

Strategic Young Researcher Overseas Visit Program for Accelerating Brain Circulation

Dispatch Report

Year: 2013

Place of fieldwork: Main Library of Jamaat-e Islami, Pakistan

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- Research background

The aim of this study is to trace the history of Pakistan's language and the expanse and development of publishing culture as it relates to Islamic thought in Pakistan. Islamic theologian and politician Maulana Saiyid Abu al-Ala Maududi (1903-1979) and his publications are the subject matter of this research. Maududi was a controversial twentieth-century Islamist thinker who worked in South Asia. He founded the religious party Jamaat-e Islami in 1941 in Lahore and wrote over 150 books and pamphlets in Urdu.

- Research purpose and aim

Based on the result of previous field work, I commenced my main research at the main library of Jamaat-e Islami in Lahore. This time, I focused on collecting material at the university library and the public library of Punjab. I also joined *dars* (religious lessons) that taught ladies in a private residential colony, as I thought it might be a good arena to learn about and discuss Maulana Maudud's religious thinking. I also continued to meet Dr. Rafiuddin Hasmi to report on my progress and receive guidance.

- Results and achievements by fieldwork

Attending *dars* (Islamic study class) was a wonderful experience. This was a private study group composed of ladies living in the same residential community. The teacher was not a professional *ulama*, and participants were housewives between 30 and 60 years old. The topics changed according to the Holy Quran in Urdu and the teacher attempted to explain the meaning of the Arabic through examples. The participants discussed their daily life: praying on Fridays, *halal*, and *haram*. I found this group to be a very good sample. A book faire was held at Bagh-e Jinnah (Jinnah Park) in Lahore. I got many books and was also able to get information about bookshops in Lahore.



Photo 1: Book faire held in front of Qaid-e Azam Library in Jinnah Park



Photo 2: A booth at the book faire



Photo 3: Press conducting an interview at the book faire

- Implications and impact on future research

The main purpose of my next visit in the winter is to survey materials in the main library of Jamaat-e Islami. There are original editions of books and journals written by Maududi, which are hard to find even in Pakistan. I will also attempt to establish strong connections with *dars* members so as to obtain knowledge on the use of Urdu languages in the context of religion. It is my aim to exchange views on a wide range of issues with researchers and members of this society. In addition, during the next field work, I will make a poster presentation at an international conference in Lahore and will take advantage of opportunities to foster academic connection with researchers from other countries.