitra by nymph Menka..

As far as aesthetic content of the poetry is concerned this composition of Narayan Shyam remains a high watermark not as yet reached by any other poetic creation. This has been performed many times by Sonu Choudhry and has won critical acclaim.

Parody: (Sindhi). In case of Sindhi Language the parody is scarce. The reasons are obvious, Early Sindhi poets were linked to Bhakti and Sufi traditions and they were revered as saints by the people. Till 1844, Persian was the official language of Sind. The poets in courts of rulers wrote in Persian language and the parodies if at all, written till that period cannot be considered as part of Sindhi literature and tradition .Sindhi script was standardized only in 1853 and it is thereafter that the modern education and modern genres of literature came into existence. Till partition the Sindhi prose had enjoyed a life span of only nearly 90 years.

Though traditional hangover of highly Persianised poetry continued till the poetry of freedom movement overwhelmed this tradition and Mushiaras in tradition of ‘misra traha’ continued to

be held at various places and it is possible that in those Mushairas the poets may have indulged in parodying many of their contemporaries but the literary publications of those time did not publish parodies and they were confined to select private audience. Though satirical literature was published in those times and at that period literature inspired by social reform movements and freedom movements had many outdated traditions and attitudes to pour their satire on and it is reflected in many narratives of that period but parody of any writer or writings is conspicuous by its absence.

After partition of the country Parasram Zia did parody of the erstwhile leaders who had led the entire community to the harsh life in the camps and their poor condition. It was much later that a book penned by Gope Kamal “Hai Muhinji Nazar” was published in 1986. At that time it was considered a pioneering effort in literary criticism in fashion of word cartoons but now it is realized that it is a parody of the writers and the books he has selected. He takes Arjan ‘Hasid’s’ book of poetry ‘Mero Siju’ (Soiled Sun) to the laundry for dry cleaning, Dayal Asha’s Book of poetry “Naeen Roshni” (New Light) to a priest in a temple and the entire narrative of this piece is couched in the language of religious katha. Sundri Uttamchandani’s Novel “Preet Purani Reet Nirali” (Old love but a new way) has been seen through a dogmatic communist cadre. Goverdhan Sharama ‘Ghayal’s book ‘Koonjoon thiun Kankan’ (Birds are chirping) through the eyes of a student. His own book ‘Chorial Khushi a jo Sukha’ (Comfort of stolen Happiness) through the eyes of a police Inspector. M. Kamal’s “Panjah Ghazala” (Fifty Ghazals) has been seen through the eyes of a barber. (It may be mentioned that M. Kamal had no use of barber due to his bald head). Moti Prakash’s book of poetry ‘Ching wich Chole’ (A Garment caught by a spark) is seen through the

eyes of a lady teacher. Vasdev Mohi's book of poetry "Subhu Kithe Aahe" (Where is the dawn?) has been assigned to a shopkeeper for his opinion. It may be said that in Sindhi literature though the parody is scarce but it is not absent.

Pen portraits: (Sindhi). Dr. Hotchand Gurbuxani in introduction to his standard book "Shah Jo Risalo" in his introductory volume 'Muqadma-e – Latifi' (1923) has given pen portrait of the great poet of Sind as a chapter on his personality and life. After partition of the Country G M Sayed wrote a book ' Janam Guzarium Jin saan' (1967) (With whom I spent life) giving pen portraits of the persons who had influenced his life. In this book he gives pen portraits of freedom fighter and writer of Sind, Jethmal Parsram, Hashoo Kewalramani a great intellectual who left his studies in England and inspired many young minds with socialist thought and influenced the communal politics of G M Sayed towards 'Sindhi Nationalism' and freedom fighter Jethi Sipahimalani who rose to become a vice chairman in Bombay Assemblies' upper House. Peer Ali Mohmed Rashdi in the second volume of his book 'Uhe Dinha Uhe Sheenha" (1980) (Those were the days when they were as Lions) gives the pen portraits of many persons who shaped the History of Sind and India during the first half of the twentieth century. Among other important personalities the pen portrait of Moulana Ubaiudulh Sindhi, who was designated as Prime Minister of India, Government in exile which was established in Kabul in wake of Khilafat Movement. Moulana remained committed to the congress ideology till the end. After partition Loknath Jetley wrote a book of short stories 'Wisarya Na wisran' (How badly I want to forget - those who could not be forgotten) at the same time it contains many pen portraits of ordinary people in rural Sind. After her travel to Sind, Kala Prakash wrote a book 'Je heare manjh Huran' (Those who are etched on

heart) writers about many characters who met her during her brief visit to Sind in 1984. Popati Hiranandani in her autobiography gives a graphic description of people which independently would constitute pen portraits. Pen portraits of many national leaders were written in Sind during freedom struggle and Prof: Ram Panjwani wrote about his teachers but unfortunately they have not been compiled in book form.

Plot: (Sindhi): In ancient ruins of Indus Valley Civilization (Mohen- Jo- Daro- Sind) a statue of dancing girl is found. This bears testimony to the antiquity of performing arts in Sind. It is inconceivable to think that with such a developed art of dancing the drama would be absent. Aryans had also seems to have developed a strong tradition of dramatic art. Without such a tradition it would not have been possible to write “Natya Shastra” by Bharat in Second century BC. In his Natya Shastra Bharat for the development of drama employed a simile of ‘Bij’, tree, trunk and branches. He speaks of ‘Sthayayee Bhava’ and a host of ‘a-sthatyee bhavas,. About a central emotion (Idea) and auxiliary emotions. Along these lines have evolved the entire ‘Rasa’ theory of aesthetics. Classical Sanskrit literature adhered to these principles. Approximately at the same time in Greece, Aristotle in his poetics while expanding on Greek tragedy spoke about ‘Imitation’ a source of creation .He laid stress on three unities and symmetry.

The ‘Catharsis’ became his *raison d’être* for tragedy. He developed the plot of the play along the following lines:

Stages of the plot are identified as Exposition, Discovery and reversal, Point and attack, Fore Shadowing, Complication, Climax, denouncement and unities of time, place and action. All above stages in some of the plays seemed to interchange and fuse into

one another. It is evident that no creative writer would like to be seen as copying his predecessor or contemporary and the very act of creativity calls for establishment of individual identity. Therefore all the rules were quite flexible.

In Indian context after the advent of Islam, in case of Sind which came into force in the seventh century due to the religious prohibition of human representation the drama as a form of art seems to have receded.

The place of public entertainment was taken by staging of Ram leela and Krishna leela during religious festivals and professional 'Kissagus' (Story tellers) who would entertain the clients in wayside inns for nights together with a story (Mostly a Folk tale or a famous tale from Arabian Nights) which would have a broad, single plot and would have many stories inserted into them as suitable to the plots. The narrator would be the actor and the singer all rolled into one.

During local fairs and on occasions Puppet shows with stories were also a popular form of entertainment.

