

A Review of the Contributions by Women to Urdu Literature in Earlier and Nearby Periods

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Abstract

Urdu literature has a long and colourful history, and it is perhaps the only language that can be enjoyed even if anybody does not understand it. Pakistan's quest for new ideas on Urdu literature produced some of the most powerful prose and poetry from many excellent writers and poets including women. Although important women writers have appeared before creation of Pakistan, yet the present era saw a proliferation of prose and poetry by women which critiqued the cultural, social and political systems with profound insight and great passion. Speculatively, the reason for the existing of many fine women writers in Pakistan, as compared to almost rare in subcontinent, may be owing to the different ways in which women in Pakistan and Muslim women elsewhere are members of civil society and participate in the public sphere. Within the scope of this paper the main theme is to indicate the key role of women writers and poets, they have played in creating awareness among the folks not only what the womanhood passes through, but also the social constraints that mars their own development. The women faced severe restrictions some decades back to express their thoughts and feelings. But, now many of them have emerged as leading voices in literature and honoured accordingly. Within a lot of cases, the women writers surpassed their male counter parts. The major writers to write as a women appeared before and soon after independence of Pakistan. Among these personalities, Ada Jafri is a first writer who wrote of her experiences as a wife and a mother in a modified traditional idiom. She has been followed by Zehra Nigah, who attempts to portray a desire for a degree of equality of emotional expression in women's relationships. The two most influential and important women poets who have written deliberately are Kishvar Naheed and Fehmeedah Riyaz, both of whom started writing in the sixties. A younger generation of women writers such as Parveen Shakir, Bano Qudsia and many more took their cue from these predecessors, but more closely examined the subtleties of human and social relations in their writings. This information on Urdu literature would not only create the journalism consciousness among the women, but also open a wide range scope for them to participate in practical lives.

Keywords

Urdu Prose, Poetry, Education, Muslim Women, Society, Literature, History, Female

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1. Introduction

For instance, take an account of the primary chapter of the human's creation, in which we learn about the story of Prophet Adam and his spouse Eve. In it, Prophet Adam complaint to Allah (God) that he is unhappy in the solitude of

Eden, which is the justification for Eve's birth who by the moment born from his rib. In other words, the female characters make the certain kinds of decisions that men make. They fight wars and even kill men in front line. Meanwhile, in certain occasions, the women have all kinds of authority. In the battlefield they race horses, and control men with swords, arrows, fascinating and witchcraft. Men are their

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prisoners; they throw them on the backs of horses before making off with them. They gather to celebrate their triumphs with feasting and splendor, and congratulating one another. In our society, a cursory glance at world's literature brings us to the view where we can get an idea of male and female gender roles by considering stories that most of us heard as children, from our mothers or may be our grandmothers. These stories send us the signal and to the society that male and female roles are not fixed, and even in the existing world both have to play multiple responsibilities.

2. Women in the Medieval Period

A number of women in Muslim era made noteworthy contributions in various fields and they also have the strong impacts on the ruling authority. 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) highlights three things which sustained the power of a Mughal's emperor; his army, his treasury and his women. During the Mughal's rule, Tughluq Nigar Khanum, Maham Begum, Hameeda Banu Begum, Akbar's foster mother Maham Anga, Jodha Bai or Maryam Zamani, Nur Jehan and Mumtaz Mehal the daughter of Asaf Khan are the chief examples of women, and among many of them are well versed in literature and other matters pertaining to theology. Prominent personality, Gulbadan Begum is the daughter of Emperor Babur; she spent life as 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 subcontinent. Another prominent literary figure, Jahan Ara Begum, is the daughter of Emperor Shah Jehan, who remained a cultured and spirited lady. She is a poetess and herself composed the Persian couplet that is inscribed on her tomb (Wasti, 1987). In these pages, Zaib-un-Nisa (1639-1709), the daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb has well read in Persian and Arabic, and she exercised as an expert calligrapher who maintained a fine library of her own. She has also been an accomplished poetess and as well wrote a commentary on the Holy Quran (Findley, 2001).

