

THE PROGRESSIVE WRITERS' MOVEMENT IN SINDHI LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Sobho Gianchandani

[Translated from Urdu by Mohammad Asim Siddiqui*]

Sobho Gianchandani (1920-2014), a student of Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan during World War II whom the great poet called 'the man from Mohenjo Daro', was a major Sindhi playwright and short story writer. Member of the Communist Party of Pakistan, which was banned in 1956, he was the first non-Muslim and non-Urdu recipient of Pakistan's highest literary award 'Kamal-e- Fann' (2004). Arrested about 20 times for his fight against injustice and inequality, Gianchandani's has been a very prominent voice for Sindhi language. This is the English translation of a conversation of Sobho Gianchandani with Muslim Shameem, Rahat Sayeed and Mazhar Jameel. For the sake of readability the observations of Gianchandani have been given the form of a unified, running text by the translator.

The Progressive Writers' Movement in Sindhi language started at the same time as in other Indian languages and its impact has also been the same. Except for some local specifics, Indian languages have emerged from similar cultural and political climate. Indian people have had common problems and limited means. For this reason literatures in different Indian languages share some characteristics. Interestingly, even before the advent of the Progressive movement, different Indian languages displayed progressive tendencies and ideas, whether they were in the form of adoption of modern education or Sufism or a sense of rebellion against the British rule.

Among the pioneers of modern Sindhi literature, the most prominent name is that of Mirza Qaleech Baig. Along with him there is Doctor Gaur Bukhshani. There must have been many others like him. The Sindhi progressive movement is comparable to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's effort to bring Muslims closer to modern education.

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However, whereas Sir Syed's movement essentially targeted Muslims after they suffered heavy losses in the Revolt of 1857, the Sindhi movement has been essentially secular. It tried to lift the Sindhi people irrespective of their religion. It was not dominated by the Muslims. Infact, there were very few Muslims in this movement. More Hindus than Muslims were associated with this movement. Still it cannot be called a movement of Hindu nationalism. Interestingly the board which was set up to decide the script for Sindhi language was dominated by Hindus and its chairman was also a Hindu. The board decided on Arabic rather than Hindi or Gurmukhi script, a decision which can be considered the most powerful evidence to establish the secular character of Sindhi literary movement.

It is remarkable that there have not been reactionary tendencies in Sindhi literature. It has not been open to concepts of narrow nationalism. The best example of Sindhi literature's open spirit is Mirza Qaleech Baig. He is a prolific writer who has written more than sixty books which include novels, translations and adaptations from other literatures. His contribution to bring Western ideas to Sindhi literature is without a parallel. His adaptations have a unique quality. Thus, in his work titled *Zeenat* he successfully transported the world of English industrial society to his local Sindhi environment, introducing Muslim characters and providing a local colour to his narrative. A scholar of Persian and Arabic, he introduced fiction into Sindhi language. Essentially secular in outlook, he also produced remarkable work on language and linguistics including a book on Shah Abdul Latif's poetry.

After the arrival of the British, Sindhi literature acquired a definite shape. Works from the Western world and also from many Indian languages were translated. Fiction was a prominent beneficiary in this process. Grammar of Sindhi language was compiled. Modern type also came into existence in this period. After 1930, the impact of Indian social and political movement on Sindhi literature was more evident. The creative process in Sindhi literature received a boost.

Sufism is the most distinctive and dominant characteristic of Sindhi literature. Beginning with the first Sindhi poet Qazi Qazin to Shah Inayat, Shah Latif, Sachal Sarmast, Sami, Bekas and Bedil, all Sindhi poets were Sufis. Still instead of an escape from life or renunciation of life or making a fetish of shrine worship, there is a total involvement with life in the Sindhi poetry. Thus Shah Latif, undoubtedly the greatest Sindhi poet, is a Sufi but he is fully involved in the activities of life. On the one hand, he shows his involvement in the construction of Bhat Shah and on the other, he jumps headlong into love. Fairs interest him, as do the sermons. There is so much

of the ordinary lived life and so many shades of it in his work that one only wonders at his power of observation. He possesses so many dialects of the ordinary existence and so many songs, mannerisms and perceptions of the ordinary life which cannot be his if he were merely confined to the shrine.

