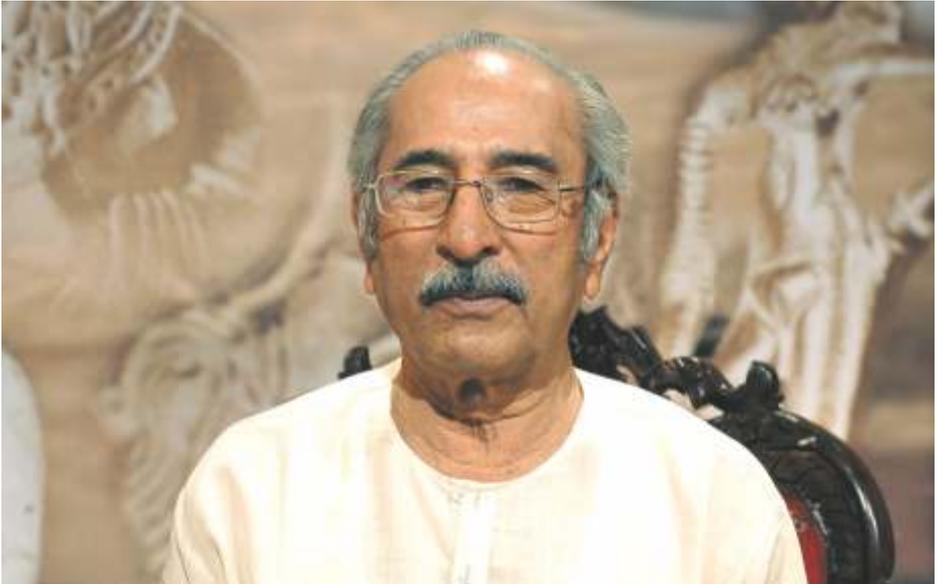


Dr. Satish Rohra Ph.D

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The esteem and reputation of some communities is their education and culture, while some communities have earned name and fame for bravery on the battlefield. The persona of Sindhi community can be best viewed by its ancient culture and its treasure trove of great literature that it has inherited from its ancestors.

To prevent this glorious history from being buried beneath the sands of time, and for its careful preservation, the Institute of Sindhology was formed in Sindh, in 1964. In similar vein, Dr. Satish Rohra and a few of his associates established the Indian Institute of Sindhology in India in 1990.

*Today, we have the privilege of meeting
Dr. Satish Rohra.*

Jawhrani: Dr. Rohra, we welcome you. At first can you tell us which part of Sindh you hail from?

Satish : Ram, first and foremost I thank Sahyog Foundation and Doordarshan for inviting me here. As to your question, I was born in the village of Dadu. Dadu is very close to Larkana. Larkana also consists of Dokri and close to Dokri is our grand historical heritage of Mohan-jo-Daro. Dadu is an important place because of G.M. Syed, and Dadu has also played a major role in the struggle of Sindh.

Jawhrani: Some historians also refer to Mohan-jo-Daro as Muan-jo-Daro or the tomb of the dead, what is its real name?

Satish : Ram, sometimes it so happens that history becomes the target of short sightedness. John Marshall, who carried out the excavation at Mohan-jo-Daro, has clearly written in English - Mohan-jo-Daro.

During partition, when the Sindhi Hindus left Sindh and migrated to India in large numbers, the people remaining behind felt that the word 'Mohan' was un-islamic. Therefore, they named it as 'Moen' or 'Muan' which they felt was more appropriate. Hence, they call it the 'tomb of the dead'

Jawhrani: But similar tombs are found in other nations also. Shouldn't they too be called tombs of the dead?

Satish : Yes, but they are differentiated. Like 'Kahu-ka-Daro', which is named so on account of its proximity to the Kahu village and so is 'Lothal-jo-Daro', which is adjacent to the Lothal village. In this manner they were named after the adjoining areas/villages. On account of this too there was a big uproar in Sindh, as naming it as the tomb of the dead was not appropriate. At that time, it was said that there dwelled nearby a small community by the name of Mohan who were fisher folk. On the basis of the name of this community, John Marshall had named it Mohan-jo-Daro. It would be better that we should try not to misquote historical facts as per our whims and fancies. This would be like playing around with history.

