

## **Modernist Trends and varied responses: Reflections on Muslim Women in Urdu Prose by Male authors of South Asia (1900-1936).**

**Gull-i-Hina**

*GC, University*

### **ABSTRACT**

Many Indian writers and activists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century South Asia made the subject of women as central topic as their agenda of cultural reform, expressing the same concern, above all, through the newly available medium of print. The main objectives of these writings were to check the decadence and resuscitate the values which had gone dormant. In order to do that, a few authors supported the British and others criticized it and tried to find out the solution in the religious or traditional education. Whether Hindus or Muslims, they were now seen at least in part as colonial collaborators. These are, above all, people who internalized the Orientalist argument that Indian traditions had fallen into decay and stagnation, and prescribed the western education necessary for their revitalization. Education for women, in particular, was not catered for. This paper argues that Urdu journalism was the dynamic tool for persuading the common people to educate their female folk to enable them to face the changed socio-political circumstance, which had impinged upon the traditional family structure. The development of that new literature focusing on Muslim women pointed to the emergence of Urdu as the common language. It also became the medium of instruction for women. By publishing of various books and journals led to the establishment of the educational institutions and societies. That's why the Urdu literature with theme centering on women in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also helps us to visualize various aspects of different local cultures, customs, the regional idioms, proverbs and parables that formed the essence of the local language used only by the women. These writings also underscore the emergence of Muslim women from middle echelons as professional ladies.

**KEY WORDS:** Urdu prose, Muslim women, Educational Reforms, Enlightened society

### **Setting the Context**

The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed far-reaching changes that the people of sub continent underwent. It was the time when European nations already operating in India for trade purposes, got engaged in power wrangling thereby bringing about

tectonic changes in the political scenario of the subcontinent. Among these western nations, competing for supremacy, British eventually had a last laugh and seized power first in the Bengal and then in the rest of India. With the inception of the British rule, India got connected with the metropolitan world and therefore it was placed in the subservient position to the West, since East India Company, the masters of India was being monitored and controlled from London. That's how then Colonial dispensation got underway, bringing about political, economic and most importantly the social changes in its wake. Those were the days when Industrial Revolution had manifested in Europe and the era of modernity had found firm grounds to flourish. Hence the modern ideas, embedded in Western Rationality firstly developed in Europe, subsequently made their way into India through the agency of colonialism. The new (modernist) thinking emanating from the changed circumstance had some of its resonance in India even in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But that process got exhilarated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ushering in an era that was qualitatively different from the yore. Women status and role had also become the burning issue in colonial India, by the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The development of reformist literature and social activities gradually offered a public space to women. Indeed, this social discourse became a widening channel for the 'expression of their cultural experiences and feminist behaviors.' Feminism led them to accomplish their desires and helped them to realize that with the education, women can face all sorts of challenges and thus can enhance the prestige of the families.

Most striking was the realization of the vast difference in respective customs of Europe and India. Some of these became the subject of British disdain were infanticide, polygamy, polyandry, sahamaran, devdasi service, infant marriage, purdah, the joint family system and caste system. Western educated Indians imbibed the influence of European liberalism and started reflecting quite critically on their own value system. Now they could detect the inequalities, injustices and oppression latent in their own culture. This introspection gave rise to a strong movement for social reform aiming at the eradication of practices and customs that led to the suffering of women. (Ali, 2000;25)

British from the last quarter of the 19th century adopted in the words of Rudyard Kipling 'the white man's burden' and initiated the civilizing mission for the Indians. Same feelings also expressed by the Karl Marx that they (Indians) can't represent themselves, they were being represented. (Marx, 1969; 43) Lord Mayo, the viceroy of India, wrote to the lieutenant- governor of Punjab in 1871 'teach your subordinates that we are all British gentle men engaged in the magnificent work of governing an inferior race.' As Thomas R. Metcalf wrote in Ideology of the Raj that the main cause to introduce the modern reforms and educational system was that they had the desire to reshape India and this was because English-based education served to intermingle the code of power and the local culture, the impact of modernity, according to Metcalf was to create that class "Indian in blood and colors, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and

intellect. (D.Metcalf, 1982; 35) About the British reforms Bipen Chandra maintained, to create loyal subjects of the Raj, the British made every effort to impose on India, the culture of Britain. British writers and statesmen also criticized Indian culture and society to vindicate British political and economic domination over India. (Chandra, 1989; 28)

### **Said s discourse of Orientalism and British India**

Edward Said writes about the western policies that Occidentals have their own paradigms of research. The press and media coverage of the Oriental world, It is not a question whether west support or not. The question is that how the west gets the information. He defines the orientalism in these words that as a western style for dominating re strutting and having authority over the orient. He further articulated that as body of knowledge produced by text and institutional practices of the west. Edward Said affirm 'because of orientalism the orient was not a free subject of thought or action. He claims that all scholarship was based by imperialism and for the sake of west. (Said, 1994; V) As a consequence it brought prestige and status to those having even a slight command of the language. In addition the imposition of the culture of the colonizer over the colonized was set another fall out of that 'mix' of culture and power. The thinking of Edward Said strengthens with the notion of Gramsci's cultural context contends culture plays important role forming the civil society ...when hegemony of culture establish, it strengthen the Orientalism. (Gramsci, 1995; 34) Benedict Anderson's idea of imagined communities has acquired wide currency in studies on the making of the political imagination. Anderson's use of the term was specific to the modern context of the nationalism and national communities (Naregal, 2001; 150).

