

# Pakistani Literature and Globalization

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## ABSTRACT:

It is a fact not deniable that evolution is an ongoing process. It triggers the quest of innovative paradigms for the promotion of fine arts and literature. The use of internet has compressed the wide distances of the universe. The use of Internet is increasing day by day in Pakistan. Such digital progress in digital world has deep effects on social, economic, literary and political life. Interdisciplinary research has not only bestowed new dimensions upon the minds but also has led to the ways of integrity in different spheres of fine arts. In my research paper, I shall focus on the point that the Internet has proved itself an important source regarding promotion of art, culture and literature in Pakistan. The Internet reader shall find this research paper a basic document for understanding the trends of arts and variation of cultures in Pakistan. The article while discussing the role of Internet in the promotion of Pakistani art and literature also touches upon the contemporary literary, social and political milieu of the Pakistani society in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The promotion of Internet has widened the horizons of the field of literature and language. Variant types of websites are being constructed with regard to Urdu language and literature. National and international Universities are playing a significant role in this sense. As Internet has served a central role in converting the world into a global village, the journey of success accompanying computer has become essential in the present age. Internet has brought multidimensional changes in social sphere of life. Specifically new generation has opened its eyes in the age of technological advancement. Within the previous two or three decades the rate of computer literacy has increased particularly in Pakistan. In Pakistani Universities, teaching of language and literary studies is usually considered an activity not very profitable and the major

part of the sources is specified for the field of science and technology. That's the reason the domain affiliated with the teaching of language has barely survived till now.

In the developed countries the uncommon significance is being given to the fields pertaining to the teaching of language and literature and the cultural studies. Consequently these fields are efficiently maintaining themselves in accordance with the cotemporary needs and requirements due to the availability of the latest auditory and visual devices. As the significance of the use of computer is universally acknowledged in the contemporary world, in Pakistan, specific steps are being taken in making the computer literacy and its application approachable to a common man in an easy and useful manner. Most of the books and journals published across the world are presented for online reading. Even in Pakistan within the previous twenty or thirty years, significant increase in computer literacy has emerged. A major chunk of researchers and critics is availing of the material available online. The major cue of inclination on the part of new generation towards Urdu poetry is the availability of Urdu poems that are canvassed on Internet pages with different generic modes.

Ghazal is the most significant genre of Urdu poetry, in whose veins are flowing the glow of Hindu Muslim civilization as well as the evolutionary process of Urdu. Ghazal is called the most illuminating symbol of the cultural life of the subcontinent. Ghazal is the most popular and the most renowned genre of Urdu poetry that has educated many a generation providing literary aesthetics. In view of flourishing popularity of Urdu Ghazal the number of web pages has incredibly increased.

Throwing light on the mode of Urdu poem (Nazm), taken as a genre, Dr Khwaja Muhammad Zakariya writes;

"The word of 'Poem' is used for different meanings. When we use the syntax of a poem or prose, poem means the entire poetic genres including Ghazal. Whereas we use Ghazal and poem, meaning thereby the poem in whose verses a semantic relation is construed. While, Ghazal means a genre whose very verse stands out on its own as a unitary piece. There is no need of semantic relation of one verse with another. In this sense all non Ghazal genres have been considered a poem. But now for the last few years, this term denotes the poetry in which found a thematic concern within itself. "(1))

Passing through the streams of art, style, narrative and also through social consciousness, latest Urdu Nazm (Poem) has become a popular genre. After Ghazal, the free verse stands very popular in Urdu poetics. Reviving the tradition of Modern Urdu poems, it will be found that this genre has covered the stages of evolution in the middle of twentieth century because free verse can be compared with any poem published on international level.

