

Life and Work of Deputy Nazir Ahmed: The First Novelist of Urdu

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ABSTRACT

The personality of Deputy Nazir Ahmed is a blend of ancient and modern elements. He is the first novelist of Urdu Language and his novel “Mirrat ul Uroos” is the first novel of Urdu. His other novels are “Fasana e Muhtala”, “Toba tun Nasoh”, “Roya e Sadiqa” and “Ayama”. There is objectivity present in these novels. Through the medium of his novels, he wanted to reform the nation. From the technical point of view, his novels are also very important.

KEYWORDS: Deputy Nazir Ahmed, Urdu Novel, Mirratul Uroos, Tradition of Urdu Novel

1. INTRODUCTION

Deputy Nazir Ahmed was born in 1831 in village Rehar, District Bajnor, India. His father’s name was Saadat Ali. His family was a Sofi family. He gained his early education at home. Till the age of nine years he got the education of Persian and Arabic from his father. After it, for five years he got education from Nasarullah deputy collector Bajnor in Arabic grammar. Then he came to Dehli and began to live in the mosque of Punjabi Kara (Adeeb, 1934). Deputy Nazir Ahmed got admission in Dehli College. From there with help of famous Arabic scholar Mamlook Ali and the English principal Mr. Taylor he got regular education of Arabic literature, philosophy, Math and English. Completing his education in 1854, he worked as a teacher in a school. In a short time Deputy Nazir Ahmed made a great progress and become deputy inspector. In 1863 he was appointed deputy collector. In the meanwhile he translated a book of English about astronomy. In 1912 he fell seriously ill and left this world on 3rd May 1914.

2. DEPUTY NAZIR AHMED’S WORK IN NOVEL

Deputy Nazir Ahmed did a great written work. He wrote easily and fluently. As a novelist his fame is due to his great novels ‘Mirrat ul Uroos’, ‘Binat un Nash’, ‘Toba tun Nasoh’, ‘Ibn ul Waqt’, ‘Fasana e Muhtala’, ‘Roya e Sadiqa’ and ‘Ayama’ (Farooqi, 1962). In addition to these reformatory novels Deputy Nazir Ahmed wrote particularly in the topic of ethics ‘Muntakhib ul Hikayat’, ‘Chand Pand, and .Moizatul Hassna’ books. He translated the Holy Quran in to Urdu and wrote the proof of creeds of Islam In ‘Alijtahad’. Moreover Deputy Nazir Ahmed wrote many other books and translated some also.

After the freedom fight of 1857, he began his efforts for the advancement of Urdu language. At that time there was no Urdu novel present. It is true, some of the English novels had been translated into Urdu and translated short story was also in a great number. Till then Urdu language was safe from the influence of English language but as soon as British hold their grip on India strong, English language began to flourish. As a result the writers of that age could not avoid the influence of English language.

Deputy Nazir Ahmed is the first man who guided the famous prose writers on the way of novel writing from which they were not familiar till that time. He said that he himself was not inclined to this but when he made a search for good books for his own daughters, he could not succeed. So he was compelled to write such books which may be in the manner of novel and interest and advice is their aim and which may be lead man in his daily life (Pasha, 1990).

A great number of the critics have admitted Deputy Nazir Ahmed as the first Urdu novelist. The novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed partially represent the art of novel. The study of English novel by Deputy Nazir Ahmed created in his works many qualities of novel. In novel writings of Deputy Nazir Ahmed, objectivity is there (Azad, 1981). His aim and objective was to reform the society. It needed piety and observation of religion. He can be compared with Richardson. He resembled him due to his objectivity and reformation. In the writing of Deputy Nazir Ahmed advice and preaching of goodness is apparent but there is also the embodiments of practical life. There is the reflection of

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Deputy Nazir Ahmed's own personality in his novels because he belonged to religious family and it was natural for him to take utmost interest in preaching's and religion. The novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed are equal to that of some of the English novelist of 18th century in view of their status and value.