When British introduced the policy to modernize India, they tried to change the old and conservative thinking with the ideas enunciating them as superior as compared to their Indian subjects. Their reforms were the practical demonstration of the Deny Hey's idea 'Us' and 'Other', the idea of Europe as a collective notion identifying Us European's as against all those Non European, designated as the 'Other'. Therefore, in the early 19th century, the orthodox and reactionary sections of the Indian society opposed the introduction of modernization process which they deemed, was posing a threat to their social and cultural norms. However, certain sections of the middle and upper-middle class opted to tread entirely the opposite path. They preferred to adopt the western life and culture, instead of carefully assimilating their positive, humanist, and scientific features. They aped European manners and customs not realizing that modernity was more a question of peculiar mode of thinking, of values and not of manners of speech, or eating habits.

The intellectual life of the people of subcontinent began to undergo a radical change because of such ideas like democracy and the rights of the people, rationalism, and humanism etc. These ideas helped Indians not only to take a

critical look at their own society, economy and government, but also to understand the true nature of British Imperialism in India. (Chandra, 1987; 25) Therefore, during the last quarter of the 19th century the Indian outlook regarding the British began to change. Among various other things, the family structure in India was also affected by the advent of modernity. In Indian family every member had a particular role to play, the life experience and gender were the key determinants of its role. It, off course, was patriarchal society but in the joint family, the mother or in her absence the wife of the oldest male member held the position of honor. Situation of newly married woman was described by S. Das in these words that “A woman used to start her married life in abject submission, however with passage of time she gained her pre eminence and started asserting authority, even grown-up sons rarely could go against her will, she had the one final granite strong hold of orthodoxy and preserver of outworn customs, and for a little daughter in law to defy her is almost unthinkable (Das, 1938;111). Many Indian writers and activists in the 19th century British India made the subject of women as central topic in their agenda of cultural reform, expressing the same concern, above all, through the newly available medium of print. (D.Metcalf, 1982; 99) A number of writers started new journals, wrote novels and fiction related to the status of women in the society. They also paved the way for the successful permeation of the British reforms and people, too began to take positive interest in these reforms. The status of women was one of the major themes which drew the interest of the colonial masters. The overall policies devised and executed by the British impacted profoundly the traditional family structure with particular reference to the status of the women in India.

Many western authors like Barbara Metcalf tried to depict Muslims as conservative people with inflexible norms and traditions particularly with respect to the status of women in Subcontinent. She maintains “Public symbols of Muslim identity, the mosque, and the khanqah, have been preeminently associated with men. Men learned Arabic and conventionally carried distinctive Islamic names women knew the regional languages and their names often evoked only beautiful qualities of flowers. (D.Metcalf, 1982; 99) Even the Classical and subsequently the Hindu literature gave further proof of such attitude, it was replete with insulting references to the character of woman, like “one may trust deadly poison, a hurricane, the beautiful large and fierce elephant, the tiger roaming for prey, the angel of death, a thief, a savage a murderer, but if a man trust a woman, he will surely be reduced to wander through the street in desolation. (Das, 1938; 93) The past letters and books suggested women as a lowly creature and men were exhorted not to trust a woman, as the Barbra Metcalf wrote that “the advice books for aristocratic men, that represent women as fitna (Kruk, 2001;99-130), as a source of potential disorder and essentially, as adherence to a pagan past. Many books like Aabus Nama ,Akhlaqi Nasiri, tufah yi nisa’ih, which were the part of Persian literature and course did not encouraged women education. These books also gave advices to men for the selection of bride, for example, she must be lower

than the husband in years, height, rank, and wealth. Then there is also a prescribed code of conduct for a woman who is supposed to speak softly, not complain, not to go without permission, and not eat before her husband (Metcalf, 1982; 99)

All these writings and the attitude of the conservative people provided pretext to British authors to highlight the 'much-needed' reform of the British Government and they underscored that "The British came; they recognized the depravity of purdah, widow burning, child marriage, and female infanticide; sensible Indians immediately recognized a superior culture when they saw one, thanks to British auspices; they began the renaissance in their society badly needed (Metcalf, 1982, 99). The same thinking seems latent in the writings of Flavia Agnes who says, " The status of women modified and improved with the arrival of British. The rights and duties of the family members had new direction with the imposing of new reforms of British in India. The British introduced new marriage acts. Therefore, demands of women also increased. India, the rights of women that flow from a marriage contracts are defined within laws formulated within the framework of feudal society of agrarian landholding (Agens, 2005;16).

Objectively speaking the Muslim women was not as socially relegated as the western authors thought them to be, however the situation of women was quite precarious in the 18th century. But before dilating on the changes wrought by the colonial regime in India, it would be appropriate to cast a cursory look at the status of women in the medieval period focusing narrowly at the Muslim Woman.

## **Women in the Medieval Period**

A number of women in Muslim era made noteworthy contributions in various fields and they also had the strong impact on the ruling authority. During the Mughal rule, Tughluq Nigar Khanum, Maham Begum, Hameeda Banu Begum, and Akbar's foster mother Maham Anga, are the chief examples. Similarly Jodha Bai or Maryam Zamani wielded tremendous influence on Akbar. Same is true about Nur Jehan and Mumtaz Mehal the daughter of Asaf Khan (Wasti, 1987; )

Many among them were well versed in literature and other matters pertaining to theology. Banu Begum, Gulbadan Begum was the daughter of Eemperor Babur. She was an extremely talented lady and wrote a treatise: Humayun Namah. It is an authentic contemporary account of the times of emperor Humayun (1530-1556) and incidentally throws some light also on the economic plight of the contemporary India. Jahan Ara Begum, was the daughter of Emperor Shah Jehan, was a cultured and spirited lady. She was a poetess and herself composed the Persian couplet that is inscribed on her tomb.