Jawhrani: Did you ever get a chance to participate in the freedom struggle?

Satish : I would like to answer this question in a different manner. I was about 12-13 years of age in 1942. Udho Relwani, who used to reside in Ulhasnagar, was my classmate. I had also got in touch with Parcho Vidyarthi in Dadu, who was staying there in disguise.

My participation in the freedom struggle has not been something like going to prison or being punished by lashes etc. but I still remember an incident clearly. One officer had arrived there who was recruiting people for the army. He asked me if I wished to join the army and I got very angry.

Jawhrani: Maybe seeing that you were young he felt you would be fit to join the army.

Satish : I replied in such a rage that he got very annoyed with me and started shaking the baton in his hand and threatening me. My anger knew no bounds when he threatened me, and I went and complained about it to one of my brother's friend. He came along with me and went straight to the officer and gave him a resounding slap. The officer got more furious. Thereafter, the people of the town collected and got after him. They went up to the collector and complained against the officer for his misbehavior in the town. Soon the collector ousted him from Dadu town. But it won't be proper to state that I directly participated in the battle for independence in some form or the other. Yes, my heart was surely linked to the freedom movement, there is no doubt about this.

Few of my friends from Dadu had a lasting impression on my life. One of them is Amarlal Sadhwani and the other is Lokram Hemrajani. Seeing them I used to get the feeling that even I should follow their path. I used to participate in the 'Abhyaas' classes conducted by Amarlal Sadhwani and the debates and arguments that used to be held on the Simla Agreement and on social and political topics. To be honest, I started wearing Khadi since 1942.

Jawhrani: At that time you were just 12 to 13 years old, and you were following the philosophy of the Congress?

Satish : It was not just simple and plain Congress. But it was a passion that this was the need of the hour, and required by the country; and the same cannot be fulfilled by the authority in power. I was not in the Congress, but surely had a nationalistic mindset. Along with wearing khadi, I also became a vegetarian in 1942.

Jawhrani: Was that your personal decision?

Satish : One should always follow those steps, by which your life remains simple and sweet. And thirdly, I learnt Hindi during that year. Since then I am a disciple of Hindi till date. I have also been a professor of Hindi.

Jawhrani: You have taken keen interest in Hindi literature and you are also well versed with the science of languages. Then how come you suddenly thought of Sindhi literature?

Satish : Very close to the section in Benaras Hindu University, where I was teaching Hindi and the Science of languages, was the college of Indology, where Professor Narayan was the director. Science of Languages has a branch by the name of Ethno Linguistic or community science. He asked me to conduct a lecture there, twice a week. Seeing that college, at that time, I took a pledge that as soon as I retire from Hindi, the very first task to be undertaken by me would be to form the Institute of Sindhology.

Jawhrani: I think it is quite difficult for one to retire from literature. Do you still have some distant connection with Hindi literature at present?

Satish : No. Now there is no such connection. I retired in 1990 and in the same year laid the foundation of Indian Institute of Sindhology. Since 1990, till today I am associated with Sindhology, Sindhi language and Sindhi literature.

Jawhrani: What is the state of Sindhi literature today?

Satish : I think I'll be a little pessimistic while replying to this question by quoting the great Sindhi poet, Narain Shyam, "God! It should not happen that we read in books, that once upon a time there was a place called Sindh and the language of that land was Sindhi." This sad moaning from the lips of Narain Shyam frightened us. The intellectual class felt that it shouldn't be that a day arrives when Sindhis and Sindhi literature become history and have no identity left whatsoever.

Jawhrani: It is said that none of the languages develop overnight, it takes ages. And similarly its credentials don't vanish so easily. Why is it feared by our scholars that our language is on the verge of extinction, a language which consists of immense treasures of precious gems like Shah, Sachal and Sami ?

Satish : This fear arose out of the signals manifested by our community. The very first indication came from the fact that our children didn't give requisite importance to learning Sindhi. They felt it a burden. Moreover, we had spread all over India in such a manner, that there were only a few places where we were in substantial numbers to have a Sindhi school, where the Sindhi language could be taught. In India, the states have been formed on linguistic basis,

therefore, Sindhi is not the official language of any state in India. Hence, Sindhi is of no use to the government in any form. There is no locality, left in India, which can be called a complete Sindhi locality, where everyone speaks only Sindhi, and the shopkeepers don't doubt whether this person is a Sindhi or not. So even outside government offices, the use of Sindhi language started waning.

