

Post 9/11 Scenario: As Depicted In Pakistani Literature

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Abstract:

9/11 is an important and historical incident of human history which which gave birth to a great tragedy. Because of American and NATO attack on Afghanistan a series of horrible incidences are talking place here and our society is facing terrible, hardship, killing bomb blasts and bloody scenes everywhere. A common person has been badly damaged in a star of fear. Our poets and writers are feeling all the horrible and terrible acts and expressing themselves about it in this article we have. We can quote here some specimen from Panjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Pashto and English literature which has been created in Pakistan but specifically Pashto literature can show us a true mirror in this connection. This paper deals with all these quotations.

Key words: 9/11, NATO, Afghanistan, Poets, Pakistan

The incident of 11 September 2001 is an event which has changed completely the socio-political scenario of Indian Sub Continent. Besides these socio-political effects the incident also has permanent effect on the literary scenario and literature of the sub continent which has become its important part. The incident has long lasting and deep effects on all national and local languages of Pakistan. The incident has effects on the English literature of Pakistan as well as International English literature. As the incident has direct contact with politics, literature, history and geography of Pashtuns that is why the effects of this incident can be seen in all literature created in this language. Both prose and poetry has its effect but poetry is highly affected by the incident of 9/11. Such sociopolitical incident can be properly depicted in lyrical poems. That is why a large portion of the Pashto lyrical poetry portrays the effects of this incident. Ghazals is highly based on technical formalities; that is why such topics cannot be properly dealt with in Ghazals but Ghazals are also not untouched with effects of this incident. In this brisk write up the effects of 9/11 incident on Pashto

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Ghazal will be examined but after a short introduction to the background of the incident. So the write up may be divided into the following parts:

1. Short Introduction of 9/11 Event and Taliban
2. Effects of 9/11 on Pakistani Literature
3. Effects of 9/11 on Pashto Literature
4. Effects of 9/11 on Pashto Ghazal

Introduction and background study of the three points will presented and the final one will be discussed in detail.

1. Short Introduction of 9/11 Event and Taliban

As the event took place in America therefore America and other European countries alleges Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaida for this act. The event of 9/11 and its consequential war have the initial remarks as follow:

“On September, 11. 2001 with the collapse of the World Trade Centre, U.S had started the war named as war against terrorism. U.S President George W Bush termed it as an act of terrorism and threatened strong action against the people who had carried out those attacks. It was the Al – Qaida and Osama Bin Laden, who were eventually held responsible for those attacks”.(1)

Due to Al – Qaida and Osama Bin Laden ties with Taliban in Afghanistan Mulla Umer and Taliban Movement also considered as their coalition and allies. It was also alleged that Osama Bin Laden has been hidden in the mountainous area of Afghanistan. On 4th April 1949 NATO was signed by 26 European states along with America in which it was decided that a collective defense mechanism will be used in any case of terrorism or invasion. From 1st April 2009 the membership of the NATO has been increased to 28 due to the inclusion of Albania and Croatia in to it. After 9/11 NATO marched forward in Iraq and Afghanistan. America along with NATO Forces invaded Afghanistan on the pretext that they will search for Al – Qaida leader, Osama Bin Laden in the mountainous area of Afghanistan. The situation arise due to this invasion of America and NATO Forces into Afghanistan and their

conflicts with Taliban provided new stuff for the intellectual and writers\ of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The incident of 9/11 took place in 2001 but Americans have their observation on the government and diplomacy of Al – Qaida and Taliban Movement in Afghanistan. So a short study of Taliban Movement from dawn to dusk may be useful for its understanding. “Taliban’s activities/actions start in the spring of 1994 with the incident when two young girls are kidnapped and 30 Taliban with the help of only 6 guns rescue them and hang commander of the kidnapers” (2).

