

THE INSTITUTE OF SINDHOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SINDH

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The Sindhi Adabi Board was constituted as an autonomous body by the Government of Sindh in early fifties. In seven years from 1955-65, the Board published a large number of books on Sindh, covering history, geography, culture, folk-lore, Arabic and Persian texts. Prose and Poetry in Sindhi, Urdu, English, Persian and Arabic.

The autonomy of the Board ended in 1962 under orders of Government of Pakistan, and a new Chairman and members were nominated. This dismayed many Sindhi scholars and others interested in promoting not only Sindhi literature, but also culture and past heritage of Sindh.

Sindh University still was autonomous and many of Sindh's well wishers wanted Sindh University to establish an organization, which would work on the lines of such institutes as Indology and Iranology, and collect and preserve all kinds of material covering every aspect of Sindh's life and culture.

Hissamuddin Rashdi, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Hanif Siddiqi and Dr. A.M. Sheikh made such a proposal to Dr. Siddiqi, the Vice Chancellor University of Sindh in 1963 and thus Sindhology came into being, with Hanif Siddiqi as the honorary Director and Dr. Allana as Assistant Director by the orders of Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqi.

In 1969 Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah nominated a Board for guiding the Director in its various functions. Since the exact functions and powers of Board were not defined in later years it became a body only for endorsing the actions of the Director and almost redundant.

In the opinion of present writer the Research Work on Sindhology can in brief be categorized in the following groups, irrespective of its original charter.

- 1. Collection of Published material:-**
Collection of raw material (non-fictional) on Sindh, in the form of published books in any language and making it available for research to students, teachers, scholars and other interested. The same is its function of other categories 2-17 discussed below:
- 2.** Collection of raw material on Sindh (non fictional) in form of manuscripts in any language.
- 3. Collection of religious, and professional materials, Sanads, treaties engagements etc.** Collection of raw material on Sindh, written in the form of

religious and professional texts, covering the religious hitherto practiced in Sindh, occupations, or professions like medicine, agriculture, engineering and etc. The official Sanads, letters, and records is another material of importance.

- 4. Collection of fictional literature, poetry.**
Collection of literature (fictional and poetry) on Sindh.
- 5. Collection of oral literature on Sindh.**
Written or oral music, poetry, phraseology, including presently un-printable oral material.
- 6. Photographing archeological material.**
Photographing of ancient settlements and objects of interest found from these cities.
- 7. Photographing of professionals tools and the professionals.**
Photographing various implements, tools and aids used in various occupations. Photographs of people working on different aspects and phases, of various traders.
- 8. Collection of objects of art.**
Collection of objects of art decoration used in housing ornaments, clothing, jewelery and geometrical pattern in buildings and study of decorating patterns, the objective or thought behind them and interpreting of these patterns as borrowings from ancient lingering cultures or new innovations.
- 9. Epigraphical Collection.**
Epigraphical collection i.e., inscriptions and numismatical material on Sindh.
- 10. Collection of Painting.**
Collection of painting, modern or ancient, or photographing them.
- 11. Collection of material on fauna, flora and geographical samples.**
Collecting information on flora and fauna of Sindh from literature and otherwise and also geological samples.
- 12. Preparation of bibliographies.**
Preparing bibliographies and source material on Sindh.
- 13. Preparation of biographies.**
Collection of biographical sketches, of people of Sindh or those who have worked in Sindh, during the past and present and also collection of biographies of rulers, administrators, soofis, poets, writers, reformers and others, in the form of National Biographical Dictionaries, Chronologically.
- 14. Material on day to day life on Sindh.**

Collecting material on the day to day life i.e., way of living of people in the past and present, their dwellings, furniture and fixtures, photographing of classic Sindhi or classic borrowed furniture, including collection of its working drawings and plans, housing materials and methods in building them.

15. Human and animal food and methods preparation.

Collection of information on human and animal food, in the past and present, methods of collection, sources of supply and methods of preparation.

16. Publications.

Publishing book and articles on above subjects, in the form of journals, bulletins, books etc.

17. Museum and exhibition.

Organizing exhibitions of above materials and other similar function.

Achievements.