Noor Jahan was undoubtedly the most important, hence deserves mention here. Her real name was Mihr-un-Nisa. Jahangir was attracted by her beauty and married her in 1611. She possessed in addition to her uncommon beauty, a fine intellect, a versatile temper, sound common sense and a love for literature and arts. All these qualities soon enabled her to have an unlimited influence over her

husband who practically left the administration to her particularly in the last few years of his reign. Her name was minted on coins and she gave audiences in her palace. Her niece, Mumtaz Mehal too was equally influential. She married to Prince Khurram(Shah Jehan). Her artistic taste is illustrated by the exquisitely beautiful tomb that she built at Agra over the remains of her father Itmad ud duala, which, it has been said, stands in a class by itself on account of the delicacy of treatment and the chaste quality of its decorations (Findley, 2001;65). Zaib-un-Nisa(1639-1709) the daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb was well read in Persian and Arabic, an expert calligrapher who maintained a fine library of her own. She was also an accomplished poetess and also wrote a commentary on the Holy Quran (Findley, 2001;511).

These exceptionally talented ladies used to offer advice on the important matters of the state. They were the most revered figures in the palace. In the Harem the mother was the sole in charge of all the matters, all the family members respected her. Paying obeisance to one's mother was a Chingizi Custom, observed Abul Fazl. Mughal histories are full of stories, respectfully told by its chronicles, of the powerful rulers standing before their grandmothers and mothers almost like cowering children (Mukhia, 2004; 88). Harban Mukhia highlights three things which sustained the power of a Mughal emperor: his army, his treasury, and his women (Mukhia, 2004;100). Of these, women of the zanana were constant and closest to him in every walk of life. Not only were they closest to him in proximity and affection, but also they could offer the emperor more personal pleasure, more unchallenged support, and more wise counsel than any other person or group. The zanana women went with the emperor everywhere, and according to the A.S. Beveridge "how fully the fate of the ladies was involved in that of the emperor" (Begum, 1902/1972; 28).

The palaces in which the women lived were self -sufficient cities with a full range of castes, occupations, and administrators, and were as cosmopolitan with a mix of religions, nationalities, and artistic talents as to be found in any metropolis of the time. The laws of seclusion governed the public lives of the women of nobility. The practice of purdah, or the sequestering of women behind a veil or wall, had already been known to ancient and medieval India and had been used through epoch to epoch by the upper classes. By the time of the Mughals, seclusion was an accepted way of life for aristocratic families, and the institution as practiced during the reign Jahangir came to be perceived as a sign by the foreign travelers of a strict adherence to Islam. "Sober and active women" guarded the harem on the inside. Armed with bows and arrows, short daggers, women guards, such as the urdubegis from Kashmir and central Asia, were placed throughout the zanana, the trust worthiest. Over these guards presided chief armed women, in the manner of Bibi Fatima, who held the post during the time of Humayun. However, (Kruk, 2001; 99-130) in the eighteenth century political decay accompanied the lowering of the status of women. By the advent of the

British as a political power in India women was subjected to the incarceration within the four walls of their respective homes.

### **Woman as an Object of Love in Urdu Poetry;**

The conservative families remained aloof from the reforms advocated by many reformists due to the wrong perception of literature produced in 18th century because close association of the court, the courtesans, and Urdu was an established fact. The impact of courtesans on Lucknow's poetry could be judged from the fact that it was under their influence that the poets of Lucknow gave a new direction to the ghazals. They chose a female sweetheart in place of the hitherto universally popular male, or at best without gender, as the object of their love. Their expressions amply prove that their sweet-heart is usually an accomplished courtesan. It was a landmark in Urdu poetry and prose in as much as it imparted genuineness and sincerity to the expression of Urdu poets and authors who, for the first time, presented a clear and distinct concept and picture of 'women', the desired women, in Urdu poetry, novels and fictions which were an accomplished courtesan.

As the courtesan was the center of their thoughts, they freely gave expression to their ideas and feelings about different parts of the body of their sweetheart especially the breasts, belly, waist, thighs and ankles unheard of earlier. It is understandable that most schools completely ignore this poetry in their teaching of Urdu or its history. Unlike a respectable female sweet-heart in whose love the poet had to pine and was prepared to die, the courtesan was easily available. That is why in the Urdu Ghazal and Masnavi, of those days, we come across allusions to sex-act itself. True, some of the verses written in those days can be considered risqué and even vulgar but let us not forget that they represented the general state of morals of the time. In the prose there were a number of authors who wrote about the courtesans, their problems and their culture. Mirza Hadi Ruswa's novel *Amrao Jan Ada* can be put forward as the best example. These women also formed the central theme of a peculiar type of poetry called *Rekhti* in which the male poet used feminine language of courtesans and like to give expressing to their suppressed thoughts.

