Nangarhar University Social Science Journal

e-ISSN: 3079-2398 (Online) p-ISSN: 3079-238X (Print)

NUSSJ

Vol:3(04), Oct-Dec: 2026

Journal Homepage: https://nussj.nu.edu.af

REVIEW ARTICLE

A Critical Review of the First Compiled Dewan of Mirza Khan Ansari

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ABSTRACT

This article evaluates the bibliographic presentation, editorial transparency, and selected reported spelling and word-division problems in the 1975 scholarly edition of Mirza Khan Ansari's Dewan prepared by Dost Mohammad Dost Shinwari. Materials and method: The 1975 edition is treated as the primary object of documentary and textual-critical analysis; the account of its eight source witnesses is considered alongside published scholarship and manuscript catalogues. No new collation of original manuscripts was undertaken. The eight sources described for the edition comprise five manuscript witnesses and three printed sources; identifying them collectively as 'manuscripts' is inaccurate. The imprint 1354 corresponds to 1354 Hijri Shamsi (1975 CE), rather than 1354 AH. Other concerns include ambiguous witness labels and reported inconsistencies in word division and Pashto yeh forms; some proposed corrections remain unverified against a facsimile. Contribution: The study separates demonstrable bibliographic facts from provisional textual observations and proposes a documented, witness-based critical re-edition.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: *Pashto Dewan, Roshani Movement, Textual Criticism, Manuscript Witnesses, Critical Apparatus, Editorial Transparency.*

Article History

Received: 08-10-2026

Accepted: 10-11-2026

Published: 14-11-2026

Cite this Article

Khialzai, K. M., & Sapand, A. J. (2026). A Critical Review of the First Compiled Dewan of Mirza Khan Ansari. Nangarhar University Social Science Journal, 3(04), 61–69. https://doi.org/10.70436/nussj.v3i04.118

Introduction

The survival of Pashto poetry in handwritten copies and printed editions creates an important responsibility for textual scholarship: to distinguish the historical forms preserved by witnesses from changes introduced by scribes, compositors, and later editors. A critical edition does not merely modernize spelling; it documents its sources and explains decisions between readings (Tanselle, 1989; Macé et al., 2015). This distinction is central to the study of Mirza Khan Ansari's Dewan.

Mirza Khan Ansari, also known as Mirza Khan Roshani, is associated with the Roshani Sufi literary tradition. Blumhardt and MacKenzie (1965, pp. 60–61) identify him, with appropriate caution, as probably a son of Nur al-Din and a grandson of Bayazid Ansari (Pir Roshan). They report that his birth date is unknown; a poem and the testimony of the poet Dawlat associate his death with 1040 AH (1630–1631 CE). The precise circumstances and location of his death are less certain: the tradition of Daulatabad is reported in a source that also contains a conflicting chronology. Details concerning his mother and childhood, repeated in later accounts (Shirzad & Afghan, 1399), should therefore be treated as attributed traditions, not independently established facts.

Mirza Khan's Dewan includes alif-namas, qasidas, ghazals, and other poems. Its Roshani vocabulary, ethical concerns, and mystical themes make textual precision particularly important: an unrecorded change of word division or grammatical form can alter the way a verse is interpreted. The present study examines the 1975 printed edition

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https://doi.org/10.70436/nussj.v3i04.118

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rather than claiming to recover the poet's authorial text (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975; Khairi, 2024).

The edition examined here was prepared by Dost Mohammad Dost Shinwari, with editorial supervision credited to Habibullah Rafi, and issued by Pashto Tolana (Pashto Academy) in Kabul in 1354 HS (1975 CE). The printed copy is described as having a run of 1,000 copies; this detail comes from the edition's reported imprint and has not been independently checked against a facsimile. The bibliographic record confirms a 1975 edition with six preliminary pages and 262 numbered pages (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975). Since earlier selections and printings existed, 'first compiled' in the title denotes the particular scholarly edition under review, not the first publication of Mirza Khan's poetry.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem is not that every historical spelling is necessarily erroneous, but that the 1975 edition does not consistently distinguish, in the evidence discussed here, between manuscript readings, editorial normalizations, and printing conventions. Examples reported in the edition's notes include joined forms such as دکند هار versus the modern word division د کندهار, and forms involving Pashto yeh letters. Such cases are first classified as possible spacing, orthographic, or grammatical variants; they become demonstrable printing errors only when checked in the exact page context and against earlier witnesses. Inadequate documentation can impede that verification and may encourage readers to mistake editorial choices for the poet's original wording (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975; Tanselle, 1989).

