DEPARTMENT OF PERSIAN  
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY  
ALIGARH

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR

Literary Society of the Department of Persian organized a one day National Seminar on “Indo Persian Literature Produced During Nineteenth Century”. The seminar was inaugurated by Brig. (Retd.) Syed Ahmad Ali, Pro Vice – Chancellor, AMU and Presided by Prof. I.H. Siddiqi (Professor of History, Aligarh). Prof. S.H.Qasmi (Delhi) delivered the keynote address and Dr. Gholam Reza Mahdavi (Iran) the Chief Guest gave a special lecture on the occasion. Prof. S. Kafil Ahmad Qasmi (Dean Faculty of Arts, AMU) and Prof. Azarmi Dukht Safavi also expressed their views.

Prof. A.Q. Jafery (Allahabad), Prof. Siddiq Neazmand (Delhi), Prof. I.A. Zilli (Aligarh), Prof. Masood Anwar Ali (Chairman, Department of Arabic AMU), Prof. Zafar Ahmad Siddiqi (Department of Urdu AMU), Prof. Razaullah Ansari (Aligarh) presented their scholarly papers and took part in the discussion. In this seminar twenty Research Scholars of the Department also presented their papers.

Dr. Mohd. Usman Ghani introduced the Guests and Prof. S.M. Asad Ali Khurshid proposed a Vote of Thanks.

Prof. Mohd. Asif Naim Siddiqi the Chairman of the Department in his Welcome Address, explained the aims and adjectives of the main theme of the seminar.

His welcome address is given below:

Persianate society had existed in India for at least seven centuries before a decline set in toward the end of the nineteenth century. At its best, it never restricted itself to local administrative, legal or religious-sufistic needs. Its concern with Iranian culture, Iranian poets, prose writers, and intellectuals was vital, interactive and creative. The work done by the Indians in every field of Persian letters is of high quality, often couched in seminal terms.

Up until about the 13th century, no distinction was perceived to exist between what was “Iranian” Persian literature and what was “Indian” Persian literature. The
earliest great writers like Mas’ud Sa’d-e Salman, Abul Faraj Runi were Indian born and bred and were entirely acceptable in the Iranian canon.

Towards the end the 13th century and early 14th century, Indian writing in Persian reached a level in both quality and quantity where poets and intellectuals like Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) began to speak of the Indian register of Persian as different and superior and more consistent in terms of tone and idiom to the “Iranian” register. Khusrau in fact denied that there was one single Iranian, normative register, whereas there was, he insisted, a single normative Indian Persian register used all over the sub-continent.

By about the end of the 16th century, Indian achievement in all literary and scholarly genres of Persian literature was so strong and varied that tensions began to develop between the “Indian” and “Iranian” literary production. The matter became more interesting when Iranian poets like Naziri Talib Amuli Kalim spent nearly the whole of their lives in India and helped create what was later termed as the “Sabk-i Hindi.”

Nineteenth century is a century when Persian was written by Indians. At times though the incontrovertibility of the language came under attack and a tendency to privilege Indo Iranian Persian against Indian Persian began. Even Ghalib embroiled himself in the bitter controversy by calling Qatil’s Persian puerile but on the whole the Persian writers of India are also of the authoritative status and write well. The Persian written by Indians has started evoking respectability and treated as inviolate in Iran and Ghalib is being acknowledged by Iranian scholars equally seminal and in no way inferior and less sophisticated to them by any definition.

The purpose of this Seminar is to make a serious attempt to give due recognition to the contribution of India Persian writers in all fields of Persian writing. This will involve taking account of the work done in this area in Persian, Urdu, and English; The following is a tentative list of the primary areas of focus:

1) Iranology in the Indian Sub-continent
Some of the categories of authors to be examined here will be lexicographers, linguists, literary historians and literary critics.

2) Eminent Individuals

3) Role of the lithography in popularizing Iranian Language and Literature in the Indian subcontinent in the 19th century
4) The role of Public and Private Libraries in preserving and promoting Persian Language, Literature and Culture

5) Role of Urdu, English, and other Indian languages in the preservation and promotion of Indian Persian.

**Note:** I am thankful to Janab S.R. Faruqi the prominent literary critic for his time to time suggestions which has taken the shape of this brief note. His writings on the subject have also imposed a degree of discipline on my English.