The relations of British soldiers established with the prostitutes, some got married to them and others kept them as their concubines. Their children when grew up served in the East India Company and then as the government servants. In these circumstances the Ashraf were very cautious about their women and they hated British because it was the matter of dishonor that the individual from a stranger nation established relations with their women. Beside this the poetry, singing and the writings were related to the prostitutes and not considered a elegant hobbies and gentle acts. The behavior towards education and literature for were not demanded important. Similarly in the Muslim families if women wanted

to get education it was generally to be not befitting to the prevailing stand and of moralities. Therefore, girls were kept away from education.

Due to this thinking only a few women got educated among the Ashraf, and a number of educated women belonged to the class of prostitutes. At the same time women from elite Muslim families were getting education and improving their status and position where as Middle and lower class Muslim families showed reluctance (daughters of Bader ud din Tayab Ji ,named Atia Faizy, Zuhra Faizy and Nazily Faizy went abroad for higher studies). With there by the consequence that literature plunged into the decadence. Therefore the women devoid of education failing to keep up with the demands of the changing times, Their husbands too disliked them and their status was reduced quite considered ably because they knew only cooking, dusting and washing clothes but did not have culture and awareness about social mannerism was absolutely missing in them. They were bored from their married life and sought pleasure in the Kothas (homes) of Tawaif (prostitutes) (Ali, 2000;88)

Their hypocrisy for the liking of women became a problem for the women. Those men who liked, respected and impressed by the prostitutes due to their education, their knowledge in literature and other fields, they closed the doors of education for their own women and if any woman interested in education, she fell prey distain and displeasure, she was branded as 'fitna' for society. Those men also lost interest in their families, they deprived of their children and wives from their rights. A number of families were broken up. The rate of divorce also increased quite considerably. The Muslim Ashraf considered that the zanana of the Muslims was the only place where the modernity should not enter; the Muslim culture should be protected. In that mission the traditional Ulemas were activated who churned out literature in which they criticized the modernity and isolated impact particularly education for women. The declined in the literature effected women and it had two fold impacts, one is that the women of elite and middle class were shut in at their homes or in the zanana, they were separated from the outer world. The family concern about them as confined as the authors and reformers emphasized to make women into excellent wives and mothers. The second impact was that women were considered as the tools of immorality and lavish. (Das, 1938; 123) No doubt the subject Muslim women were central to the Ashraf culture as it was generally assumed that the position of women provided an excellent indicator of the health and progress of Muslim society in India under the changing circumstances. Defenders of the community's interest, however, approached the question of reforming Indian Muslim womanhood in a variety of ways reformist and modernist approaches being more important. The reformist approach was epitomized by Ashraf Ali Thanavi,s book of advice for women, his Behishti Zewar which outlined the importance of adab (manners) as prescribes the religion (Thanavi, 1950). The first of the modernist approach was represented by Nazir Ahmed (1836-1912) and Altaf Hali's (1837-1914) didactic works (Mirat al Arus and Majalis un Nisa), which emphasized the importance of modern education

for women similar to the one received by any well to-do men. Second stage of the modernist approach was reflected in the curriculum advocated by Shaikh Abdullah who established Aligarh Zenana Madrasa and was the founder of journal *Khatun* (Fazal, 1991; 111).

The growth of press from the early 19th century made possible to publish various kinds of literature which became the source for various authors to explore the social evils and highlight the issues related to family structure. Besides many topics from the family structure, the issue of women also found space in literature, which expressed status of women and we can also visualize various aspects of women's lives, for instance, the distinct closeness of women to different local cultures, the local superstitions and customs they followed, the regional idioms, proverbs and parables that went to make the local language used by women of that time (Ali, 2000;7).

The 19th and 20th century literature had following broad features:-

1. The works published under the patronage of the government for studying of the situation of the Indians
2. Modernist elite wanted to transport changes in India on the pattern of the west.
3. Religious literature that aimed was to defend the religious identity.
4. Moderate culture that was the mixture of modernist as well as religious reforms.
5. The development of that new literature focusing on Muslim women pointed to the emergence of Urdu as the common language. It also became the medium of instruction for women. By the publishing of various books and journals the acknowledgment of education significance for women develops into as the causes for setting up of the educational institutions and societies. That's why the Urdu literature with theme centering around women in the latter half of the 19th century also helps us to visualize various aspects of different local cultures, the local superstitions and customs they followed, the regional idioms, proverbs and parables that went to make the local language used only by the women. It also depicts the Muslim and Hindu women' contrast with the British women.

The different authors who wrote about the issues related to women are as following: -

1. Education for women
2. Purdah
3. Marriage related issues (unmatched marriage and against the will of girls,)
4. Childhood marriage
5. Re- marriage of widow
6. Combined family system troubles and settlement of newly married women
7. Superstitions among the women
8. Courtesans and their position in society