Significance of the Research

This study contributes a focused audit of one important Pashto edition, identifies where bibliographic and textual evidence is insufficient, and proposes an attainable procedure for a future critical re-edition. Its principal scholarly value is to separate verified bibliographic information from conditional claims about the actual wording of individual poems (Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965; TEI Consortium, 2025).

Rationale (Necessity) of the Study

The 1975 edition continues to be a valuable means of accessing Mirza Khan Ansari's poetry. Nevertheless, its source descriptions and reported spelling variation deserve reassessment using explicit editorial principles. Preservation of historical spelling, transparent normalization for contemporary readers, and correction of proven misprints are different editorial operations; they should not be confused (MacKenzie, 1959; Macé et al., 2015).

Research Questions:

Main Question:

Which bibliographic, editorial, and reported orthographic problems can be identified in the 1975 edition of Mirza Khan Ansari's Dewan, and which require manuscript verification?

Sub-Questions:

1. Who prepared the 1975 edition and how is the publication identified?
2. What types of witnesses, and how many of each type, are listed for the 1975 edition?
3. What is known—and what remains unproven—about the compiler's use of these witnesses?

Research Objectives:

Main Objective:

To evaluate the identifiable bibliographic and editorial issues in the 1975 edition and distinguish verifiable findings from proposed textual emendations.

Sub-Objectives:

1. To document the edition's compiler, date, publisher, and bibliographic structure.
2. To classify the reported source materials as manuscripts or printed witnesses and assess the completeness of their identification.
3. To describe the limits of evidence for the compiler's method and evaluate reported Pashto orthographic variants.

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive, analytical study of a published edition, not a new critical edition of Mirza Khan Ansari's poems. Its primary object is Dost Shinwari's 1354 HS (1975 CE) text and its reported front matter, witness descriptions, footnotes, and sample forms. The evaluation uses four criteria: (1) accurate bibliographic description; (2) identification and traceability of textual witnesses; (3) distinction between substantive readings and spelling or spacing variation; and (4) disclosure of editorial intervention (Tanselle, 1989; Macé et al., 2015; TEI Consortium, 2025).

The procedure is to record each claim or reported form, identify its stated location in the 1975 edition, classify the issue, compare it with the published bibliographic and orthographic literature, and assign one of three evidential statuses: confirmed bibliographically, reported from the edition but awaiting facsimile checking, or unverifiable without manuscripts. Where a possible modernized form is shown, it is a proposed normalization, not a reconstructed authorial reading. The original editor is reported to have consulted eight witnesses—five manuscripts and three printed sources. Consultation of multiple witnesses does not by itself establish 'eclectic editing': that label would require documented selection of readings across witnesses. No independent collation or variant-by-variant reconstruction is claimed here (Harvard Geoffrey Chaucer Website, n.d.; TEI Consortium, 2025).

Methods of Data Collection

The primary bibliographic source is the 1975 Pashto Tolana edition (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975). Contextual and comparative sources include a published Pashto manuscript catalogue (Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965), Dorn's earlier anthology (1847), a peer-reviewed manuscript study (Kabir, 2025), a contemporary linguistic review (Khairi, 2024), and works on Pashto literary history (Hewadmal, 1379, 1389; Shirzad & Afghan, 1399). Methodological criteria are drawn from established textual-scholarship studies (Tanselle, 1989; Macé et al., 2015; TEI Consortium, 2025) and Pashto language scholarship (MacKenzie, 1959). Source reliability is assessed by identifiable authorship, publication record, access to relevant primary material, and independently checkable catalogue information; online commentary is used only for attributed contextual claims, not as manuscript proof.

