



## Pashto Contemporary Writer: Nasir Ahamd Ahmadi's Contribution in Novel and Short Story Writing

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### ABSTRACT

There is abundant Pashto contemporary literature throughout the country produced by staunchest Afghan writers who depicted the literary, social, cultural, political, and religious aspects of the society. Yet, there is little information, particularly in English language, about

the literary life and contribution of Nasir Ahamd Ahmadi. The study aims to disseminate the biographical and literary information about Ahmadi in English. It also provides his literary contribution in modern Pashto literature. The analysis revealed that Lat. Ahmadi was famous for his Pashto novels because of his sweet, local color, and simple linguistic terms. He was a fluent and eloquent writer of Pashto modern novels and short stories which are written for the purpose of reforming Afghan society morally. And, he has published more than twenty five works among which Jojo (2013), Baghdadi Pir (2016), and Akh Watana! (2018) novels had been a lot of popular. The data were primarily collected through Arts students' monographs in Pashto Departments including some personal communications. Some books were also reviewed in the central library of at Kandahar University for data collection which was analyzed thematically and translated into English professionally. The findings suggest that many Pashtun critics and students love Ahmadi's artistic works especially the novels and short stories. It seems quite essential that not only his literary life and achievements have to be researched in native languages but it is significant that one of his best novels needs to be translated into English language for a large number of international audiences.

**Keyword:** Pashto Contemporary Literature, Novel Writing, Short Story Writing.



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## 1. Introduction

Pashto literature, rich in oral and poetic traditions, has seen significant evolution in prose fiction over the past few decades. Among the contributors to this transformation is Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi, a leading contemporary writer, whose novels and short stories have captivated readers and critics alike. His works stand out for blending traditional Pashtun values with contemporary issues, and for expanding the literary scope of Pashto storytelling. This research seeks to evaluate Ahmadi's influence on modern Pashto literature through a critical examination of his biography including his narrative style, thematic concerns, and literary

achievements. The great feature distinguishing a novel from other piece of arts is that it has the power to make the secret life visible. The novel is the most important gift of bourgeois, or capitalist, civilization to the world's imaginative culture. It is its great adventure and it is a discovery of man (Fox, 1956) and it is an extended narrative work of fiction that often focuses on character development and complex plotting (Abrams, 2012). In addition to it, a novel is a storytelling medium that allows authors to explore 'the secret life' which each of us lives inwardly (Forster, 1927). The novel writing is the process of crafting a long, fictional narrative in prose, focusing on elements like character development, plot structure, themes, and setting. It involves creating a cohesive story that explores human experiences and emotions. Every narrative, we are reading in a language, must have a value and if we write it, we will write it with a value in mind. So, all prose literature is more valuable, whether it is a short story, novel, or romance (Saydi, 2012). Hashemi defines a novel as, "it is a word derived from Italian *Novella*" (Hashemi, 2010, p. 106) and it is not a creative literary genre of Pashto literature.

The Pashto novel writing did not begin directly by novels but initially it emerged as a translation of Urdu language novels that is, Pashto novels are greatly and particularly influenced by Urdu in the last decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Koza Pashtunkhwa (Peshawar, Pakistan). Two Urdu novels 'Mart Ul Oros' and Tuba Ul Nosuh' by Nazir Ahmad are the most remarkable novels that are translated into Pashto first by Mia Hasib Gul with the name of 'Naqsh e Naqin' in 1876 and the second with the same name by Mohammad Usuf in 1905 both of which were published in Peshawar. Later on, the Pashtun writers, there in Pashtunkhwa, were acquainted with the art of writing novels. The first man credited for creating the first Pashto novel is Sayed Rahat Zakheili who wrote his novel in form of a short story with the name of 'Nawal Da Marokhay' [The Marokhay Novel] which was first published in 1910 in 190 pages. Later, the first perfect novel in Pashto was 'Piaghla' [The Miss] by Sahibzada Mohammad Yunas published in 1950. How did the art of writing Pashto novel was traditionalized in present day Afghanistan is directly connected to Pashtunkhwa. In Afghani literature, the novel also emerged primarily through a translation from Persian language by Professor Abdul Hai Habibi who translated the great novel of Victor Hugo 'Binawayan' into Pashto with the name of 'Biwazlan' which was published in Tolo-e-Afghan newsletter in 1932. There is one supposition that is it was a Dari translation). The first Pashto novel was published by Burhanuddin Kashki in 1938 with the name of Patta Mina [The Secret Love] in Afghani literature in Pashto language (Hashemi, 2010). The art of Pashto novel writing at this stage in the world of fiction is amazingly evolved and presently, there are various types of Pashto novels and there are numberless readers of it throughout the country.