From the very beginning a mixed culture developed on the shores of Sindh. Hindu and Muslim customs and traditions have had a mutual existence for such a long time in Sindh that the development of a composite culture in Sindh is not an accident. It was an inevitability. In fact, Sindhi culture is a synonym for this composite culture. Hindus of Sindh were influenced by the monotheistic philosophy of Islam. They also developed a detachment from idol worship. An attitude of tolerance and a realistic view of life were other influences accepted by them. Similarly many habits and patterns of local life gradually entered the lives of the Muslims. As a result of this in the northwest in general and Sindh in particular many Sufi and Bhakti institutions came into existence. Sufi elements are present in not only Sindhi poetry but in life in Sindh in general. What constitutes the Sufi character of Sindhi poetry? It consists of the spread of higher human values, love and brotherhood among human beings, search for truth wherever it may come from, love of the beauty of life, hatred against forces of oppression, and an exhortation to avoid those forces which turn the beauty of life into ugliness. These teachings are present in every religion but bad people exploit them for their own benefit and make these values ineffective. Sufi poets of Sindh have employed these Sufi beliefs in their poetry beautifully and effectively. They have used the traditional stories and tales of Sindh in their literary works in such a manner that they have come to life again. In their work there is a very true representation of Sindhi life. These Sufi poets have presented traditional Sindhi tales and stories in such a manner that they have become the chronicles of Sindhi life. The richness of Sindhi folklore is such that as many as forty-five volumes of these traditional stories and tales have been published. They contain all shades of folk life. There can be found in these stories tales, dialects, riddles, epigrams and all other pieces of interesting conversation which people may indulge at moments of leisure. One reason for the richness of Sindhi folklore is that in Sindh the traditions of different lands have come together. In Sindh can be found the influence of, among others, Punjabi, Bilochi, Qibali, Marwadi, and Gujarati traditions. This mixed culture has entered the Sufi poetry in a significant manner. As a result of these influences and because of the insistence on human values, the outlook of Sindhi literature

has essentially remained secular. It does not mean that the poets and writers had turned their back on their faith. It simply means that they promoted the universal and essentially humanist aspects of their religion which do not hurt the sensibilities of others.

The canvas of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry is so wide that all aspects of life can be found in it. The experiences and sentiments of common people and their happiness and sorrow are beautifully represented in his poetry. His vocabulary is so large that it is a matter of surprise that he wrote in a language which had not produced any great poetry before him. He had the twin job of representing life and expanding and refining the language inherited by him.

In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that he is not only one of the greatest poets in Sindhi language but in other languages also he would have few parallels. A true and great artist is part of the world heritage irrespective of the language he uses as his medium. He or she surely has something distinctive about him/her. From this angle the most distinctive quality in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is his power of observation and expression. He is a poet who has seen the world. He has not stuck to any one place for too long. He is familiar with each aspect of Sindh. When he talks of the Thar Desert he appears to be an inhabitant of Thar. The topography, the weather, the climate, the flora and fauna, the language, the dialect and the patterns of life that define the people of Thar Desert can be found in him. Similarly, when we see the description of 'Bahar Natran' in 'Sursa Mandri', which is purely an Indian custom, we see him thinking like a Hindu woman. According to this custom, women make a coffin of banana leaves and light it to flames. They then drop it in the river with a prayer that their loved ones who have left their village come back home safely. Shah Abdul Latif reminds us of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* in his description of Modav brothers' struggle against the sea. In the same manner when he represents the feelings of Marvi, in his *Age of Marvi*, the listener is full of emotions and his feelings for his native place reach their purest form. It is the magic of his expression that his tales are sung in even small fares in different places. In any case, in Sindh, there has been a close relationship between poetry and music and instead of bookish poetry there has flourished a kind of poetry which is accompanied by music. In fact, with this has developed a complete cultural climate. The large vocabulary of Shah consists of very expressive metaphors and similes which capture the essence of his subject. Despite expressing himself in a local lingo he succeeds in imparting universality to his work. It is because of this that a worldly person or even an atheist can get

