

C. M. Naim

## TWO AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS

Way back in 1976, Dr. Anwar Moazzam of Hyderabad launched an extremely useful project—the creation of a bibliography of Urdu sources for social sciences research. The fruit of his long labor is now available in four volumes, two in Urdu script—*Vazahati Urdu Kitabiyat ('Imrani 'Ulum)*—and two in English/Roman version—*Annotated Urdu Bibliography (Social Science)* (Delhi: Educational Publishing House, 2008. Rs. 3000/- per set of four. The book is co-edited by Dr. Moazzam's son, Ashhar Farhan, an expert in information technology. The work was begun under the auspices of the Indian Council for Social Science Research, and completed with the help of the National Council for the Promotion of Urdu.

It is a mammoth (over 9200 entries) bibliography of books that do not fall into the category of *belles-lettres*, and instead deal with topics that are now subsumed under social sciences. In all, twenty-one subject headings are used in the book; these are: Ethics, Anthropology, History (General), History (Countries), Education, Technology, Geography and Travel, Biography, Political Science, Personal Hygiene, Home Economics, Sociology, Arts and Sculpture, Law, Commerce, Library Science, Essays, Economics, Managerial Services, Public Administration, and Psychology.

The work was very sensibly done in two phases, first at four major libraries at Hyderabad, and then at ten other major libraries around India, including the National Library (Kolkata), Khuda Bakhsh Library (Patna), Raza Library (Rampur), and the libraries of the Aligarh Muslim University (Aligarh), the Jamia Millia Islamiya (New Delhi), and the Nadvatul Ulama (Lucknow). Each entry clearly indicates the libraries where the book may be found. Further, the entries are arranged according to a slightly modified Dewey Decimal classification system—a boon to librarians around the world.

Most importantly, in every instance, *all bibliographical data was obtained directly from the book*. Those of use who have experienced the vagaries of card catalogues of Urdu books in India can't be too grateful for it. Considerable thought and effort were put into indicating the contents of each book; for example, in the case of an edited volume or a collection by a single author, the entry lists all the included essays. (I was delighted to finally learn what essays by Abdul Halim Sharar were included in the various volumes of his *Mazamin-i-Sharar*.)

To further help the user, the editors have added two indices: one for authors, compilers, and translators, and the other for subject headings. Thus one can conveniently find not only the books by an author but also the books on that author.

No doubt there are some repetitions and some odd classifications, but these are astonishingly few in a work of this size. That is true also concerning typographical errors. Dr Anwar Moazzam deserves our profound thanks for conceiving of this project in the

first place and then bringing it to fruition with such meticulous attention. It is indeed a model work.

In addition to the printed four volumes, the database is also available in a searchable digital form. People interested in it should contact Dr. Anwar Moazzam at: moazzam.71@gmail.com. The printed book can be obtained either from Dr. Moazzam or from the publishers: Educational Publishing House (www.ephbooks.com; [ephdelhi@yahoo.com](mailto:ephdelhi@yahoo.com)).

A different major project, *The National Bibliography of Indian Literature (1901–1953)* was done long ago under the auspices of the Sahitya Akademi, India. Its Urdu volume was edited by Prof. Ale Ahmad Suroor, and I had done the initial collection of data for several months in 1955–6. That bibliography included fiction and poetry, but as I recall was more concerned with ‘major’ writers. I was most pleasantly surprised to learn that too is available in digitized form. According to James H. Nye Director, South Asia Language and Area Center and Bibliographer for Southern Asia, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, the entire NBIL, including the supplementary 5th volume, was converted to electronic form in 1990. It is available as a searchable database at <<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/bibliographic/nbil/nbil.php>>. The NBIL titles that were microfilmed are also in OCLC. There are more than 27,000 titles microfilmed out of the 56,000 from the five-volume set. “And finally, we are loading those bibliographic data to the South Asia Union Catalogue <<http://sauc.uchicago.edu/>> along with holdings of the British Library. (Try a search for British Library for the BL holdings or Early 20th for the NBIL filmed titles.) Within the next two months we will have loaded an additional 8,500 titles to the SAUC database representing Urdu holdings at the British Library.”

All Urduwalas owe a big debt and a big round of applause to Anwar Moazzam, Ashhar Farhan, and James Nye for these remarkable achievements.

\*