3. Pre Independence Era of Urdu Literature

Many writers and activists in the 19th century of South Asia have made the subject of women as central topic as their agenda of cultural reform, expressing the social and political system through the newly available medium of print. Gull-i-

Hina (2012), argues that Urdu journalism is the dynamic tool for persuading the common peoples to educate their female folk to enable them to face the changed socio-political circumstance, which has 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, it led to the establishment of the educational institutions and societies. That's why the Urdu literature with theme centring on women in the latter half of the 19th 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.

In short due to the initiative of these early Urdu authors who pointed out the various problems faced by women and 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 is 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. The countless still other female characters in this story of Urdu literature have made a new taste familiar in its history. If we want to discuss these issues in the context of Urdu literature, we begin with traditional and modern gender roles. In 2002, Urdu literature has attained an age of 200 years old. As we see these two centuries mirrored back at us in literature, it is clear that apart from men, women remained contributing in Urdu literature. But, it is also true that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the British Raj's newly expanded administration, which preceded the introduction of Western education and of modern industry, has a huge influence. This inspired Urdu writers to discuss women's rights, education and freedom, and retained from an exceptional status. These writers rejected men and women's prescribed gender roles (Amber, 2004). Among these, two important names are Sajjad Haider Yaldram and Mirza Azeem Baig Chughtai. Sajjad Haider Yaldram is among the first Urdu writers whose goal is to bring equality to women. In his stories, women defy their prescribed gender roles and are seen shirking the veil, receiving modern education and participating in mixed gatherings. Perhaps he got these ideas from his wife, Nazar Sajjad Haider, who wrote novels with female characters who rejected their prescribed gender roles.

When it comes to rebel against gender expectations, no name is more important than Azeem Baig Chughtai's. He personified women in a new way. His women lived in a beautiful world based on gender equality, whose are educated and have brilliant minds, and take in air side by side with men as companions. In his famous novel, *Shahazoori*, there is a female who is illiterate and from lower class, but who is nonetheless fully conscious of her rights. The heroine of *Shahazoori* defies ancestry class status and male dominance with such vehemence that there is none like her in Urdu literature. Such characters that disrupt the traditions of male and female gender roles and turn them on their heads as has never been created before, this too from a man's pen. At the end of the nineteenth century, Rashida Alnasa's novel showed men and women with slightly distorted gender roles, but from the beginning of the twentieth century, Saghara Humayun Mirza, Nazar Sajjad Haider, Walda Afzal Ali, Mrs. Hijaab Imtiaz Ali, and many other female writers came to the fore. Many of them defied the prescribed gender roles in their creations and shocked readers. With publication of *Angare* (Embers) began the Urdu Progressive Writers movement, which gave us the work of Ismat Chughtai, Khadija Mastoor, Hajrah Maroor and other very important names. These women move within the labyrinth of the film world, where old gender traditions are forgotten. Jeelani Bano and Wajida Tabussum also tore down gender roles in their work.

4. Tradition of Feminism in Urdu Literature

Two of the very few fearless voices of consent and finding print space in those dark days are that of Fatima Jinnah and Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan who kept holding a mirror to the face of the usurps in their speeches to various gatherings that travelled orally and in printed form far and wide.

4.1. Fatima Jinnah [30, 1893- July 8, 1967]

Mather-e-Millat (Mother of Nation), is the most famous and noncontroversial lady in the history of Pakistan. As a younger sister of Quaid-e-Azam, she played very important role in the Pakistan's Movement. She is also well-known for her struggle and contribution for national language with her brother-Quaid-e-Azam, and motivated to women to play their roles in society.

4.2. Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan [1905- June 13, 1990]

She is the first Muslim women Governor and first Muslim women delegate to United Nations (UN), and she has married with Liaquat Ali Khan in 1932. She is also the first Muslim woman to win UN award for Human Rights in 1970. This

brilliant lady played very important role in Pakistan's Movement and after creation of Pakistan she worked hard for the welfare and betterment of the women of Pakistan including their education.