Having said all above, we have to look into its achievements in the past 25 years. I have seen that some work has been done in all the above fields, although little in some, more in others and negligible in the third. The reasons are simple. This type of work is highly specialized, and there is no limit either to the knowledge at scope. Sindhology as it is constituted, works under its director and is one man-show. His being responsible to Vice Chancellor of the University, is purely to financial and administrative control, but technically he is the boss.

Attempts to have a board to govern it have failed, as the board was redundant without any powers. A few, Sub-committees formed, worked as endorsing signatures to the action, already taken by the Director. Since the Board was arbitrarily constituted by a Vice-Chancellor for a fixed period, the succeeding Vice Chancellor not considering it binding, did not reconstitute the Board. Even during the period it worked, some members were not notified at all, the others did not get agenda, or minutes and thus members got disinterested.

What needed to be done, was permanent committees for various factions and each committee having scope to enlarge or add in each of the above fields members from reputed provincial, inter-provincial organization or international specialists. A small office of one secretary could have corresponded on behalf of these committees. Since there is no dearth of material in all these fields, a system to collect materials, could have been built in a few years and the rest would have followed with certainly.

I can put my comment on activities 1 to 17 of the Sindhology as under:

1. Published Material.

Some 70,000 volumes of printed material is reported to have been collected. This is an enormous material, but we really do not know what it is, what is collected,

what is not collected and what need to be collected, as in 25 years no library cards were made and maintained. I have a humble library on Sindh. I have a complete catalogue, as well as catalogue cards. It has also been put on computer. With help of catalogue cards, indexes, it is easy to work on any aspect of Sindh.

2. Manuscripts.

Some work in this field is on collection of manuscripts done we cannot say how much, as the list of acquisition has not been printed. Recent collection by Dr. Dur Muhammad Pathan, from the living scholars of unprinted and printed material is commendable.

3. Religious and professional manuscripts.

Some material has been collected, but enormous material at Pir Jhando, Lowari Pir, and many other places, needs photographing or being brought on micro film or microfisch. Some of these may be photocopied, as there is every danger of material at these places. Getting lost for ever. The books on Uniani system of medicine were difficult to get in the past. The prescriptions in them, were considered as highly professional secrets. Now that the Hakims have virtually lost their practices among masses, and their concentration is limited to, many incurable, and complex functions of human body, these books have lost their utility. It is high time to collect all possible written material from these sources, before it is destroyed.

4. Collection Literature (fiction and Poetry).

There are more than 3000 Sindhi books in India Office Library and 6000 more in the Library of Congress collected from India and Pakistan. Most of them are fiction. Sindhology having been directed by a professor of Sindhi for 21 years, will have a large collection of this material, but whether it is systematic, can be known after catalogue cards are ready. One typist trained by me for an hour was put on the job to prepare catalogue of my books, completed cards for about 12000 books, of which 6000 on Sindh 6000 technical in 50-60 working days, at rate 200 to 250 books per day of 8 hours. The included number of page, index, charts, drawings, photographs and maps in each book. Work was completed in 60 working days.

5. Oral literature.

We have no knowledge about its collection. Some individual interviews have been taped but it is the oral literature meant here, but biographical material. Some work a collection of music is definitely in progress, but none has thought of un-printable or un-circulatable books. The worlds largest collection of such books in. The British Museum and 'Vatican'. Sindhology can have a proud

privileges, if they collect this type of material on Sindh or from Sindh or else where.

6. Ancient settlement.

Very limited work is done on photographing of ancient settlements and objects found from them. This can supplement the work of the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Pakistan and the latter can indicate sites known to them, but no photographed. I had located about 100 such sites in Kotri Barrage in early 60's and communicated to Dr. F.A. Khan, who got them surveyed in late 60's.

7. Photographing professional and their tools.

This is a raw field in which new professional tools are replacing old tools very fast and urgent action is needed. As for example; bullock-cart is disappearing as Suzuki has killed it. Boats started disappearing with railways, but they have been hit the worst, by truck service on roads. Bullock drawn implements have given way to the tractor drawn. Power operated tools are coming up in carpentry and so on. Some work has been done, but it has to be systematic, profession-wise and sequence wise, showing all operations.

8. Objects of arts.

Let of work has been done in collection of wear of the people i.e., ornaments, dresses, rellies, shawls, ajraks, topies etc., of symbolic Sindhi culture, but work of collection of geometrical pattern or art in building and art and interpreting, its meaning, borrowings and now innovations, has not been touched upon.

