



REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON EARLY NOVELS OF URDU

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Abstract: The Urdu and Hindi language belongs to the Indo-Iranian and Indo Aryan branches of the Indo-European family of languages, commonly known as the Hindustani dialect (BBC, 2007; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016). Urdu is a Turkish word which means ‘an army, a market or a camp’. Urdu in its less formalized register is referred to as a Rekhta, meaning ‘rough mixture’. The language evolved through a commingling of local dialects Sanskrit, Hindko, Pashto, Pali, Prakrit etc. into the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish during the Mughal period of Indian history (BBC, 2007; Kachru, 2008; Masica, 1993). Its ability to absorb words from other languages also reflects its meaning as ‘an army’. However, there seems to be many different opinions about the exact origin of the Urdu language and cannot be ascertained when the Muslims of this region especially its elite started speaking Urdu.

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Introduction: ‘Novel’ is the word of Italian language which means unusual and new or strange. In literary term, novel is the tale or story in which various aspects of human life are deeply observed and after that, are presented by the novelist in a particular arrangement and ability in the light of his own feelings and experiences. Realism and truth is the base of novel writing. Human life is its topic. There is no capacity for the unreal and supernatural elements in the novel. In other words it is true picture of human life (Bukhari, 1960). Before the development of novel, Dastans were used to be written. They were for the refreshment and recreation. These dastans had a plenty of supernatural elements in them. We see that the novels were written in a period when there was prosperity and peace. But when the time changed and Mughal Empire met a decline. The English came to India and snatched rule from the hands of the Muslims. The life became difficult. The people came back from the world of imagination to real world which had so many problems, pains and difficulties. Now they began to watch the life with the real eyes. Then the prose gained seriousness. The story which was entangled in the imaginative surroundings of dastan gained a realistic style. Dastan presented imaginative life, whereas the novel narrates real life. Novel is a story in simple language, in which events of routine life are presented in such a way and technique that may arouse interest in reader. The interest is created with the help of plot, imagery and characterization. There are some contradictions regarding the history of novel but no one denies the fact that novel represents the real life. Novel can be a long story but it has not extraordinary length of dastan. Novel tells the story of the whole life. It has different aspects of life in it. It has a central story and the secondary stories also but they are not like those of dastan. The secondary stories in novel are also secondary stories but they are always integrated with the central story

Some trace back its invention to the arrival of Muslims in the 8th century in Sindh, while others consider its roots in the 14th century with the arrival of Mahmood Ghaznavi (Matthews, Shackle & Husain, 1985). Urdu started to flourish in its true sense during the Mughal period in Delhi and Agra durbars by the Indian scholars using Persian and Persian scholars using Hindi in their communication and literary expressions. Eventually, it became the intellectual identity, medium of education, literary, and political expression of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Urdu marks an abundance of literature and expression produced as original, translated and adaptations in many dailies, magazines, and publications in the 19th and 20th century. Later, the language also become one of the founding reasons for the ‘two nation theory’ causing the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016; Rahman, 2002), and Pakistani leaders emphasized Urdu’s centrality to the nation and in 1948 it was declared as the official language of Pakistan parallel with English to index Muslim identity (Ayres, 2009; Kachru, 2008). Rahman (2002) states that although Urdu is Pakistan’s ‘official’ language, it has also been perceived as an imported language that is or was native to only a few people in the region before independence from Britain in 1947, and, in fact, most people claim Urdu as a native language in India ‘where its developing roots lie’. Urdu is one of the official languages of the six states of Northern India and is well spoken and understood in other countries i.e. Nepal, Bangladesh, and the Middle East (Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 2017; Fatihi, 2003; Matthews, Shackle & Husain, 1985). It’s prominence as a language of administration, judiciary, business, formal literacy, media communication, religious sermons and more particularly as a language of intellectual activity, establishes it as a representative of religious, cultural and social heritage of the country (Ayres, 2009; Zia, 1999).



Urdu is spoken by nearly hundred million people around the world (BBC, 2007; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2009, 2016) and is written from right-to-left in Nasta'liq script, derived from the Persian Arabic script (Kachru, 2008).

Review of literature

Urdu Novels and the Partition of Bengal: The partition of Bengal in 1905 had a significant impact on Urdu literature and the emergence of Bengali Urdu novels. Writers such as Syed Mujtaba Ali and Rashid Jahan explored the themes of cultural identity, communal tensions, and the effects of partition through their works. Ali's *Deshe Bideshe* (1948) and Jahan's *Parda* (1942) shed light on the experiences of those affected by the partition of Bengal.

Urdu Novels and Mythology: Urdu novels have drawn inspiration from mythology, folklore, and ancient legends. Writers like Intizar Husain and Fahmida Riaz have reimagined mythical tales and woven them into contemporary narratives. Husain's *Naya Ghar* (1962) and Riaz's *Sarai* (2006) incorporate elements of mythology to explore existential and philosophical themes.

Urdu Novels and LGBTQ+ Narratives: In recent years, Urdu literature has begun to explore LGBTQ+ narratives, reflecting the evolving social discourse on gender and sexuality. Authors such as Nadeem Raj and Maheen Usmani have delved into LGBTQ+ themes, portraying the struggles, identities, and love stories of queer individuals. Raj's *Khuda Ki Basti* (2016) and Usmani's *Jab Sey Jaagna Hai* (2018) provide sensitive portrayals of LGBTQ+ experiences.