5. Women Writers and Poetess of Pakistan

Generally, women have been considered as inferior to men in terms of their qualities, capacities and their roles in society. With the passage of time, however, women's role is increasing in different fields of life and women proved themselves compatible with men, and even in some cases females perform better than male. The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, takes men and women equal in terms of providing them opportunities for acquisition of knowledge and education. He stressed upon the importance of gender-equality on education during his speech on the occasion of first education conference, 1947 (Nisa, 1989; Jafri, 1997). It has been observed that women have added serious contributions throughout all walks of life as well as Urdu language and literature. No doubt books play an important role in developing their images and when positively portrayed create effects on the new generation. It is observed that the females are involved in productive and practical work, the religious activities, as a working women and women as writers (Khalid et al., 2010). So, by keeping in view the above discussed points, the present study is designed for treating women as writers.

Ada Jafri (born 1924) wrote of her experiences as a wife and a mother in a modified traditional idiom, but also noticed the lack of fulfillment that accompanied these relationships. She also protests against society's dehumanization of women by its reduction of them to sexual objects, and is keenly aware of discrimination. Ada Jafri's poetry explores women's identity, rather than concentrating on them as a romantic ideal, as poetry up to now has usually done. She is followed by Zehra Nigah, who attempts to portray a desire for a degree of equality of emotional expression in women's relationships. Zehra Nigah, while staying in a generally progressive framework, is also keenly aware of the specific exploitation of women in society. Her poetry explores the schizophrenic existence of women that results from social taboos. Therefore, she attempts to give voice to the woman within the one who is forced to compromise with patriarchal society (Naim, 1978; Omar, 1996).

5.1. Ismat Chughtai (1915-1991)

While these writers portrayed traditional gender roles, they also write rebellious male and female characters who deviated somehow or another from norms and traditions.

Among these writers, Ismat Chughtai's name is a key, who wrote stories that defied gender roles exposing society's hypocrisy. Ismat Chughtai's stories, on one hand, include female characters that are financially independent, such as those in her novels *Crooked Line* and *Innocence*. As crusader for the rights of women and the downtrodden, Ismat Chughtai has a leading fiction writer in Urdu. Her major short story collections are *Kaliyan* (The Buds), *Choten* (Injuries), *Chooi Mooi* (Fragile), *Ek Baat* (A Point) and *Do Haath* (Two Hands). Her novels are *Tehri- Lakeer* (The Crooked Line), *Ziddi* (The Obstinate), *Ek Qatra-e-Khoon* (A Drop of Blood), *Dil Ki Duniya* (Heart's World) and *Bahroop Nagar* (The Deceptive Town).

5.2. Qurratulain Hyder (Born 1927)

In the rush for praising, she is a trendsetter in Urdu fiction and began writing at a time when the novel has yet to establish itself as a serious genre in the poetry-oriented world of Urdu literature. She lifted it out of its stagnation, divested it of its obsession with fantasy, romance and facile realism. She offered it extraordinary range and depth and brought to its ambit, hitherto unexplored terrains of human thought and sensibility. As prolific writer, she has so far written some 12 novels and novellas, four collections of short stories, and has done a significant amount of translation of classics. She received the Jnanpith Award on her later novel, *Aakhir-e-Shab ke Hamsafar* (Travellers Unto the Night). *Aag ka Darya* (River of Fire) is her greatest novel which is a tour de force in Urdu and possibly in Indian fiction as a whole. Qurratulain Hyder included some traditional gender roles in her stories, she also wrote about modern, educated and independent women, like Sita Marchandaani in *Sita Haran* and Chumcha Ahmed in *River of Fire*, as well as the heroine of *Autumn's Voice*. By rejecting tradition, she determines her own new gender roles.

6. Post Independence Era of Urdu Literature

In the last fifty years, new names have come to the fore in Urdu literature. In the wake of India's partition, hundreds and thousands of peoples have been uprooted, murdered and massacred, impoverished and without livelihood. Women have been also violated; Western civilization has space to invade and in its wake came sexual aggression. In cities there has been sectarian violence, political repression and stringent ideological and religious prejudices. All this gave Urdu writers a wide variety of topics, which they each took on in their own style. There have been included both men and women among these writers. Many have written stories about men and women that reflect traditional gender roles, but

some of the stories and novels have examples of men and women deviating partially or entirely from tradition (Muhammad, 1991).