Jawhrani: The use of Sindhi is quite minimum in schools, colleges, offices etc. It is said that women are the caretakers of the language. Where are those mothers today? Where did they fail? Why are they not teaching their children and encouraging them to speak Sindhi?

Satish : Ram, one aspect of the language as known to everyone is that it is a device and means, but not an objective. Language is used to achieve other objectives and therefore it can also be termed as a weapon. The more powerful and sharper the weapon, the better the usage. The massive craze and popularity of the English language can be attributed to the fact that many goals can be achieved via English and Sindhi was not able to achieve the desired aspirations. And I'll be a little tough in saying that the English schools and English teachers, put forth the misconception that if you speak in Sindhi with your child at home, he will be weak in English. This misconception had such a tremendous effect on the parents that whenever possible, they would try to speak to their children in English and not in Sindhi.

Jawhrani: You are also running a school in your Institute of Sindhology. What are the efforts made by you to promote Sindhi as a subject in that school?

Satish : Our main motive to start the school in the Institute of Sindhology is for the promotion of the Sindhi language, because we felt that until and unless Sindhi is put forth in some or the other type of formal education, we shall not be able to promote it and take it further. It shall only remain as a spoken language and the readers and writers of Sindhi shall cease to exist. If this happens, then the language will soon take the form of a dialect, which at most can be used only to speak, like the Kutchhi language. Literature in that language will not be produced and the ancient literature of that language will not be read. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to make it a part of formal education. We started the school with English medium, as parents desire that their children get the best education, but we have made Sindhi language compulsory for all Sindhi students. So that if one studies Sindhi for 10 to 12 years, we

shall soon have a new generation of Sindhi-speaking as well as Sindhi-reading youngsters, who have started dwindling at present. It can be said that we started sowing seeds to reap a new generation of Sindhi knowing youngsters, in about 10 - 12 years. Else, the fear of Sindhi becoming a dialect looms overhead.

Jawhrani: Has the Institute of Sindhology taken steps to attract youth towards Sindhi prose and Sindhi literature? Have seminars been organized, workshops conducted, or any provisions made to arouse their interest in Sindhi?

Satish : The Institute took a major step towards this and took the first step to start a personality development course, because, if we only teach the Sindhi language, children are not so enthusiastic about it. This course is for students above the age of 13 and below 19 years of age. It consists of a 10 day camp, where the students stay with us and we take care of their lodging and boarding. At the same time we teach them about Sindhi language, Sindhi literature, Sindhi culture etc. This camp is held every year. Ram, you will not only be glad but also surprised to know that this course has gained so much popularity, that we got an invitation from Singapore to conduct this course there for Sindhi children. Two of our representatives were sent to Singapore who conducted this course for 10 days. There we came to know that they were very fond of Sindhi language, and regarding the script; well, we came across its new form. They mentioned that for them, both the Sindhi scripts were equally foreign, whether Arabic or Devnagri. They asked us to teach them Sindhi in the Roman script. You won't believe it but we wrote down all the lessons in the Roman script and taught them the entire course material in the Roman script. We taught them about the Sindhi language, Sindhi culture and aroused in them the interest for Sindhi literature. We also conducted this course in Indore which was well appreciated. For this course, Swami Hirdaramji from Bairagarh sent his people to be trained, so that they could conduct this course over there.

Jawhrani: Did any litterateurs emerge from this personality development course of yours?

Satish : Yes. It so happened that because of this course we also started conducting drama, dance and music workshops. I shall tell you about one of my books where I have mentioned a theory that - 'Today, Sindhi needs bypass surgery' and I have written the book 'Cultural Bypass Surgery.' My friends ask me, bypass surgery is

needed for the physical body, so what do you mean by Cultural Bypass Surgery? My reply to this question is simple, when the veins block the blood from reaching the heart due to the accumulation of cholesterol, then a vein is taken and connected to another part of the body, so that the flow of blood is resumed.