delight from his work. Unfortunately, no proper scientific study of his work has been done so far. Dr Gaur Bukhshani has presented him as a mere Sufi philosopher and has interpreted Shah's couplets, compiled in *Shah Jo Risalo*, in a philosophical, spiritual and metaphorical context. In fact, the social context of his work which influenced Shah's poetry is not explored by Gaur Bukhshani. H.T. Sorally was the first critic who tried to understand Shah's poetry in a historical and social context. He tried to touch on the influences on Shah's poetry. He has also quoted the testimony of Italian traveller Manucci who travelled through Sindh in order to understand Shah's poetry. He has also used many documents of the East India Company which illuminate some aspects of Shah's work.

Local colour has always defined Sindhi poetry. Despite Arabs coming to Sindh and despite Persian being the official language in Sindh for a long time, Sindhi poetry remained rooted in tradition and locality.

The fusion of different cultures has always happened in Sindh and no culture has ever existed in its final pure stage in Sindh. Both Persian and Arabic influences did not last long. Arabs came to Sindh in a small number and they hardly brought any cultural capital which could have exerted a definite influence on Sindhi culture. Cultural influences travel through home and family. Arab men mostly came here without their families and they married and settled down in Sindh. They were influenced by Sindhi culture much more than they influenced it. The influence of Persian also remained confined to the court. In fact, courts and feudal lords in Sindh did not have the kind of grandeur that defined their counterparts in Lucknow, Delhi, Agra and Awadh. Sindh did not even have cities like Lucknow, Delhi and Agra. In fact, even during the relatively prosperous period of Khudmirs, Mir would sit on the floor with his courtiers. The gap between the feudal lords and their subjects in Sindh was not as wide as in other feudal lands. They were more like big Zamindars. It was rather a tribal system which fell short of being a fully feudal system. It did not have great influence on life.

Respect for others' faith is another remarkable element in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif, or for that matter, in Sindhi poetry as such. Sachal Sarmast, a poet very different from Shah Latif, whose poetry has more of the religious element, is essentially secular in his outlook. Apart from this another remarkable tendency in Sindhi poetry is its international concern. When Shah says "Oh God make all lands of the world fertile before sending water-filled clouds on my sky", he immediately reveals his love of all humanity.

Since the beginning of history, the valley of Sindh has been home to various world cultures. It has not made distinctions between eastern, western, northern and southern cultures. These cultures also included cultures such as Greek, feudal Arab and old Indian cultures. The remains of Mohenjo-Daro point to the fact that even five thousand years ago, there were trade relations between the people of Sindh and the Egyptian people. It is because of this cultural fusion that tolerance and coexistence have been the basic elements of Sindhi character. As recently as about five decades ago it was not unusual to see devout and religious Hindus folding their hands before a mosque and then ringing the temple bell and worshipping their idols. The threads of different cultures were woven in Sindhi culture. Sindh's Sufi poets played a very important role in creating this composite culture. Today a greater number of Hindus who migrated from Sindh to India celebrate the birth and death anniversaries of Shah Latif and Sachal Sarmast than they do in Sindh. It is because these two are their national poets too. Compared to them, Sami has not had the same kind of influence, for the reason that in terms of thought and style he is not quite in the same league as Shah and Sarmast.

Interestingly enough there has also been an influence of religion on the poetry of both Shah and Sarmast and both have taken up religious questions with a lot of devotion. However, in their expression of religious sentiment they neither hurt the religious sensibilities of others nor showed any religious bias. This is secularism of the highest degree which has respect for others' religious beliefs. Compare them with Hashim Thattvi, a very distinguished scholar who has very competently translated Quran in Sindhi language but has written against Sufi thought and has also written in favour of Muslim nationalism. Despite this Hashim Thattvi has not been able to exercise any influence on Sindhi thought because his ideas do not harmonize well with the basic Sindhi character. In Sindh, religious preachers and thinkers have not had the kind of influence exercised by the Sufis. A few religious teachers and scholars who gained prominence are the people who were not Sindhi natives. They were rather people who came from outside Sindh and settled down here. Even today one can see the influence of Sufi thought on the native Sindhi scholars, thinkers, intellectuals, and social workers. In other words Sufism is an integral part of Sindhi character.

