

# WORLD SINDHI CONGRESS

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## *Three Scholars Honored for their Contributions to Sindhi Culture and Identity*

Three renowned scholars, Mr Keerat Babani (83) of Mumbai, India, Mr. Ibrahim Joyo (89) of Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan and Dr. Motilal Jotwani (68) of Delhi, India, were conferred with the prestigious “Saeen G M Syed Memorial Award” 2004, in recognition “to their exceptional contributions to Sindhi culture, identity and *Sindhi rights movement*.” These awards were announced during the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Sindh, held on July 31<sup>st</sup>, London. World Sindhi Congress (WSC), a UK/USA based human rights advocacy group, is the sponsor of these awards and organizer of the conference.

Last year, WSC established the Saeen G. M. Syed Memorial Award, “to honor the memory of Mr. Syed.” Saeen G. M. Syed, was a visionary leader who pioneered the Sindhi freedom movement and was a beacon of the Sindhi people’s struggle for national self-determination. Mr. Ram Jethmalani, the Chief Guest of the event



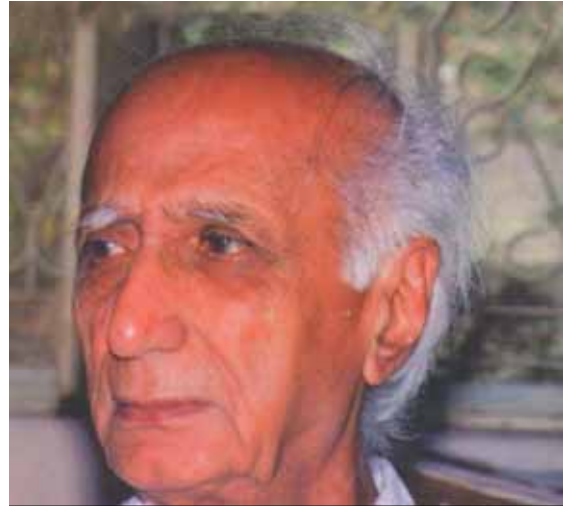
*Saeen G M Syed – 1904-1995*

awarded the certificates and cash awards to the representatives of the awardees. All three recipients could not travel to UK to receive the award in person.

**Mohammed Ibrahim Joyo** is an intellectual, educationist, writer, linguist, critic, translator, editor, columnist, publisher, social researcher and reformer, and political activist. He has written and translated more than 35 academic and literary books in Sindhi and English. His work has inspired many generations of Sindhis. He remains one of the most eloquent and bold voices for the people’s right to have education in their native languages. In Pakistani context where, due to hegemony of Urdu, Sindhi and other native languages have suffered tremendously, Mr. Joyo, through his writings, books and especially through the ‘Sindhi Adabi Board’ (Sindh Literary Board) and

other grass-root organizations has contributed to the Sindhi language movement. Through his translations of monumental works of western foreign languages, he has enlightened generations of Sindhi youths, with secular, rational, scientific philosophical thoughts. As a strong voice of Sufism in Sindh, his work remains a great challenge to state-sponsored pan-Islamism.

Mr. Joyo was born in 1915, in Abad, Sindh. After his college education from Bombay University, he remained affiliated with education departments in various positions throughout Sindh. From 1951-1963, he was appointed as the Secretary of Sindhi Adabi Board. In this capacity he published hundreds of books about Sindhi language, dictionaries, and history. He was guide of many political and grass-root campaigns for Sindhi language, heritage, Sindhi cultural policies, adult literacy, revival of Sindhi literary genres, etc. Mr.



Saen Ibrahim Joyo – 1915- Present

Joyo and Mr. G.M. Syed were close associates and comrades in different aspects of Sindhi rights movement. Mr. Joyo also published and translated four books of Saen G.M. Syed. *This awarded is bestowed in appreciation for Mr. Joyo's research and preservation of Sindhi language and culture, through seven decades of institution building, educational efforts, and enlightened writings.*

