

Received : 10 January 2024, Accepted: 15 April 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9i2.73>

The contemporary global circumstances and Urdu short story

¹Dr. Noreen Razzaq, ²Dr. Naila Anjum, ³Dr. Shazia Razzaq,
⁴Rafia Zubair

¹Assistant Professor, Urdu department, Lahore College for Women University Jail Road Lahore, noreenrazzaq@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Urdu department, Lahore College for Women University Jail Road Lahore, nailashahid@yahoo.com

³Assistant Professor, Urdu department, Lahore College for Women University Jail Road Lahore, shazia.razzaq@lcwu.edu.pk

⁴Lecturer, Urdu Department, Lahore College for Women University Jail Road Lahore, rafiashahzad27@gmail.com

Abstract

The connection between literature and society is profound. Short stories, like other genres of literature, are intricately connected to life. Presently, short story writers depict realities and life events in a manner that reflects the ups and downs of life intertwined with political, social, and economic activities. There are vivid examples of deep maturity, broad understanding, political awareness and the depiction of contemporary objective realities. These stories often address issues such as the lack of constructive elements, cultural heritage, social and religious sectarianism, incompetent political leadership, non-transparent electoral systems, religious, ethnic, and emotional challenges, as well as the shortcomings of government institutions. In this article, the authors will delve into the main aspects of short stories and explore how short story writers portray these themes.

Keywords: intricately, intertwined, cultural heritage, vivid, sectarianism, depiction, profound

Introduction

Among the genres of prose, the novel and short story are the best means of reflecting the current era and articulate human emotions and thoughts. Like other forms of literature, the genre of short stories has a profound connection to life, prompting short story writers to transcend geographical and territorial boundaries in order to address both local and global issues. This approach allows them to delve into events unfolding within the realm of humanity, such as environmental changes, war crimes, religious and culture conflicts, rational disputes, the absence of key developmental elements, fatal diseases, violent confrontations, the dominance of powerful nations over weaker and underdeveloped nations, unidentifiable social and religious demographics, crucial elements and various other topics are important. Through the literature, Short story writer has main aim to portray the relationship between human unity. By empathizing with the sorrows and pains of humanity, modern short story writers are depicting the life's realities and events in a manner that incorporates all the complexities and nuances based on political, social, and economic engagements. The notable examples of contemporary realism showcased through short stories highlight the writers' sophisticated theoretical viewpoints, broad understanding and entrenched political, social and global awareness.

Urdu short stories serve as a lens through which various aspects of life's complexities are explored, shedding light on global issues and advocating for peace and harmony. This is especially relevant in regions and communities where conflicting interests and preferences have promoted a culture of discord, resulting in increasingly dire and consequential matters. The repercussions of these conflicts have had direct and indirect impacts on millions of people, potentially posing a threat to future generations. Short story writers, brimming with human empathy, are not only keen on shedding light on human consciousness but also strive to seek solutions to these issues. Although short story writers have embellished settings, characters and real events with imaginative and conceptual hues in their presentation, in order to depict impartiality. However, the nature of all issues related to human brutality on one hand and human vulnerability on the other are of different type. In this context, three fundamental objectives of Short story writers come to the fore.

Presenting visual depictions of oppression and devastation in occupied and

affected areas.

Identifying various emotional, mental, aesthetic and economic aspects of individuals inhabiting occupied and affected regions.

Expressing the indifference of powerful nations and as a manifestation of collective human flaws.

Since life's canvas is vast and focusing on one colour, element or aspect from its broad spectrum and presenting life experiences in a concise, imaginative, symbolic and artful manner is the pinnacle of a short story writer's art. As regard to global scale reflecting psychological, social, cultural, and political issues through the short story serves as the evidence of short storywriter's keen observations and subtle insights. Human behaviours are not rigid and inflexible they undergo positive or negative changes as required by nature. Therefore, glimpses of these changes are also reflected in their writings. Short story writers weave stories based on their personal insights, emotions, preferences, dislikes, studies, experiences and artistic skills, in accordance with deep observations on social relationships, individual and societal lives.