After that they get strength and marched toward their government in Afghanistan. Their major action starts in 1994. From 1994 to 1996 they succeeded in establishing their strong and stable government in Afghanistan. The picture has been depicted in the following words:

“The Taliban’s first major activity was in 1994 when they marched northward from Maiwand and captured Kandahar city and the surrounding provinces, losing only a few dozen men. They captured a border crossing at Spin Boldak and an ammunition dump from warlord Gulbaddin Hikmatyar on October, 29,----. Over the next three months this hitherto unknown force took control of twelve of 34 provinces, disarming the heavily armed population. Warlords often surrendered without a fight. By September 1996 they had captured Afghanistan’s capital, Kabul.”(3)

To defeat / undermine Taliban Ahmad Shah Massoud invaded them from North in 1997 but was unsuccessful. However, Ahmad Shah Massoud retained his control over Mazar Sharif. Taliban gradually weakened due to their continuous incursion fights with Northern Alliance. Even that NATO marched toward Afghanistan and they connected Taliban to Al – Qaida and finished their government. This background has been clarified in the following extraction/excerpt from a lecture.

“On August 8, 1998 the Taliban recaptured Mazar – I – Sharif, avenging their earlier defeat and creating more international

controversy by killing thousands of civilians and several Iranian diplomats. This offensive left the North Alliance in control of only 10-15% of Afghanistan in north. Thereafter, the Taliban retained control of most of the country until the NATO invasion. On September 9, 2001, a suicide bomber, posing as an interviewer, now widely thought to be connected to Al – Qaida, assassinated Massoud”. (4)

In this way America combined / connected Taliban and Al – Qaida and blamed them both for terrorism and continued their activities against them. When the incident of 9/11 took place they search Osama Ben Ladin – master mind and leader of Al – Qaida –in Afghanistan and in this way dismantle Taliban regime in Afghanistan. After the incident of 9/11 Al – Qaida and Taliban are carrying out their activities against USA. These activities have affected Pakistan completely and other neighbouring countries partially. That is why literature produced in this region present pictorial depiction of these social and political effects.

Prevailing/Present Situation

Effects of Nine Eleven on Pakistan can be traced back to the policies of former US president George W Bush. After George W Bush his successor Barak Hussain Obama took the charge of the office which make the Pak-Afghan intellectual think differently. But the present situation present different picture and it is evident that there is hardly any change in US policies with reference to Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, Obama declare it Pak-Afghan war rather than religious extremism and fanaticism. Chris Kline, a Western intellectual, explain Obama policy in the following words:

“Conventional western public opinion regards the war in Afghanistan as a struggle between NATO and extremist Islamic militants. Since assuming office Barak Obama has redefined the conflict by calling it the Af-Pak war. The US president’s redefinition is recognition that the Taliban’s nerve centre, as well as Al – Qaida’s safe heaven, across Afghanistan’s border in neighbouring Pakistan. In forbidding tribal territories, Waziristan especially, another dimension of the same fierce conflict is

underway with more Pakistani troops thrown into the fray, than the whole of NATO deploys on its side of the northeast frontier.” (5)

Shortly, the literature produced in these two countries must demonstrate the uncertain and vague environment until the flames of this war come to an end.

9/11 and Pakistani Literature

Literature always presents the social scenario of a society. If 9/11 affected international literature all over the world with reference to topics and priorities it also has shown different social and political scenario in the literature created in Pakistan. In this connection, poets and writers generally, regardless of their religious, political, linguistics, and geographical likes and dislikes and discrimination have criticized war, brutality, terrorism, manslaughter and all inhuman attitudes. If they have criticized presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan on one hand, on the other hand they also criticized severely those who have undermined humanity and human dignity through suicide bombing and other inhuman activities and destroying peace and stability of the region.

9/11 has its effects on the literature produced in English, Urdu and other languages of Pakistan, especially, extremism and havoc has been strongly condemned in this literature. In Pakistan few fictions and novels depicts the situation, in which “The Reluctant Fundamentalist”, “No Space for Further Burials”, and “A case of Exploding Mangos” written by Mohsin Hamid, Faryal Ali Gohar, and Muhammad Hanif respectively, can be especially mentioned for reference. In fiction, Asim Butt has worked with special attention.