As mentioned elsewhere in this text, the beginning of modern Sindhi literature took place with the writing of novels and short stories. With the coming of the British the influence of English

language and literature can be seen on Sindhi. The English people ruled Bengal for close to two hundred years. After the battle of Plassey in 1757, they exercised full control over Bengal. Gradually they took control of other parts of India as well. At last they came to Sindh in 1843. Thus they ruled over Sindh for about one hundred years. It is evident from this historical fact that they ruled over Bengal for a longer period and hence the English influence on Bengal and Bengali language is more definite as compared to its influence on other languages. Interestingly other languages acquired European influence not only directly through English language but also through Bengali. The first Bengali novelist was Bankim Chandra. The characters in his novels are often mendicants but they are quietly part of a movement against the British. In his novel *Anandmath* the 'Vande Mataram' song, which is now the song of Hindu nationalism, was introduced for the first time. This movement was similar to conservative Wahabi movement among Muslims which also raised its voice against the British. The literature which came into existence in Bengali and other Indian languages as a result of these movements was essentially nationalist in spirit. The Bengali literature of this period lacks the technical and stylistic complexity which we find in the later Bengali writings of writers like Tagore and Sarat Chandra. In poetry, Qazi Nazrul Islam distinguished himself as a revolutionary poet. Premchand and Sudarshan were other major writers of this period who talked of nationalism. Meanwhile, the Progressive Writers' Movement provided an ideological current to this revolutionary ferment which was especially manifested in the short stories of Krishan Chander, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Upendranath Ashq, Ismat Chughtai, Saadat Hasan Manto, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Balwant Singh. These writers were quite popular in Sindh. Their work displays a consciousness of social and economic issues. It can be said that the literature produced outside Sindh showed a revolutionary fervor. It was creating a political and social awakening. There was also a consciousness against exploitation of all sorts. This consciousness was given a shape by the Progressive Writers' Movement. From the time of Mirza Qaleech Baig Sindhi literature awakened to a new consciousness. People in Sindh seemed very enthusiastic to welcome the new ideas. In the beginning a great many works were translated from English into Sindhi. The contribution of Mirza Qaleech Beg in this respect has already been mentioned. Compared to the literature in other languages Bengali literature was more progressive and a greater number of English classics were already available in Bengali. Almost a similar situation prevailed in Hindi literature and

it also was familiar with the richness of European literature. Urdu has also seen a period of translation. Most Hindu writers of Sindh knew Hindi and Hindi bore the influence of Bengali. As a result Sindhi writers were exposed to the Western influence through their reading of Hindi, Bengali and Urdu literature. They benefitted a great deal from this exposure. In other words, Sindhi literature has acquired modern ideas not only through Sindhi translations of English texts but also through Bengali, Hindi and Urdu literature. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Premchand and Sudarshan were familiar names in Sindh. A journal titled *Sundar Sahitya* (Beautiful Literature) was launched in 1920 and it remained in circulation for more than twenty years. It played an important role in promoting modern literature. Thus, even before the beginning of the twentieth century the stage was set for modern Sindhi literature. During this period the literature of different languages, English and Indian, was available in Sindhi through translations and adaptations. The first long story and novel was written between 1920 and 1925. Qaleech Baig's novel *Zeenat* was also published during this period. In this cultural awakening a very important name was that of Shewak Bhojraj who started a movement for the development of children's life. He belonged to Motani family of Larkana and wrote three books. His first book titled *Ashirvad* (1933) was a story about young people who are full of new ideas. They participate in the national movement and go to jail. In jail they are transformed into revolutionaries and raise their voice against exploitation. This is essentially a story about the problems, passions and aspirations of the youth of the revolutionary times. His second book was titled *Dada Shyam* (1934) which was a story about the love of a school teacher for his student and was written against the backdrop of the nationalist movement. His third book, set against the tribal background of Shikarpur, includes stories about the Balochi region. All writers of this period were realist. They came from rural backgrounds and village is very much present in their stories in all its honesty and sincerity. Their stories are remarkably free from any air of affectation. All these works present a reflection of Sindh of the times. They present a portrayal of both the freedom movement as well as a reaction against social evils and conservatism.