Identity Crisis

Global transformations are imprinting astonishing patterns on the world map. Due to scientific discoveries and progress, where life has become easier, distancing from simplicity and natural environments has turned humans into machines. Constantly, the outcomes of new discoveries in scientific fields have not integrated human senses but instead left them unsettled. Hatred and disillusionment is escalating. From the concept of individual survival and welfare, the element of selfishness has increased in the human psyche. A gap is emerging between the individual and nature. Today, the world has become a global village where the pace of scientific and material progress surpasses human's thought. Yet, the representation of how human life has become entangled in this cycle is a significant theme in Urdu short story. Short story writers have presented the story in such a way that depicts how, amidst the chain of compulsion, humans become victims of suspended mental and emotional crises which leads to uncertain situations. These writers have presented the story in such a way that illustrates how humans, caught between compulsion and choice, experience mental and emotional crises, leading to uncertain situations. Changes in

moral and societal structures contribute to the decline of moral values. A lack of time and emotional connection has led to a loss of respect, integrity, and decorum. A prevailing sense of desolation and apathy has eroded trust. Harmony is missing in both human's internal and social life. Short story writers have included themes such as detachment from life, alienation, individual solitude, exclusivity, psychological and mental turmoil, fascination with complexity, and immorality in their stories.

"I put my weary eyes through the cracks of the doors. I glance inside and astonish to find everything inside but a man? ---- The Voices that resemble humans but a human is neither alive nor dead - and dogs and cats - and everything is present except a human neither alive nor dead." (1)

This theme is present in short stories of Tahira Iqbal " Bari Khabar" Shehnaz Parveen "Ikeeswain Sadi ka Pahla Dhamaka" Altaf Fatima "Jashan-e-Daarad" and Khalida Hussain's short stories.

Coronavirus

Owing to their sensitivity, writers observe events and incidents with their own eyes and establish an emotional connection with the pain of others, whether individual or societal, caused by those incidents. This is why some global crises become the subject matter of writers worldwide. Economic instability, famine, natural disasters, pandemics and numerous other global issues have continued to influence world literature. One such pandemic was the coronavirus. In response to this global pandemic, short stories have been written that depicting its human and financial losses, impacts and preventive measures. Since the onset of the pandemic, significant changes have been observed in individual and societal lives. The global economy has been devastated, affecting even strong and stable economies severely. People have had to endure emotional turmoil. As a precautionary measure, an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty continued to linger over the environment. Lockdown created an opportunity for solitude which served as a reminder of lost time and people became estranged from one another. This era of literature created during the pandemic is referred to as "Coronavirus Literature." The coronavirus emerged as a global issue that short story writers made it the centrepiece of attention in everyday social life.

"It is good for all of us. Some of you must have lost a loved one in this pandemic. It is possible that more than one person in someone's family may have passed away. Someone may have lost either one or both parents; someone may have lost a child. Someone's sister, uncle, maternal uncle, grandfather, grandmother, anyone. Remember that every epidemic has a democratic mood. It doesn't discriminate. An epidemic is the one thing that brings us closer to our loved ones. Oh yes... I remembered Mr Pervez, whose eyes are filled with tears, lost his two elder brothers. We share their grief. We must not forget that we are on a same page. A player is not allowed to pause or stagger. Exiting the game means leaving the field itself". (2)

In this regard, some short stories can be observed such as Hameed Shahid "Corona aur Qarantine", Nasir Abbas Nayyar "Marg-e-Aam Naimat Hai", Naima Fatima Alvi "Coronai Mahol", "Daaku Qaum", "Chaudhry Sahib ki Beti", Fatima Hasan "Makar Karne Wale", Noor-ul-Huda Shah "Almiya", Naseem Anjum "Tijarat", Shehla Naqvi "Aik Tanha Din", Ali Tanha "Yajooj Majooj ne Corona se kya kaha", Rahman Abbas, "Tauoon ke dino mein Eid", Qamar Saleem "Josh-e- Mohabbat" and many others short stories can be studied.

"After Mussarat's mysterious death when this news had become public that she had died of the plague, the girls from the neighbour's building stopped to visit their house. The mansion was now shrouded in silence. Everything seemed to have perished along with Mussarat's mysterious death. Even the flowers on the window sills had wilted, the colour of the roof faded, plaster had come off the walls and one of the door latches had become feeble. The house had turned into a graveyard where Begum Sughra was alive but entombed herself". (3)

Terrorism and the 9/11 Incident

Terrorism is the result of unethical, illegal, and inhuman actions. Those who engage in terrorism disregard regional and international laws, descending from the ranks of humanity as they commit heinous acts. In acts of terrorism, a person may be a hero to one group but labelled as a terrorist by another. This same pattern is evident in all instances of terrorism, including the tragedy of 9/11. The attack on the World Trade Centre resulted in the deaths

of thousands and inflicted significant damage on American security and autonomy. Every possible aspect and avenue was explored to uncover the master minds behind this attack. Racial prejudice led to Muslims being targeted alongside all other acts of terrorism. Seemingly a national issue, it became a global dilemma, prompting some countries and individuals to resort to savage actions. Post-9/11, efforts were made to justify labelling Muslims as terrorists. Muslims in Europe and the United States experienced fear, uncertainty, and instability. The situation in Afghanistan remained precarious. The entire world was affected at a political and social level by this event. Various aspects of its underlying motives and its effects were incorporated into stories by short story writers. Some authors subtly touched upon the theme in their stories, while others made it a central focus in their short stories.