The emergence of Urdu literature for women created a strong class of writers interested in feminist theme that started new journals as well as institutions for women. A large number of authors' male and female both came into scene, which favored women equality and participation in different fields of life. The writers of reformist literature were further encouraged by favorable attitude of the government. In 1868 the Lieutenant – Governor of North – Western Provinces, William Muir announced the annual award of prizes for literary works, which would deal realistically with social problems especially related with women. In 1869, for instance, Sayyad Munir wrote his *Larkiyun Ki Talim* (the education for girls) which was awarded a prize and which took the form of a series of dialogues between a mother and her daughter. The basic theme was to demonstrate the importance of education for mothers, as they were responsible for the training of their children, in particular the upbringing of girls and their preparation for marriage. (Ali, 2000;14) The second prize winning was Innayat Husain's *Mufid-e-Khalaiq* (of benefits to the people), which was published in the same year and came to be adopted as a textbook in girls' schools in the North – Western Province, Oudh and Rampur states. He criticized illiterate women their attitude etc. He also appreciated the modern medical education for girls but he considered romantic tales like *Qissa-e-Laila Majnun* and *Shireen Farhad* harmful for girls. He also referred to Quranic Passage in which Muslim men and women both are enjoined to seek knowledge. He proceeded to outline the characteristics of famous Muslim women and advised his readers to follow their example. (Ali, 2000;16) It is interesting to note the change of emphasis that occurred when some women of reformist principles, such as Shahjahan Begum, the ruler of Bhopal, came to write her *Tehzil-e-Niswan* (*The Refinement of Women*) in 1889. She did not stress the need for women to become submissive wives, good mothers, running a household or observing hierarchical relationships. Instead, she suggested something else more beneficial for her Muslim sisters and their lives. She surveyed all customary practices of Muslim women in the light of the Quran and hadith, and recommended a kind of 'purified' Islamic behaviour, by providing a general guidance for health conditions, the upbringing of children, and women's rights concerning marriage and divorce. (Ali, 2000; 103)

In these circumstances a number of writers pin pointed the issues related to women and they also smoothen the way for the female education and detached and purified the impression of the literature. Pioneer author was Sayyid Mumtaz Ali (1860 – 1935) who with his wife founded journal for women, took up an agenda largely set by the British: the issue like polygamy, the age of marriage and the rights of girls about marriage, her status as daughter, wife and mother, *purdah* (veil) and need for education. His journal continued for fifty years and sustained itself till 1948. He stressed equality between men and women, insisting that physical strength was a trivial measure of superiority and that in all important aspects, including intelligence, all humans were the same. His views were shared by many of those associated with the westernizing movement at Aligarh.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817 – 1898) in his book *Asbab-e-Baghawete Hind* (1858) mentioned the as one of the core cause of the revolt the interference of the British in the education for the women, he wrote that “There was at the same time a great deal of talk in Hindustan about female education. Men believed it to be the wish of government that girls should attend and be taught at these schools, and leave off the habit of sitting veiled. Anything more obnoxious than this to the feelings of the Hindustanis cannot be conceived. In some districts the practice was actually introduced. The pargunnah visitors and deputy inspectors hoped, by enforcing the attendance of girls, to gain credit with their superior. In every way, therefore, right or wrong, they tried to carry out their object. Here, then, was another cause of discount among the people, through which they became confirmed in error (Dar, 1988; 280). Their aim was to create the good environment and sympathies for the East India Company, but it evoked anger and indignation among the people and had bad opinions about the British.” Further he considered independence of women as guaranteed by the Civil Court. This also violated the religious values as Ordained by the religious text. He expressed his feelings in the article, published in *Madras Times* on 1868; in which he wrote that if the education were popularized among the women in India the family life would fall apart. He expressed the same feelings in the procession held in Lahore in 1889 the modern education system arranged by the government or the Islamic organization I don’t approve of it and he further expressed that the course books which were selected for women, I don’t appreciated it. He was so firm in his believes about the education for women his opinion remained same even after 26 years. He wrote in 1884 ‘I did not wish that you (girls) read the modern literature instead of that books which were read by your grand mothers.’ The men no doubt had needed modern knowledge for jobs but you better don’t pay attention to this. It is possible that women of British would be the Member of Parliament and the employees of the post office but it not possible in your case now and in future.

Next and prominent reformist work was produced by Depty Nazir Ahmed (1836 – 1912), who belonged to Delhi School, of thought and associated Aligarh Movement. His writing has tremendous importance in Urdu literature. He challenged the behavior of uneducated women who followed customary practices and were unfamiliar with Islamic teachings. He emphasized the moral training of women through education. As Muslim curricula offered regrettably little in the way of proper materials for the schooling of children and the training of the young adults, and none whatever for female education, he decided to write these himself. According to him education could be divided into two parts, one was related to worldly matters and for the satisfaction of mind and other related to religion and for the spiritual satisfaction. Therefore, English education, he deemed, was necessary for the progress of the public. For greater effect, he turned to the genre of the novel: a story with a plot-but nonetheless a story to teach, yoked inexorably in the service of morals. He wrote several novels, all sharing his unflinching touch for realism. The idiom is unpretentious, crisp, and close to every-day speech. Often his prose managed to achieve great evocative power. The education and training of the women was the major theme of his novels. Moreover, his writings are the reflections of the society of Dehli. *Mirat-ul-Aroos*, *Binat-ul-Nash*, *Tobat-Un-Nasuh*, *Fasana-e-Mubtala*, *Ibn-ul Waqt*, *Iyama*, *Rivay-e-Sadiqa* are the writings in which he presented the various aspects of women characters, he pinpointed the problems of the women of that time and also gave solution of these problems very wisely. In the novel *Fasana Mubtala* he criticized the system of polygamy and its result that how a man invited a number of problems by the second marriage. He not only destroys his home but also become restless. He also alludes that circumstances in which Islam permitted four marriage were different and such practice cannot be adopted as a hobby, he also explained that with the second marriage not only women suffers but men also undergo immense problems. He ended his novel with the death of the hero because of problems emanating from the second marriage. In novel of *Mirat-ul-Aroos* he presented the , Akbari (elder sister), Asghari (younger sister), Aqil (a wise man) and Kamil (the complete man). The basic theme of the story revolved around the tension between evil (ignorance) and virtue (education) and their impact on the part of women's lives. Nazir Ahmed's other reforming work *Banat-un-Nash* (*The Daughters of the Brier*) which directed attention particularly to women's education, was published in 1873 and was considered to be a sequel to *Mirat-al-Arus* as far as its style, subject matter and educational recommendations were concerned formal education was not sufficient for women In his opinion so he divided his education plan into two parts. *Miratal-Arus* dealt with the first part, consisting of moral education and domestic, affairs, while the second part, *Banat-un-Nash*, discussed the importance of physical education, geography and astronomy. His aim was that women should gradually understand the world at large and reduce the role of superstition in their lives. (Pitchett)