Scope and Delimitations

The article is confined to the 1975 Kabul edition and selected historical, bibliographic, and methodological material relevant to assessing it. Earlier printings and other manuscript collections are discussed only insofar as they help identify the edition's textual witnesses. This is a targeted review of the sources cited, not a systematic or exhaustive search of all archives, catalogues, theses, or publications; accordingly, no claim of absolute research priority is made.

Challenges and Limitations

The original manuscript witnesses reported for the 1975 edition were not directly accessible for this review, and a verified page-by-page facsimile of the edition was not supplied with the manuscript under revision. Therefore, the present study cannot independently authenticate the proposed corrections in Table 1, determine the genealogical relationships of witnesses, establish the editor's base text, or reconstruct the poet's wording. Shelf marks and provenance for the five witnesses reported by the compiler also remain incomplete. These are material evidential limits, not merely practical inconveniences.

Consequently, conclusions are restricted to bibliographic facts confirmed by external catalogues, claims attributable to the edition's description, and clearly identified examples requiring further checking. A responsible future re-edition must return to the printed pages and manuscript facsimiles, recording both positive evidence and uncertainty (Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965; Macé et al., 2015).

Background of the Study

Historical accounts identify Mirza Khan Ansari with the Roshani movement. The most cautious catalogue description says that he was probably the son of Nur al-Din, Bayazid Ansari's second son, and dates his death to 1040 AH (1630–1631 CE) on the basis of a dated poem and Dawlat's testimony (Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965, pp. 60–61). The assertion that he died at Daulatabad appears in a later narrative with an inconsistent reference to Aurangzeb's reign, so it should not be presented without qualification. Accounts of his mother Zulaikha, separation from his parents, and youth in Tirah remain attributed to subsequent literary histories (Shirzad & Afghan, 1399), rather than independently verified here.

A verse ascribed to Dawlat Lawani is cited in the 1975 edition as evidence for the year of Mirza Khan's death (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975; Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965, p. 61):

"He was martyred in the Deccan battle; may he rest in peace / His passing was in one thousand and forty." (English rendering reported in the source text; Pashto wording and translation require checking against the original.)

Modern scholarship on Pashto language and texts has a longer history than a simple late-nineteenth-century origin suggests. Bernhard Dorn published A Chrestomathy of the Pushtū or Afghan Language in St. Petersburg in 1847, including specimens of Pashto prose and verse (Dorn, 1847; Luzhetskaya, 1996). Subsequent Afghan and Pashtun contributions to editing and literary history include the work of Abdul Hai Habibi and other scholars discussed by

Hewadmal (1389). Claims that any one editor was categorically the 'first' in a specific national or regional tradition require more precise evidence than is available here.

The preservation of Pashto literary manuscripts has involved copying, excerpting, printing, and scholarly editing across different places and periods. These activities should not be collapsed into a single, linear history of textual criticism. For Mirza Khan, the coexistence of manuscripts and printed anthologies provides opportunities for collation but also complicates claims about the relative authority of witnesses (Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965; Dorn, 1847).

Textual criticism asks what a witness actually reads, how that reading relates to other witnesses, and why an editor adopts or rejects it. It therefore requires a transparent account of sources and choices, not just the elimination of apparent nonstandard spellings (Tanselle, 1989; Macé et al., 2015).

Mirza Khan's poetry addresses Sufi concepts, humility, ethics, and spiritual practice, often through forms and vocabulary unfamiliar to contemporary readers. A linguistic study of Hidayat al-Haqiqat also draws attention to language variation in the textual tradition (Khairi, 2024). Historical variation is evidence in its own right and should not automatically be classified as carelessness or corruption.