On Folk level during celebrations there would be improvisations by the members of wedding parties which in Sind were called 'Saangs'. Later on in Sind there emerged an institution of 'Bhagat' in which a singer and his disciple would present a story throughout the night with sub plots often embellished with humorous anecdotes, singing and dancing. In this way Sind was never a barren of performing arts only normal dramas could not be staged because of religious reasons.

As with the Hindi language so is the case with the Sindhi language, the revival of the theater in Sind commenced only from the time of British era. Originally many groups of 'Parsi' theater

would visit Sind to regale the audience with their plays. Most of these plays were mythological or translations of English Plays.

Mirza Qaleech Baig was a pioneer of writing Sindhi plays. He translated most of the plays of Shakespeare and wrote original plays too. Many plays from other languages were also translated.

During the initial period, professional Sindhi drama groups also emerged, two notable groups were being managed by ladies. The groups were named ‘Jamaadar’ and ‘J’ameela Razal Company’. During those times ‘Indra Sabha’ play proved to be very popular with the viewers.

As most of the original plays were inspired by English writings the writers did not follow the classical Indian tradition of Natya Shastra in the plot as well in treatment of the subject but it was in a way continuation of Aristotelian theory. Before 1947 about 150 plays were written. Many were translations or adaptations and those written in Sindhi mostly had Social reforms as the core of their plot.

Nationalism (Patriotic literature- Sindhi): Though Sind was last part of the subcontinent to be conquered by the British in 1844 and much time had not elapsed till 1857 but even in that short period the tremors of the uprising were felt In Sind. At Karachi on 14th September 21st Regiment Native Infantry revolted. Written eye witness account of that incident has been preserved for posterity At Jacobabad, Dilmurad Khan Khoso, Darya Khan Jakhrani and Inayat Ali Shah were caught when their conspiracy was leaked and they were executed by being tied to the mouth of the canons.

In 1885 first session of All India Congress was attended by two delegates from Sind. With every congress the number of

delegates kept on increasing. First provincial congress was held at Karachi in 1895. In 1905 the Division of Bengal acted as a turning point in the

Freedom movement. At that time ‘Vande Matram Mandali’ was established in which Lalachand Amardinomal, a well known writer of his time left his job as a teacher and started working for this ‘Mandali’. He considerably contributed to patriotic literature and wrote a full length play “Umar Maruee” based on a Sindhi Folk tale of love for the homeland which aroused a patriotic fervour. As students Tolaram Balani and Choithram Gidwani were attracted towards this cause. Tolaram Balani used to write patriotic songs and roam across the the land singing and inspiring people for Independence of India. He launched a periodical called ‘Mata’. That had a considerable impact.

His life was cut short in the bloom of youth and that was a great loss to the freedom movement and patriotic literature in Sindhi First political criminal case during the freedom struggle was launched in 1909. This was for publishing a book containing thoughts of Bal Gangadhar Tilak “ Swadeshi Halchal ya Muhba Watan srijut Tilak ja Raya” (Swadeshi movement or thoughts of Sri Tilak). As a consequence Goverdhan Sharma who had penned the booklet was given 5 years imprisonment at Andamans, printer Chatumal Hariram and publisher Verumal Begraj were given prison term of 3 years each.

All India congress session was held at Karachi in 1913 and 1931. National leaders like Lokmanya Tilak, Gandhiji and others visited Sind quite often. In 1919 as a protest against the Rowaltt Act, and massacre of Jaliana wala Baug Jethmal Parsram wrote an editorial in his weekly paper quoting a line from Shaha Abdul Latif’s verse and he was imprisoned for 18 months. Mr. Hariram

Mariwala wrote a pamphlet against the Rowaltt Act. He as well as the publisher Durgadas had to face imprisonment for 18 years. 'Hindu' paper was banned but it used to come out daily with different names and with different Editors and all 8 editors had to face imprisonment one after the other.

Dada Shewak Bhojraj pioneer of 'Balkan ji Bari' wrote a novel "Ashirwad" (A Blessing) based on the philosophy of Gandhiji and Guli Sadarangani first woman writer of Sind wrote a novel "Itihad"(Unity) based on Hindu Muslim unity taking inter religion marriage as background for her novel.

In the sphere of poetry Kishinchand 'Bewas' infused new consciousness and brought poetry to the masses and extensively wrote about patriotism. His disciple Hundraj 'Dukhyal' emerged as an important poet during the freedom movement. He was much sought after poet as he would sing his own poems to the masses all across India.

This period is replete with prose and poems of patriotic fervor which is scattered In various magazines of those times and are now not available with us due to the mass migration of the community from its native soil.

Myths and Mythologies: (Sindhi) Man's relationship with nature has always been ambivalent, sometimes hostile and at the same time provider of nourishment and growth. Often man has remained a victim of fury of nature and at the same time in this march of civilization he has tried to tame it, subdue it and harness it for his own benefit. Yet from the stage of being a hunter and fruit gatherer for nearly 9500 years, his obvious physical weakness has induced in him a strong sense of insecurity. That sense of insecurity is embedded in the collective mind till this day. In this

process it becomes necessary to summon the powers of nature as his allies.

In order to face the pressures of life and its very existence, apart from calamities of nature he has fortified himself with existence of a parallel world of super natural and mythological world. Mythology, in the initial period of man's wanderings may have remained as a part of deeds of ancestors magnified through imagination and invested with elements of supernatural power such as magic and miracle. Due to intermingling and constant wanderings of various clans and tribes across the globe even the mythologies have mixed with another lending themselves to apparent diversity yet retaining the single core. It keeps on changing with time and place . Mythology is often used to validate the existing value system, it is often subjected to biased vision of dominant class. This is aligned to religion, rituals and customs prevalent in Society. Thus mythology constitutes a core part of any culture. Puranic stories and epics remain mainstay of Hindu population in India.

Sind being a cradle of one of the earliest civilizations of humanity is replete with mythologies that have come to be a part of 'Hindu religion'. One of the seals recovered from the site of Mohen-Jo-Daro depicts a figure of a person surrounded by animals.

This is surmised to be that of 'Lord Pashupati' (Lord Shiva) a deity which was absorbed in Hindu religion after the Rig Vedic period. The early society of man being matriarchal it is but natural that in Sind the cult of mother culture is strong.

A Temple dedicated to Goddess is situated at Hinglaj now situated in Balochistan. It has remained a place of pilgrimage of Hindu Jogis and mendicants for centuries and the great poet of

Sind Shah Abdul Latif is said to have visited this place in company of Jogis. His entire Sur Ramkali is dedicated to those Jogis for whose company he pines.

The mythological story related to Hinglaj Devi can be traced back to the puranas. According to the legend when Sati immolated herself in fire of ‘Havan Kund ‘ (Sacrificial fire pit) Shiva carried her charred body on his shoulder and started his Tandav Nirtya (Dance of destruction) during that period various parts of Sati fell on this earth. During that devastating dance the head parting of Sati smeared with vermilion (‘ Sindoor’ smeared on the parting of hair- a proud mark of being married lady whose husband is alive) fell at the spot which is now Hinglaj. It is a place of pilgrimage for Hindus as well as Muslims who venerate this Sati as ‘Nani’ (Maternal grandmother).