Molana Altaf Hussain (1837-1914) was the great champion and supporter of women rights and education. He highlighted his view in the story *Majlis-un-Nisa* written in 1894 for the women. In the *Majalis* the character of Zubaida Khatun is presented as that of an ideal woman, an educated woman well trained in household management. She (Zubaida) says that by the age of thirteen she had studied the *Gulistan*, *Bostan*, *Akhlaq-e-Muhsini*, *Ayyar Danish*, in Persian, *Kimiya'sadat*, *Kalila-wa-Dimna* in Arabic, and the basic grammar, the common factor and the decimal factors in Arithmetic, Euclid's geometry, Geography and History of India and had practiced both *naskh* and *nastaliq* calligraphy. She also exhibited the paintings made by her and won first prize. Zubaida was thus made to criticize the superstitions, heresies and social evils that were common among Muslim women under the influence of Hindu culture, claiming that it was difficult to remove this influence because people preferred customs to religion. For example, while Muslim widows were permitted to remarry according to the Hadith, Indian Muslims considered this practice immoral. Hali was against the traditions which was against the teaching of Islam and he criticized all these norms through his writing. He was also in favour of modern reforms introduced by the British government which reflected through the character of Zubaida when she pays her gratitude to the British Government for its welfare work in the form of modern inventions, the press, hospitals and educational institutions. By the character of Zubaida Hali presented the ideal woman who can face and understand the changes occurred in the Indian society and through her knowledge she can face the hardships of life.

Molana Rashid ul kheri (1883- 1914) Known as *Musawer e Ghum* (painter of grief) inscribe about the depressed women and pointed out the behavior of family towards girls who considered them as inferior as compare to boys. His short story *Mehroom-e- Warasat* shows the similar behavior in which the father always ignored her daughter named Razia and favored his son Mohsin. Her wife Safia objection her husband's behavior but was helpless, whenever, she complained he said: my son is the owner of my property and she is only the member of another family. Razia never complained, her mother reared her up in very good manners. When her marriage was decided, his father refused to give her dowry and gave everything to the son. Safia objection it but when her husband threatened never to marry her daughter, she had no choice but to agreed. But after the marriage the son misbehaved with parents and refused to spend even a single penny on the treatment of father. During that time of misery his daughter took care of him. This shows the sincere love of a daughter who never expected the reward and money, but always ready to help out her parents in the time of miseries and this was the moral character for those people who were not in favor of female rights.

His writings betrayed a strong influence of Nazir Ahmed. He considered that Islam is a complete code of life; he interpreted the rights of women according to Shariat. He pinpointed the traditional and relative rivalry of women, which became the cause of strained family relations and sowed the seed of misunderstanding among the family members. He advised women to perform their duty as mother, daughter, sister and wife sincerely. In his novel *Noha-e- Zandigi* (grief of life) in which he sketched the character of a Hindustani widow, describing her problems and caused her to committed suicide, according to the author "it is the act of the followers of that religion that had granted more rights to women that than any other religion. If you men have the vision and heart then you can analyze how have the women deprived off all the blessings. He also pointed out the issues related to the marriage of girls; he favored the final decision about the girls' marriage to be taken according to her will as it is the right of women granted them by Islam. He lamented in the novel *Subah Zindigi* (morning of life) how cruel was the act we did not care to ask the will of girls, "how helpless and senseless the girls are". In 1908 journalism for women was ushered in a new era with the publication of Rashid-ul-khairi's *Ismat* (Jameel, 2001; 115-120). The hallmark of the *Ismat* was that most of its contributors were women; it also brought to the field a higher standard of writing and a broader coverage of issues, a variety of subject matter, and above all, its mission to cultivate the taste for reading among women to change their views as an enlightened and perfect woman.

Abdul Halim Sharer (1860-1926) wrote historical novels and presented women as important and active member of the society. He presented women character as warriors who took part in battles very heroically and courageously. Beside this he also wrote the social novels in which he espoused not only the domestic education for women but also modern education and portrayed their characters as extremely progressive. In the novel *Husan Kay Dakoo* (the robbers of beauty), he presented the character of Mah laqa as a up to date lady who also got benefits from the modern educational system, he introduce her in the following manners "when she was released from school education, she handed over to Miss Minton who was very active and intelligent lady. She became so vigilant and speaks English very fluently even not a college going boy can compete with her." According to the opinion of Abdul Halim "English education was necessary for women because they would be able not only face the bitter and hard realities of life but also lead mannered and civilized life. He wanted to remove the prejudice about the English language that was quite entrenched among the Muslim Ashraf. He also tried to undo the suspicious of the Muslim that had led them to believe that English Education would turn them into Christian etc". (Shere, 1953; 56)