Jawhrani: Just as when the main road is blocked, other subways are opened to resume the flow.

Satish : We are in the same condition, as the path for a child to read the Sindhi script and to reach Sindhi literature, is almost blocked. The old equation was from language to literature and from literature to culture. A child was first taught the language and after knowledge of language he would read literature and from literature he would reach towards his culture. But now this path is blocked, hence we thought of reversing this equation from vocal culture to culture, from culture to language and then to literature. By vocal culture we mean, music, drama, dance, oral stories etc. Bring your children forward, as they are still fond of these. They start singing Sindhi songs and they participate in Sindhi plays. As soon as they reach this point, then inform them about Sindhi culture. Once the child is attracted towards the culture, then he will himself try to learn the language, and once he knows the language he will move towards literature.

Jawhrani: I think all the Sindhi institutes have been carrying on such efforts, since the past half century. What level have we reached? How successful have we been?

Satish : I think as of now, there are two types of tracks moving simultaneously, one is the active usage of Sindhi language or the fluent practice of Sindhi language which is soon declining; and on the other hand, there is keen interest being rekindled to know more about Sindhi Culture, Sindhi language, Sindhi roots. And this is happening not only in India, but to a greater extent outside India also. In the whole world, today the curiosity to discover one's roots, has been greatly aroused, which is termed as 'Ethnic Awareness' or the 'Awakening of the Community'. In foreign countries, when other communities are identifying themselves as, we are so and so, for example :- we are Irish, we are Scottish, etc., at such times the Sindhi feels like a fool. At that time he identifies himself as a Sindhi. Hence, this interest has been arising to a very great extent to know about Sindhi roots, Sindhi language, Sindhi culture, Sindhi music, Sindhi songs etc.

Jawhrani: During the period after partition, the fear of Sindhi language becoming extinct gave birth to many organizations and institutions. They also joined hands with each other to work for the promotion of Sindhi language and even you have been attached to some of these, to a certain extent. Since all these institutions and organizations were already existing, then why was one more institution i.e. Institute of Sindhology established?

Satish : This is a very important question. For all the institutions and organizations who worked for, or are still working towards the betterment of the Sindhi language, this was a secondary task. All of them didn't have this as their main objective. We established Institute of Sindhology so that it would devote its full time to this cause and accordingly make its plans and strategies.

Jawhrani: What has been the achievement of Institute of Sindhology in this long journey of 15 years from 1990 to 2005?

Satish : We have kept the purpose of Sindhology very clear; and that is propagation and preservation of Sindhi culture. For the preservation, we felt that the most important aspect would be to save our literature. Therefore, we have opened a very huge reference library, which consists of not only books but also precious manuscripts and handwritten techniques etc. We have kept one section of this library for audio-cassettes which consist of about 300 cassettes of Sindhi ragas or melodies right from the ancient times of Jeevanibai upto the present day singers. It also consists of a video section where we have video cassettes of all the Sindhi films produced till date and also the plays performed. We have also got portraits of all the litterateurs prepared and preserved there.

Jawhrani: Can this be termed as a museum?

Satish : Yes, this is for the purpose of preservation.

Jawhrani: I believe you were inspired by the Institute of Sindhology in Sindh to set up Sindhology here on the same lines, or was it different?

Satish : This is quite different. Firstly, the Institute of Sindhology in Sindh is basically a government body and secondly they are more into research and publication. We have two different types of activities at our Institute of Sindhology. On one hand we are propagating Sindhi culture and on the other we are into its preservation. Ours

is a non-government organization operating with the help of the Sindhi community. I think this is the right opportunity to thank the Sindhi community, as we are very small people who have very small resources and are able to function only because of the funds received from the Sindhi community.

Jawhrani: Going back to the beginning of our interview in which part of India did you initially settle down, after leaving Sindh?

Satish : Ram, I left Sindh in December 1947 and we entered India from the Marwar side. Initially, after staying at Ajmer for a few days, we moved to Nasirabad, which is close to Ajmer. I remember very well, that during those days, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. I was in the market place and there was chaos all over when the news broke out.