Tassuaq Hussain Khalid, N M Rashid, Meera Jee, Mukhtaar Siddiqui, Majeed Amjad, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Wazeer Agha, Akhter -ul-Emaan, Zia Jalandhari, Ahmad Faraz, Amjad Islam Amjad and many other writers have contributed to the opening of multidimensional horizons of art and the reflection about free verse. Within the last three or four decades, where new trends have taken place in free verse, the need of internet has significantly increased in the world rapidly changing into a global village. In promoting the popularity of Urdu poetry, *Rekhta* is a website worth mentioning. On this site a particular portion has been specified for poem. More or less the poems of all the eminent writers are arranged alphabetically and available for online reading. Establishing poem as a genre of Urdu poetry it proposes:

“Nazm is the generic term for the non-Ghazal poetry that came to Urdu under the influence of the English poetry during the second half of the 20th century, and soon established its independent presence. Nazms are written both in rhymed verse following a rhyming scheme as well as in the free-verse form. Now prose poetry has also got established in Urdu.”(2)

The above mentioned characteristic of this site is that the data available on it can be read in Urdu as well as in Roman script. Besides, clicking the difficult words included in the text will provide you their meanings. Audio visual formats in which selected poems have been presented have given a wonderful touch to their presentation. The portion available on *Rekhta* and “Nazm” is introduced in such way

“The genre of poem in Urdu emerged during the last decades of nineteenth century under the influence of English. Later on it gradually established itself on strong grounds. Nazm has been composed both in confinements of metre and rhyme as well as without any such kind of restrictions. Now a prose poem has also stabilized itself in Urdu”.(3)

A long list of the poets that includes the selected poems of the poets not just from Pakistan or India but also from the ones living across the globe is arranged in Urdu alphabetic order. In term of collection a bulk of material is available on Nazm but it holds many typos. Even while reading the selections of Nazms, the feel of an obvious lack of metrical balance emerges. A fine selection that ranges from traditional Nazm to the latest Urdu Nazm (poem) can equip the readers with an effective study of genesis and evolution of Nazm. This site includes the poems of some emerging writers whose work at initial stages illustrates the lack of their literary sensibility. Whereas it has pushed some giants of Urdu poetry to the periphery of cyber space either by totally neglecting their names or by presenting a grain of their works. For instance this site includes just one or two poems of the eminent poets namely; Mukhtar Siddiqui, Wazeer Agha, Yousuf Zafar, Sarmad Sehbaai and Qaayum Nazar.

With an emphasis on Urdu poetry, [www.urdupoint.com](http://www.urdupoint.com) is a site that contains the selected works of ancient as well as modern poets. This site doesn't categorize Ghazal and Nazm (Poems) separately. However, it features a refined selection of Nazms and Ghazals that is extracted from the anthologies of poetry. It's useful addition is its references of the anthologies from which it borrows poems. On this site, the selection of Ghazals and Urdu Nazms arranged alphabetically is presented in Roman script. Basically this site is developed for the people who live abroad and have no basic awareness of reading Urdu script. On some other sites, Urdu poems have been presented in roman script. The complexities of Roman script and the predicaments of its standard has roughened the process of conveying the artistic beauty and subtleties to the readers. So it's the need of the hour that we should avail of digital technology for promoting Urdu poetics. Hence the material devoid of any typos and errors needs to be presented. Although it is arguably correct to say that Nazm could not invite more popularity than Ghazal earned, yet one can't deny the significance of Nazm that has grown into a well grounded tree whose roots has pinioned its marks on our cultural life and whose branches have spread themselves across the world through digital space.

Wikipedia is a source of basic information for the Internet users. Wikipedia is the latest form of encyclopedia. Initially it used to have data regarding Urdu language in English. But now, the development of Urdu Wikipedia has emerged as a treasure of information for the community speaking Urdu in particular and for other people in general. Significant characteristic of this site allows the readers to upload the scripts of their own choice with different topics. Moreover, they are authorized to the rectification and review of the available material if necessary.

Wikipedia includes a bulk of material on fiction in the languages both English and Urdu. Urdu Wikipedia is named as 'آزاد بین اللسانی دائرۃ المعارف' that serves a significant role in promoting linguistic and literary works of Urdu.

