

Autobiographies in Urdu Literature - a Critique

Autobiography is an important, popular and authentic genre of biography writing. To more than 400 autobiographies in Urdu, a greater contribution has been made by the Urdu prose writers and poets. Releasing the important need of literature, the writer has taken pains to critically assess the autobiographies of Urdu literature.

The thesis has been divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter, the origin and evolution, earliest impressions and various forms of autobiography in Urdu have been taken into consideration. Discussing the art, style another elements of biography and Autobiography separately difference between the two has been established in the same chapter. The second chapter contains a study of the early period of autobiography and the evaluation of the first autobiography in Urdu literature. Besides, a general discussion on the remarkable autobiographies written before partition has been made in the perspective of the particular socio-political scenario of the age. The third chapter of the thesis is vitally important for it contains concentrated critical assessment of the most important autobiographies written after partition. These are the popular autobiographies that depict the particular circumstances and aftermaths of the partition of India. The fourth chapter shows the distinguished style, literary trend and approach of women autobiography writers. Fifth chapter discusses 20th century's other autobiographies which gained popularity for their eloquent style.

A few autobiographies written in verse have also been discussed as vitally important to the topic. The sixth chapter is important as it deals with the autobiographies that came out in the early seven years of 21' century. Written by literary celebrities, these autobiographies shows expanding thematic horizons due to scientific approach and the most modern literary trends. The seventh and last chapter contains a brief history and evolution of the autobiography as well as a discussion on autobiographies written by non-literary writers such as high military officials, politicians and bureaucrats.

After a bird's eye view of the autobiographies translated from other languages, the discussion has been summed up. To avoid unnecessary length only choice autobiographies have been discussed in detail while others have only been touched upon generally. The writer believes that the research work will contribute towards establishing the literary status of Urdu autobiographies.