In talking about the background of modern Sindhi literature it is important to discuss the efforts of some English and European scholars. Ernest Trumpp, a German philologist and missionary to Sindh Province, got *Shah Jo Risalo* published in modern type from Germany. He had also compiled the first Sindhi grammar. He also

promoted the use of modern type. In fact, all over India wherever the English people had influence, the English rulers, missionaries and priests adopted the regional Indian languages for their needs. They refined these languages and tried to fix some rules for them. Generally they tried to promote these languages. It happened in the case of Sindhi too and with the efforts of the Englishmen, local scholars and intellectuals, Sindhi established itself along with other established languages.

Progressive Writers' Association was formed in 1936. Though no branch of PWA was formally established in Sindh, Sindhi literature was taking the form of an organization. In the beginning some efforts were made at the individual level. In Shikarpur in 1940 Gobind Punjabi and Barkat Ali Azad jointly started a series of volumes entitled *Nai Duniya (New World)*. Its first volume was titled *Sard Aahe (Cold Sighs)* which included many stories by Gobind which were written in a new style and which addressed new problems. In the second collection Barkat Ali Azad published a translation of Peter Kropotkin's *Message to the Youth* which became highly popular not only at that time but was also published in many new editions in later years. Recently Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo has published another edition of this work. This work is an appeal to the youth to connect with the ordinary people in whichever field they want to excel, be it medicine, law, philosophy or engineering. At this time the publication of many literary magazines also promoted the cause of Sindhi literature. A magazine titled *Asha Saita Mandal* presented the translation of many important Hindi, Urdu and Bengali novels which are considered modern classics. A similar kind of magazine was published by the Sikhs of Hyderabad which presented the translation of classic works of Western writers. Later Jagat Advani started a magazine titled *Zindagi (Life)* which also published the translations and adaptations of the selected modern masterpieces of world literature. One magazine titled *Sindhu* which started from Jacobabad continued the trend of translations. From these details one can conclude that in the third and the fourth decade of the twentieth century Sindh was experiencing a literary wave. There was a competition among literary magazines and the individuals about who could present a better translation of literary works. It does not mean that no original works were produced during this period. Original novels and stories were produced though their number was limited. There was certainly a rawness about the original works in Sindhi. Readers were becoming familiar with the best in world literature through translations and adaptations. As a result their literary taste and sensibility was reaching a new plane.

Progressive literary movement formally started with the founding of 'Sindhi Adab Sangat' (Sindhi Literature Union) in 1945-46. But even before it was founded, progressive-minded young people were busy making their individual efforts. When Gobind Punjabi came to Karachi from Shikarpur, a group of progressive young men was already active in Karachi which took interest in literature too. This group included comrade Jamaluddin Bukhari, Gobind Mali, Ram Nijvani and me (Sobho Gianchandani). Apart from this, the students and teachers of D.J. College, which included professor Gurbakshani, Shaikh Ayaz Narayan, Shaikh Razaq and Sundari Uttam Chandani, constituted the progressive element. We held a socialist ideology and we wanted Sindhi literature to follow this path. There were many others with us, not socialist though, who held liberal views and who were interested in the development of Sindhi literature. At this time there was the dominant trend of translation in Sindhi literature and few original works were being produced. When I came out of prison in 1944, we launched a movement for original works in Sindhi and persuaded writers to produce ones in Sindhi. We started a magazine *Nai Duniya* which encouraged original works in Sindhi. In addition to this we also brought out a few collections of original stories. One of our collections of stories was titled *Sahrai Phool* (Flowers of Desert). We motivated Sindhi writers to produce original works on the line of Western literary masterpieces. We travelled in different parts of Sindh to prepare a favorable ground for 'Sindhi Literature Union'. Before Sindhi Literature Union, another half-formed organization, namely Sindhi Adabi Circle, was started under the leadership of professor Gurbakshani which later took the shape of Sindhi Literature Union.

