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Sahitya Akademi



Ram Panjwani Trust

invite you to

meet the author

A J Uttam





Assandas Jethanand Uttamchandani is an outstanding progressive writer, critic, journalist, editor and very well known for outspoken, consistent well studied and documented opinion. In fact he is called the walking, talking and living encyclopaedia of Sindhi literature. He says, "I attribute my love for Sindhi language to my mother's influence and out-spoken nature to my father".

Born on 16th December 1923 in Hyderabad (Sindh) Uttamchandani displayed organizational abilities and literary skills at a young age even before completing his matriculation in 1942. He organized the Hyderabad Students' Union in 1941 and became its General Secretary. In 1942, after passing matric and joining college, he participated in the Quit India movement and courted arrest and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

He had already started writing short stories, essays and research articles on literature and criticism in 1941 and some were published in daily and weekly newspapers. He contributed to *Phuleli*, the college magazine of D. G. National College, and was elected its editor in 1946-47.

He formed a progressive writers' group in 1946 in Hyderabad (Sindh) which held weekly

literary study classes in which famous writers like Lekhraj Aziz, Professor M U Malkani, Tirth Basant, Professor Gehimal Mulchandani, Kalyan Advani and the revolutionary poet Haider Bux Jatoti and others used to participate. Here, he also interacted with other progressive artists like A K Hangal, Gobind Malhi, Shaikh Ayaz, Anand Golani and others.

When he was the editor of *Phuleli* in 1946, a young, beautiful and intelligent reader, Miss Sugni Narwani was attracted by his anti-dowry short story depicting ideal couple entitled "*Taraki-a-je raha te*" (On the path of progress); she became his life partner on 14th November 1947 and since then, is known as Smt. Sundari Uttamchandani.

In January 1948 when the riots broke out in Hyderabad (Sindh), he reluctantly migrated to India.

His educational pursuits were rudely interrupted in Sindh due to Partition. However he cleared his MA Exam in March 1949 in Mumbai. After results were out, he got a job in Bombay Secretariat in the same year. But he continued to work for Sindhi language and culture through Sindhi Sahit Mandal and *Naeen Duniya* monthly, which according to Prof. M U Malkani, "gave a rebirth to Sindhi literature in India".



Being honoured L. K. Advani



With wife Sundari and other family members

A. J. Uttam was one of the pioneers of the first premier literary and cultural organization - Sindhi Sahit Mandal which was formed in January 1949 under the presidentship of Prof. M U Malkani, the well-known dramatist and Historian in Mumbai. A J Uttam held the post of General Secretary and Vice President. The Mandal encouraged upcoming writers. Here, many writers sent their writings to weekly study classes. The Sindhi Sahit Mandal started the Sindhi language recognition movement in 1952 with a committee of five writers including A J Uttam. In 1956, Prof. M U Malkani, A J Uttam and others met the Rashtrapati for obtaining the recognition of Sindhi Language. Subsequently Sindhi was recognized by Central Govt. in 1957 for Sahitya Akademi Awards and Radio Programmes. The crowning success of the allout efforts by Uttam and others emerged when Sindhi was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Uttam worked as a co-editor of *Naeen Duniya*, a progressive monthly magazine, from 1950. From 1957 till date he continues to publish *Naeen Duniya* which is his unique contribution to Sindhi Literature & culture.

Along with *Naeen Duniya*, he was co-editor of *Sindhu Dhara* upto 1967, a weekly started in 1959. After the bifurcation of Bombay State into Maharashtra and Gujarat, he resigned from his Govt. job instead of accepting a transfer to Ahmedabad.

From 1960 till this day, Uttam has devoted his fulltime, energy resources and capabilities for the promotion of Sindhi literature, language and culture, initially through *Naeen Duniya* and *Sindhu Dhara*, thereafter, through the central organization Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Ain Sahit Sabha formed in 1959. He became the Founder General Secretary of the Sabha and was re-elected as its General Secretary eight times.

He has also edited special issues of weekly *Jhulelal*, (Ahmedabad). With the special issues of *Naeen*

Duniya, he became so popular in Sindh that he was invited to visit Sindh to attend Shah Latif's Annual Urs in 1964. There he met eminent writers and educationists. After his personal visit to Sindh he was called the "Bridge of Sindh & Hind". He edited special issues of *Dharmyug* and *Sarika* on *Jeay Sindh* in 1972.

In 1973, A J Uttam was invited to the World Writers' Conference in Russia, where he came in personal contact with the Marathi Poet Narayan Surve and other famous writers like H R Bachchan, Bhisham Sahni, Subhash Mukhopadhyay, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Sajjad Zaheer and Chilean Nobel laureate Pablo Naruda and others. A J Uttam was editor of two Sindhi Dailies *Sindhu Samachar* from 1973 to 1975 and thereafter *Sindhu Sansaar* from 1975 to 1978.

Prof. M U Malkani once wrote in *Sindhu Sansar*, "In young Sindhi writers, Uttam is my earliest friend. I have noticed that behind his serious nature, a sensitive heart is hidden which is now revealed after he has started his daily".

In 1984, Uttam visited Japan, Hong Kong and China.

A J Uttam had joined the Progressive Writers' Association started by Munshi Premchand in 1936. He has written about 100 short stories. Prof. Malkani called him the front ranking storywriter. Some of his stories are translated and published not only in India but also abroad in foreign languages and also in Sindhi.