6.1. Kishwar Naheed's Contribution to Urdu Literature- a Pioneer of Feminist Urdu Poetry

Employing a gentle tone or the voice of bitter protest, she can effectively communicate the pain of the truncated spiritual, socio-political and physical existence of women in an oppressive society. For her the poem becomes a weapon with which to undermine such a society. She has examined all aspects of women's lives from their place in the politics of nation and state-building to their sexual exploitation. She has also translated women's writings from other languages into Urdu, and writes ghazals and poems with equal facility. The Urdu literary journal "Chahar Su" has brought out a special issue on Dame Kishwar Naheed, the undisputed icon of feminist literature in Urdu, containing articles by contemporary authors on her life and work, selections from her poems, excerpts from works in prose including Kishwar's translations and adaptations of western literature, and a thought-provoking conversation with the poetess.

For most of us, Kishwar is a woman who has remained continuously engaged in writing for more than forty years, producing more than forty books (all big and small volumes included). She has been participating in social, cultural and political movements in one way or another for about 50 years. She is among the earlier broadcasters of radio Pakistan, when the country experimented with telecasting she became a part of it, and when the great Indo-Pak Music Conference held in Lahore, she has been there. In literature, both her poetry and prose, the corpus of her work is feminist and progressive addition to our national self-expression. When she is natural in her expression, her poems are beautiful, fresh and moving. She has given some unforgettable verses to Urdu literature, both in metered poems as well as in the genre of free verse. In prose and poetry, she explored some themes related to women that are not touched by poets, such as physical violence meted out to women, oppression under the guise of protecting women and female circumcision. Her life's work has indeed firmly installed her as an outspoken representative of women in literature. The fact is that anyone who knows Kishwar Nahid, loves her for her great sense of humour, her indomitable spirit, her courage, her God-forsaken syntax, her championing of the right causes, her zest for life and her vivaciousness. She is a poet because she always has poetry in her heart. She writes prose because she has something to say. She is not only an icon; she is the darling of contemporary Urdu literature in the whole South Asian subcontinent.

6.2. Fehmida Riaz

She has been a working woman since her early twenty's, rising to become executive of institutions such as The National Arts Council of Pakistan, struggling with all her might for each and every achievement, observing the world around her and taking every challenge that came in her way, including running her own NGO, Hawwa, that specializes in embroidered clothes made by village women over the length and breadth of Pakistan. Today, this single woman is the owner of a spacious apartment and a centrally located office-cum-shop in the dreamland of property owners that is Islamabad. Fehmeedah Riyaz is a poet of woman's emotional reserves which she transforms into critique of patriarchal relations. She writes about the unfulfilled sexuality of women, their creative power, and their closeness to earth with outspoken candor and sometimes anger. She has recently published a widely acclaimed novelette and a travelogue of Bangladesh. Her poetry has also become more apparently political over the years. Practical and hard-nosed during these later years of her life, she is an embodiment of success.

No doubt, the women are part of civil society in Pakistan they are so as women rather than as Muslims. For example, during the colonial period women are viewed as keepers of the tradition, but after the creation of Pakistan this function in many ways has been shifted to the state. Muslim women continued to be held as guardians of a Muslim identity, these liberated Pakistani women from quite a burden, and it also made them more flexible to state laws directed against humans. Furthermore, social conservatism plus the state imposition of Islamic laws has meant that the position of women, as women, is in some ways particularly strong in Pakistan in the form of mother, sister, spouse and daughter as well as next of kin. Their subsequent greater ability to participate in public debate in Pakistan has also empowered them in interesting ways. The post-Independence years can also be regarded as an era of women writers. After Independence, the rise in literacy among women has been the major motivation behind the feminine interest in literary activity. There appeared major writers to write as a woman soon after independence (Robina *et al.*, 2015 a; 2015 b). In short story, Mumtaz Shirin, Saira Hashmi, Nishat Fatima, Anwar Ghalib, Farkhanda Lodhi, Zahida Hina and Neelam Bashir have made valuable contributions and extended the range of female fiction writing. Zahida Hina's *Raah mein Ajaal hai* (Death is in the Way, 1993) is transcultural in its theme, perception and treatment. Her short stories have a wide spectrum and combine romance with realism in their fictional structure. Jameela Hashmi's novel *Dasht-e-Soos* (The Soos Wilderness) published in 1984 is in the tradition of historical fiction. It portrayed the mystic life of Mansur Hallaj who has been sentenced to death in AD 922 for his

Sufic utterance of Ana-al-Haq. Jameela Hashmi revived the historical novel writing which has been discontinued after Nasim Hijazi's *Akhari Chattan* (The Last Rock) published in 1951.