Among others who were part of the progressive movement in Sindhi the names of Ehsan Badri, Kirat Babani, Sundri Uttamchandani and Roshan Mughal are worthy of mention. The prominent centres of the movement were Karachi and Hyderabad. After Gobind Punjabi left Shikarpur, it ceased to be an important centre of progressive movement. Later Shikarpur gained some prominence when Shaikh Ayaz settled there again and he started a paper titled *Aage Qadam* (*Forward Steps*). Three issues of this paper came out.

Another person who made his mark later was Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi. In his views on poetry he had progressive ideas. He wrote a long poem in the manner of Iqbal's 'Shikwa' and 'Jawab-e-Shikwa'. This poem so enraged Rashdi Brothers that they launched a movement against Jatoi. So much so that even a fatwa of blasphemy was passed against Jatoi. However, Jatoi was not part of the group that started progressive movement in Sindh.

The contribution of Mohammad Ibrahim Joyo in publishing

Sindhi literature in modern form and in expanding it intellectually and stylistically is very noteworthy. Ibrahim Joyo is largely responsible for giving Sindhi literature its present shape. His work started with the publication of the magazine titled *Mahrat*. With this magazine he encouraged the young talent and showed them a new way. A very widely read person, he is familiar with entire world literature. Because of the encouragement given by him to new writers, a new generation of Sindhi writers has come up.

Jamal Abru belongs to the post-Partition phase of writing. In fact, Sindhi Literature Union did most of its work after the Partition. After the Partition when many writers left Sindh and people belonging to a different culture and speaking different languages came to Sindh, there was a reaction against it. The change in political climate in Pakistan, in Sindh in particular, after 1950 filled Sindhis and other minorities with a sense of deprivation. This sense of deprivation reached its climax after the Pakistan government adopted one-unit programme. During the ten-year period of one-unit programme, all minority cultures, except that of the Punjabis, increasingly felt a sense of deprivation. A very strong kind of nationalism developed in regions other than Punjab. This nationalist consciousness and sensibility found an acute reflection in literature. During this entire period Sindhi Literature Union played a historic role in promoting and publishing the national literature of Sindh. It will not be wrong to say that Sindhi Literature Union symbolized Sindhi society's desire to organize Sindhi literature in a progressive framework. There was a time in Sindhi politics when opportunism and cheap intrigues were the order of the day. At that time Sindhi Literature Union was the only institution which continued a fight for the Sindhi language, literature, culture and the rights of common people. It was due to the valiant efforts of the young Sindhi writers, poets and intellectuals that even politicians had to pay heed to their words. They had to follow the path showed by these Young Turks.

This period also saw the beginning of a new era of poetry represented by Shaikh Ayaz, Tanwir Abbasi, Shamsherul Hyderi and Niyaz Humanyoun. Shaikh Niyaz had always been a representative poet of Sindh. However, it was after the creation of Pakistan, and particularly after the Sindhi nationalist reaction to Pakistan's one-unit policy, that he distinguished himself as the most effective, powerful and loudest nationalist poetic voice in Sindh. A very erudite person, Shaikh Ayaz was fully familiar with the heritage of Sindhi classical poetry as well as the classics of world literature. He possessed historical consciousness and aesthetic taste in equal measure. His

creative capacity was such that he tried his hands at every literary genre. Today any discussion of modern Sindhi poetry or short story cannot be completed without mentioning his contribution. His poems addressed to Gaut Bhattai entered the blood veins of Sindhi readers. In his work he evolved an idiom, not found anywhere else in Sindhi literature, which was a perfect blend of the classical and the modern. This entire period gets its identity from Shaikh Ayaz.

