

Editorial : M.K.Raina
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Literature in Devanagari-Kashmiri Script

Post-exodus, much Kashmiri literature has been produced by both well-known and not-so-well-known Kashmiri authors from various parts of the country. This literature on various subjects and topics, including creative works in prose and poetry, has been written in Devnagari-Kashmiri Script because the majority of the community especially the women and youngsters are not familiar with Urdu and hence Nastaliq, the Urdu-based script of Kashmiri. Without Devnagari this body of literature being produced would be inaccessible to them. Indeed, after losing homes, our younger generations face the spectacle of losing the mother tongue itself unless suitable measures like making books in the Devanagari script available are taken. Recently evolved Standardized Devnagari-Kashmiri Script has provided a sound means to writers to write in Devnagari without any problem on account of the peculiar Kashmiri sounds

Since the Standardised Devnagari-Kashmiri Script is yet to find favour with the present governments, both State and Central, for its recognition as an additional script for Kashmiri language, the literature produced in this script generally remains in an orphaned state for the want of aid and recognition from the literary circles. This leaves a wide gap between the material written and the material published and often the material remains unpublished and hence confined to the custody of an author's desk. This is not to say that no such books are presently published. A good number of books of new as well as renowned authors are being published from Jammu, Delhi and other places, of course with funds mostly managed by authors themselves. Knowing that there are not sufficient returns on such books by way of sale, the author only gets discouraged from attempting it a second or a third time.

In view of the apathy of the government towards Devnagari-Kashmiri script and writers' inability to get their material printed and published for mass readership because of heavy financial implications, it is necessary to pool our resources and raise some sort of fund for the purpose, so that a good work does not remain under wraps. For this purpose, in the first instance, we need to form a Central Organization to take up the mantle of an over-seeing body, which would have the authority to scrutinize the material fit for publication and have enough funds to

finance its printing and publishing, partly or wholly. We also need to encourage writers who adopt the Devnagari-Kashmiri Script, with Awards/Mementos in recognition of their work, primarily to encourage quality literature and to give the deserving writers due recognition pending encouragement by the Government or Government agencies, which in present circumstances is a far cry. Besides no good literature can be produced without the best literature in the language being available to the writers. Here unfamiliarity with Urdu/Nastaliq has practically closed the classical and other literary treasure to the general readers as well as many writers. We need to take up projects so that the huge body of Kashmiri literature is made available in Devnagari script.

There are a number of organizations in the country which have some thing to do with the literature. Prominent among them, as far as we can visualize, is the SAMPRATI of Jammu. This organization has, in addition to the normal work it is doing, the publication of the PRIMER and the READER in Standardised Devanagari-Kashmiri to its credit. Though the Project Zaan of Mumbai is also doing some work on Kashmiri literature, Kashmiri Language and the Kashmiri Culture, having also published the 'Basic Reader for Kashmiri Language' and a series of Information Digests, it will not be in a position to assume a central status being far away from Delhi and Jammu, where the bulk of literature is being produced. SAMPRATI in this regard can be one such organisation to handle the issue. However, consideration of an alternative organisation in Jammu or Delhi can not be ruled out. This is where we need to put our heads together and arrive at a unanimous choice of a sound platform for our literary works. It is hoped that the intelgentsia among us willingly gives this suggestion a serious thought.