The Dewan includes alif-namas, odes, ghazals, and other forms, as described in the 1975 edition. Historical textual witnesses are catalogued in Britain (Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965, pp. 60–65), and excerpts appeared in Dorn's 1847 chrestomathy. These sources establish a longer textual history, but the exact relationship between those copies and the five handwritten witnesses used in 1975 has not been demonstrated.

The 1975 scholarly edition identifies its compiler on the title matter as 'Tsaranmal Dost' and credits Habibullah Rafi with editorial supervision. Bibliographic records confirm publication by Pashto Tolana in Kabul in 1354 HS/1975 and record six preliminary pages followed by 262 numbered pages (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975). 'First compiled' must therefore be understood as referring to this particular edited edition, not to the first appearance of the poems in print, which predates it (Dorn, 1847).

The present analysis contributes a source-conscious reassessment of the 1975 edition, emphasizes the documentary value of its existing work, and identifies the evidence needed to convert preliminary editorial observations into verifiable textual conclusions.

Bibliographic Description of the Dewan

The bibliographic description below follows the edition's front matter as reported in the present study, supplemented by catalogue verification where possible. The 1975 publication is described as containing preliminary matter and a numbered text of 262 pages (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975). The following page descriptions refer to the edition's preliminary leaves, not the page numbering of this article:

;"Preliminary page 1: "The Dewan of Mirza Khan Ansari editorial introduction, correction, and notes credited to .Tsaranmal Dost; Pashto Tolana, 1354 HS (1975 CE)

Preliminary page 2: Editorial supervision credited to ;Habibullah Rafi; calligraphy credited to Nasir Ahmad Government Printing Press; stated print run of 1,000 copies (imprint particulars as reported; facsimile .(verification pending

Preliminary page 3 onward: Biographical information concerning Mirza Khan and notes on the textual sources .used in compiling the edition

The biographical section provides an introductory account of the poet's life, lineage, literary position, and Roshani affiliation. It may function as an introduction even if no separate section bears the heading 'Introduction'; absence of that label alone is not sufficient evidence of a missing scholarly introduction.

The edition reportedly devotes a short section to the eight sources used for its text. For a future critical edition, each witness should be described by library, shelf mark, script, date or date range, extent, condition, and provenance; the present source descriptions do not consistently provide this information (Macé et al., 2015).

Introduction to the Manuscript and Printed Witnesses Used in the Dewan

The 1975 edition describes eight source witnesses: five handwritten manuscripts and three printed editions or anthologies (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975). These are distinct from the seven Mirza Khan Dewan manuscripts surveyed in Kabir (2025). In Blumhardt and MacKenzie's British-Isles catalogue, the seven entries (nos. 67–73) are distributed between two historical collections: British Museum Or. 4228, Or. 4497, and Or. 2803; and India Office Pashto B.24, B.19, B.3, and C.1. The catalogue specifies dates and folio counts for individual entries—for example Or. 4228, 1101 AH/1689–1690 CE; Pashto B.24, 1157 AH/1744 CE; and Or. 4497, circa 1700 CE

(Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965, pp. 60–65). These are comparative records, not sources demonstrably used in 1975. Kabir's description of seven British Museum copies needs checking against this repository-level distinction (Kabir, 2025).

1. Pashto Academy manuscript (handwritten): Described as a copy in Roshani script; shelf mark, copying date, folio extent, scribe, and provenance not supplied in the present documentation.
2. Early Lahore printed edition (print): Described as issued by the Islamic Press in Lahore; exact year, title-page transcription, and pagination need bibliographic confirmation.
3. Hamesh Khalil's Peshawar edition (print): A printed collection associated with Hamesh Khalil; edition statement, printing year, and complete bibliographic particulars need confirmation.
4. Incomplete manuscript (handwritten): Described as an older copy with unknown copyist and date; repository, shelf mark, and surviving folios are not specified.
5. "Ancient" manuscript (handwritten): The compiler reportedly gives this source particular authority and notes Roshani-script spellings; its age, location, and textual authority cannot be checked from the available description.
6. Dorn's Chrestomathy (print): Bernhard Dorn's printed anthology, St. Petersburg, 1847; it contains selected Mirza Khan verses (Dorn, 1847; Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965, p. 61), not a separate handwritten witness.
7. Kabul Public Library complete manuscript (handwritten): The description mentions damage to the first 53 pages and poems absent from other consulted sources; a catalogue identifier and facsimile are still required.
8. Kabul Public Library incomplete manuscript (handwritten): Its opening and ending are said to be missing; the estimated copying date, copyist, folio count, and shelf mark remain unconfirmed.