In his book “Sind and the races that inhabit the valley of the Indus” Richard F Burton mentions ‘The names of the principal Pirs, who are revered by all classes of both the faiths are as follows:

1. Lal Shah- Shabaz called by Hindus Bharathari Raja, 2. Patto Sultan or Pir Alim Shah designated as Pir Patto. 3. Khawja Khizir termed as Zindah Pir. 4 Pir Mangho known as Lalu Jasraj. 5. Sheikh Tahir also called Uderolal.

It may be mentioned that all the Pirs and their Hindu names mentioned above have their mythological tales but the most popular is that of Uderolal who is called as Jhulelal. This myth is an interlinked myth of Zindah Pir or Khwaja Khazir. This is related to water worship which appears to be the most ancient all over the world and abounds in myths across the civilizations. This water worship cult is traced back to the Great flood mentioned in the Old Testament and as a “Pralay” (great flood) mentioned in old Hindu texts. It is said when Ibrahim left Babylon at that time

Zindah Pir also accompanied him as his protector so was the case when Moses crossed the Red Sea and it parted to give him a way. In Hindu mythology one of the incarnations of Vishnu is 'Matsya' (Fish). It is said that a fish guided the boat of the first man 'Manu'.

The mythology of Jhulelal is thought to be a part of ancient tradition is comparatively recent. It has been given communal overtones in recent narration. It is said that at the time of Aurangzeb a local Chieftain Mirkh Shah egged on by zealot Mullahs decreed that all Hindus should embrace Islam. Hindus were terrified and asked for some time to consider. Their request was granted. Hindus gathered on the bank of the river Indus and prayed fervently for forty days. There upon appeared Jhulelal who is called Uderolal on a Palla Fish. (A Fish that swims upstream from sea to the eastuary of Indus river). He through his miracles subdued Mirkh Shah and he rescinded his decree and became his follower.

After the partition of the country, Jhulelal has become an icon of distinct identity of the Sindhi Community thus an additional God has been added to the pantheon of Gods in Hindu mythology. Narayan Shayam, an eminent Sindhi poet has taken as a base the story of seduction of Sage Vishwamitra by celestial nymph Menka for his long poem 'Rup- Maya'. It has been hailed as a mini classic of Sindhi Literature as it takes aesthetic expression to new heights.

Most of the Sindhi literature is based on folk tales. Even in folk tales the elements of miracle and magic are interwoven which takes them in the realm of supernatural thus merging with mythology. In the folk tale Sasui Punhoon immortalised by Shah Abdul latif when Sasui in the midst of her wandering in wilderness

in pursuit of Punhoon is attacked by a lustful person her prayers to mother earth are rewarded and earth opens up to grab her to save her chastity. (Reminder of an incident in Ramayana) In the story of Moomal Rano there is a Kaak Mahal (palace of illusions) which is full of magical tricks.

All this may not strictly fall in the category of myths but they hold a considerable sway on the minds and hearts of the people. Sind is dotted with many tombs of holy men and every tomb has miracles attached to it. They attract many a faithful irrespective of their religion. The reason for these phenomena is that in Sind, Hindu society is not constituted on the basis of caste structure which is the case in the rest of India. The Sufi ethos and afterwards Sikhism has greatly influenced Sindhi psyche and values. Let me confess that here it has not been a Brahmanical supremacy on the literature or on the society. Therefore the imprint of Puranic mythological tales on the collective consciousness has not been very deep.

BRIEF NOTES ON EARLY SINDHI WRITERS

Translated by Mohan Gehani

Sahib Bijani



(Note: In 2020 I was invited to Edit issue No.73 of SINDHU JYOT published by Sindhi Academy Delhi. I had designed that issue as a Digest of old Sindhi literature because I was conscious of the fact that though the students of Higher level of studies for Sindhi at College level are

acquainted with the names of early Sindhi writers but they may not have sampled their writings as they appeared in original. I selected some early essayist, playwrights and short story writers along with some of the contemporaneity writers. The comments on the essays were written by Sahib Bijani, On short stories by amdev Tarachandani, on plays by Late Dr. Prem Prakash, and on poetry by late Vasdev Mohi. The brief introduction to writers were provided by Sahib Bijani. I have translated introduction to some of the old writers as well as contemporary writers for the benefit of those who are not familiar with Sindhi language but want to approach it through English to aquatint themselves with the richness of Sindhi literature.)

Kauromal Chandanmal Khilnani (1844-1916)



Kauromal Chandanmal was a famous writer of early Sindhi prose and an eminent social reformer of his time.

He was born on 5th October 1844 in Sahiti region of Sind in village Brihia. He had his early education in village Dayakhan Jablani from Akhund Suleman's Madrasa. Thereafter he was admitted at Government School at Brihia in 1855. He had his further education at Hyderabad (Sind) and in 1862 after an arduous journey lasting 3 months he reached Bombay along with his other three classmates to appear for Matriculation Examination that he could not pass. Thereafter he was employed at Karachi in Office of Commissioner as a clerk on monthly salary of Rs. 30/-. He switched to teaching and was employed as an Assistant Teacher in a Normal School at Hyderabad. In 1865 he was transferred to Sukkar as the Headmaster. He was again brought back at Hyderabad as Headmaster of Normal School. Apart from his teaching duties he was working as a translator to the Government as well.

His contribution to writing of text books for various subjects for Sindhi medium is enormous. Thereafter he was transferred to the revenue department and became an Assistant Collector. Again he was transferred to the Education Department and was appointed

as a principal of Training College from where he retired in 1899.

He occupies an important position in Sindhi literature. The first ever book in Sindhi on Female Education was written in 1866 itself by him as “PUKO PAHU”. First book of humour “Tahak e Tahak”(Laughter and Laughter) was published by him in 1906. He had already published “Baarana Geeta” (Children’s songs) and “Baranyun Aakhariyoon” (Children’s Stories) in 1891 and Sindhi Idioms as far as 1888.

He meticulously edited SAMI’S Shalokas from original chits written in Gurmukhi Script and published his poetry in three volumes in 1892.

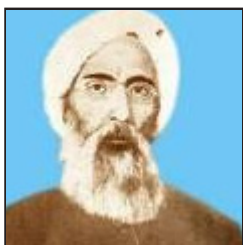
As he was the eldest among four pioneering writers of Sindhi Prose he is often refereed to as a FATHER OF SINDHI Prose. He has contributed more than sixty books to Sindhi Literature.

As an active social worker he was devoted to the cause of female education and he was instrumental in establishing the first Government school at Brihia in 1886. After his death that school was named after him. In 1906 he established a school for female education. He worked hard to limit scourge of dowry system and took many steps to limit it by involving many Panchayats of Sahiti region and mentioned the modest amount for the ceremonies.