In the opinion of present writer the decorative geometrical pattern art on Jam Nizamuddi's tomb, has been a guide line, as well as inspiration and fountain-head for all decorative art of Arghoon, Tarkhan, Mughal, Kalhora and Talpur periods and patterns on the original stone were either copied in stone or were transferred to tiles in many cases. Pattern on some Ajraks, and the embroidery work are adaptations from Mohenjo Daro trefoils or quatrefoils of the later pre-historical period.

9. Epigraphy.

Inscription on many monuments are disappearing, due to the lack of conservation. Photographing of all inscriptions at Thatta, Rohri, Sukkur, Larkana, Mian Nasir, Sehwan, Nasarpur, Hyderabad, Chawkhandi, scattered 14-15th century graves ancient mosques and etc, within the Archaeological Departments jurisdiction, or out-side, could be photographed and interpreted by Sindhology, as part of the preservation and record. Sindhology has a number of coin collection, but it is well known that Hyderabad Sharof Bazar is the leading

city, in the supply of forged historical coins. It is a highly technical job to distinguish forged from non-forged. I cannot do any justice to it, but one has to be careful as many of coins were purchased from Hyderabad.

10. Painting.

Sindhology has collected some modern paintings but there is collection of more than 1000 paintings on Sindh in U.K libraries and museums. There is also a private collection. I had listed some of the U.K paintings numbering about 500 for an article for 'Sindh Quarterly'. Systematic photographing of these can be done.

11. Fauna and Flora.

Karachi University has catalogued flora. Forest Department and Sindh Wild Life Board have photographed many fauna. Sindhology can borrow and duplicate the copies. My wife has collected information on 4500 flora, 45 mammals and 1500 birds of Sindh. We can readily supply this to Sindhology.

12. Bibliographies.

Sindhology's two bibliographies on Sindhi literature, 1947 to 1973 and 1973-1978 are a catalogue of their library acquisition rather than systematic collection. My own 'Source Material on Sindh', was based on rare material, I was able to lay hands on or read up to 1969, when it went to press and came out 8 years later in 1977. All the above three bibliographies thus are outdated. No attempt has been done to prepare bibliography of printed material from 1853-1947. Either Sindhi Departments of Karachi and Sindh Universities of Sindhology are the organization who should undertake this work.

13. Biographies.

Some biographical sketches have been written for preservation by Sindhology. What is required to be done is a series of Nation Biographical Dictionary covering the whole past of Sindh, rather than only the contemporary period.

14. Material on day to day to day life in Ancient Sindh.

Some material of archaeological interest on life pattern in Sindh has been collected but not properly catalogued, giving site of supply, exact location, shrata, period, age of the object, type and its utility. This needs help of a specialist. Sindhology has not been able to find any one so far. Some photographing of house hold articles of utility has been done by Sindhology, but less so, of furniture and fixtures of the past. In the early Victorian-Era, Prince Albert organized an exhibition of past 400 years European furniture at Crystal Palace. Since then, Museums world over, started collecting antique pieces of

furniture. This is what is to be aimed at, but start can be done with photographs. There are antique pieces of furniture owned by many families, but they are being replaced fast, by modern cheap and fancy versions. It certainly is very late, but quick efforts can help in its preservation on colour photographs. This will fall into 3 or 4 categories. Early Sindhi classical (Talpur furniture), Victorian, Early 20th century and, modern furniture. Some applies to furnishing. Common man's furniture and furnishings have gone through little change. Some furniture of late last century or early 20th century can be seen in some old institutes and offices. Since its collections and housing will require space and funds, to start with, photographs and working drawings can be made for preservation.

15. Human and Animal food.

To know about food of past is difficult without archaeologist spade, and specially without at least one experimental trench of each of large number of archaeological sites, but the material already collected from 8000 BC to 2000 BC by archaeologists can be elaborated and published.

