

Urdu Studies, Vol 2 Issue 1, October 2022

Description

Crafting an Imaginative Style: Sirajuddin Ali Khan-i Arzu and the Development of Linguistics and Philology in the Eighteenth Century

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7621063>

Abstract:

This paper attempts to explore the many oeuvres of Khan-i Arzu, his contributions in the development of literary culture. It examines his linguistic expertise and comparative philology and the socio-cultural aspects of the era in which he was practicing his craft. This article would show how Arzu's universal view of language and the linguistic concord (taw'fuq) between Persian and Indian vernacular languages like Urdu, allowed his work to connect Persianate and Indian literary practices. He created a literary critical framework for poetry in Urdu on the lines of Persian and Arabic, which were not previously available for vernacular poetry. Most importantly, I argue that intellectuals like Khan-i Arzu, who efficaciously defended the cause of Urdu by strengthening a strong public opinion in its favour, led to the replacement of Persian with Urdu in the eighteenth century. It was under his influence and mentorship that the new generations of poets in Delhi started exploring the possibility of writing in rekhta and this led to the transformation of the Perso-Urdu literary landscape of India.

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Date Created

June 2, 2024

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