His other important books are “ARYA NARI CHARITRA” (1905), SINDHI PAHAKA 800 (First part) 1888, SINDHI PAHAKA 1484 (1911) SINDHI GUJHARATOON (Sindhi Riddles) (1888).

He left for heavenly abode on 16th December 1916.

Dayaram Giidumal Shahani (1857-1927)



Dayaram Giidumal Shahani is considered among four pillars of the edifice of Sindhi Prose. He was an eminent educationist and Social reformer as well. He was born on 30th June 1857. He had his early education at Hyderabad (Sind) at the madrasa of Aakhund Noor Mohamed. He joined English school and passed Matriculation examination in 1874 and went to pursue higher education at Wilson College at Bombay from where he graduated in English literature in 1877 and being a first ranker in Bombay University in English literature was awarded the Ellis prize. He was appointed as a second clerk in the High Court. He passed LLB examination in 1882 and became first ever Sindhi to achieve such a distinction. In the meanwhile the then government had decided to involve local population also in judicial process and Dayaram was appointed as the sessions court judge of Small causes.

During his tenure as a judge he was transferred to Shikarpur, Ahmedabad, Surat and Dhulia. He retired in 1911-12. He occupies an important position among pioneers of Sindhi prose. He knew 12 languages that included Sindhi, Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi,

Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian, French and English. He has contributed profound and thought provoking prefaces in simple Sindhi prose to Collection of “SAMI’S SHLOKAS” collected by Kouromal Chandanmal as well as to the Translation of Rubayat of Umer Khyam by Mirza Qalich Baig. They occupy a place of pride in early Sindhi literature. He wrote comments on three Hindu as well as Sikh religious books that explain the philosophy of Vedanta. They are “JAP SAHIB” (1891), SRI BHAGWAT GITA (1893) and “SRI YOGA DARSHAN” (1903). All three books are exemplary pieces of Sindhi Prose.

Books of his poetic prose are “CHABUKA (MANA LAI) RIHAN” in all five volumes. (Two were published during his life time and three volumes were published posthumously). His book written in English Language “SOMETHING ABOUT SIND” was published in 1882. Apart from the above he wrote more than 20 pamphlets in Sindhi and English.

He was very active in the Social reform movement and an eminent social worker. He established many Charitable Institutions for common welfare including health centers, Educational Institutes and created Metharam Trust in memory of his brother from the wealth bequeathed to him . As a result D J National College was established in January 1887, Sind Hindu Provident Fund Society (1893) and GARIBIRI BANK” (Bank for Poor) in 1896, SEWA SADAN FUND SOCIETY in (11th July 1908), Dhrampur TB Centre at Dhrampur and Seva Kunj Hostel at Karachi. He established Sharnagati library as well as an art school with the same name at Karachi among many others.

He breathed his last on 27th December 1927 at Karachi.

Parmanand Mewaram Ramchandani (1866-1938)



Parmanand Mewaram Ramchandani is among four pillars of early Sindhi Prose. He is known more as an essayist and lexicographer.

He was born in the last week of January of 1866 at Hyderabad Sind. He had his initial schooling at a private madrasa and further education from Church Missionary School. Due to family financial stringency he could obtain formal education only till 5th standard of English. In 1888 he obtained a Government job. In October 1888 when Sadhu Hiranand established the ‘Union Academy’ he joined it as a teacher. In 1891 under the influence of Christian Missionaries he converted to Christianity religion. He was named as Felix. Due to change of religion as per advice of Sadhu Hiranand he resigned from the school and again joined the Government service. From 1894, for three years he taught at St Patrick High School.

After three years he founded and edited a fortnightly magazine “JYOT” (Light) and continued in that position all his life. In his magazine he contributed many moral, educational and entertaining essays in simple but effective Sindhi language. He compiled selected essays and published in a book form as “GULA-PHULA”

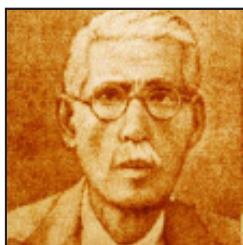
(Flowers) in 1925 and second volume was published in 1936. He selected entertaining and humorous anecdotes from his magazine and published in a book form as “DIL-BAHAR” in 1912- 14).

He is known more for the dictionaries that he compiled after many painstaking efforts. His Sindhi- English Dictionary was published in 1910 while his English- Sindhi Dictionary was published in 1933. Till this day these dictionaries are cited as an authority.

His other important books were “Hiroo and Guloo”, “Sur Kapaiti” (one one of Surs of Shah Latif) and translation of “CHRIST- JI- PERVI” (Following the Christ- 1923))

He left for heavenly abode on 29th November 1938 at Hyderabad (Sind).

Behrimal Meharchand Advani (1875-1950)



Behrimal Meharchand Advani was an accomplished writer who successfully wielded his pen to contribute to various genres of Sindhi literature.

He was born at Hyderabad (Sind) in the year 1875. He could pursue his education only till Matriculation. In 1895-6 he joined Salt Excise Department as an employee. He retired from the same department as an Excise Inspector in 1924 in month of November, after obtaining pension.

Thereafter he joined as a D J SIND College as a lecturer of Sindhi. He retired from that position in 1937. After partition of the country he along with his family migrated to India and settled at Poona. His literary journey started with writing poems for children. Contributing Lessons for text books for schools. He was also a member of a committee constituted for the review the of text books. He wrote more than 100 pieces for the text books during his tenure. His collection of poems for children was subsequently published titled “Nav- Bahar” (New spring) in 1926.

He wrote novels on the themes of dowry, female education and ills of Sindhi-Hindu Society. His Novel “ANAND

SUNDRIKA” was published in 1910 and other Novel “MOHINI BAI” in 1917. His plays on themes of social reform “BAZAZUN JO NATAK” (Drama of Cloth merchants) was published in 1921 and other play “PANGTI MUQAMO” (Social trial) was published in 1927. It was an effective satire replete with humour.

After joining D J Sind College he devoted most of his time to research work. He was interested in History, Geography, Culture, Literature and eminent Historical personalities of Sind and linguistics. In the process he wrote “SIND JO SAILANI” (Traveller of Sind) in 1932, “GULQAND” in 1928, “SINDHI BOLI A JI TWARIKH” (History of Sindhi Language) in 8j1941.

Books written by him “SINDHI HINDUN JI TWARIKH” (History of Sindhi Hindus) and “QADEEM SIND” were published in 1946 and 1957 respectively. These books bear the stamp of his deep scholarly and research abilities. He also knew many other languages such as Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian and Arabic. His work on the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif is also note worthy. He compiled “GARIB AL LUGHAT” giving the meaning of words used in verses by Shah Latif that was published in 1907 and it deals with three Surs of Rasalo. His “LATIFI SAIR” and SUR SORATH as well as commentary on Shah’s Risalo as edited and compiled by Dr. Hotchand Gurbuxani too are commendable works. After publication, Dr. Gurbuxani came under severe attack by ardent devotees-Scholars of Shah Latif for having left out many of his verses.