The edition's printed numerical sequence is described as pages 1–262, following separate preliminary matter. These are page numbers of the 1975 book, not the page count of the present article. The sections are reported as follows, subject to direct checking of a complete exemplar:

Part One (printed pp. 1–18): Alif-namas

Part Two (printed pp. 19–52): Qasidas

Part Three (printed pp. 53–252): Ghazals

Part Four (printed pp. 253–258): Miscellaneous poems

Part Five (printed pp. 259–262): Glossary

The English-language closing imprint is reported to read:

DEWAN MIRZA KHAN ANSARI

PUSHTU ACADEMY

KABUL AFGHANISTAN

1975

Government Printing Press (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975).

The imprint's 1975 date supplies the context for interpreting 1354 as Hijri Shamsi.

Findings

The findings below distinguish a verified bibliographic clarification from editorial concerns and sample forms transmitted in the present study. Examples in Table 1 have not been collated against a reliable photographic copy of the 1975 print or the underlying manuscripts. They are therefore evidence of issues to investigate rather than conclusive proof of the editor's mistakes.

1. Calendar identification: The year '1354' is reported on the edition's title matter, while the English imprint states '1975'. Together they indicate 1354 Hijri Shamsi (HS), which falls in 1975–1976 CE, rather than 1354 Hijri Qamari (AH), which falls in 1935–1936 CE. The omission of 'HS' in one location may reduce immediate clarity, but it does not justify dating the publication to 1354 AH (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975).
2. Nature of the introduction: The title page reportedly credits 'introduction, correction, and notes' to 'Tsaranmal Dost'. The following biographical pages constitute introductory material; the narrower criticism is that a clearly labelled editorial preface specifying principles, base text, and treatment of variant readings is not demonstrable from the description. Whether such a preface is absent must be checked on the full 1975 exemplar.
3. Compiler identification: The abbreviated form 'Tsaranmal Dost' may be less informative to readers than the full name Dost Mohammad Dost Shinwari. Nevertheless, the short form on a historical imprint is not, by itself, a textual error.

A modern bibliographic description should supply the full name and explain the academic title, without silently replacing the original imprint wording.

4. Optional preliminaries: No separately identified dedication, acknowledgment, or formal epilogue is recorded in the reported contents. These are not mandatory elements of a critical edition and their absence cannot establish an editorial defect. What is materially important is an adequate explanation of sources, editorial choices, and textual interventions (Macé et al., 2015).

5. Witness labels and sigla: Some references use descriptive names, and two distinct sources are both called 'the incomplete manuscript'. This creates a risk of confusion when comparing notes. A conspectus of unique sigla (for example, PA, LP, HK, IM1, AM, DC, KL1, and KL2) would make witnesses traceable; these codes are proposed for future work and were not used by the original compiler. Sigla support a compact apparatus but do not independently establish the accuracy of a selected reading (Macé et al., 2015; TEI Consortium, 2025).

A. PA — Pashto Academy handwritten witness ("Qalami Nuskha").

B. LP — Lahore early printed witness (reportedly called Kandahari"; identification needs checking").

C. HK — Hamesh Khalil's printed edition.

D. IM1 — incomplete handwritten witness of unidentified location.

E. AM — "ancient" handwritten witness.

F. DC — Dorn's printed Chrestomathy (1847).

G. KL1 — complete Kabul Public Library handwritten witness.

H. KL2 — incomplete Kabul Public Library handwritten witness.

6. Editorial procedure: The compiler's consultation of eight sources is compatible with comparison of witnesses, but there is insufficient evidence here to establish whether he consistently followed a base text, selected readings eclectically, or normalized spelling. An 'eclectic' text is one in which an editor makes documented choices among readings, rather than simply citing multiple sources. A systematic collation and a statement of editorial policy are needed before the compiler's method can be classified confidently (Harvard Geoffrey Chaucer Website, n.d.; TEI Consortium, 2025).