Uttam has about 15 books of essays to his credit. All these contain critical appreciation of the works of Kalidas, Meera Bai, Sant

Gyaneshwar, Guru Nanik Dev, Shah Latif, Sami, Sachal, Tagore, Munshi Premchand, Sharatchandra, Mahatma Gandhi, and Lenin. His other famous book *Sindhi Kahani Nataku Ain Tankida* contains historical and critical evaluation of stories, drama and criticism.

In sixty years of his literary and cultural career, Uttam has been honoured and awarded by Indo Soviet Friendship Society, by Jiya Sindhi Sabha (1974), Priyadarshini Academy (1991), Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Ain Sahit Sabha (1991) and Ram Buxani Foundation (1991). But Uttam donated the money he got from awards for the cause of Sindhi language & literature. Uttam was honoured with Special Shield by Progressive Writers' Association Golden Jubilee Meet at Lucknow in 1986. He has been honoured with Gold Medal in 1994 by Maruee, Delhi. Uttam has a very good library of rare Sindhi books, which very few institutions in India have. A real tribute to Uttam is Rukmini Chainani's compi-lation on him, *Sindhyat Jo Upasak* (2002).



With H.R. Bachchan & others at World Writers conference, U.S.S.R

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essays

SARHAD JO GANDHI
Quomi Sahit Mandal,
Hyd Sindh – 1946, 18.5 cm

TAGORE HIKA JHALAK
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1961, 18.5 cm

MAHATMA AIN LENIN
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1969, 18.5 cm

SINDHI SAHIT
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1971, 18.5 cm

KASHMKASH (*Short Stories*)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1971, 18.5 cm

SAHIT AIN SAHITKAR
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1974, 18.5 cm

SINDHI KAHANI NATAK AIN
TANQEED
Kalpana Kitab Ghar
Sindhunagar – 1981, 18.5 cm

SUJAG SIND
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1984, 18.5 cm

MANGHARAM MALKANI
Sahitya Akademi
Bombay – 1985, 21.5cm

LEKHRAJ AZIZ
Sahitya Akademi
Bombay – 1985, 21.5cm

HOO JAHAN, HEE MAN
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1991, 18.5 cm

SAHITIK PARAKH
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1997, 18.5 cm

KALYAN B. ADVANI
Sahitya Akademi
Mumbai – 2002, 21.5cm

Translations

PYAAR YA VAASNA
(Novel by Leo Tolstoy)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1962, 18.5cm

INSAAN JO NASEEB
(Novel by Shokolov)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1965, 18.5cm

CHODAH BHARATI KAHANIYOON
(14 Indian Stories)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1968, 18.5cm

CHHAVEEH MAANHOO - HIKA
CHHOKRI
(10 stories by Maxim Gorky)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1969, 18.5cm

Compiling & Editing

PYARYU BATIYOO JIVAN JHATIYOO
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1965, 18.5 cm

JIYE SINDH (*Short Stories*)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1972, 18.5 cm

SINDHU DESH JUN KAHANIYUN
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1973 18.5 cm

SINDHI SAHIT JI SAMALOCHNA
(Collection of M U Malkani's reviews)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1982, 18.5 cm

TOTAL AARSEYUN
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1982, 18.5 cm

BUTI KUNWAR (Dramas)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Bombay – 1982, 18.5 cm

SINDHYAT JO BANDHAN
(13 Short Stories of Sindhi writers)
Naeen Duniya Publications
Mumbai – 2002, 18.5 cm



With Shaikh Ayaz



Being felicitated

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1923 Born in Hyderabad, Sindh (Pakistan)
- 1941 First story published and elected General secretary, Hindustan Students Union
- 1942 Courted one year imprisonment on 9th August
- 1946 Elected editor of College Miscellaneous *Phuleli*
- 1947 Married to Sugni Narwani
- 1948 Migrated to India
- 1949 Cleared M.A. and joined Bombay Secretariat Job
- 1950 Co-editor of Naeen Duniya Magazine
- 1952 Member of Mandals Committee for Sindhi Language Recognition
- 1956 Elected Vice President Sindhi Sahit Mandal
- 1957 Attended first Asian Writers' Conference in Delhi
- 1958 Elected General Secretary of Sindhi Sahit Mandal
- 1959-63
1970-71 General Secretary Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Ain Sahit Sabha
- 1965 Received Indo-Soviet Nehru Peace Prize
- 1970 Attended Afro-Asian Conference at Delhi, organised Alwar Sammelan
- 1971 Soviet Land Nehru Award and visited USSR
- 1972 Organised rally for Sindhi Script in Bombay Edited Sindhu Samachar Daily
- 1973 Attended World Writers' Conference at USSR
- 1974 Awarded for *Jiye Sindhi* Sabha, honored by Sindh Panchayat Edited Sindhu Samachar Daily
- 1986 Special shield by Progressive Writers Association Golden jubilee meet at Lucknow
- 1991 Received Dr. Sadarangani Gold Medal Award, Delhi, Priyadarshini Award, Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Ain Sahit Sabha and Ram Buxani Foundation Award
- 1992 Edited special issue of Jhulelal : Shyam -Ayaz Poetry
- 1994 Edited Jhulelal's special Sindhi story Issue Honoured with Gold medal by Maruee
- 1999 Honoured by Deputy Prime minister Lal Krishna Advani at Indian Institute of Sindhology, Adipur
- 2002 Honoured by Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli & Sahit Sabha for his unique contribution to Sindhi language and literature