Behrimal defended his work as many verses of other poets were also attributed to Shah Latif.

Jethmal Parsram Gulrajani (1885-1948)



Jethmal Parsram was an eminent writer and a journalist-activist. He was born in October 1885 at Hyderabad Sind. He had his primary education at Hyderabad and Secondary Education also at Union Academy at Hyderabad. He passed his Matriculation Examination in 1902 and joined the same institution as a Teacher in 1903. He worked as a teacher at Madrasa Al Islam and New High School at Karachi too. He worked as a lecturer of Sindhi subject at Dayram Gidumal Shahani National College from 1933 to 1941. After partition of the country he was not willing to leave his motherland Sind but was persuaded to visit Bombay for treatment due to his ill health. He breathed his last on 6th July 1948 at Bombay.

Apart from teaching he devoted all his time to Sindhi Language, literature, journalism and social reforms. He established ‘Sindhi Sahit Pracharak Society’ in 1914. (Subsequently it was called Sindhi Sahit Society) and under its auspices in 1917 he started Hindvasi and in 1921 periodical “Rooh Rihan”. In 1922 he established Sindhi library, series of affordable literature, and Brahama Vidya Mala. In 1929 he started Sind Herald and Prakash.

In 1934 he started series of publications to publish final books on various literary and other subjects. He was able to publish more than 150 books of various types.

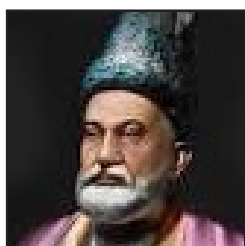
He himself authored about 75 books or translated some of them. He was a voracious reader and had deep study of religions across the board. Most of his books contain philosophy propounded by Theosophy School and based on Upanishads and Sufi faith. His books on study of Shah Latif are also important. He wrote “SHAH JOON AAKHARIYOON” (Stories of Shah Latif) part 1 and in 2nd part he has given a commentary of those stories (these books were published during 1922-23). In 1915 he had written a book on Life of Shah Latif and about correct version of Shah Latif’s Rasalo. In 1923-24 he vehemently questioned the omission of many of the verses previously attributed to Shah Latif by Dr. Gurbuxani in Rasalo edited by him. He activity opposed the suggestion of Dr. Dauadpoto to append the vowel signs as per Arabic system and it was a raging controversy of that time this was carried through his papers Bharatvasi and Prakash in 1940.

He was a freedom fighter during the massacre of innocent people at Jalianawala Baug at Amritsar in 1919, he gave a heading which quoted a verse from Shah Latif in his paper Hindvasi as a result he was imprisoned for one and half year. On his release from jail he was given an unprecedented welcome. He wrote of his experiences in jail in a book form called “TURANG JO TEERTH” (Pilgrimage of Prison).

He was a person who first raised the slogan “HAARI HAQDAR” (Peasant’s Rights). His book on “Communism” is a first such book in Sindhi that was published in 1926. He translated many of the plays of Shakespeare in Sindhi, He wrote on “SACHAL SARMAST” in 1922 and on Bhai Kalachand in 1914.

His stories of social ills as “CHAMRA POSH JOON AAKHARIYOON” was written in 1923 and he translated “PURAB JYOTI” also in 1923. (This book has seen 3rd edition in 2000).

Mirza Qalich Beg Faridun Beg (1853-1929)



Mirza Qalich Beg occupies an important position among early pillars of Sindhi prose. He was born according to Hijra calendar on 4th day of Maharam 1270 that correspondence to 1853. he was born at Tando Thoro (Hyderabad). He had his primary education at his village at the school of Aakhund Mohammed Sahafi. For his secondary education he joined High School at Hyderabad. He passed Matriculation examination in 1872 and went to Bombay to pursue higher education at Elphinstone College with Persian as the main subject. He was well versed in Persian had a deep knowledge of that language. During his student days he was appointed as a fellow student in that college. Due to his ill health he could not appear for his graduation examination and had to return to Sind. At Hyderabad, he competed for Magisterial examination and passed it. He was appointed in the Government service as Sub-Divisional officer of the district. Soon he was appointed as the Acting Deputy Collector, City Magistrate at Shikarpur. In 1893, he was confirmed as deputy collector and he retired in 1910.

His contribution to Sindhi literature is immense. He was a voluminous writer who contributed to original Sindhi literature

as a creative writer as well as a critic and translator of high caliber. His first play “LAILA MAJNOON” was published in 1880. He wrote the first Sindhi Novel “ZEENAT” in 1888. He was the first to write poetry in RUBAI form in Sindhi Language. His first book of literary criticism “SHAH LATIF BHITAI JO AHWAL” was published in 1885.

He contributed books on Natural History, about animals, flora fauna of Sind as well as on History and Geography of Sind. He wrote Grammar of Sindhi language. His history of Sind was published in 1904 and History of Sindhi Language was published in 1904 and his book History of Sindhi poetry was published in 1914 while his extended Grammar was published in 1921. He gave various renderings from various manuscripts of Shah Latif and compiled a volume of his poetry as Rasalo of Shah in 1913. His other books relating to Study of Shah Latif are “Lughaat Latifi” (Dictionary of Latif’s verses-1905), Commentary on Sur Sohini (1911), “LATIFI LAAT” (1912), Commentary on Sur Sri Raag (1916) and ‘KEY TO POETRY OF SHAH LATIF” (1918). He authored or translated 457 books out of that only 175 have been published. Taking into account his literary contribution he was presented with Gold Medal and was conferred honour as “KAISER HIND” in 1906. In 1924 he was honoured as “SHAMS AL ULMA”. His autobiography “SAAO PANO YAAN KAARO PANO” was written in 1923 but could be published posthumously only in 1965.

He breathed his last on 3rd July 1929 at Hyderabad.

Mangharam Udharam Malkani **(1896-1980)**



Mangharam Udharam Malkani was a famous playwright, critic, literary historian, stage actor, director and a leading figure in the Sindhayat movement. The movement that aimed at preserving distinct Sindhi identity. Under his mentorship writers of many generations came forward to dedicate their lives to writing and enriching Sindhi literature. He was born on 24th December 1896 at Hyderabad. He had his school education at Hyderabad High School and passed Matriculation examination in 1919. He was amongst the first four ranker in entire Sind. He obtained his graduation degree in 1924 from D J Sind College with English Honors. For the first five years he looked after his ancestral lands. He was invited to join D J Sind College first as a fellow and then he was appointed as a lecturer in which position he worked from 1927 to 1947. He simultaneously held the position of being in charge of Metharam Hostel too. In 1948 he joined Jai Hind College at Bombay as a lecturer of English Literature. He retired in 1961 and spent rest of his life mostly at Calcutta.