Similarly, in Urdu fiction the topic has not been dealt with any worth mentioning attention. However, Mustanser Hussain Tarar has been penned a novel, few miscellaneous fictions and few poems in this perspective. In poetry, Kishwar Naheed, a renowned poet, has written on the topic with more concentration and attention but nothing has been written worth mentioning in Urdu literature. However, the topic needs much more concentration and attention.

Other local languages, Sindhi, Saraki, Punjabi, Balochi, has little samples on the topic but there is no major work in any local language. However, literature in Pashto language has dealt with topic with more seriousness and attention as compared to other languages. The reason behind this dealing in Pashto language is obvious that the event directly related to Pashto literature and society. A short summary will be presented with reference to the Pakistani literature depicting the effects of 9/11 and afterward, it will be discussed in the perspective of Pashto literature.

A research paper was presented at SARC Writers Conference inauguration in March 2009 in Agra India, under the title of “Literature in the Times of Terror” published in Frontier Time in which it was observed that, “Like other art forms and mediums of social expression, literature is also a dynamic, evolving collation of human and social experiences. The very fact that there are Pakistani poets and writers challenging the rising tide of extremism and violence regardless of who the originator of such crises may be – is a welcome shift and a testament to the rich heritage of Pakistan’s literary history and its alive present.” (6).

From the excerpt it is evident that Pakistani literature is strongly condemning terrorism in all forms regardless of their planners and executors but when we are experiencing terrorism on our land and people the situation has been depicted in our literature.

Pashto Literature and 9/11:

With reference to the effects of 9/11 on Pashto literature I would refer to an excerpt from the research paper presented at first SARC Writers Conference, Agra. It has been mentioned in the paper that literature in Pashtoon geography of Afghanistan and Pakistan explored new horizons due war like situation. Sabotages of peace and terrorism has become the focal point of Pashto literature. The excerpt says:

“Increasingly regional writings are also making powerful statements of rejection, of the culture of violence for instance, Pashto literature has undergone several changes since the advent of violence

and fundamentalism to the region especially after the Afghan war and the ensuing crisis of nationhood in Afghanistan. Traditional Pashto literature has been nationalist and based on glorification of past by invoking traditions and folklore. This new dimension within Pashto literature is reflective of the changing nature of Pashtun society especially in the context of the NWFP (Khyber Pakhtukhwa) and its surrounding regions". (7).

In the excerpt change of general culture and collective topics and new horizons has been explained in Pashto literature. All these changes reflect terrorism, fright and panic and abuse of human life in Pashtoon regions. Prose and poetry both clearly expose these inhuman phenomena. In fiction the topic has also been treated properly but Tahir Afridi is the most prominent name among other writers. He made this havoc focal point of most fictions. Farooq Sarwar, Quetta Balochistan, has worked on the topic with more concentration and attention, which has been main and fundamental theme of his several fictions and novel "Sagwan". Not only the topic has been dealt in fiction and novels but research and informative prose book and several dissertations have also been written on the topic. In Afghanistan Muhammad Kamal has written a massive book on the incident of 9/11 and Taliban strategy under the title of "Narhay da Topaan pa Ogoo" world on Typhoon's shoulders"

In poetry the effects of 9/11 have depicted in poems and Ghazals, however these effects have become the main topic in Pashto poetry. Most of the poets from the Pashtun region have written poem in this perspective, Pashto Ghazals do not have the same intensity and velour. The fundamental reason behind the fact is that in poem direct and continuous discussion can be made regarding a single topic with more clarity and explanation. On the other hand Ghazal's demands pun, rhyme and rhythm, simile, metaphor, verbosity and other literary accessories which effect clarity and explanation of any topic in discussion. Furthermore, Ghazal is the esthetic expression of romance and fantasy that is why, a poem is more suitable and appropriate way of expression for social, political and epical problems. Therefore, effects of 9/11 are

more vivid in Pashto poems than Ghazals but its glimpses can be seen in certain Ghazals.

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