Because of his style and soft tone, Tanwir Abbasi also represents Sindhi character. Niyaz Humanyoun, on the other hand, is full of a revolutionary spirit. Apart from these two there is the important name of Abdul Karim Gadai, who had been writing poetry for a long time but would gain prominence during this period. Among the modern short story writers Jamal Abru, Ayaz Qadri, Shaikh Razzaq, Hameed Sindhi, Rasheed Bhatti, and Naseem Kharl are worthy of mention. In the last three decades, Sindhi literature has scaled new heights. A lot has been written in different genres of Sindhi literature which include, apart from Sindhi poetry and short story, criticism, research works, witty and humorous writings, personal essay, autobiography and travelogue. In other words all varieties of writing have seen growth.

The progressive situation in Sindh has been quite different from its counterpart in Urdu. In Urdu, the beginning of modern literature saw both progressive as well as reactionary elements. Later the progressive elements carved out a separate ideological position for themselves. In Sindh, the entire modern literature started with progressive ideas. From the very beginning, we had to struggle to produce original works in Sindhi. Translations and adaptations reigned supreme before we came on the scene. When we started our style of writing, as mentioned earlier, it had a technical and stylistic rawness about it which would be refined by later generation of writers.

The Partition affected the course of Sindhi literature. Before the Partition, most Sindhi writers in Sindh were Hindus. After the Partition, many Sindhi writers left for India and a vacuum was created. Only Ayaz, Ibrahim Joyo, Abdul Razzaq and Usman Diplai remained important names in Sindhi literature. Diplai was basically a Wahabi Muslim and he wrote against grave worship, Pir worship and Murshid worship. He also wrote against the oppression of Zamindars. At the same time he wrote books against the Congress, endorsing the viewpoint of the Muslim League much in the manner of Naseem Hijazi. Thus, in the beginning there were contradictory strands in his writing as he was a follower of Muslim League but was also a

progressive. After Pakistan was created and he saw the conditions in Sindh closely—political conspiracies and exploitative strategies—he also experienced the frustration which was experienced by all progressive writers. When Gobind Mali and I, to share an interesting incident, toured Sindh in 1945 in connection with progressive writers' movement, we also met Diplai. Diplai told us frankly that his and ours paths are different from each other. However, when we came out of the prison in 1952, Diplai was among those who welcomed us which obviously was a sign of the intellectual change in him. After that he became a part of the progressive movement and made friends with Ibrahim Joyo whose company he shunned in the past. A man good at publishing, he brought out a couple of literary magazines to promote the cause of progressive literature.

The writers who migrated from Sindh continued their literary activities even from the camps in which they were forced to live. In fact, there was an intensity in their efforts. They brought out *Nai Duniya (The New World)* from Bombay. These writers included Kirat Babani, Gobind Mali, Gobind Punjabi and Anand Golani. Gradually Ajmer and Hyderabad also became the centres of Sindhi literature and magazines and books would be published from these two places. The migrant writers from Sindh had to compete with Hindi and other languages and they needed to preserve their Sindhi identity. For this language and literature were the best means. When their writings were received in Sindh they were hugely influential because of their quality. Their popularity in Sindhi grew enormously and literature linked the two lands culturally and emotionally, a relationship which is still very strong. In the initial years after the Partition, the growth of literature in Sindh was slow but in the fifth and the sixth decade of the twentieth century, the development of Sindhi literature reached a crescendo. In particular there is no match in India for Shaikh Ayaz's poetry. Interestingly Shaikh Ayaz considers Narayan Shyam a better poet and talks of him very fondly. In my opinion Shaikh Ayaz is a far better poet. However, in fiction and other prose genres a lot of work has been done in India. It is remarkable that because of the efforts of Sindhi writers Sindhi is included among the national languages in multilingual India.

In the end I would like to underscore that in a matter of fifty years or so, Sindhi writers have expanded the canvas of Sindhi literature in India. However, the other aspect of this reality is very disappointing. In Pakistan's political history, the injustices done to Sindh have adversely affected the course of Sindhi language and literature. At the official level not much has been done for Sindhi language.

Unless a language is wedded to an economic cause, it cannot prosper. A Sindhi-knowing young man cannot procure employment. A language also prospers if it is made the medium of instruction. Sindhi has not got its due from this angle too.