7. Historical spelling: The draft of this study contrasts the Pashto connective چې (che, 'that') with a reported older or nonstandard form. Without an exact page and verse context, it cannot be determined whether that form is a compositor's error, an orthographic convention, or a distinct grammatical item. No definitive correction is proposed on the present evidence; the passage should be transcribed and collated before emendation (MacKenzie, 1959).

8. Word division and agreement: The examples in Table 1 were supplied as transcriptions from the 1975 edition's notes (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975). The proposed forms mainly reflect contemporary spacing conventions, with one possible agreement adjustment. Because original facsimiles and precise note identifiers were not available, each row is labelled provisional. Romanization is retained only as a pronunciation guide: ā/ē/ī/ō represent long vowels; ṛ represents the Pashto retroflex r; ḥ represents ځ. It is not a diplomatic transcription.

Table 1. Reported word-division and grammatical variants in the 1975 edition (provisional comparisons)

No.	Reported form	Proposed modern form	Location / status
1	دکند هار dakand hār	د کندهار da Kandahār	Footnotes; exact note unverified
2	دهميش په نسخه کې dahamish pa nuskha ki	د همېش په نسخه کې da Hamēsh pa nuskha kē	Footnotes; exact note unverified
3	ددرو يزه تحريک dadarw yaza taḥrīk	د دروېزه تحريک da Darwēza taḥrīk	Reported p. 1; unverified

4	درو ښانی نهضت darō shānī nahẓat	د روښاني نهضت da Rōshānī nahẓat	Reported p. 1; unverified
5	دو حدت نوبهار dawa ḥdat nawbahār	د وحدت نوبهار da Waḥdat nawbahār	Reported p. 3; unverified
6	دابیت واخیستل شو dābayt wākhistal sho	دا بیت واخیستل شو dā bayt wākhistal sho	Reported p. 1; unverified
7	داصل او نیمګړی نسخو dāṣal aw nīmgaṛi nuskhō	د اصل او نیمګړیو نسخو da aṣal aw nīmgaṛyō nuskhō	Reported pp. 2–3; unverified
8	اوقلمی نسخه awqalami nuskha	او قلمي نسخه aw qalamī nuskha	Footnotes; exact note unverified

Note. Page references are those reported in the reviewed manuscript; the corresponding printed pages and footnotes have not been checked from a facsimile. "Proposed" means a possible contemporary normalization, not an established authorial reading.

9. Pashto yeh forms: The study reports spellings such as نسخې / نسخی (nuskha), همدغې / همدغی (hamdaghe), پخوانی / پخوانی (pakhwanay), and انصاری / انصاري (Ansari). Contemporary Afghan conventions distinguish ی, ې, ي, ى, and ئ in different grammatical and phonological environments (MacKenzie, 1959; LingDocs, n.d.). The first item in each pair is therefore a candidate for normalization only if the word's function and the print's actual spelling are verified. In a historical edition, these differences must be recorded as variants or stated normalization rules; they should not all be labelled automatic typographical errors.

10. Closing matter: The reported edition concludes with a glossary and an English imprint rather than a separate epilogue. A scholarly editor may use that structure legitimately; the substantive recommendation is to add a clear editorial account and source apparatus in any future re-edition, not to treat a missing ceremonial conclusion as a textual error.

Discussion

The findings suggest three distinct levels of editorial concern. First, the publication year can be resolved by the printed English imprint: 1354 is the Afghan solar year corresponding to the 1975 publication. Second, the list of eight witnesses demonstrably mixes manuscripts and printings; a modern account should classify each type explicitly. Third, reported orthographic and spacing inconsistencies remain hypotheses pending access to the actual pages and comparative witnesses. These distinctions prevent the methodological error of treating every difference from present-day spelling as a corruption of a seventeenth-century text (MacKenzie, 1959; Macé et al., 2015).