**Dr. Motilal Jotwani:** Today we present this award to **Dr. Motilal Jotwani**, in appreciation for furthering the global understanding of *Sindhityati*, through outstanding research, exemplified in his classic work "*Sufis of Sindh*". **Dr. Motilal Jotwani** is a well known writer in Sindhi, Hindi, and English. Born in January 1936 at Sukkur, Sindh, he did post-graduate Diploma in Journalism from Punjab University in 1959, M.A. (English Literature) in 1962 and Ph.D. ("*Shah Abdul Latif: His Life and Work*") in 1973 from Delhi University. Dr. Jotwani is a distinguished poet, fiction writer and research scholar. He was Vice-Chairman, Sindhi Advisory Committee, Ministry of HRD, New Delhi; Member-Secretary, Sindhi Akademi, Delhi; a Visiting Scholar, Harvard, USA and Life Member of the Poetry Society of India, New Delhi. He has taught at Delhi University and has published 56 books in Sindhi, Hindi and English. He has visited numerous foreign countries as a guest lecturer/contributor of learned papers on Indological subjects in conferences. Dr. Jotwani received the Hindi Akademi Delhi's Kriti Award (1988) for his book *Niyamit* and the Uttar Pradesh Hindi Santhan Sauhard Award (1990). He was honored for his services to Hindi Literature at the First World Hindi Conference, Nagpur in 1975 and for his services to Sindhi Literature at the President's House in 1982. He received the Ishwaribai Buxani Life-time Achievement Award, Dubai (2002) and Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Sabha Literary Award Jaipur (2003). Also, the President of India awarded a Padma Shri to Dr. Jotwani in the fields of Literature and Education in 2003.



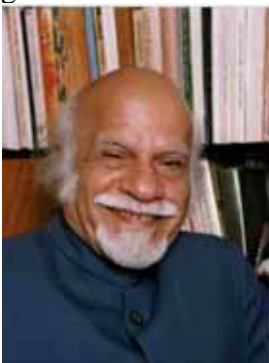
Dr Motilal Jotwani

**Mr. Keerat Babani: In appreciation for his life-long struggle to promote unity, peace, and freedom for Sindhi peoples throughout the world and to recognize his literary works and grass-roots efforts.** Mr. Kirat Babani is a dynamic personality who for over 20 years, was President of Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Ain Sahit Sabha, an all India organization of Sindhi writers, intellectuals and educationists, endeavoring to preserve their cultural identity and enrich their culture and literature. Kirat Babani was born in 1922 in a small town of Moro Lakho, district Nawabshah. While still a student, he was drawn towards movement for Independence of India and at a tender age of 16, he organized a strike in the school and took out a procession throughout his home town as a protest against the mass arrest of national leaders on that historic day of August 1942 when the "Quit India" call was given.

Babani became organizer of the Student Congress for the whole district of Nawabshah and was soon elected as the General Secretary of the provisional unit of the All India Students' Congress and later, he was elevated to the position of a vice-president of the All India Students' Congress in its session held at New Delhi in 1940, when now famous Pathan leader -- Khan Wali Khan -- was also elected as one of the vice-presidents of the All India body. During his detention in the 1942 struggle, in Sukkur jail, he came in contact with many stalwarts of the freedom movement and more particularly the revolutionary student leader -- Sobho Gianchandani -- the legendary figure of 1942 struggle in Sindh. Here he acquired a deep insight and vast sweep over political matters and came out with staunch radical socialistic views.

He did not migrate to India though his family had left after establishment of Pakistan. He remained at Karachi taking secularism as sheet anchor, to serve the downtrodden. But he was soon arrested by the government of Pakistan, along with other Communist leaders of Karachi. After 11 months of detention, he was externed from Karachi, but he refused to leave Sindh and went into the interior of Sindh. He stayed in Hyderabad (Sindh) with the great peasant leader -- Late Hyder Bux Jatoi -- now affectionately remembered as Baba-e-Sindh by the peasantry. He was put in charge of "Hari Hakdar" (Peasants' Right) press and weekly of the same title to the edited and looked after by him. But he was considered to be a dangerous person and was shadowed and harassed by the Pakistan intelligence and ultimately in 1949, on the basis of cooked up charges of subversion, he was deported to India.

Babani's commitment to the cause of people of Sindh and the movement launched by them for their cultural preservation, economic justice and political equality -- popularly known as "Jiye Sindh" movement -- is total. He was very closely associated with G M Syed, the revered leader and father of "Jiye Sindh" movement, much earlier than the partition of the country. He has followed the course of the struggle of Sindhi people from the very inception and, supported it all along.



*Mr. Keerat  
Babani*