Deputy Nazir Ahmed has the superiority of being the first one in the history of Urdu of novel. No one can deny this fact. But from the very beginning, he gave Urdu novel some great traditions, which is a great service. But it is a pity this till his services have not been fully acknowledged. Deputy Nazir Ahmed is the first novelist who learnt the construction of Urdu novel, creating a linguistic style in it. He also thought this manner to other novelists. The elements in Deputy Nazir Ahmed's novels which are for storytelling, he tried to give them a style so the story becomes automatically stylish (Hussaini, 1987).

Deputy Nazir Ahmed is a reformer and an artist also. As the art of novel was not popular till that time and Deputy Nazir Ahmed was not familiar with the fact, how ideas and creeds are molded by the art. So he has the behaviour of a reformer and a novelist separately. He has expressed this in the prefaces of different novels although his ideas and beliefs could not give a life giving goal and he could not put the foundation of high ideals and traditions. However he has tried his best to accomplish the mental and emotional needs of his time (Abbas & al., 2017).

2.1 THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NOVEL WRITING OF DEPUTY NAZIR AHMED

Deputy Nazir Ahmed is one the well known and pioneer Novel writer. The main characteristics of his novels are discussed as below

2.1.1 PLOT

The novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed have a basic importance in reference with the plot. The plot has been dealt with in the best way in all his novels as the plot is the basic part of any novel or short story on which the whole building of novel is constructed. The novel of Deputy Nazir Ahmed 'fasanae Mubtala' is more successful than his other novels in plot construction. This novel has been written after a period of ten years from the publishing of his early novels. He remained silent for ten years. This is the cause that the plot of this novel has rightness to a great extent. In the same way in the other novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed a great care has been taken to present a strong and integrated plot.

2.1.2. CHARACTERIZATION

Deputy Nazir Ahmed has paid a great attention to the characterization in his novels. He has chosen the best characters to convey his ideas to the people. The characters of his novels are living and working characters of daily life. In presenting all the characters Deputy Nazir Ahmed has an aim of reformation in view. Some of his characters are clever and cunning and want reformation but there are others who are noble and are on the path truth and wish to instruct others by their character and by their pieces of advice. These characters are ideal and favorite characters of Deputy Nazir Ahmed and through them Deputy Nazir Ahmed wants to reform the whole society.

2.1.3. REALISM

Realism is also an essential element of any novel because the novelist presents the realities of life through his novels. In all the novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed we see the real colours of life. All the characters of his novels seem to be real. All the events taking place in his novel are based on real events, which we see in our daily routine of life and we are very well familiar with them. These events colour the story and the reader feels that he is watching these events with his own eyes. In this way Deputy Nazir Ahmed has made his novels successful through his matchless realism (Bukhari, 1960).

2.1.4. REFORMATION OF THE SOCIETY

The colour of objectivity is seen intensely in the novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed. The basic problem in 'Fasana e Mubtala' is Polygamy. But he has included also many other topics in it. In this way he has presented before the readers reformation of the society in a very successful manner. He has narrated the problems of literacy, upbringing of the children, modern and ancient education, the superstitious traditions of the women, injustice in the division of inheritance, the rights of fellowmen and some other problems. He has mostly presented these problems in background of domestic life. And these problems and their solution have been presented in detail and accuracy. In these novels we see the depth of observation; the events do have the interest and refreshment for the readers.

2.1.5. WRITING STYLE

The style or the way of writing of the novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed is everlasting. He has used such words and phrases in his novels which are used in homes during the daily life and others are those educational and other proverbs which were common at that time in educated and the other common people also.

2.1.6. TOPICS

Deputy Nazir Ahmed takes a great care in choosing his topics. The topics of his novels are the topics of real life. He takes the topic of his novel from the real world. Therefore his novels seem to be a part of real life. And the colour of reality is seen glittering on everywhere. The topic of the most of novels of Deputy Nazir Ahmed is women folk. The cruelties and injustice to the women in society have been exposed in them and rights of women have be brought forward (Ahmed Khan, 1979).

2.1.7. AIM AND OBJECTIVE

When a writer writes a novel or a short story, he has some particular aim and objective. All the novels written by Deputy Nazir Ahmed had an aim in them. Some people say that since he had written these books for the education and upbringing of his daughters, so these have ethical ridiculing. Some people have the opinion that Deputy Nazir Ahmed has narrated the prevailing situation of the Muslims and the teaching their religion so these are not so much beneficial for the other nations.