In the contemporary Pashto literature, there are effective and creative novels that portray the cultural, social, political, religious, philosophical, and other aspects of Afghan society. There are many types in Pashto language either including romantic novel, science fiction novel, historical novel, theological novel, didactical novel, spiritual or psychological novel, erotic or sexual novel, spying or detective novel, police novel, dramatic novel, political novel (Bashardost, 2018). There are tens of best Pashto novelists and short story writers for example, the pioneer of an artistic short story writer is Gul Pacha Ulfat whose most frequent themes were love, traditions, societal transformation, and so on. Khadim Muhammad Akbar, Rahmat Shah Sayel, Zaitoon Bano, Hamza Shinwari, Sayeed Ahmad Shah, Nazir Ahmad Shakir, and other names are also worth mentioning. Among the Afghan novelists, the very contemporary novelist is Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi who won the attention of almost every educated Afghan youth.

### *1. Review of the Relevant Literature*

This famous writer of Afghanistan, Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi, is considered to be a famous writer in Pashto narrative literature due to his simple, flowing and figurative language. In a very short time, more than 25 literary works were published, which some writers call that it is his commitment and intention to writing (Selab, 2022). According to Mohibullah Zaghham, Ahmadi's most important characteristic was his imaginative and pictorial prose. He also adds that his prose was like watching a movie, seeing everything, understanding it with all the senses such as, hearing sounds, tasting, touching the tongue and smoothly that is, it addresses five senses. He also praises Ahmadi's vivid, sensory-rich prose and the incorporation of unique dialect words, enhancing the Pashto language. Moreover, Ahmadi's novels encompass diverse genres such as detective, historical, police, and love stories, reflecting societal realities (Zaghham, 2022). Another perfection of Ahmadi was that he would use some words of his dialect in stories that are not found in other dialects. So, it gradually increases the vocabulary in the language. Furthermore, the basic elements of a novel like a story, dialogue, plot, characters, language, scenery, plot, passion, message and, feeling are all explained very clearly by Ahmadi which are the results of his personal actions and efforts (Omari, 2020).

The late Ahmadi did not spare himself in transmitting his thoughts and reforming the society and his pen was always dedicated to drawing letters. Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi himself said that in every writing, be it a

short story or a novel, two aspects should be taken into consideration. One is that the reader should enjoy it, which encourages him to read and the other is that it should have a moral lesson. What I write should have a big message and some small messages as well, there should also be something for the reform of the society (Ahmadi, 2011) as quoted by (Katib, 2020). After Ahmadi started writing short stories, novels and other prose works which are very popular in Pashto literature, he became one of the unique writers in the field of artistic prose (Nasrat, 2017). Jawed declares that Ahmadi had been written his novels for all strata of the society. All people can read and understood his language because it is very simple and common to everyone. He always wrote about the topics people could relate to their daily lives. He did not look at writing from the point of view of zeal, he considered it seriously and he was a responsible writer (Jawed, 2022). Najeeb Mayar writes that Ahmadi was a writer of young generation and inherited abundant and valuable legacy in his shorter age. He with reference to Haroon Hakimi, an assistant of the department of the Art and Culture in Ministry of Information and Culture, also pens that Ahmadi created many, valuable, magnificent, and elegant short stories. Ahmadi has sustained the intellectual enlightenment, construction of mindset, and patriotism in his works with sweet tone. Yet, there are many stories that needed to be documented in history and there are many histories that needed to be written in the form of stories (Mayar, 2021).

### *Biographical Background*

Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi was born on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 1974 in the village of Malik Ghulam Rasool, Qarabagh District, Ghazni Province of Afghanistan which was considered the center of Islamic civilization in the year 2013. His father's name is Fat-ullah and belongs to Kharoty Pashtun tribe (Bismel, 2018), (Popal, 2019) & (Selab, 2022). Furthermore, according to Mohammad Rafi, who is the nephew of Ahmadi says, "Ahmadi had five children i.e. a son Perwaiz Ahmad and four daughters Mina, Arezo, Madina, and Lima" (M. Rafi, personal communication, April 3, 2024).