From childhood he was interested in literature as well as in stage plays. He along with Khanchand Daryani and others

established the Rabindranath Dramatic and Literary Club at Hyderabad. Under the auspices of that club many small and big plays were performed in which he took part and he directed some. He also contributed to the College theater in various capacities. He mainly wrote One Act plays that were successfully staged. He wrote four full length plays and in all he contributed 35 plays.

One Act plays were his forte and his passion. He published two collections of one act plays. “PANJA NANDRA NATAK” in 1937 and “PANGTI PARDA” in 1938. While at Sind he published translations of Tagore’s *Gardner* as “PREET JA GEET” in 1937 and *Gitanjali* in 1942.

After partition of the country during the difficult historical phase of the community he played an important role in history of Sindhi literature, he could attract many generations of young Sindhi writers in his fold of Sindhi Sahit Mandal where every Saturday evening writers would gather to present their creations for collective evaluation and he remained as a mentor- guide and president of the organization till he retired. Sindhi Sahit Mandal was established in 1949. He contributed his valuable opinions and his memoirs of those times on the creative endeavours of then budding writers and subsequently published them in 1968. His *History of Sindhi Prose* was awarded by Sahitya Akademi in 1972. He was co-opted as Fellow of Sahitya Akademi, it was a first such rare honour for any Sindhi writer.

He published five books. ‘KHINA JI KHATA’ (Full length Play) 1930, “ADABI ASSOL” 1950 (Reprint 1969), “PACHMI YATRA” (Journey to the West- A travelogue) 1963, “JAWANI A JA JAZBA AIN PIDHIA JOON YADOON” (Emotions of youth and remembrances of old age- Poetic prose 1975), “SAHITAKARAN JOON SMIRTYOON” (Memoirs 1979),

“BHARAT MEIN SINDHI SAHIT JO MUKHTASIR JAIZO” (A brief evaluation of Sindhi literature produced in India - 1980), “JEEWAN CHACHITA” (Plays of Life- 1957), “PAAP KIN PUNJHUN” (Sin or Good deed-1962), “AAKHRIN BHETA” (Final Offering - 1975) and “Mangharam Malkani a ja choond Nanada natak” (selected one act Plays of Manghram Malkani- Total 23 plays).

He breathed his last on 1st December 1980 at Bombay.

Lalchand Amardinomal Jagtiani (1885-1954)



Lalchand Amardinomal Jagtiani was a renowned writer who has wielded his pen on particularly every genre of literature.

He was born on 25th January 1885 at Hyderabad, Sind. He had his education at Hyderabad itself and he passed Matriculation examination From Sadhu Navalrai Academy in 1903. He was appointed as a teacher in his own School and in 1908 he passed examination of School teaching certificate.

Subsequently he obtained BA degree from Bombay University in Philosophy as a subject. In 1920 he established Tilak School that could continue only for about 4-5 years and had to shut down. In 1934 he established Indian Women's College affiliated to SNDT University at Bombay. That college also had to shut down after 4-5 years. He worked as a Principal of Marwadi Vidyalaya situated at Karachi for some years and after retirement of Behrimal Meharchand in 1937 he joined D J Sind College at Karachi for some months. After partition of the country he migrated to Bombay where he continued as a teacher in High School for Sindhis and continued to teach Sindhi subject at SNDT University too.

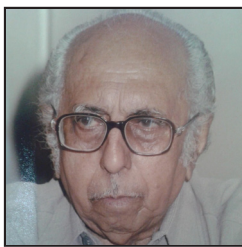
He was a versatile creative writer as well as literary critic and he greatly contributed to Sindhi literature. His novel “CHOUTH JO CHAND” (Crescent Moon) (1905-6) is amongst the pioneering social novels of Sindhi literature. His second Novel “KISHNI A JA KASHTA” (Pains of Kishni) was published in 1917. His first short story of Sindhi Literature “Hura Makhi a Ja” was published in 1914. The story is a narrative about the adventures of often misunderstood activities of the Hur tribe. He has not glossed over their cruelty but has a soft corner and positive aspect of their activities that were declared as ‘looting’ by that tribe. He wrote a play “UMAR MARUEE” based on folk story in 1925. It was at that time considered as one of the best.

He has greatly contributed to corpus on literature on Shah Latif. His book “SHAHANO SHAH” (1914) is considered among the early seminal books of its kind in Sindhi literature. Along with Dinghomal Thadani he co-authored a full length play “SUHINI MEHAR” in 1939. he wrote on SUR KEARO in 1910, SUR YAMAN KALYAN in 1924. His “JEEWAN MATHUR” could be published only in 1956.

He is known for his chaste- rustic and idiomatic use of language. His translations also were very popular. For example his translation of Tagore’s *Gardner* as “SADA GULAB” and “SON VARNYOON DILYOON”. He was active in India’s freedom movement also and had to face imprisonments. His other books are “MOHAMMED RASOOL ALLAH” (Biography-1911), “SUNHARO SACHAL” in 1914. “BE RANG BAGH JO GUL” (Criticism- 1920), “AMALDAR KIN RAYAT AAZAR”(Officials of Oppression for masses- A play 1921), “PHULAN MOOTH” (A handful of Flowers- Essays- 1927).

He breathed his last on 8th April 1954 at Bombay.

Narain Jiwaladas Paryani ‘Bharti’ (1932-2017)



Narain Bharti was an eminent short story writer, prose writer and journalist.

He was born on 1st October 1932 at Kambhar town of Larkana district. He had his early education at his town itself. After partition of the country the family migrated to Ulhasnagar. He passed his Matriculation examination there. Subsequently he obtained a BA degree from Bombay University and obtained his Doctorate from Bombay University on “SINDHI FOLK LITERATURE”. Initially he worked as a teacher and afterwards joined as a lecturer at R K Talreja College (Ulhasnagar). He retired as a Reader at Bombay University. He started as a short story writer in Sindhi and collection of his short stories “Zindagi a Jo Babu” (A chapter of Life) was published and the same was reprinted in 1981 under the title “DASTAWEZ”.

Soon he gravitated to collect Sindhi Folk literature from the surviving old generation, for that purpose he had to visit many Sindhi settlements. He complied those in a proper form and published them. The title of his books are “HOJMALO” (1960), “SINDHI LOK KAHARIYOON (1960), “SINDHRI THI GAHE”

(1961), “MEHNDI A RATA HATHRA” (1961). According to his statement he had collected 100 folk stories and 400 folk songs apart from other Folk Literature.

His contribution as a journalist is also important. Along with Hari Motwani he started a weekly paper SINDHI TIMES which after some time he continued as a lone venture. After 1972 he published some important special issues and annually published books of various writers cutting across the generations. This way his role in enriching Sindhi literature is outstanding and noteworthy. The books published by him are more than 100.

He passed away on 15th October 2017 at Ulhasnagar.

Amarlal Wasanmal Hingorani (1907-1956)



Amarlal Wasanmal Hingorani is considered to be a pioneer of realistic modern short story in Sindhi Literature.