"Thus one day significant question coalesced and dripping down from the sky. It was the 11th of September 2001 when the reverberations of an incident echoed like the trumpet of Israfil, took the breath out of the entire world, like a thick tear silently dropping like a voiceless lament of enduring powerlessness. In this way, like silent flames rebelling against four centuries of colonization fell on New York, resulting in the collapse of the renowned Twin Towers of the World Trade Center." (4)

Afghanistan, Iraq and other regions Western countries do not lag behind in terms of economic dominance over economically backward countries. The political landscape is affected by the increase in political turmoil and confidence due to the destructive actions of global imperial powers, international covert agencies and terrorist organizations. However, at the global level, the approach to problem-solving is more about empty rhetoric than actual solutions. Countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, and all those regions are examples of unresolved issues where people are being exploited at the hands of power. Afghanistan has also been a victim of such circumstances where Afghan residents' identity has been destroyed and their culture and heritage have been violently suppressed by tyrannical rulers who have gifted them with abundant amounts of bullets, missiles, explosions, body rags and burning incense. This is called cultural cleanliness, terrorism and the extermination of terrorists. The dungeons of these civilized countries are full of injustices where people are treated the worst. Devastation has

been intertwined with the war and short story writers have presented the direct and indirect effects of this situation. Numerous implications of nuclear and chemical weapons are emerging and the lust for power-driven atrocities has ravaged regions such as Badakhshan, Kabul, Herat, Bamiyan, Shighnan, Dasht-e Leili, and Kandahar have turned into ashes.

"Forty years later, he was standing on the forty-fifth floor of a skyscraper in Chicago, America, found himself deep in thought, contemplating his position in the world. Although he played no part in the tragedy of the World Trade Center, people of his race and heritage were being targeted and urged to 'Go Back to Your Country'. Consequently, he pondered which country he truly belonged to, where his homeland is, and which place he called home. Will 1947 ever come to an end? Is the concept of 'Big Brother' universal? America has assumed the role of a universal 'Big Brother' but why does its treatment of its own 'Big Brother' seem authoritarian? Did we all get separated from our parents after born? Which world is it where barriers of colour, race, and religion not exist? Where I can go from here? Beyond this, the earth simply ends. Is the entire third world an orphanage?" (5)

Burning bodies, bloody cutting limbs, crying mothers for help, human body parts scattered on walls, trees, spaces and deprive of half-body people are the focus of short story writers. The madness of war has inflicted damage on many regions/countries beyond Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine, leaving countless people prey to cruelty, brutality, and madness.

"Congratulations! O you children recall the tables today and no child of Sabra and Shatila will attend the school. They won't be able to go because the morning sun fails to rouse them. They have been plunged into a profound slumber by the tanks, rendering them incapable of awakening to gaze in amazement at those lands." (6)

In this regard following short stories can be seen such as Zahida Hina's short stories "Kum Kum Bohat Aaram Se Hai", "Neend ka Zard Libaas", "Jage Hain Khowaab Mein", "Taqdeer ke Zindaani", "Tanhai ke Makaan Mein", "Raqs-e-Maqabir", Masood Mufti "Bhook", Mazhar-ul-Islam "Zameen ka Aghwa", Parveen Atif "Diesel Mein Lathdi Chirya", "Honi Anhoni", "Mohabbat Ab Nahin Hogi", "Alvida", Akhtar Jamal "Chand Taaron ka Lahu", Neelofar Iqbal

"Whites lilies", "Operation Maaiis I", "Operation Maaiis II", Bushra Ijaz "Ghareeb Nagar", Tahira Iqbal "Sairgaah" etc.

“Two dusty colour helicopters, named Cobra, rise from the back of the mountains. A woman picking potatoes in front of her mud house, her two children playing in the mud, old Pathan carrying tomatoes on his donkey heads towards the market and all those neckless prisoners of castle warriors who had kerosene poured into their veins instead of blood. Then they were torn apart like firecrackers with matches. Just became mere news.” (7)

Tales of oppression have also been engraved in Gulf States and Yugoslavia. The global conscience remains silent despite witnessing of everything. All eyes are on the oil reserves of Muslim countries. The tranquillity of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Chechnya has been shattered. However, the mind-set of international organizations and institutions supporting peace is ambiguous.