2.1.8. DIALOGUE

Prior to Deputy Nazir Ahmed, there exist so many short stories and tales but it is a fact that he took the style of dialogue between the characters from the famous poet of Urdu Ghalib. Deputy Nazir Ahmed created some modernity in this connection. In Urdu novel he used the dialogue and made it more interesting and effective.

2.2 MAJOR NOVELS OF DEPUTY NAZIR AHMED

Deputy Nazir Ahmed has written a number of novels in Urdu literature. The main novels are discussed in this section.

2.2.1. MIRRA TUL UROOS

It is the first novel of Deputy Nazir Ahmed. Since Mirratul Uroos was the first book in his own style, so it got a great popularity and the Government awarded the prize of one thousand rupees for it. The topic and the objective of MirratulUroos is education, good manners and housekeeping. The topic of this book is particularly the house hold work (Ahmed, Merrat ul Uroos).

2.2.1.1. PLOT OF MIRRA TUL UROOS

The concept of reformation of society is fully dominant in the plot of Mirrat ul Uroos. It is obvious that the aim of Deputy Nazir Ahmed in spite of presenting a book of new style was not to promote story telling or giving any other shape. So he did not care for the continuity and relation of the events, creation of interest and suspense and creation of climax in the story. The preaching molviat is not justified in a short preface of the book. So after preface there is a long prologue in which light has been thrown on the reformation of house hold work and the education of the women folk. In short it is dry and simple narration in which objectivity is dominant. If some unnecessary details, some unwanted events and so much out of place pieces of advice are separated or struck off from the story, pretty good plot can be established (Ali Arshad, 1984).

2.2.1.2. CHARACTERIZATION IN MIRRA TUL UROOS

Mirrat ul Uroos consists of two important characters. Two real sisters Asghari and Akbari are there, who are opposite to one other in view of character and action. In addition to them two real brothers are their husbands. The father of Akbari and Asghari, Door Andesh Khan, their brother Kher Adnesh Khan, Muhammad Fazil and sister in law Mehmooda etc., have short characters. Mama Azmat and Be Hajjan keep some importance due to their cleverness and hypocrisy. Tamasha Khanam, Diyanat un Nisa and Hazarimal are seen as secondary characters. The two important characters of Mirrat ul Uroos show that the two real sisters have different dispositions. In their nature there is a difference of earth and the sky. One is the collection of evils and the other is the paragon of goodness.

They have been brought up in the same atmosphere. In spite of all this the contradiction between their characters is not only wonderful but also unbelievable. In the male characters of *Mirrat ul Uroos*, Muhammad Aqil and Muhammad Kamil both are important. Booth has been married to Akbari and Asghari who are quite different from each other but there is no much difference in the character of the brothers. There is gradual progress in the character of Muhammad Kamil but collectively he has all the characteristics of his elder brother Muhammad Aqil. Both the brothers represent the young men of their age and no one up lifts himself from the common level of personality. Muhammad Aqil is a simple hearted young man with little intelligence. The narration of his intelligence is although present in the story of Akbari but in the light of the events he seems to be average intelligence. He is unable to face the bad temper of Akbari. So he gets separate from his parents according to her orders. He does not understand the cunning tactics of Be Hajjanin spite of being a man, neither has he forbid Akbari to mix with her. However his character has ups and downs of the life. On the other hand some mistakes of Muhammad Kamil add to the attraction of the character. He is a playful and careless young man. Even after the marriage he is so childish that he is desirous to use firework on eve of Shabe Barat. He wastes all his time in playing at cards, chosar and chess.