I had heard a statement at that time. Well, there is no connection of it with this incident, but I still remember it clearly although 57 years have passed and would like to narrate the same. At a gathering that was organized then, one of the speakers had mentioned that today we have enacted the character of the spoilt brat, who got his shoes made from his father's skin. That statement effected me so severely, that today, even after the lapse of 57 years, it is still fresh in my memory.

Thereafter, I left for Gandhidham. From 1950 to 1962 I was in Gandhidham and was engaged in the task of the development of Gandhidham and taught at a High School over there. I used to teach Hindi and Sindhi. In 1962, I left Gandhidham for Pune to pursue higher studies. I was there till about 1965 - 66 when I completed my diploma in linguistic post graduation and also did my Ph. D. in linguistics. Then I got a chance to teach Hindi and the Science of languages at Benaras Hindi University. After that I joined the Central Hindi Institute in Delhi as a reader. Over there I got the opportunity to go abroad as the visiting professor in Hindi and Indian Culture to George Town University in Guyana. Returning from there I rejoined Central Institute of Hindi where my main job was to teach Hindi to foreigners. Therefore, right from the beginning I have mastered the art of teaching a foreign language to a student who is alien to it. Hence, I was also appointed as Professor of Applied Linguistics in which the Science of Language is utilized. There were two sections of my job in Hindi, one was to teach Hindi to foreigners and the other was to prepare dictionaries. I am proficient at Lexography. The Hindi-Sindhi bilingual dictionary has been prepared by me which has been published by the ministry. The Sindhi section of the tri-

lingual dictionary Hindi-Sindhi-English and also of the Indian dictionary of 16 Indian languages has been prepared by me. Not only this, I have also compiled a dictionary which is actually a dictionary of dictionaries.

Jawhrani: A 'Maha-Dictionary'?

Satish : It is a dictionary called 'Kosh-Vigyan-Kosh' in Hindi, which is used for explaining all the technical terms that are used in the various dictionaries. So you can say that compiling of dictionaries is one of my fields and, as mentioned earlier, the other field is of teaching language.

Jawhrani: You just mentioned about Gandhidham. Sindhis had dreamt of making Gandhidham New Sindh, but I feel, as per the current state of affairs, Gandhidham has become a town of only schools and colleges. Why did that dream of building New Sindh fade away? Where did we lag behind? What were the obstacles encountered by us?

Satish : It is a fact that building Gandhidham as New Sindh was a great dream. In the beginning, they were also thinking along the lines of naming it as New Sindh. But, maybe to avoid offending a foreign nation and keeping Gandhiji in view, we named the town after him.

Jawhrani: Was the name 'New Sindh' approved by Gandhiji?

Satish : Yes, we had obtained Gandhiji's approval. After Gandhiji's assassination, his ashes were immersed in the Kandla creek and some of them were buried there at the 'Gandhi Samadhi'. There are only two 'Samadhis' of Gandhiji in India, one in Delhi and the other in Gandhidham. Your question is most appropriate as this town was mainly intended for those refugees who had abandoned their own lands and arrived here. But the biggest problem at that time was that of food and livelihood, and this place was a big desert.

Jawhrani: Instead of the selection of this desert, which was infested with snakes and scorpions, couldn't another suitable area in India be selected, which would have been better equipped to provide for the basic needs? How could we have survived in this desert where there were no provisions for livelihood?

Satish : No, I do not agree with you. This was a well thought out and far sighted plan. Because the amount of land that we got, more than 5,000 acres, could not have been made available in any other state

of India for the settlement of Sindhis. The Maharaja of Kutchh said that these are my subjects, and whatever amount of land that I give away, I am giving it to my subjects. And the other was Bhai Pratap who wanted to make this dream a reality. He felt that after the Port of Karachi, Kandla port was the nearest port which would be accessible to places right upto Punjab and about half of India, as even the Bombay port was to the South of Kandla Port. So it was as if this port would have taken the place of Karachi Port, and therefore was of strategic importance. The problems arose because of the non-implementation of various plans of Bhai Pratap quickly enough for making job opportunities available for employment. The plans were : making railway lines, development of Kandla port, founding of free trade zone, the establishment of Asia's biggest factory of IFFCO etc. Since these plans could not be implemented fast enough, it was very difficult for Sindhis to wait there patiently hoping for the realization of all these well thought out plans. Therefore, most of the Sindhis left Gandhidham in search of livelihood. The vacant places left behind in Gandhidham were then occupied by the non-Sindhis.