By typing the topic of the required text in search option, a number of pages available on this site can be read. If necessary, images or copy of these pages can easily be obtained. For instance if word 'fiction' is typed in search option, an introductory page will emerge. It begins as;

"Fiction is a genre of prose in Urdu literature.

Etymologically, it is the short story. But in literary terminology it is the artistic and moralizing presentation of an aspect of life that is depicted in a form of story. Such a piece of writing holds precision and brevity as its central feature. Organic unity is its most significant characteristic. Even novel and fiction has a distinction in term of their length, a novel presents life in totality while fiction presents just one of its part".(4)

Wikipedia (Urdu) contains a detailed introduction of Pakistani fiction. In the beginning it introduces the general conceptions and then the realism technique employed by Romantic fiction writers and Prem Chand. Throwing light on the tradition and influences of the Progressive Writers' Movement on Fiction, the site mentions the "Angaary group". Here it reveals an unacceptable error. In citing the writers of the collection of fiction entitled and published as "Angaary", this site presents the names "Rasheed Jahan, Ahmad Ali, Mehmood uz-Zafar. Whereas it puts the name; Sajjad Zaheer into the well of oblivion; one of the most important writer of the collection 'Angaary'. He is the writer who, by writing 5 fictional stories/accounts, contributed to this collection that includes 19 fictional stories and 1 drama. Afterwards bringing into light the names of Krishan Chandar, Rajandar Singh Bedi, Saadat Hasan Manto an Ismat Chughtaai, the site elaborates their literary consciousness very briefly.

Wikipedia captures a comprehensive view of post-partition fiction writers. Mentioning the fiction written after 1947 under the heading 'the trend of violence', the site gives references of the most important Urdu fiction written on the topics of migration and violence".

After the establishment of Pakistan, many fiction writers who emerged on the screen of Urdu literature, had already started their journey of creativity far before the determining of geographical boundaries. However, they got recognitions as writers when Pakistan stood on its own. Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi and Ghulam Abbas belong to such group of writers. In the evolution of Pakistani fiction, a significant

stage is “the trend of symbolism and abstractionism”. According to Wikipedia, this trend gave birth to a new fiction

“In which new styles and topics were presented. In the terrain of style, symbolism replaced narrative technique and breaking of logical/linear continuity of plot gave space for the use of the stream of consciousness as a technique. Whereas the characters were no more stable as they were in traditional fiction. Pertaining to consciousness and topics, instead of realist representation, a world of shadows and silhouettes that is extremely obscure and foggy was formulated. Some subjective reflections; predicaments focused in this trend, have been concertized in the form of fear, isolation, disintegration and especially identity crisis. The most explicit reason for the use of symbolism as a technique is the loneliness, disintegration and fear that result in moral and cultural decline channelized by industrial life of human beings”. (5)

In introducing symbolism in fiction, the most prominent name in Urdu literature is Intizar Hussain. He employed symbolism as a technique for mirroring moral decline, changes emerging in society and the depiction of crisis. To illustrate such reflection, “The Last Man” has been presented on Wikipedia as an example of fiction; representative of Intizar Hussain’s literary identity because it serves as a symbol of decline of moral, civilizational and religious values. In this way, Wikipedia has paid a peculiar significance to sexual and psychological aspect depicted in Urdu fiction because under the very influence of such trend, various great works of fiction were produced. Saadat Hasan Manto is one of the prominent fiction writers who represents the influences of such trend. While analyzing sexual and psychological aspects found in Manto’s works, this site informs

“Sadat Hasan Manto didn’t fell a prey to sensuality and hedonism while analyzing sexual and psychological aspects. For him, these sexual and psychological dimensions are the strands of reality that need to be narrativized and approached. Manto narrated what he saw and observed. He loathed hypocrisy. Manto argued that if his fiction/fictional stories were unbearable, it meant that the society was unbearable too”.(6)