Ahmadi primarily started education in his village's mosque and then was enrolled in Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi High School in 1980. He continued it until third grade because he moved to Kabul. There were some reasons behind this. The first was his family was affected by the civil war in the country and the second was that his father was on duty in a private company in Kabul. He settled in Khushal Khan Mina, Kabul along with his family. He enrolled again in Spin Kala High School and continued his education until ninth grade in the same school. Consequently, he transferred himself to Habibi High School where he was graduated in 1991 (Bismel, 2018). In 1992, due to the war in Kabul, his family went back to the village. Ahmadi started working as a teacher in Khan Kala Secondary School where he taught history and geography subjects for two consecutive years. Then, he went to Peshawar (Pakistan) where he studied a short course in the field of agriculture just for one year which was sponsored by District Education Authority - DEA organization. Later on, he was appointed as an employee in the same organization and served for two years (Bismel, 2018).

Ahmadi, as many other Pashtuns, had very scarce opportunities for education. He hoped to complete his higher education but the situation did not allow him. During the first regime of Taliban, he was finally succeeded in taking part in the entrance exam (Kankor) and was qualified to be admitted to the Faculty of Agriculture at Kandahar University in 1997 (Malamat, 2021). He studied there only for a year. His academic journey became incomplete due to a series of problems (Katib, 2020) (Najib, 2022). So, he went to Iran as a laborer and worked until 2001. He returned to homeland and started working in the educational department of BBC Radio until 2005. At first, he was just a producer and then he became he editor of the featured publications for children and adults until to the end of his life (Selab, 2022).

Ahmadi started working with the media and emerged as a journalist. In the field of journalism, he started working with the educational department of BBC Radio and is still working in the same organization. He is famous for being a writer of sweet stories therefore his short stories and novels have attracted the attentions of many readers. One of the characteristics of Ahmadi's stories and novels is that there are many imageries in the novels and they have a rural color (Zagham, 2022) And, Ahmadi's vivacity was reading novels and short stories. Nevertheless, he also loved playing football and cricket and most importantly he sometimes has also devoted his time to painting (Bismel, 2018).

According to Ahmadi, as I child, I used to listen to my grandmother who was telling me stories with love. When became teenager, I loved short stories and novels. At that time, a classmate of mine, named Hafeezullah, had a personal library at home where all kinds of books were available. I would sometimes visit it for short stories and novels. Arsen Lupin's books were very popular which I read the most. Ahmadi says that one day, my older brother found a hot topic and told me that if you were a writer, you would write a story on

it. I was inspired about it a lot and tried to write. It was my first time I wrote a short story. I was living a village and there no one could understand techniques of writing. Once Muhammad Saddiq Pasarlay, the Pashto poet and writer, came to our house, I read the story to him. He enjoyed it and marked few items to be modified (Katib, 2020) and he motivated me a lot and took it to Kabul for printing. When Ahmadi's first story was published, it was a great encouragement to start writing stories and novels. He turned towards writing. Few years later, he wrote and translated a number of books (Bismel, 2018) (Malamat, 2021). The published novels are include: 1. Boda Aw Da Lewano Plonna [The Old Man and the Footprints of Wolves, 2006] was published by Danish Publishing Society; 2. Rana (2008); 3. Burbukey [The Tornado, 2009]; 4. Khunkar [The Murderer, 2010]; 5. Yawa Khabara Derta Kawam [I'll Tell You One Thing, 2012]; 6. Aghzan Sem [The Thorny Fence, 2012]; 7. Ranga Ghwagona [Jojo or Colored Ears, 2013] and its second edition in 2021; 8. Zaro (2015); 9. Nika [The Grandfather, 2016]; 10. Baghdadi Pir [David Jones, 2016]; 11. Patan (2018); 12. Akh Watana! [Oh My Homeland!, 2018]; 13. Taal [The Swing, 2019]; 14. Da Ghanne Zala [The Nest of the Spider, 2021] are published by Momand Publishing Society. And, his prose work 15. Razey Che Kesa Waleko (Let's Write Short Story) was published in 2011. Furthermore, the collections of his short stories are: 16. Sara Seley [A Calm Sigh, 2005]; 17. Mina [The Love, 2006]; and 18. Da Wawri Saray [The Snow Man, 2009] were published by Momand Publishing Society but 19. Ashar (The Teamwork, 2017) was published by Quetta Institute Publishing Society. He has written some biographies that include 20. Abu Raihan Al-Biruni (2018); 21. Musa Shafiq (2019); 22. Maiwandwal (2019); and 23. Katib Hazara (2019) which are four biographies were published by Kitabshar Publishing Society. Mr. Ahmadi has also translated some books such as 24. Pa Palsafa Ke Tal Patte Peshey [The Perpetual Events in Philosophy, 2013] and 25. Da Mujezay Teega [The Stone of Miracle, 2014] were also published by Momand Publishing Society. He has one work which is not published yet by the name of 26. Tor Mar Da Mashomano Lapara (The Black Snake for the Children).