He was born in the year 1907 at Larkana (Sind). He had his school education at Sukkar. He graduated in 1930 with B A Honours in English literature from Bombay University as a student of D.J. SIND College of Karachi. Thereafter he obtained LLB degree and worked as an Advocate. After partition of the country first he went to Ajmer but ultimately he settled at Bombay.

Even during student days he was keenly interested in modern short story and he was helped and encouraged in his hobby by his Professor Anderson D'art. His short story "ADO ABDUL REHMAN" (Brother Abdul Rehman) is considered as the best realistic and modern short story of the time. This story was published in a Magazine 'Phulwari' that was published and edited by none other than Amarlal himself in the year 1930. This story was re-printed in SAQI magazine in 1940.

In 1954 this story was published in English Translation by UNESCO and it was again reprinted in 1959 by Sahitya Akademi

in its anthology of Indian Short Stories. He has authored many other memorable short stories also. For example his short story “BUDHE JI BAAJ” (Mercy of an Old Person) and “RANJHOO A SANDHI RAMZ” (A trick by the beloved- God) were also well-known.

The collection of his short stories was published by Sindhi Times Publication in 1981.

He left for heavenly abode on 30th September 1956.

**Photograph of Amarlal is not available so we have inserted a picture of his novel cover “ADO ABDUL REHMAN”*

Sundri Assandas Uttamchandani (1924-2013)



Sundri Uttamchandani was a prominent novelist, short story writer and poetess in Sindhi literature.

She was born on 28th September 1924 at Hyderabad, Sind. Her father Dholumal Narwani was a Sindworki businessman working at Burma. Her education was at Shewakram Chandumal Municipal School and Tolaram Girls' High School. She passed matriculation examination in 1942. While at Sind, she had passed intermediate Science examination from Benaras Hindu University.

After partition of the country her family migrated to Bombay. While working as a teacher she passed MA from SNDT university of Bombay. She had started writing while at Sind itself in the year 1944. She was a associated Editor of Women's Magazine "SAATHI". She contributed in various literary genres as a writer of Progressive School.

She wrote novels, short stories, plays as well as poetry. Her Novel "KIRANDARA DEEWAROON" (Crumbling walls) was published in 1953 and her novel "PREET PURANI REET NIRALI" was published in 1956. These novels have seen many reprints. Kirandara Deewaroon has been published in Urdu, Hindi

and Bengali languages too.

She has authored about 200 short stories that have been published in various collections. Her collection of short stories “VICHHORO” published in 1985 won her the Sahitya Akademi award for the year 1986. Her translation of Russian poems won her the Soviet Land Nehru Peace Award. Her other main collections are “BHOORI” 1979, “KHERYAL DHARTI” 1999, “MURAK TE MANAH” 1992 and collection of her poems “HUGHAO” in 1993, “SINDHU” (Plays- 2000).

She expired on 8th July 2013 at Bombay.

Harish Hansraj Vaswani (1940-2013)



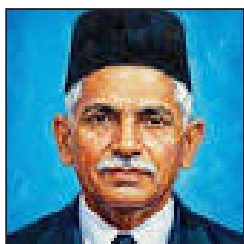
Harish Vaswani is known as a noted poet, critic and short story writer.

He was born on 22nd November 1940 at Loralai, situated at Baluchistan. He had his early education in Urdu and after the partition his family settled at Gujarat. He persuaded his higher education and did his MA from Aligarh University in first class. For a while he remained a journalist at Bombay but soon he joined Tolani College of Arts and Science as lecturer in department of Political Science. He retired from there as head of the department. He is considered a leading voice in modern literary trend in Sindhi Poetry. His poems explore the intricacies of sub-conscious by creative imagery and metaphors. 40-76 collection of his poetry are published in 1976 and collection of short stories is 40 to 80.

His short story GHANTI is very famous and it was published in 2001. A book of his applied criticism is titled 40- 84 that was published in 1984. He was awarded by Sahitya Akademi in 1987. His last book was 0+000(2001) which is a collection of poems, travelogue articles on Kutch and critical essays.

He expired on 13th April 2013 at New Delhi.

Kishinchand Tirthdas Khatri ‘Bewas’ (1885-1947)



Kishinchand Tirthdas Khatri ‘BEWAS’ was a famous poet and playwright.

He was born on 25th February 1885 at Larkana Sind. He had his schooling at Larkana and studied till vernacular Final in Sindhi language. He obtained first rank in entire Sind. He was appointed as Headmaster of a Sindhi School near Larkana from that position he retired in due course. Thereafter he was appointed as an advisor to Larkana Municipality for School Board. In addition to teaching he used to practice as a healer in branch of Homeopathy medicine.

He started composing poetry at an early age. He introduced new themes of nationalism, nature, everyday life, poverty and language of the common man in Sindhi poetry that could be easily understood by common readers.

That is one of the reasons why he is considered as a harbinger of modern poetry. His collection of poems “Saamoondi Sipoon” (Sea Shells) was published in 1929. He was amongst the first poets who wrote songs exclusively for children that are published in two volumes as “Shireen Shair” (Sweet poems) in 1929 and “Mouji Geet” (Joyful Songs) in 1941.

He wrote plays too. He has written six full length plays and many one act plays. His other compositions are “GURU NANAK JEEWAN KAVITA” in 1941, INDA LATHA (Play) in 1939.

His collection “Shair Bewas” was published in 1953. His entire poetry and some essays on his poetry were published by Bewas Vani Mandir, Adipur under the title “SADU PRADO SAAGHYO” (Sound and echo are same) in 1984.

Books on his poetry and his life and vision are as under:

1. Bewas Hiku Abhyas by Pritam Varyani,
Goverdhan Sharma and C H Raisinghani - 1970
2. Bewas ain Naon Daur by Arjan Shad - 1970.
3. Bewas Jo chunda Kalam (with meaning)
by Hari Dilgir- 1988.
4. Jaaizo by Hari Dilgir- 1993.
5. Bewas Hiku Guldasto- by Hari Dilgir in 1993.

He breathed his last on 23rd September-in 1947 at Larkana, Sind.

Lekhraj Kishinchand Mirchandani Aziz (1897-1971)



Lekhraj Kishinchand Mirchandani ‘Aziz’ was a prominent poet, critic, essayist and a playwright apart from his mastery over language and prosody.

He was born on 19th December 1897 at Hyderabad in a landlord family. He did his matriculation From N.H. Academy at Hyderabad and joined Elphinstone College at Bombay to pursue his education but after a year due to ill health he had to abandon his further education. For a while he worked at a jeweller's shop but returned to look after his ancestral lands which he continued from 1920 till the partition of the country in 1947. Along with looking after his lands he continued to contribute to Sindhi literature in various genres. After partition of the country he joined KC College as a lecturer of Sindhi from which post he retired in 1962.