He also criticized the traditional Purdah institution, the purdah, he wrote in the preface of the novel *Badar-un-Nisa* that “the women are not commodity that you locked them in the houses as you wrapped your diamond and precious stone in the boxes. The women are more valuable as compared to other precious things. He further writes about the veiled and household ladies in the novel *Meena Bazar* in the following manners “the household women who also remained in purdah (veil) are un aware of the worldly matters and leading life as prisoners, they should go outside so that able to meet with other and gained knowledge about the worldly matters. He was quite conscious about the feminist rights. When he went to England he got tremendously impressed with the women liberty granted in the western society. He was of the opinion that women should play their role in constructing the society and avail of their abilities. He favored the will of girls in her marriage; he was also in favor of the second marriage of widow which was also the religious obligation. He presented the picture of Arabian Women how had they participated in various matters and their life was not limited within their four walls of their houses. By these examples he wanted to high lighted that Islam is not a conservative religion, it granted the women rights and by the examples of Arabian Women he provided the proof because it was their spiritual /religious center. With his novels he wanted to reform the lives of Indian ladies and wanted to see them independent.

Abdul Halim Sharar wrote in unique style, his characters belong to Indian society but background which he presents was Central Asia , the example are such stories like *Malik Verginia*, *Hasan Anjilina* (1889), *Qais o Lubna*(1891), *Ayam e Arab*(1899), *Firdus e bareein* (1900). By these historical Novels he tried to explore the glorious past of the Muslims and he tried to explore the enlightened qualities of Muslim women. His aim was to create the dignity and revive the courage among the Muslim so that they could been able to face the British as a influential nation.

Mirza Muhammad Hadi Ruswa (1885-1931) was well-known by the novel *Umrao Jan Ada* (the name of a fictitious Lucknow courtesan; 1899) he presented the emotions of a middle class family whose daughter was kidnapped and the brought up as a courtesan, when she found up her family then there was the question of acceptance her as a courtesan. The story also reflected the other female characters who were involved in various activities as courtesan and their social status. In the novel *Akhtari Begum*, *Shareef Zada*, he presented the working and independent women who run the affairs of their homes and also face the hardships created by their relatives. He criticized the veil among women and according to him it is the mark to tie up women as prison He wrote in the novel *Aktari Begum* “*Danda Dolly* (veil hand carriage conveyance) only exists in Hindustan and it is unfair that you prison the women in the homes. (Ruswa, *AKhtari Begum*, 1977).

Munshi Prem Chand (1880-1936) He presided over the first conference of progressive movement (taraki pasand Tehrik). In the Europe the Romantic Movement was on its peak and a number of authors were also emerged in India. Sajad Haider Yalderem, Niaz Fatehpuri, Qazi Abdul Gaffar, Sajjad Ansari, and Mehdi Afadi were the prominent in the Urdu male authors, who were initiator of progressive movement in India. Enlightenment, liberty, emotionalism, and equal rights for women were the theme in the writings. Women presented by these authors were not idealist and dreamy instead of it they emphasized on rationality and the social, economic, religion and traditional problems faced by women presented in very clearly. The representation of women by this class was totally different, they demanded women rights, presented women physical beauty but with her emotions. Individuality of women presented, her problems and her psychic presented. A woman presented in the fiction of Krishna Chander is ordinary looking and the daughter of petty clerk. Once a family visited her home for the marriage proposal, but the family rejected her due to her ordinary beauty. But that women spent her whole life for that boy, she was involved that boy and imagined that he is always with her, even when she went in cinema she bought two tickets even she also buy the gifts for herself from that boy. Her illusion made her lonely girl in the society. The progressive class of writes also wrote about the various topics of women their problems and solutions.

He utilized his writings for the betterment and the improvement of the women. The role he ascribed to the women was very sacrificing and sympathies just as

1. He presented the courageous characters of women who scarified everything for the prestige of her family and her own self. The story of Jaloos (procession) based on that type of woman character whose husband sacrificed his life for the sake of country's prestige. In the story Zad-e-Rah (source of livelihood) he presented the character of Soshila who and her daughter commit suicide due to lavish demands of the debtors.
2. He presented the role of women as mother who want to protect his son even don't like her relations and understanding with his wife, considered that her daughter in law would clutch my son and I remained alone, her prejudice behavior was affected the relations between husband and wife.
3. He outlines the role of the women who are content with the family of her husband behavior. Akhri Tuhfa, Doodh ki Kemat, Kafan , Najat project the women who were satisfied by their way of living and faced the inhumane effects.
4. He also favors the traditional way of living for the women. He points out that on the desire of men when women become liberal then there is bound to be problems in the relationships, the same feelings are reflected in his writing Nok Jhonk (criticizing and tussle).
5. He focuses on the attraction of feminist sex and sexual relations of men and women. The character of Banni expresses her same feelings about men that how after the death of Pandat Chobay Nath's wife loves her adopted daughter and married her. There is tussle presented in the relationship of Pandat Chobay Lal as a father and as a beloved with that girl.

6. He has woven the characters of prostitute in masterly manner, their feelings and their status in the society, even if they were married but could not able to get the respectable status in the eyes of husband and his family. The same situation has been presented in the fiction *Kashmakash* (dilemma).
7. He delineated the characters of widow in a very realistic way through his writings as to how they have been treated and faced the problems posed to them by the men and the society. The story of *Majbory* (helplessness) depicts such circumstances. In the stories of *Zad-e-Rah*, *Eid Gah*, *Malkin*, and *Budnaseeb Maan* similar themes, have been broached by the Prem Chand.