His use of modern narrative techniques such as internal monologue, flashbacks, and nonlinear storytelling marks a departure from traditional storytelling methods. His characters are multidimensional and reflect the complexities of life in Afghanistan. This works mainly delves into the psychological and social experiences of a Pashtun youth navigating war, family, and identity. His narratives often highlight the impact of conflict on ordinary lives, giving voice to marginalized communities. As Saeed writes that Ahmadi has made honorary attempts for the enrichment of Pashto literature particularly Pashto novel writing. He wrote great novels for Afghan readers to call them for balance, moderation, and the development of Afghanistan (Saeed, 2021).

Ahmadi passed away on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 in Kabul hospital due to Covid-19 pandemic. He was hospitalized for 10 days (Shafaq, 2022) while he was in a coma for three days (Karimi, 2021) and died at age 47 (Saeed, 2021). After Ahmadi's death, many writers and fans of his published novels, published messages of condolence on social media and all the people who were heard about him were very unhappy about his death, because many of his fans were just waiting for his new novels to read and enjoy it, but unfortunately everything went with his death. In his last days of his life he was writing the novel under the name of "Da Ghanne Zala" (The Spider's Nest) and then he completed it and sent it for publishing (Selab, 2022).

## **2. Method**

This study entitled 'The Pashto Contemporary Writer: Nasir Ahamd Ahmadi's Contribution in Novel and Short Story Writing' employed a methodology which is based on the qualitative approach to explore the biographical description of the Afghan famous novelist Ahmadi. The approach emphasizes gathering and analyzing textual data from various sources, including theoretical literature, Pashto departments' monographs, and personal communications, to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic. The data collection process involved two methods. The library method was employed for the literature review of the relevant academic articles, books, and monographs related to the life and works of Ahmadi. And, the translation method was employed so that English information would be disseminated for the international readers. The most relevant data for the topic were reviewed in native language, Pashto. The texts and information supporting the topic were translated into simple English and then reviewed by other professionals in the department. After the data collected, key topics observed included the real contribution of Mr. Ahmadi in Pashto literature especially the novels and short stories. The real cultivation of seeds for the habit of reading novels in Pashtun society. Ahmadi's real impact not only in novels but in translations and biographies of the prominent figures. The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The analysis aimed to present actionable insights for future Pashto novelists and short story writers to be popularized in the whole world through English. Finally,

all data collection activities adhered to ethical research guidelines. Secondary data from published sources were appropriately cited to maintain academic integrity. This methodology ensures a thorough and reliable information about biographical account of the writer Ahamdi and his contribution to Pashto literature. It also offers valuable guidance for researchers in the field of literature.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

#### *3.1 Result*

In the result, the Pashto contemporary literature in the second decade of this 21<sup>st</sup> century is evolving more than ever before, particularly, in the aspect of novels and short stories. It is very evident when attention is paid to the rise of the art of Pashto novel writing in the late of 19<sup>th</sup> century where Pashto novels emerged through translations from the neighboring languages such as Urdu and Persian (Hashemi, 2010). Based on some communications with the students of Pashto literature at Kandahar University, observing the present literary scenario of the Afghanistan, many young Afghan writers throughout the country strive to get their subjective and objective views published in many literary genres but of prime importance is the novels. It is evident that there is a lack of literacy either among Pashtuns in general but many strong-minded and determined writers and researchers tried to change it by writing various types of Pashto proses such as essays, stories, short stories, novellas, novels, romances, and others. The pioneer of an artistic short story writer was Ulfat whose frequent themes were love, traditions, and societal transformation. Others included Akbar, Sayel, Bano, Shinwari, Sayeed Ahmad Shah, and Shakir. Among these young writers is Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi who has really enthused many Pashto speaking readers by creating his artistic novels portraying the social, cultural, political, and religious dimensions of Afghan society. On the basis of Arts students' monographs, it was found that Ahmadi in his short literary life (2005-2019) was able to author and translate fundamental novels, short stories, and biographies in 2000s and 2010s and awakened the spirit of literariness of Pashtun readers. Reviewing his biographical account, he was not a graduate of the Faculty of Letters but used to be only a fresher of Agriculture Faculty at Kandahar University. He was bestowed an extraordinary talent in writing novels Pashto language (Shadan, 2017); (Nasrat, 2017); (Bismel, 2018); (Popal, 2019); (Malamat, 2021); (Karimi, 2021); (Najib, 2022); (SayedAhmad, 2022); & (Selab, 2022).