Jawhrani: Indeed no place can remain vacant for long.

Satish : Today, Gandhidham is not a desert. You will be surprised to know, and you might be unaware because you are sitting here in Bombay, that Bhai Pratap had said that everyone would get a plot of land - whoever purchases the share with a face value of Rs. 1,000/-. But the value of that share dropped so sharply that it was available for Rs. 250/- and today the value of that share is Rs. 250,000/-.

Jawhrani: Agreed, the value may be Rs. 250,000/- today, but are Sindhis purchasing those shares?

Satish : No. The non-Sindhis are purchasing them. There was no doubt about the land and its population, Bhai Pratap was confident that this land would soon become a gold mine. But till that land could become valuable, Sindhis could not wait.

Jawhrani: Sindhis could not wait because it was a matter of their livelihood and survival.

Satish : Today in Gandhidham, the population of Sindhis is equal to that of non-Sindhis. Only the section of Adipur, has a majority of Sindhis, where moving around, you will feel as though you are in some part of Hyderabad (Sindh). You can speak with everyone in Sindhi, whether it's the shopkeeper or the rickshaw driver etc.

Jawhrani: In the media dominated age of today, be it print or electronic media, is there any daily newspaper in Sindhi available there?

Satish : No. There is no daily Sindhi newspaper, because the population of Sindhis is not enough to justify the circulation of a daily newspaper. Therefore, the daily newspapers that are available like Kutch Mitra, Kutch Uday, Gujarat Samachar, Sandesh etc. are all in Gujarati. The Sindhi newspaper Hindustan, that used to reach the Sindhi households has also discontinued.

Jawhrani: This is like moving a step backwards.

Satish : Yes. It can be said so.

Jawhrani: Isn't the availability of a daily Sindhi newspaper a must, more so in a place like Adipur, where the huge Institute of Sindhology has been established, from where our future generations shall hopefully get knowledge about our culture and civilization. Adipur, which was supposed to be New Sindh and today you have compared it to Hyderabad of Sindh, where all the scholars reside at Maleer. Surely this lack of a Sindhi daily newspaper must be felt.

Satish : There was another problem which the Sindhi community created for themselves, and that was the problem of the script. All the schools that were established there started teaching Devnagri as the Sindhi script. The new generation who know to write, cannot write in the Devnagari script, and those that can read, are unable to read the Sindhi Arabic script. This partition has, as though, divided the people of Sindh, and given a tremendous blow to our community. I am not talking in favour of either this or that script, but already it is a small community and only at a few places they are in substantial numbers, and if that also gets divided like this from top to bottom then there will be more problems. However, our literary magazine 'Rachna', as you are aware, is being published regularly.

Jawhrani: There was a time, when our litterateurs were financially weak. However nowadays, since the past few years, many prizes, and other forms of monetary assistance have been extended by philanthropists and the financial conditions have improved. In spite of this, the type of literature being published is very limited compared to the past - why? Where did we lag behind?

Satish : This is because Goddess Saraswati and Goddess Laxmi can never be friends.

Jawhrani: When there was no money, the litterateurs sacrificed their entire life, and now when money is pouring, there is no consideration for literature.

Satish : Now there is more concentration on money. Therefore, the passion of performing which used to be there, is missing. But if you start preparing the list today, you will find that there are so many writers, like for example, in Gujarat itself when they prepared the list of Sindhi poets, it consisted of more than 100 names.

Jawhrani: I am not talking about the poets or the authors in particular, but the type of literature.....

Satish : It is precisely for this reason that the type of literature that should have been produced is not coming forth because every author starts writing so much that he himself doesn't read what he has written. He gets his book written by others and also gets it published in some other script. . . .

Jawhrani: This can also be termed as a doubt or delusion or may be it's a reality, you will be in a better position to clarify it, as you are in this field. The young generation of litterateurs are not being encouraged and their writings are also being viewed with suspicion, that he couldn't have written this, or their writings are rejected outright. What is the cause behind that?