6.3. Nigar Ahmad

She is very active social worker and works for the Aurat Foundation (a women rights organization in Pakistan). She completed her Master's degree from Punjab University and completed higher studied in Cambridge University. She is also a scholar of Common Wealth. She helped the women of Pakistan in all matters through her pen and actions.

6.4. Sara Shuguftah (Died 1984)

She is a profound chronicler and analyzer of women's psychological states in a claustrophobic society which provides them with no escape.

6.5. Azra Abbas (Born 1950)

Azra Abbas is particularly concerned with exploring the relationship of women's bodies to their emotions and environment.

Some other authorities in Urdu's history are Ishrat Afreen who examines the tension between her new found confidence as a woman and a patriarchal reality. Fatimah Husain writes about the disagreements within the women's movement. Other good poetesses include Tanveer Anjum (born 1956), A'ishah Aslam, Mahmoodah Ghaziyah, Yasmeen Hameed and Shahidah Hasan.

7. Some Women's Writers of Recent Past to Support Urdu Literature

A younger generation of women took their cue from these predecessors, but more closely examined the subtleties of human and social relations. From the most mundane activities of women to the contradictions of family and nation these women explore women's lives, and in the process also tell us much about men. Women poets have also experimented in form and style so that they are better able to convey their views

7.1. Parveen Shakir [November 24, 1952- December 26, 1994]

An authority on Urdu's history is prominent poet of Pakistan Parveen Shakir and her work in literature and poetry awarded her Pride of Performance Award which is most prestigious award of Pakistan. Her first volume of poetry named "Khushbo" in 1976 has a great success. Parveen Shakir is

conscious of her grief as a woman, but examines her attraction for exploitative relationships that results from a need for emotional support and fulfillment. Her poetry may be read as an attempt to complicate the vision of Kishvar Naheed and Fehmeedah Riyaz. The element of romanticism is very prominent in her poetry. Unfortunately she died in car accident in 1994.

7.2. Zaheda Hina

Zaheda Hina, is an Urdu writer, columnist, essayist, short story writer, novelist and dramatist. She is the recipient of numerous literary prizes. In 2006, she has been nominated for Pakistan's highest award, the Presidential Award for Pride of Performance. She turned it down in protest against Pakistan's military government.

Some identical such voices is, Abida Batool who collected in book form articles on research techniques, research methodology and editing. Titled 'Fan-e-tadveen', is the book quite useful for research students. On criticism, again we have her other rich contributions in the recent years as well. Razia Fasih Ahmed, a veteran fiction writer and humorist, came up with 'Gul daste aur gul daaire', that is a collection of pen-sketches. She has created vivid pictures of some of the renowned writers, but typos have almost ruined in a couple of sketches. Abida Rahmani's autobiography 'Mujhe yaad hai sab zara zara' is among some of the books that represent these genres in 2013.

7.3. Bano Qudsia

A popular literary figure in Pakistan is Bano Qudsia, who is the most celebrated writer of Urdu literature. Mostly, she is famous in drama writing for television and radio. She is an Author of many books among which Raja Gidh (The King Vulture published in 1984) is best seller in Pakistan. Bano Qudsia is a prolific "Afsana" writer and follows the scheme of writing, which has used the absurd as the principle of framing the protagonist in an indifferent world. These novels portrayed the working of the dynamics of a developing society where man is crushed under the pressure of cruel social mechanism. She born in 1928 and married with famous writer Ashfaq Ahmad. She is still the best female writer in Pakistan.

7.4. Benazir Bhutto [21 June 1953- 27 December 2007]

Prominent among these women is Benazir Bhutto who is the most celebrated political figure in the history of Pakistani politics. She is the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan and re-elected for the post of Prime Minister of Pakistan in 1993. She won United Nation Prize in the field of Human Rights in year 2007 and same year on 27 December she has

been assassinated in Liaquat Bag Rawalpindi. Benazir wrote a book on her life which is named as "Daughter of Pakistan".