According to Wikipedia a major chunk of Pakistani fiction is history. In this sense, a historical consciousness is found in the works of Intizaar Hussain and Hamid Baig. Whereas in narrative fiction, Zahida Hina's artistic features have been demonstrated. The last trend of evolutionary process of Pakistan Fiction is available on the electronic pages of Wikipedia under the heading "the latest trend of multicultural/ harmonic creativity from the rapidly changing world". The site reads;

"Till 1980's, Urdu fiction has absorbed in it a diverse range of topics and stylistic features, experimentation of language and narration along with critical thoughts. New generation of the artists succeeded in introducing the style of multicultural/harmonic creativity derived from the changing trends of the world. The fiction writers of this generation earned the privilege in connecting the readers, diverted form Urdu fiction due to its extravagant use of symbols and abstract formulations to their own creative experiences." (7)

In term of collection, Wikipedia has provided considerable amount of data with regard to the evolution of Urdu fiction and also to the trends of Pakistani fiction. Not just the researchers, critics or students but also a wide range of readers across the globe can avail of the information provided on it even when this site is in its preliminary stages. Variant errors of spellings and typos found in the material presented on this site create difficulty for the readers. In mentioning the names of the writers in Urdu tradition, this site overlooks many significant Pakistani fiction writers as well as remains unable to throw light on the aspects of their critical thinking. Likewise many female fiction writers have not been considered as contributors in the progression of Urdu Fiction. Despite these facts, significant role of this site in promoting awareness about Urdu fiction needs acknowledgement.

In the present era, the prestige of Urdu language and its progression lies in its synchronicity with digital technologies. This is the fact far away from doubt that in twenty first century, only the language that will be maintained with contemporary requirements of the age will remain aligned with the roads to success. In this sense, the doors of success and prosperity will be opened for the languages that will be compatible with the digital advancement. Following the very dimension, Urdu language and literature has started exploring the possibilities in the world of digital technology.

Focusing Asian digital archives Roopika Risam in "South Asian Digital Humanities" observes the digital forums crystallizing their

features. Alongwith the sites related to diasporic histories and social, political and cultural aspects of south Asia, she mentions the sites, for instance *Umang*, *Allam Iqbal Urdu Cyber Library* and *Rekhta* that digitally or globally represent Urdu language and literature. She observes;

“Seeking to transcend linguistic boundaries in the production of digital literary archives, *Umang*, a project based in Karachi, provides a forum for discussing, exploring and sharing poetics across the world. The site includes videos and documentaries that feature contemporary poets from Pakistan writing in Urdu, Sindhi and Wakhi. This project also demonstrates the importance of translation, offering full text and translations in Urdu and English, alongwith subtitles for videos in English, Urdu and transliterated Urdu. As it focus on translation, the project is interested in fostering transregional and transnational connections” (8).

Urdu language and literary scholars have made significant contributions to digital humanities as well, viewing the digital medium as a place to preserve and disseminate the Urdu language. Allama Iqbal Collection of Urdu literature, grounded in the belief that the survival of Urdu literature relies on a robust web presence. Designed by Iqbal Academy Pakistan, the site is inspired by *Project Gutenberg's* goal of creating a digital library of free books. Although Urdu is a prominent literary and spoken language on the subcontinent, few Urdu texts have been available online. The project publishes Urdu books in multiple formats. Texts in the collection include Urdu classics, poetry, and the work of eminent poet Muhammad Iqbal. Currently, the project contains nearly 800 digital books (9).

In this era of globalization where the world has turned into a village; the borders are getting contracted, the distances are being indistinct - Internet has attained a pivotal position in the new global village. Internet is both constructive and subversive: whereas capitalistic authorities use internet for the expansion of riches, the lovers of knowledge, awareness and fine arts endeavor to sustain the creative process and fine arts through the power of Internet. In the past the great works of art were inaccessible to the layman, but now a single click on the computer can unlock infinite charismatic doors of the world of wonders.

Interdisciplinary research has not only bestowed new dimensions to the minds but also it has led to the ways of integrity in different spheres of literature. The amalgamation of literature and art has endowed new meanings to our global village.



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