Kashmir and Palestine

The tragic and heart-wrenching situation in Kashmir has found a place in the creations of Urdu short story writers. It is a saga of the unholy intentions and condemned projects of global imperialism. This issue, on-going between two nations for decades has resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians. The dead bodies of the Kashmiri people are a stark reminder of the insensitivity of world powers. The refusal to accept the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination and the continued spectatorial role of unscrupulous institutions are major factors contributing to the non-resolution of these issues.

We find various short stories regarding these issues such as Mahmood Hashmi's stories "Nandha Bus Service", "Peer Panjal ke Qaidi", Rasheed Amjad "Sabz Phool", Kehkaashan Malik "Jheel aur Jharnay" and various short stories etc.

The land of the noble Prophets Palestine holds significance for Muslims, Christians and Jews simultaneously. The Jewish atrocities in Palestine are not hidden. The relentless killings of Palestinian Muslims and their displacement from their own lands are longstanding practices. Due to seizing properties and the brutal treatment with their lives, they have been compelled to migrate towards Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and other regions. The

ultimate goal of global colonialism is to establish a Zionist state in the midst of Arab countries. For this purpose, heinous and bloody conflicts have been created, leaving the world, including the Islamic community, as indifferent spectators, a stain on humanity's conscience. Silence on the violation of international laws is also an injustice. The horrific and terrifying siege of Palestinians, targeting hospitals and schools, the relentless killing of innocent women and children, destruction of buildings, lack of access to food, water, medicine, and basic facilities is only being showed through expressions of regret by the United Nations and international human rights organizations. In Urdu short story there is an emotional connection expressed on the issue of Palestine. Hence, short story writers have addressed the unwavering steps of Palestinians, the passion for jihad, the desire for martyrdom and many other topics.

"In this context short stories of Mustafa Kareem "Tareekh Ka Sabq", Sami Ahuja "Titli Ka Janam", Younas Javaid "Dusri Karbala", Jameel Ahmad Adeel "Yerushalim Ki Betiyon", Attiya Syed "Bint-ul-Islam", Salma Awan "Gaza Ke Bache" and many other short stories have been written."

"My eyes wandered down the caverns made by cannonballs and started wandering on the walls broken by bullets, for some time, my heart started to beat continuously while I wandered in the desolate oblivion. There was dreadful smell immersed in darkness all around. Mile after mile of broken roads, dirt, sand dust." (8)

Conclusion

These short stories demonstrate that short story writers possess a deep understanding of the intricate global issues of our modern world. As writers, they know that it is their duty to address various subjects in their writings. However, it is also noted that they are also familiar with the technical demands of short stories. By using artistic insights, they have demonstrated that international media may only provide sombre commentaries and the role of united nation is not more than just a silent spectator. The short story writers have carefully evaluated the worldwide impact of these issues in their stories and their description is robust which is based on

facts. Perhaps this is an attempt to expose the condemned endeavours of global powers or at least to show a mirror to the pretenders of the civilized world. They have expressed mental distress, worsening state of human rights and the apathy of international organizations advocating for global peace by showing the root causes and sources of issues. These issues have assumed a global dimension and their impacts are being felt directly and indirectly across the entire world.

References

Ahmed Javed, Gidh, mashmoolah majmooah afsanay, Lahore: Shirkat printing press, 2022, P. 373, 376.

Nasir Abbas Nayyar, Marg-e-Aam Naimat hai, Delhi: Aalmi Urdu Trust, 2001, P. 326.

Rehman Abbas, Tauoon ke dino mein, Delhi: Aalmi Urdu Trust, 2001, P. 170.

Masood Mufti, Shanakht, Mashmoolah, Fanoon-117, Lahore: April to August 2002, P. 121.

Iftikhar Naseem, Pardaisi, Mashmoolah, Fanoon-117, Lahore: April to August 2002, P. 156.

Altaf Fatima, Zehan ka aqlideesi zaviya, Mashmoolah, Taar-e-Unkaboot, Lahore: Feroz sons, 1990, P. 169

Parveen Atif, Muhbat ab nae hogi, Mashmoolah, bol meri machli, Lahore: Alfaisal, 2007, P. 130.

Sami Ahuja, Titli ka Janam, Mashmoolah, Falasteen Urdu adab mein, Muratib: Fateh Muhammad Malik, Lahore : Sang-e-meel Publications, 2000, P. 117.