The wider history is relevant insofar as Mirza Khan's poems circulated before the 1975 edition: Dorn's anthology appeared in 1847, and manuscript catalogues document several additional witnesses. The editions and manuscript entries are not interchangeable, and the authority of an individual copy cannot be determined from its age or label alone. The critical task is to establish provenance, textual relationships, and variant readings (Dorn, 1847; Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965; Tanselle, 1989).

Dost Shinwari's work was a substantial scholarly contribution that assembled and made accessible a wide body of poetry. The present critique is retrospective and therefore should not assume that all present-day documentary conventions were universal in 1975. Instead, it asks what a transparent future edition would need: a complete witness register, an explicit base-text policy, examples of rejected readings, a system for encoding sigla, and a distinction between historical spellings and demonstrable misprints (Macé et al., 2015; TEI Consortium, 2025).

Editorial transparency matters because orthographic regularization, grammatical emendation, and substantive choice between variant words are not equivalent acts. A modernized reading text may be useful, but a diplomatic record of historical forms should remain available, ideally in a critical apparatus. The provisional examples in Table 1 illustrate where such a distinction is necessary; they do not warrant a claim that the compiler corrupted a poem's meaning (Tanselle, 1989; TEI Consortium, 2025).

The British-Isles catalogue offers a useful independent check: several identifiable manuscripts of Mirza's Dewan have shelf marks, dates, folio counts, and scripts, while the

five handwritten sources named for the 1975 edition remain insufficiently identified in this review. Kabir (2025, pp. 13–27) discusses a further manuscript and claims seven British Museum copies; the published catalogue, however, distributes relevant entries across more than one institution. This discrepancy calls for repository-level verification, not an unqualified statement that seven copies are held in a single museum (Blumhardt & MacKenzie, 1965, pp. 60–65).

Conclusion

This review identifies the 1975 Pashto Tolana publication as the particular scholarly edition under study and clarifies its date as 1354 HS (1975 CE). Its compiler is Dost Mohammad Dost Shinwari, credited on the historical title matter as Tsaranmal Dost. Eight sources are reported, comprising five handwritten witnesses and three printed works, and they should not be described collectively as eight manuscripts (Shinwari, 1354 HS/1975).

The clearest editorial deficiencies are incomplete witness identification and insufficiently documented principles for handling variants. Short labels, possible inconsistencies in word division, and the treatment of Pashto yeh forms deserve close scrutiny, but without original manuscripts and verified facsimiles of the printed edition, this study cannot determine their authorial status or quantify the edition's errors. Consultation of eight sources likewise does not prove an eclectic method.

The contribution of this study is thus a bounded, evidence-aware diagnosis, not a definitive corrected text. It recommends a future critical re-edition that preserves traceable witness evidence and explicitly distinguishes historical orthography, editorial normalization, and proven typographical mistakes. The sources reviewed here do not justify claiming that no earlier critique exists.

Recommendations

1. Obtain complete scans or physical access to the 1975 printed edition and the five manuscripts identified in its source list; compile a witness register giving repository, shelf mark, date, script, foliation, condition, and provenance before proposing textual emendations.
2. Undertake a sample collation of selected poems, followed by full collation where feasible. Identify the base text, assign unique sigla, record substantive and orthographic variants in an apparatus, and state rules for retaining original spelling, regularizing it, or correcting proven misprints (Macé et al., 2015; TEI Consortium, 2025).
3. In a revised edition, replace the general source heading 'The books utilized in the arrangement of this collection' with the more precise 'Manuscript and printed witnesses consulted for this edition'. Identify the 1354 date explicitly as HS alongside 1975 CE, reproduce the original title-page attribution faithfully, and distinguish editorial notes from the poem text. Prioritize checking the exact locations reported in Table 1 before making any changes to the readings.

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