Satish : The reason is quite simple. The author is asked whether he has studied at least three Sindhi books, and if he says that he has and that too any three books, then we are ready to believe that whatever he has written has been written by him. If he has not studied even three books and calls himself a litterateur and is seeking an award, and that too of Sahitya Academy

Jawhrani: Doesn't mean that if anyone gets someone else to write a book and then presents it as his own, he will be entitled to an award?

Satish : Yes, definitely. They are getting awards. What to do Ram? It's a sad state of affairs and we are not in a position to stop this. And most of us are aware about it. But the main reason is that as the awards have increased, the litterateurs, instead of focusing on enhancing the quality of their literature are more obsessed with winning awards. And sometimes we feel quite odd, that the persons whom we regard as good authors are left behind. At the seminars, these so called authors start boasting about the amount of money received by them through awards. This means now literature is being measured in monetary terms. These days those litterateurs are not present, who are ready to refuse the Nobel prize or the Sahitya

Academy award. But, even if someone in Ulhasnagar declares a prize of just Rs. 1,000/- for a good story, all our authors will rush forward and start writing stories.

Jawhrani: In that context, in your opinion, how would history rate these litterateurs?

Satish : It is a straight forward matter that in today's context, Sindhi literature in today's era can be said to have tremendous opportunities to move forward swiftly. This is because we have six academies and every academy is willing to give grants for the publishing of books. There are awards granted on behalf of these academies. There are awards on behalf of Central Sahitya Academy, and NCRT gives away awards for children's literature etc. Therefore, nowadays there won't be any Sindhi litterateur who would not be earning name and fame as well as wealth. But the fact is that we don't get any feedback.

Jawhrani: There was a time when with the help of some aid from a donor, books used to be published, and that philanthropist would get the copies of that book, which would be stored in his garage and would provide for the nourishment of white ants. Have we come out of that era or not?

Satish : No, not yet. Even today, if you ask any litterateur whether even five persons have paid for and purchased their copies, you will definitely receive a negative reply. Maybe there are some organizations or institutions that purchase about 150 copies and he recovers his cost of printing or as they say, that love is immeasurable, and whoever has this immense devotion for writing can get their work published by investing maybe Rs. 5,000/- or Rs. 10,000/-. Ram, eternity has remained just in the form of a word and somewhere deep inside human beings there is a hidden desire to be immortal. You will see that there are innumerable new authors who have arrived on the literary scene.

Jawhrani: You must have read the literature of the earlier ones and also of the new ones. Do these new litterateurs have that spirit?

Satish : Yes, many amongst them do. Actually, if you consider objectively these past 40-45 years have not gone waste and it is not that whatever has been written by the senior authors has had no effect. All these new authors are in fact products of various workshops, seminars or literary meets.

Jawhrani: This was regarding our litterateurs. What about artists? We have a dearth of artists. I do not see any new artists. If we take the whole of India into account, there are only a few artists who can be counted on your fingertips. We are desirous of decorating our stage more adequately, and want to put it forward as a tool to express ourselves. If there will be no artists then how will the theatre progress? In this regard, your Institute of Sindhology should take some comprehensive steps so that new artists are born, and talent in them can be recognized, polished as well as brought forward by you.

Satish : This is indeed essential. In this regard, we are trying to take appropriate steps. We regularly conduct music classes and drama workshops. But the reason for the dearth of artists in real terms is different. At some point of time, there weren't so many shows, fairs, functions, seminars etc. being organized where these artists would be required. It was felt one Bhagwanti Navani was sufficient for the entire community. But, nowadays, so many fairs are being held. Cheti Chand is one such occasion which is celebrated not only in India but around the globe by innumerable organizations and when you contact the singers you realize that they don't have even the time to decide whether to go to Dubai or to Singapore or to Hong Kong etc.

Jawhrani: This is precisely the reason that inspite of the increase in the population of our community, we have not been able to produce artists at that pace. Even from our settlements in various parts of India like Jabalpur, Katni, Satna, Sholapur, where the organizing of Cheti Chand fairs has been going on since long, no artists have evolved. Its only from Ahmedabad and Bombay that we have about 5 to 8 artists or from Adipur, who are regularly invited to America or London. So infact there is a great scarcity. How do we encourage these artists and how should we create new ones? Should there be a workshop organized on this subject?

