

BOOK REVIEWS

"SINDHI BOLIAIN ADAB IJTARIKH" (Sindhi) (4th edition 1999) written by Dr.Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch, published by the Pakistan Study Centre, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, pages 478, price Rs.200 PB and Rs.225 HB.

TRACING THE BIRTH OF SINDHI

Shaikh Aziz

Much has been written on the origin and evolution of Sindhi language, specially after the birth of Pakistan. While its original script is yet to be deciphered, a number of writers have contributed immensely to the history of Sindhi language and literature. The book under review, authored and revised by Dr.Nabi Bakhsh Baloch, is a recent addition to these scholarly attempts.

This book deals with four subjects: the origin of Sindhi language and the script used by the Moenjodaro people, the literature of mediaeval period, the reformative period after adopting the present-day alphabet and the present-day literature.

In his attempt to trace the origin of Sindhi language, the author has discussed all theories regarding the Moenjodaro language and has tried to establish that Sindhi is perhaps a language of Sumerian origin or that of one of its contemporaries, that it is not an offshoot of Sanskrit language but precedes it and that it is an Indo-Aryan language and grew under the influence of Indo-Persians. He has concluded that Sindhi is a proto-Prakrit language, but his observations are open to interpretations and would need further study.

The author has painstakingly dealt with the mediaeval period as he has covered a long stretch of history, giving details of the evolution of Sindhi poetry, the scripts that were used by the people at that time and the schools

and subjects taught therein.

The third part of the book gives details of lingual and literary pursuits made during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. According to the writer, Sindhi became the medium of instruction in 1680, but, looking at the political situation of that time, it seems less plausible that Sindhi-medium schools were encouraged by the rulers, as from 1499 Persian became the official language of Sindh. In an indirect manner the writer has acknowledged this fact.

The fourth and the last section covers classical Sindhi poetry and prose. Although Persian remained the official language from the time of Kalhoras (1699-1783), Sindhi was the lingua franca of Sindh till the British took over in 1843. The author has described in detail the growth of Sindhi language and the literary pursuits made during those days.

The research on the origin of Sindhi language and literature is in fact a daunting task. From George Shirt and Grierson to Lambrick, Stackm, Asko Purpola, Bherumal, Fairvis and Dr. Baloch a number of scholars have presented their view-points which vary in both perception and approach. This is a quest for linguistics as well as archaeologists and historians. In the absence of thorough research on Moenjodaro, it is difficult to decipher the phonetic and connotative expressions of the ancient people. As no concerted efforts have been made in this regard, it still remains an enigma; Dr. Baloch's theories can only hold ground if substantiated by ample evidence. Nonetheless, his attempt at describing the history of Sindhi language and literature is praiseworthy.

This book was first published in 1962 and this is its third edition, enlarged and updated in view of the research carried out during recent years.

Reviews published in "DAWN" magazine "Books & Authors" December 5, 2000, p.8.

"EDUCATION BASED ON ISLAMIC VALUES: IMPERATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS" by Dr. N. A. Baloch, published by Pakistan Study Centre, University of Sindh, 2000 A.D., pages 152, price Rs.150, US \$ 10 net.

ABOUT AUTHOR

The author Prof. Dr. N. A. Baloch had his Masters of Arts and Law degrees from Aligarh University, and Masters and Doctorate degrees in Education from Columbia University, New York. As Professor of Education, he established Education Department at the University of Sindh, which became the first Graduate Department of Education in Pakistan. Later, developed into Institute of Education and Research. Dr. Baloch declined all offers to serve abroad, and stayed on for long years to serve the country. He participated in educational conferences, symposia and seminars in Pakistan and abroad(Unesco), served as Vice Chancellor of Sindh University, and as the first Vice Chancellor of Islamic University, Islamabad. Prof. Dr. Baloch has been advocating educational change in Pakistan to develop a truly national system of education.

What is presented is not a blue print for an 'Islamic System of Education': much less a thesis on the subject. It is an attempt to clarify thinking about it, -- to search for its purposes and principles and determine its directional goals. The proposition, with its imperatives and implications is presented under Part-I, while readings in educational development in the early Muslim society are provided under Part-II to highlight the perspective.