Ahmadi's novels stand out for their realism, emotional depth, and rich cultural context and he has employed all the essential elements of novel writing (Omari, 2020). Ahmadi's short stories reflect sharp observations of human nature and society. His collections cover themes such as love, betrayal, honor, injustice, and resilience. Ahmadi's writing is characterized by its strong thematic focus on: 1) Depicting the psychological trauma and socio-political implications of prolonged war, 2) Exploring the tension between traditional Pashtun values and modern influences, 3) Challenging societal norms regarding women through strong female characters, and 4) Addressing issues like corruption, inequality, and displacement. His narrative style is realistic, utilizing vivid imagery, symbolism, and local dialects to create authenticity.

#### *3.2 Discussion*

Ahmadi's significance in the field of Pashto contemporary literature no only lies in the volume of his literary output but also in his role as a transitional figure in Pashto contemporary literature. His short story writing bridges the gap between classical and contemporary modes, fostering a simple prose tradition that resonates with modern sensibilities in the country. In a literary tradition, Ahmadi elevated the status of the novel and short story. His influence is evident not only in literary discourse but also in how readers perceive contemporary Afghan realities through literature as Zaghham argues that his pictorial prose, which was like watching a movie, and his use of local color or dialect in stories are the greatest characteristics of him (Zaghham, 2022) and Jawed also engraves that all people are able to read and understood his language because of his simple and flowing text (Jawed, 2022). Ahmadi among other novelists and short story writers is the one who really became famous through his extraordinary novels for instance *Jo Jo* 2013, *Baghdadi Pir* or *David Jones* 2016 and *Akh Watana!* 2018 in his short literary life as Mayar confirms that he was a writer of young generation and inherited abundant and valuable legacy in his shorter age (Mayar, 2021). Besides, Ahmad was the one who was publishing a novel after another and he is in a position in Pashto literature has created and published volumes of novels in a short time (Shafaq, 2022). Moreover, his writings contributes to cultural preservation by recording oral traditions, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions within modern narratives as Jawed inscribes that Ahmadi had written his novels for all the strata of Afghan society. He balances moral reflection with literary artistry, making his stories not only enjoyable but intellectually and emotionally

enriching (Jawed, 2022). This study is limited to analyze only the Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi's biographical account and his literary contribution in contemporary Pashto literature particularly novels and short stories.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides invaluable understandings of this biographical description of Nasir Ahamd Ahmadi who has carved a distinct place in Pashto literature through his innovative novels and short stories. Ahmadi in his young age, as a modern Pashto writer for Afghanistan, has written down twenty-six works among which there are 15 novels, 4 short stories, 4 biographies, and 3 translations that affirm his pivotal role in shaping contemporary Pashto literature and encourages further scholarly engagement. In fact, there were neither his siblings nor any other family members who had acquaintance with writing literature as such but he was the only one in his whole family who was bestowed a natural ability to produce great literary pieces of literature particularly novels in Pashto language even though he did not literally attend any Faculty of Letters or Arts but joined Faculty of Agriculture at Kandahar University only for a year. Many young readers are inclined to have read all his literary works; the novels in particular. While this study focused narrowly on his biography and his literary achievements, the insights about his literary world and critical reviews for his literary pieces can be extended more broadly when Afghan researchers and critics write about him and his literature with Pashto language. They will surely pave the way for young Pashtun writers to produce literature like his. By addressing critical themes and experimenting with narrative structure, Ahamdi has modernized Pashto prose while maintaining its cultural integrity. His influence is evident in the works of younger writers and in the growing recognition of Pashto fiction in academic and literary spheres. Bearing in mind the present Pashto contemporary literature, researchers and critics are suggested to investigate more about his literary works and find out the aesthetic and artistic values of each of his work. Furthermore, this study may not be sufficed in respect to the literary life and contribution of Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi. Therefore, further exploration and investigation is needed to get the secrecy of his tendency into the world of his literariness. Each work of him needs to be critiqued and researched for further elaboration.

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