2.2.1.3. WRITING THE SURROUNDINGS AND BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE IN MIRRA TUL UROOS

Mirrat ul Uroos has mostly ideal characters but the surroundings in which they breathe is not magical or ideal but is realistic to a great extent. Deputy Nazir Ahmed has like his other novels presented the life of the middle class living in Dehli in his novels. The surroundings of the house of Muhammad Kamil and Muhammad Aqil are different from the father of Asghari and Akbari. In this way different surroundings of the houses of the same class come before the readers. In addition to Asghari the environment of Husn Ara's house has also been presented. her talk to the maid servants exposes the rudeness of HusnAra. The talk of Shahzamani Bagum makes a different environment, which is that of rich families of the age of Deputy Nazir Ahmed. On the whole it can be said that efforts have be made to write the environment in the best way. Deputy Nazir Ahmed creates a fair atmosphere and he is expert in it but his objective comes in the way. Moreover he is not familiar with the atmosphere building therefore he has not given so much attention to it. However he has introduced the novel writing with the real and natural atmosphere (Ashraf, 1994).

In *Mirrat ulUroos*, Deputy Nazir Ahmed is basically, a reformer and a novelist. But he also admits that the aim of writing *Mirrat ul Uroos* was to provide the girls of the common home with instructions regarding house hold work and good manners. Deputy Nazir Ahmed was not satisfied with the status of women in society, and he takes ignorance for the cause of their disgrace. The women of Deputy Nazir Ahmed's own family were almost facing the same circumstances that were related to middle class Muslim families. Deputy Nazir Ahmed made his own house the center of reformation and wrote a novel for his elder daughters, in which the education and ignorance, good manners and bad manners were presented through these characters. This fact is not hidden that Deputy Nazir Ahmed was unfamiliar with art and its objective. He creates his novel from his aim. He chooses and creates characters and events and at last by these carries the novel to the end. From two letters of Door Andesh Khan, making of great preaching speech is very funny. Moreover time to time Deputy Nazir Ahmed cannot stop from preaching. This makes the remaining story uninteresting. But his real aim is to explain his own ideas. In *Mirrat ul Uroos*, in addition to continuous pieces of advice there is the instruction to avoid over spending and the education of thrift. These teachings are no doubt Islamic teachings but in this book Deputy Nazir Ahmed has repeated them so frequently that some critics think it his materialism and the desire of hoarding and the others see the pictures of Deputy Nazir Ahmed's own personal life. On the whole the presentation of objective has not successfully done in *Mirrat ul Uroos* as where there is a preaching for the others. The novel seems to be losing interest.

2.2.2. TOBA TUN NASOH

The year of writing *Toba tun Nasoh* is 1873. The plot of *Toba tun Nasoh* reflects the inner struggle between the novelist and national reformer but on the whole the novelist wins and the reformer seems to retreat to the back rows. The beginning of the novel is very interesting and has touching scene. In *Toba tun Nasoh* characterization finds more place than the novels of early period of Deputy Nazir Ahmed. In this novel the characterization is more forceful and better. There is no doubt that the characters of *Toba tun Nasoh* are not completely real but their human shape comes more vividly. Being ideal to a limit they seem men to us. In characters of Naeema and Kaleem the evils which are presented by Deputy Nazir Ahmed, have the objective to brighten the good characters. Another objective of showing evil characters is that to make the people learn from them and to reform themselves. In creating the characters, Deputy Nazir Ahmed keeps the demands and the needs of his own time. Naeema is a rude and obstinate

girl which has been brought in oriental environment. In spite of in difference to the religion and the hate for the traditional civilizations she cannot go outside the local civilization. But Deputy Nazir Ahmed does not do so. Perhaps this is the cause that he is sympathetic to Naeema instead of hating her. And when repenting on all her evils becomes peaceful noble and sane woman and comes again before us, we forget all her previous mistakes and began to like her. Deputy Nazir Ahmed has presented a sample of the Muslim women belonging to a particular group in the shape of Naeema. This part of the society consists of wealthy but illiterate Muslim ladies. They have been indulged in to a false life due to easiness and lack of wisdom. When Naeema argues with her mother, this characteristic of her character come to light that she quarrels with her mother with her oily tongue and when she is defeated by the arguments she shows her rigidness. And at last like other ignorant women gives up taking meals and insists on accepting his claim. All her manners are the cause of creating life freshness and reality. Kaleem is also of the same kind. Deputy Nazir Ahmed has presented him in the shape of an obstinate, showy and selfish man. He sells all his property on seducing by Mian Fitratan and after it distributes all the wealth among his concerts and in merry making. All this is according to his strayed nature. The talent of creating his poetry also comes before us. Sometimes this capability comes to help him because the people encouraging literature have been present in every society. He likes an easy choice and wakes late at noon. He has reserved two of his rooms of the house for his own convenience. His all these habits have become so rigid in him that after objecting Nasoh, he flies in to a rage and the advice of mother and brother has no effect on him. But the friend whom he trusted also betrays him. At last after leaving the house he has to spend his first night in a deserted mosque where he satisfied his hunger with parched grams and water. His rebellion not only creates interest and suspense in the novel but makes him more powerful living and natural character as compared with Nasoh (Sadiqi, 2008).

