

Book Review

Vigyan Darpan: An International Classified Bibliography of Punjabi Books, 1869-2021/ by Sukhdev Singh ;assited by Neha Thakur. Patiala: Punjabi University,2022,xx,183p. ISBN 978-81-302-0549-6.

A bibliography is an instrument to record the literary output of a nation or in a given area of knowledge. It is a repertoire of cultural heritage which provides knowledge and access to the intellectual out for use and further research.

Sponsored by the Society for promotion of Science and Technology in India(<https://spsti.org>), it is a classified catalogue of 1992 Punjabi books in Gurumukhi script in the areas of science and technology published during 1869-2021. Obviously it also lists books published in colonial India before 1947, mostly from Lahore which was a centre of education and culture. Items in this minutely and systematically classified bibliography have been arranged by the Dewey Decimal Classification. Each entry provides author, title, edition, imprint and pages again according to a standard cataloguing system. Divided into three parts the first part lists 670 books under the classes 500-599 of the DDC. The second part similarly lists books in technology and engineering from 600-699 classes of the DDC. This class includes 1281 books on subjects such as medicine, agriculture, home science, manufacturing etc. Third part lists eleven literary books on Science, mostly science fiction. In each part minutely divided by the DDC numbers the arrangement is by the author, or by title if the author is not known. Apart from full details each entry bears a continuous serial number S-1 to S-1992 across the three parts.

For listing these books the authors searched the shelves and catalogues the major academic and institutional libraries in Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana and Delhi. This was supplemented by the trade catalogues of the publishers to make the listing comprehensive.

Listing is followed by two diligently prepared indexes (pp.147-183) that of subject and authors which refer to the serial number of the entry. True to its title 'Darpan' it holds mirror to the literature available in these vital areas of knowledge. The preface analyses the trends in publications. It shows 87% of the books are in popular science meant to explain science to lay persons, while only 13% books are in what can be called as hard science. Of these 472 books are translated from other languages. It further brings out the ten major publishers, and five major authors. Of the total of 1374 authors including institutional/ corporate authors there are only 163 female authors. Systematic listing by subject shows the areas where more literature needs to be produced. Overall, we need more books published regularly if we want to switch over the Punjabi as a language of instructions in S&T in schools and universities. Unfortunately, the Punjab State Textbook Board which had initiated this task in 1980s is now defunct. This must be revived and equipped to carry on the high task entrusted to it.

However, it is a pioneering, unique and successful effort which provides a clear mirror to the librarians, teachers, educationists and science policy makers. Its design and production are of commendable quality.

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