He is considered as a master poet. At the age of 13 years he studied Arabic and Persian from Moulvi Imam Bux Mio and at the age of 30 he studied further Arabic from Maulana Abdul Mio of Sukkar. His first book “KULYAT AZIZ” was published in 1938 in two volumes. After leaving his motherland he wrote many nostalgic poems about Sind that formed the part of his book of poems

“ABSHAAR” (Water Fall) published in 1953. His collection of poems “SURAHI” (Wine Holder) published in 1966 won him the Sahitya Akademi Award.

While at Sind he had written 3 full length plays named “KUMAR AJEETSINGH” (1931), “GARIBAAN MAAR” (Oppression on poor) published in 1930. (That book won him an award from the then Government.) and "Mr Majnoon" in 1933.

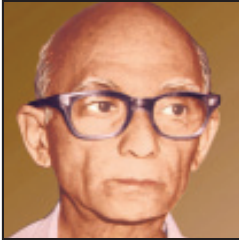
He was awarded by Advisory Board for literature of Government of Sind for his book of essays “ADBI AAINO” (literary mirror) published in 1941.

His books of literary criticism are “GULO-KHAAR” in 1955 and “SAMI” in 1965. His notable contribution while on bed due to his sickness are two volumes of “SINDHI SAYINGS” that were posthumously published in 1976 and 1987.

His other books are “GULZAR AZIZ” Poetry - 1944, “SHAIRAINI SHAMAMAH”- 1944, “PACHTAVA JALURKA”- Poetry in Masnavi form - 1946 and “BHAGUNA BOLA” (Poems for children) - 1970.

He passed away on 19th August 1971 at Bombay.

Narayan Gokuldas Nagwani ‘Shyam’ (1922-1989)



Narayan Gokuldas Nagwani ‘Shyam’ is an important poet of his era.

He was born on 22nd July 1922 at Village Khaee Qasim, of Taluka Naushahro Feroz situated in Nawab-shah district. His initial education was in his village Khaee Qasim, Bhiria and Naushahro. He obtained BA degree in 1945 from D J Sind College with Persian Language as his main subject. He was appointed as a teacher of Persian at Madrasa of Naushahro Feroz. After partition, the family first moved to Ajmer and then settled at Delhi. At Delhi, he joined the Post and Telegraph department and retired in 1980 from the same office as a head clerk.

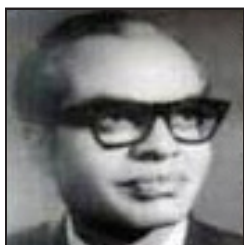
He started writing poetry in 1939 and at that time his poetry was highly influenced by Persian poetry. His first collection of poetry was published along with Hari Dilgir in a collection titled “Maak Phura” (Dew drops) in 1953. His second book “Pankhriyoon” (Petals) was published in 1955 that consisted of his mini epic “ROOP MAYA” a sequence of 16 sonnets that speak about puranic tale of Menka and Rishi Vishwamitra. This was a water shed mark in aesthetic poetry in modern Sindhi literature.

They were published along with 100 of his poetry in Rubai format. He contributed the Japanese form of poetry Haiku (A poem of 3 lines) as Te Sitta in Sindhi literature that are included in his collection, "MAAK BINA RABEL" (Flowers covered in mist) in 1964. He was awarded by Sahitya Akademi for his collection "WARIA SANDO PALAND" (Apron full of Sand) (1968) in 1970. Naryan 'Shyam' has successfully experimented in every form of poetry may it be Haiko, Traditional Wai, Rubai, Sonnet, Doha, Triolet (A French form of poetry), Ghazal, and Free verse. His other collections of poetry are 'ROSHAN CHHANWRO' (Light in midst of Shade) 1964, "AACHINDE LAJA MARAN" (I die of shame while offering) in 1972 and "MEHKI VELA SUBHUJI" (Fragrant moment of morning) in 1983. His complete poetry has been collected and published by Hari Himthani under the auspices of AJANTA SAHIT MALA, Ajmer in two volumes titled "DAAT HAYAT" (Life and Gift) in 1988 and 1999.

Narayan Shyam was the convenor for Sindhi Language and executive committee member of Sahitya Akademi from 1978 to 1987.

He passed away on 10th January 1989 at Delhi.

Gordhan Assumal Mehbubani ‘Bharti’ (1929-2010)



Gordhan Assumal Mehbubani ‘Bharti’ was a known poet, lyricist, playwright, short story writer, stage artist and director of plays. He contributed to composing and understanding the nuances of music too.

He was born on 13th January 1929 at village Arazi situated in district Dadu. He had his early education at Arazi and Talti but he passed his Matriculation examination from Gurdasmal Secondary School of Hyderabad in 1946. He obtained second rank in entire Sind in that examination. For a brief period he worked as a teacher of English at a school situated at Tando Aliyar. After partition of the country his family settled at Ajmer. Initially for a while he took to teaching but very soon he obtained a job in the Railways. While working he obtained his BA degree from Agra University in 1953. He retired from Railways in 1987.

His contribution in the field of vocal culture is commendable. Basically he is known as a poet but he has contributed two collections of short stories, one full length play and a novel too. He has more than 15 collections of poetry to his credit. His humorous songs, wedding songs and other songs composed on

basis of folk songs are sung by many singers and are popular at all cultural events. He contributed songs to many Sindhi films too.

His book “Shishe Ja Ghar” (Houses of Glass) published in 1988 won him the Sahitya Akademi award in 1990. He has been awarded by Education Department also in 1963 for his book for children “NAEEN BASTI”.

He along with his troupe has presented many cultural programmes and plays that have been directed by him. He has provided lyrics for films that include ‘Hojmalo’ (1967), ‘Shal Dheear Na jaman’ (1968) in which film he has acted too. His other films to which he has contributed lyrics are ‘Jhulelal’ (1964), ‘Ladli’ (1966), ‘Sindhu a je kinare’ (1966).

His important collections are “UTHA MEENHA MALEER” (Poetry- 1966), “AAO KUNAN MEIN KAHE” (Poetry-1973), “TANHAE AIN KOURO DHUAON” (Poetry- 1980), “PILO CHAND LAL DAAGH” (Short stories- 1966), “PAANDI PURANO WATA NAEEN” (Short stories- 1972), “SOOR JOON SAO SOORTOON” (Novel- 1997) and “BIGHRYAL GHAR” (Play- 1972).

He breathed his last on 22nd June 2010 at Ajmer.

Sahitya Akademi Award Winning Sindhi Author About Mohan Gehani

He is a noted Sindhi scholar, playwright, translator and poet. Born in Karachi (Sind) on January 20, 1938, he belongs to a select community of writers who have lived through the Partition of India. Gehani, whose first short story appeared in 1955 in Naeen Duniyan, a progressive literary magazine, is the author of numerous books. He has also played an active role in the successful campaign to introduce Sindhi in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution.



Gehani is the recipient of several awards, including the Sahitya Akademi award in 2011 and the Saeen G M Sayed memorial award by World Sindhi Council at London. He has also received awards for his contribution to Sindhi literature from the Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language and Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli ain Sahit Sabha. He was a member of the Sindhi advisory board for Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, from 2007-12.

Explore his work