Urdu Novels and War Literature: War and conflict have been recurring themes in Urdu novels, reflecting the turbulent history of the Indian subcontinent. Writers like Abdullah Hussein and Asghar Nadeem Syed have depicted the harsh realities of war, exploring its psychological and societal impacts. Hussein's *Nuskha Haye Wafa* (1991) and Syed's *Draupadi* (1997) offer powerful narratives set against the backdrop of war.

Urdu Novels and Magical Realism: Urdu literature has embraced the genre of magical realism, blending the ordinary with the extraordinary, and blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy. Writers such as Khalida Hussain and Fahmida Riaz have experimented with magical realism in their novels. Hussain's *Jheel Jalti Hai* (1997) and Riaz's *Godavari* (1998) transport readers into enchanting worlds infused with magical elements.

Urdu Novels and Postcolonial Literature: Urdu novels have contributed to the postcolonial literary discourse, examining the legacy of colonialism and its impact on society. Writers such as Abdullah Hussein and Bapsi Sidhwa have engaged with postcolonial themes, addressing issues of cultural identity, power dynamics, and the complexities of decolonization. Hussein's *Udas Naslain* (1963) and Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (1988) provide insightful perspectives on the postcolonial experience.

Urdu Novels and Existentialism: Existentialist themes have found their way into Urdu novels, exploring the fundamental questions of human existence, freedom, and individuality. Writers like Ghulam Abbas and Saadat Hasan Manto have depicted existentialist concerns in their works, delving into the depths of human consciousness. Abbas's *Anandi* (1958) and Manto's *Toba Tek Singh* (1955) offer thought-provoking narratives that delve into existential dilemmas.

Urdu Novels and Regional Diversity: Urdu novels reflect the diverse linguistic, cultural, and regional traditions of the Indian subcontinent. Works from different regions such as Lucknow, Delhi, Karachi, and Lahore carry distinct flavors and influences. Writers like Rajinder Singh Bedi, Ghulam Abbas, and Intizar Husain have captured the essence of their respective regions, adding depth and richness to Urdu literature.

Urdu Novels and Historical Women Figures: Urdu novels have explored the lives and stories of historical women figures, shedding light on their contributions, struggles, and achievements. Writers such as Qurratulain Hyder and Razia Butt have brought historical women to the forefront of their narratives. Hyder's *Aag Ka Darya* (1959) presents strong female characters from different historical periods, while Butt's *Bano* (1974) focuses on the life of the legendary female warrior, Razia Sultana.

Urdu Novels and the Rural-Urban Divide: The divide between rural and urban settings has been a recurring theme in Urdu novels, exploring the contrasting lives, values, and aspirations of individuals from different backgrounds. Writers like Ghulam Abbas and Bano Qudsia have portrayed this dichotomy in their works, examining the societal and cultural gaps that exist between rural and urban communities. Abbas's *Dharti Ka Safar* (1963) and Qudsia's *Raja Gidh* (1981) offer insightful reflections on this theme.

Urdu Novels and Postmodernism: Urdu literature has also witnessed the influence of postmodernism, characterized by its skepticism towards grand narratives, experimentation with form, and playfulness with language. Writers like Abdullah Hussein and Shamsur Rahman Faruqi have incorporated postmodern elements in their novels. Hussein's *Baagh* (1998) and Faruqi's *Kai Chand Thay Sar-e-Aasman* (2013) exemplify the fusion of traditional storytelling with postmodern techniques. Jaayeyn (2011) and Zainab's *Taraqqi Pasand* (2019) shed light on the urgent need for environmental awareness and conservation.

Urdu Novels and Social Media Influence: The advent of social media has impacted Urdu literature, including the novel. Writers have reflected on the influence of digital communication, social media platforms, and virtual interactions in their works. Novels such as Aliya Bukhari's *Parveen Shakir Ki Shakhshiyat* (2018) and Mirza



Athar Baig's Hameshan (2015) explore the changing dynamics of human relationships in the digital age. Urdu Novels and Psychological Exploration: Urdu novels have delved into the depths of the human psyche, portraying complex characters and exploring themes of psychology and mental health. Writers like Umera Ahmed and Aasia Mirza have touched upon psychological aspects in their works. Ahmed's Peer-e-Kamil (2004) and Mirza's Doraha (1994) delve into the intricacies of human emotions, personal growth, and introspection. Urdu Novels and Satire: Satire has been a powerful tool in Urdu literature to critique societal norms, political systems, and cultural practices. Writers like Shaukat Thanvi and Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi have employed satire in their novels to expose hypocrisy, corruption, and the ironies of society. Thanvi's Aangan Tehra (1983) and Yousufi's Aab-e-Gum (1957) provide satirical commentaries on various aspects of life. Urdu Novels and Regional Identities: Urdu literature has celebrated the diverse regional identities and cultural heritage of different regions in the Indian subcontinent. Writers such as Balraj Manra and Qazi Abdul Ghaffar have highlighted the distinct flavors of Punjab and Sindh, respectively, in their novels. Manra's Lahoo Rang Ne Aasman (1994) and Ghaffar's Shaheed-e-Mohabbat (1998) capture the essence of regional identities and folklore.

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