

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

Two books launched to pay tribute to Dr Sono Khangharani

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Two books have been published in Sindh to highlight the contribution of Dr Sono Khangharani, a leader of the social development sector, in introducing an indigenous model to alleviate poverty in the province.

The books, *The Voice of the Desert* and *A Ray of Hope*, have been simultaneously published by two different organisations, and portrayed the life, work and experiences of the social sector leader.

Dr Khangharani is recognised across South Asia as an expert on the causes of poverty in the region, especially in Thar and rural Sindh, where people are facing acute poverty, food shortage and lack of health and education facilities.

He presently leads two organizations; the Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) and the Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO).

The first book, *The Voice of the Desert*, has been compiled by Mahran Mallah of the Sindh Agricultural and Forestry Workers Coordinating Organisation (Safwco), and contains a comprehensive interview with Dr Khangharani, depicting his childhood, achievements and struggle to end poverty.

The other book, *A Ray of Hope*, has been compiled by Abbas Khoso, a poet and writer, has been published by East Line Publishing House Hyderabad, and contains 28 articles, profiles and features contributed by different writers, civil society activists and community leaders to pay tribute to Dr Khangharani.

In a recent gathering in Hyderabad, organised by Eastern Publishing House, prominent leaders of the public sector said that Dr Khangharani, who hails from a low-income family of Thar, had introduced a successful model for poverty alleviation.

Activists of the social development sector suggested that even if public sector universities donot add these two books to their syllabus, development sector organisations must make them part of their skill development courses.

Civil society representatives further said that Dr Khangharani's contribution to make TRDP a successful project is immense. They added that the project was initially run by a leading funding agency, Save the Children Fund. When they decided to windup the project in Islamkot, Tharparkar district, they handed over the project to the newly established TRD, of which Dr Khangharani was a founding member.

"While handing over the project to the TRDP, we never imagined that one day it will become this successful in Sindh under the command of Dr Khangharani. Now, I am proud to say that Dr Khangharani has the talent, skill and commitment to bring a positive change," said Dr Naseer Nizamani, chairman of the TRDP board of directors, and former country head of Save the Children.

In his address, Dr Khangharani appreciated the efforts of his team, and said that works attributed to him are in fact a result of team work. He also praised the Sindh government for allocating Rs10 billion to SRSO for rural development and poverty alleviation in the province.

He defended the provincial government for its contribution towards the rural development of Sindh, saying that the work that is being done in this regard would produce long term results.

Comrade Rochi Ram, 82, who belongs to Thar and was presiding over the event, appreciated Dr Khangharani's role regarding poverty alleviation in his district. "It was Dr Khangharani's leadership due to which similar models of poverty alleviation have been adopted in other provinces," he said. He was of the view that the change is only possible with enhancing political consciousness.

Safwco Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Suleman G. Abro said that Dr Khangharani has always been an envoy of the poor of this South Asian region.

"Dr Khangharani grew up in an atmosphere where persistent drought, malnutrition, lack of education and health care were affecting impoverished communities. This is why he knows the real causes of poverty," Abro said, adding that as a child Dr Khangharani also faced discrimination for being a Dalit.