8. Recent Women's Support to Urdu Literature

An event "Women in Literature", has been organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and Rawalpindi Arts Council (RAC) in connection with the 4th National Women at Work Festival at the RAC auditorium Wednesday, March 4, 2015. At the occasion, some views have been expressed by the four leading writers and poetess such as Zareen Yaseen, Sarwat Mohyuddin, Nilofar Iqbal and Ayesha Masood. The talk and recitation of poetry and prose have been followed by an interactive session with students and the audience.

Zareen Yaseen, a well-known poet from the USA, has been promoting Urdu literature in the South American states. Speaking on an occasion she says, women's literature has significant role in the social development of the society. Now the women writers are getting breathing space. She is of the view that for a healthy society we need to understand the passion and feelings of the women who play different roles at different tiers. The women's literature has created awareness on their rights and issues as well.

Sarwat Mohyuddin while narrating her story of success says that it is her conscious efforts to excel in life while she has got married at the age of 16. She says it is the urge that helps to recognize one's own potential. Sarwat is specialized in the Sufi poetry and writes in Punjabi, and is often invited by the universities across the globe to lecture on Punjabi poetry.

Nilofar Iqbal is well known for her short stories. She read her story 'Hisab' that reflects the agony of a mother who spent all her life in grooming her children, but they successfully embark on the journey of life, and they neglect their mother. Nilofar, the author of two books, expresses that woman at all levels suffer from the deficit of reward even from their own loved ones.

Ayesha Masood, a popular poetess and columnist, says the senior women writers have sacrificed a lot to ease the journey of young women writers and poetess to be accepted and recognized according to their literary calibre.

9. Pakistani Literature in Abroad

With the migration of Pakistani families to the countries in the West and to the Gulf States, the overseas writings have formed a distinctive category of literature. Sabiha Shah has

portrayed the life of Pakistani engineers and technical workers in the Gulf States in her collection of short stories *Sheeshay ka Saiban* (The Glass Tent, 1990). Bapsi Sidhwa's novels *The Crow-Eaters* (1978), *Ice Candy Man* (1988) and *The American Brat* (1993) describe the life of Parsi families in Pakistan in a transcultural setting. In her novel, *The American Brat*, a young Pakistani girl is exposed to various hazards in New York, and even the life of the Blacks adds fear to strangeness in her experiences of the big city. Farhat Parveen, who is a medical doctor, has given a vivid account of Pakistani and Asian immigrants in her collection of stories *Munjamid* (The Frozen Ones, 1997). She has particularly focused on the challenges faced by Pakistani families in making adjustments in a new and unfamiliar environment. Urdu literature in Pakistan has evolved its own identity, but has also become the socio-cultural document of an era of hope and hardships.

10. Conclusion

Urdu is the official language of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and one of the major most important literary and cultural languages of the subcontinent with upwards of fifty millions native speakers worldwide. Literature illustrates the temporal and physical realities of its context and it is not possible that society's traditional gender roles would change and literature would go on as though nothing has happened. In Urdu literature, a clear change is occurring, reflecting the changing relationships between men and women in our society. This study deals the females' representation in Urdu literature which travelled orally far and wide and found print space in numerous publications. It is just an overview of the works that has been published and it is regretted here that it is possible to mention only a handful of women contributions in these columns due to limited space. Also, most of the works already discussed in the earlier pieces have not been repeated here. Urdu literature in Pakistan has evolved its own identity, but has also become the socio-cultural document of an era of hope and hardships. In many cases, the women writers of Urdu literature in Pakistan have overshadowed their male counter parts. The women have played extremely rewarding role right from the independence of Pakistan to date in the social and democratic development and economic growth through their vibrant roles. We need to remember and celebrate the women's role and contribution that have been significant in our social and economic development. This article provides an opportunity to writers, intellectuals and academics to discuss the challenges being faced by Urdu

language and literature. The main objective is to promote Pakistani literature, to give confidence to young writers, encourage Urdu literature and support creative values in society. The cultural heritage and legacy of our legendary writers should be transferred to the new generation. The package of writing would be supportive to highlight the challenges to Urdu language and literature and devise concrete measures to cope with the situations.

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