16. Publications.

Journal "Sindhological Studies", is doing an excellent job of research on the past of Sindh. Thanks to its honorary editor Mazhar Yousaf. But the activities of Institute of Sindhology can be projected and served through only if there are more journals on Sindh, for example:

- (a) Journal "Source Material on Sindh", for item 1 to 15 above.
- (b) Journal "Sindhi Literature and Literary geared to do so.
- (c) Journal of Sindh Epigraphy (archaeology inscriptions, ancient architecture, numismatics and anthropology).
- (d) Journal of "Sindh Biography".
- (e) Journal "Sindh Historical".
- (f) Journal "Sindh Economics".
- (g) Journal "Ancient Technologies"

These journals will published series of articles and in a few years, enough new material will be collected for advanced research. These journals can not be a few-men show. Participation of outside bodies is required for example:

- (a) Sindhological Studies.
Departments of archaeology at Karachi, Sindh and Khairpur Universities and Department of Archaeology Government of Pakistan, and also history department.
- (b) Sindhi literature.
Karachi, Sindh and Khairpur Universities.
- (c) Epigraphy.

Karachi and Khairpur Universities and Archaeological Department.

- (d) Biography.
All Universities in Sindh.
- (e) History.
All universities in Sindh.
- (f) Arts.
Same as (a) and also departments of fine arts at Sindh and Karachi Universities.
- (g) Economics.
All universities and Planning and Finance Department Government of Sindh.
- (h) Ancient Technologies.
Two engineering universities, engineering college Nawabshah, Sindh Agriculture University, Agriculture Department of Government of Sindh and Industries Department.

If for each journal, editorial panel, has specialists, from all these institutes, sense of participation will create interest and material can be systematically collected. Six new journals of some 60 pages each issued quarterly, shall not cost more than Rs.300,000, annually and Sindhology should be willing to bear this cost.

17. Sidhology has to be extremely cautious on publications of books. Manuscripts received from authors need thorough checking and probably would need writing and some editing. Recent reprints of histories of Sindh, written more than 50 years ago between 1931 and 1937, without any change was not an adviceable a policy, as material on Sindh's history collected in past 50 years is 100 times more, than what was known about it, in early thirties. Same applies to other publications of Pithawala, Marriwala, Crowe, Postan and others. They should have been reprinted with exhaustive notes, pointing out errors, new developments and changes. This function could only be achieved by suitable committees and involvement of specialists on various subjects.

Sindhology has published a number of books, which in general could be categorized as:

- (i) Bibliographies.
- (ii) Translations.
- (iii) Original works.
- (iv) College text books.
- (v) Selections of short stories.
- (vi) Books on linguistics.
- (vii) History books of other countries.
- (viii) Travel accounts.

- (ix) Arts.
- (x) History of Sindh.

A brief review on these publication is:

- (a) Bibliographies.
Have been discussed above.
- (b) Translations.
Should cover the translations of historical, archaeological or other works mentioned in 1 to 17 above and not really translations of poetical work from Sindhi to Urdu, as this is a low priority. Translation of Bu Ali Qalander's Persian works in Sindhi, for general information, can at the best be squeezed in to functions of Sindhology.
- (c) Original works of Sarfraz Kalhora, Lutullah Qadari and Sayed of Daira are within the scope of Sindhology and are standard works.
- (d) University or College text books on politics, sociology and economics are out side the scope of work of Sindhology.
- (e) A book on ligistics is within the scope and is of some standard.
- (f) Selection of poems and short stories are out side scope of Sindhology as it is function of department of Sindh.
- (g) History of Moorish Spain in Sindhi does not justify even a remote link with function of Sindhology.
- (h) Traveler accounts of McMurdo, Delhoste and Crow were travels taken between 1801 and 1841. Their information on Sindh was distorted due to very short stay and lack of authentic information. These should have been printed with elaborate notes, correcting names and up dating other information. The institute should have taken care of it.
- (i) Book on Sindh's music, a compilation of 4-5 articles is incomplete and inadequate to give information on Sindh. Thus publications of Sindhology some of them M.A. monographs range from below average to average and only a few of them like that of Professor Qadri are a real good work.
- (j) On history of Sindh, 5 out of date booklets of Sindhi Adabi Society printed between 1931-1937 is what Sindhology can claim.

In general the most authentic work of Sindhology as can be presented to the public, is the books. Out of some 250 odd publication, barring one dozen, the rest are substandard and should not have been allowed to see light of the day. The journal Sindhological Studies is of course out standing contribution.

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Sir being on a ship is like being in a goal with the additional chance of being drowned.
Johnson

-O-

In Pakistan, Governemnts have lived thrived and survived on terrorization.

-O-

It is the function of a Director of a Company to cheat the share-holders as that of a Government to bamboozle the citizens.