2.2.3. IBN UL WAQT

The novel *Ibn ul Waqt* consists of 128 chapters. The division of chapters is different from the stories of past times. The division of different chapters of the novel is ideal. Where ever Deputy Nazir Ahmed leads an idea he creates a new character there. This division is commonly objected that it stops the continuity of the novel. But this fact cannot be neglected that the aim of the novel of Deputy Nazir Ahmed is not story telling but preaching. The medium chosen by him, its nature and all others things are according to his aim (Ahmed, *Ibn ul Waqt*, 1980).

From the technical point of view *Ibn ul Waqt* falls in the category of character novel. The building of novel gets shape from the character of a personality. From his action and reaction the events of different nature are created and make their effect for the others. The topic of the novel is the gradual progress of a personality. The first chapter of the novel is informative and in it the writer has presented the circumstances quite after 1857 and has criticized them. The situation of the novel is old city of Dehli and the social panorama of the old city of Dehli in which new aptitudes and ideas are being promoted due to English rule and the education in Madrasas. Under the influence of some new educational curriculums and under psychological disposition *Ibn ul Waqt* began to like the foreign civilization. There were the feelings of criticism in his nature from the very beginning but at the time of freedom fight when *Ibn ul Waqt* saves the life of a Noble, he gets a high position in the first five chapters of the novel. There are so many examples of artistic beauty, storytelling and study of society. At the time of freedom fight of 1857 the depiction of panic, anxiety and helplessness by him is a forceful epic of the revolution of a civilization. In this background the characters of *Ibn ul Waqt* and Noble expose the artistic beauty of Deputy Nazir Ahmed. The foundation of novel is put on the change in the character of *Ibn ul Waqt*. All the other circumstances and events take birth from the same one event. By separating imaginative part of the novel from its emotional part continuity is achieved. But its imagination is affected very much. The common objection on *Ibn ul Waqt* is that it is an incomplete novel and the events do not reach a destination. From the talk of *Hujat ul Islam* it seems that the novel is still incomplete. In this connection the last sentence of the novel creates this misunderstanding. *Hujat ul Islam* debating with *Ibn ul Waqt* divides Islam in two parts. After describing the nature of first part as for as the other part is concerned that is a choice of a particular sect from all the other sects of Islam postpones it to another time. We understand from this sentence that Deputy Nazir Ahmed wanted to write something more but he postponed it and it is a misunderstanding (Sarmast, 1973).

It should not be neglected during the study of *Ibn ul Waqt* that all the efforts in writing *Ibn ul Waqt* were for the national reformation and betterment instead of individual betterment. To save the life of noble in 1857 was mere an accident. He was liberal from the very beginning. His companionship was a human need but common people think the relations between *Ibn ul Waqt* and Noble make him a non-Muslim. In the reformatory program of *Ibn ul Waqt*, it was the aim at first place to make religious reforms to finish prejudices, to spread modern knowledge, to create scientific interest and to finish misunderstandings before the rulers and ruled ones so that the Muslims may get once again their honourable and high position in the world.

SUMMARY

Deputy Nazir Ahmed was not only brought up in an ancient environment but he was fully benefitted with the modern education. Because of this fact along with old traditions, his novels reflect the colours of modern times also. He wrote his novels under a particular objectivity. He always remained against the rotten values and traditions of the past and gave the lesson of ethics in his novels.

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