Satish : You are right. But now what has been happening is that, even the artists are eyeing money as priority.

Jawhrani: The reason for that was, as per what I have heard, that in Sindh... or what is known from history, is that art and literature was a profession. If a person was an artist then he used to work only as an artist and for 24 hours he used to think only on those lines. Here he has to also earn his livelihood by doing a job

somewhere from morning 10 a.m. to evening 5 p.m. and thereafter do rehearsals. How can he do full justice to his role on the stage? You say that there is no shortage of money now and many have come forward to help willingly, and in Sindhology you have those kind of provisions, you have that stage, you have those means. So you should provide for facilities to teach them accordingly.

Satish : In this regard, if we provide for scholarships for the artists, and encourage them to practice their profession on a full time basis, then it may be possible. Like there is the Sahitya Lalit Academy . .

Jawhrani: Actually yours is the main institution for Sindhis in India, and the entire Sindhi community looks up to you. Have you corresponded with the government regarding the Lalit Kala Academy who are sending groups of artists abroad on their own and encouraging them? There are no awards or recognition for our artists. So don't you think in this regard, also some concrete steps should be taken to move forward?

Satish : Yes Ram, I think there has been a bit of difference in opinion. In fact, those matters which we want to demand from the government can easily be done through efforts of our own community. We are in that position.

Jawhrani: We have the capacity, no doubt about it.

Satish : Today if we want, our artists can go anywhere in the whole world, because there is so much demand. Therefore, there isn't really a need for demanding such favours from the government, although we are entitled for the same, as even we are citizens of this country.

Jawhrani: If we hold this mindset, then our artists, litterateurs, scholars will never get any Padma Shree, Padma Bhushan or any other title. So whatever we are entitled to receive from the government, as we were promised when we quit our lands, that is being entitled to equal rights, I think in that regard we have lagged behind somewhere.

Satish : I don't see any dearth. On the contrary, I feel that we have received a lot. Sindhi is the only language (which I think is spoken by about 40-50 lakh people,) that has got six Academies, and out of these, some like the Delhi Academy has a grant of Rs. 1 crore. In actuality, if you compare, then, in India there will hardly be any language that has been granted so many facilities and provisions.

Jawhrani: But then, our culture is also ancient. I would like to know, how can our culture contribute to the development of the nation or the development of the world?

Satish : In fact, I wanted to inform our community through this forum, that preserving the Sindhi culture or saving it, is not only beneficial for the Sindhi community, but for the whole world. Because the Sindhi civilization is so ancient and so great that the whole world is associated with it. In reality, it is the treasure of the entire world. It is an asset of the world. If it is destroyed, then it will not only be a loss for the Sindhi community, but a loss for entire mankind, because Sindhi civilization has such beautiful possessions that can help mankind today. We are dreaming of a better world nowadays, and to build such a better world, the Sindhi civilization's characteristics can be extremely helpful. For example, the United Nations secretary Mr. Koffi Anan said that the greatest challenges faced by mankind today are poverty, diseases and war. And with war, he also included religious fanaticism. I think in all these three subject matters, in all these three issues, the Sindhi civilization can help immensely to construct a better world. We can proudly proclaim about the religious generosity and tolerance possessed by us, the dignity of labour, the spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship possessed by us and our casteless society without any class or caste distinction. I think that this civilization has to play a major role in making this world a better place and this is a huge responsibility on us. To dutifully perform this responsibility the Sindhi community should nurture its civilization and pass this on to the new generation. If we fail to pass on our culture to the new generation then we should think that we are deceiving our new generation in some form or the other, because we are depriving them of their right to that inheritance, that treasure, that wealth, that fortune, due to which they can hold their head high in society.

Jawhrani: Truly, if we do not pass on this precious treasure, this wealth and fortune of our rich culture to the coming generation, then they will never be in a position to forgive us.

Thank you for being here with us today and putting forth your knowledgeable opinions before us, which will be very beneficial to our Sindhi brethren and will also act like a beacon for the coming generation.

Satish : Thank you.