Overall the writings of Munshi Prem Chand presented the role of the feeble, dependent and powerless women who faced the innumerable problems in the society but he also tried to give expression to the oppressed women in the society. In the collection *Prem Pachisee* (25th of prem) he sketches the characters of Rajput women through whom he tried to convey out that the traditions and the religious outlook of the Hindus were better than anything comparably. He served himself as the member of Hindu society. But his views changed with the passage of time which can be observed in his collection *Prem Batisee* (32nd of prem). He presented the positive as well as negative roles of women in his writing. He analyzed that women and men had similar sexual feelings and emotions. In the stories *Naye-e Biwi* and *Malkin* he telescoped illegal relations of women with their servants and in the story *Bhoot* he dealt with the feelings of sexuality among men. He also visualized the natural prejudice among the women and brought in this in the story of *Doo Bahnain* (two sisters). He also pointed out the ignorance, poverty and the power oriented peoples dealing with the lower classes and specially women.

Sajad Haider Yaldrem (1880-1943) He graduated from Aligarh College, was interested in the western literature, and became the active member of progressive movement in the Urdu Literature. In the pieces of fictions *Kharistan-o-Gulistan* and *Soda-e-Sangeen*, *Sohbat Najinse*, *Azdawaj-e-Mohabat*, *Nikah-e-Sani* and *Ainey Kay Samney* he highlighted the domestic and family problems of women. He pointed out that unmatched wed lock the resultant and lack of harmony are the main reasons by which the family suffered and divorce took place. In the story of *Ainey Kay Samnay* he presented the story of such woman whose husband had not interested in the family, therefore, he got involved in a prostitute, the wife of the man met with prostitute and convinced that she had not right over her husband. Although he presented the problems of women in his writings but basically his representation of women as courtesan is not reliable because he considered them as the commodity and ignored her emotional and real life problems and particularly he overlooked those social dynamics forcing her to be a prostitute. He wrote an article entitled *Talim-e-Niswa Bazria Azdawaj* (feminist education with the reference to wives) in 1903. He favored women education and also criticized the parents as regards their careless new about the female education. According to him the matrimonial relations also suffered due to uneducated wife. He expressed the same feelings in his other article named *Jahil Auratain* (uneducated women, he wrote that there is no difference in maid and wife both are expert in cooking and washing. The dreams and desires of young foreign qualified persons are turned into nightmare due their uneducated wife.

These reforms injected in the middle class which was demanded of enlightened women, the woman the men of upper echelon of the society needed as their partner who would be presentable in colonial society. This way of thought drove a wedge between the reformists and modernists; one espoused an enlightened domestic woman, the other was in the favor of the women performing an active role in a society and in the evolution of national awareness. They also encouraged women to participate in the political movements. This consequently opened up new debates regarding the relations of the men and women. Education was also opening up economic opportunities to parents belonging to poorer classes. Some of these parents were actually more interested in the value of education in the subsequent employment of their educated daughters than in its role in a successful marriage for them. Primary school teaching was a popular occupation adopted by the women of such families as, for instance, had been the case in Europe as well. Similar was 'the case in the field of industrial education, through which several poor widows and deserted wives not only improved their technical skills but also received stipends during the training period. The education of Muslim women was sought to promote through the evolution of a creative synthesis between local cultural values, norms and institutions' and external influences. As it was the practice among other communities, Muslim female students too began going abroad for higher studies. The earliest example was Faizy sisters, Attiya, Zuhra and Nazli. Many Muslim female students succeeded in getting government scholarships in later years. For instance, in 1923, Miss S. Khan and Miss G.M Ali received such scholarships. In 1924-25 Session Miss M.A. Shah Gillani was awarded a degree in Veterinity Science from the Royal Vertenity College, London (Chudhari,2004; 19) .

In short due to the initiative of these early Urdu authors who pointed out the various problems by women and also criticized the issues like ignorance, backwardness, matrimonial issues (unmatched marriage, childhood marriage etc.), Purdah, combined family system troubles and settlement, the status of women in home and outside the home, superstitions among the women, courtesans and their position in society, widow status etc. This literature not only creates the consciousness among the women but also opened a wide range scope for them to participate in practical lives. The consequence by this literature has increased the rate of women education; even they went abroad for higher studies and emerged as Enlightened Professionally who can even fly the Aircraft (Hajab Imtiaz Ali was the first Muslim pilot). She wrote a number of novels by which she promoted the Romanticism as well as the rational approach related to society. In the novels, she presented the different characters by which she proved that modernism and British educational system women not only became confident but also effective members of society. Her thinking depicts by the characters of Dadi Zubaida, who is authoritative woman who believed in traditional way of living, Hajab criticizes this character very much. The problems of maid and difficulties of her life reflect by the character of Zonash. Sabohi and Rohi are the characters that represented the ultra-modern class of women; by these characters she expressed her feelings that the education and modernity is the essential for women. Fantasy, romanticism and love is the topics of her writing but she ignored the middle and lower class and preferred to write only elite class.

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## South Asian Studies 27 (2)

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## Biographical Note

**Gull-i-Hina** is Lecturer in Department of Philosophy and IDC, G.C, University Lahore-Pakistan

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