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# URDU LITERATURE AT THE WORLD FORUM: NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE AND URDU/HINDI RECOGNITION

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# URDU LITERATURE AT THE WORLD FORUM: NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE AND URDU/HINDI RECOGNITION

## **Abstract:**

Urdu language is well-known for literary beauty and other linguistic as well as social factors. Over centuries Urdu/Hindi has gone through many cultural, political and linguistic changes. Urdu language has also changed in some ways of spoken and written forms. Despite the long history and literary power of Urdu, no Urdu author received a Nobel Prize in literature. Some data is presented about the trends in awarding Nobel Prize for literature. This article analyzes and highlights pathways for Urdu/Hindi literature at the world forum. The pathways emerging from connecting various fields and incorporating new linguistic frames can open innovative ways for Urdu/Hindi literature. The new trends of genres of literature are also briefly discussed in the context of Urdu/Hindi.

Urdu language is well-known for literary beauty and as an amazing linguistic treasure with enriched history. Some people call Urdu the linguistic Taj-Mahal of India. According to TIME magazine:

“Can 2 billion people be wrong? The music, movies and literature of South Asia are the most popular in the world. Now America is falling under their spell.”

(TIME, Canadian Edition. May 2004. pp. 34)

Over centuries Urdu/Hindi has gone through many cultural, political and linguistic changes. Urdu language has also changed in some ways of spoken and written forms. The use of metaphors and poetic themes, the sociolinguistic frames and the code mixing factors have changed the current form of Urdu literary texts in multiple ways. Urdu is also popular in media for many poetic and linguistic representations.

Despite the long history and literary power of Urdu, no Urdu author was nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature between the years 1962 and 1966 (Exploring those reasons in-depth with a robust framework can itself be a topic for research study). The “Archives” information on the Nobel Prize website currently show the results of nominations made for Nobel Prize for literature in the years 1962 to 1966. The Nobel Prize website only gives access to older records; therefore other recent names can not be researched. Nobel Prize nominations are not disclosed for 50 years. According to the current stipulations, Nobel Prize is only given to a living person.

For details: <http://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/literature/>

In the year 2008, Urdu-Hindi was mentioned in the Nobel Lecture. How! The Urdu language novel “aag ka darya” by *Qura Tul Ain Haider* was mentioned by a Nobel Prize winner: Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio. He also mentioned Hindi language—a Mauritian novelist Abhimanyu Unnuth, for his writing *Lal passina (Sweating Blood)*.

For details: [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2008/clezio-lecture\\_en.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2008/clezio-lecture_en.html)

If the available data for the genre of literature which were awarded the Nobel Prize is compared, then prose and poetry take the first two positions

**Nobel Prize Literature awarded by genre, as of 2016**  
109 totals from 1901 to 2016 for Literature category

No	Genre	Count	Percentage
1	Drama	13	11.3%
2	History	2	1.83%
3	Philosophy/Essay writing	3	2.7%
4	Poetry	34	31.1%
5	Prose	77	70.06%

One Nobel laureate may be listed in more than one genre

For details: [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/genres.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/genres.html)

In 1965 Gopal Singh was nominated.

Urdu and Hindi are highly influenced by code-switching and code-mixing. Urdu/Hindi are not just acquiring words from the English language, there is also a diachronic study which shows that Urdu/Hindi lexemes are increasing in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Moreover, the description of lexemes has changed over time in the dictionary. This research study which includes *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* editions from 1912 to 2002 is also referred in this book: *The Languages and Linguistics of South Asia: A Comprehensive Guide* (Hock et al. 2016). This diachronic study about the Urdu/Hindi lexemes published in 2011, was perhaps the first study with this unique framework.

How the literature creation of one language works with other languages! The analogy of ‘trading zones’ is used by Galison (1997), to show how different groups with different ways of trading can also use common grounds for trading certain items. This analogy is also used about the interactions between theory and experiment to develop physics (Derry et al. 2005). This analogy can also be applied in the world of literature of various languages, cultures and genres. Despite the differences, certain common grounds or trading zones can be explored to form interdisciplinary collaboration pathways. With the current trends of research in the field of neuroscience, the field of multilingualism is gaining momentum in a variety of forms (Hardiman, 2003). This analysis and argument provides reasonable ground to explore the beauty of Urdu literature with the current global wave of literary growth (Qadeer, 2017). In the light of this growing trend, many literary pieces can be produced and globally presented to show the beauty of Urdu-Hindi literature to all hearts.

The possibility of giving Nobel Prize literature to the writers of other languages is increasing, as explained by an official of the Swedish Academy. For details: <https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/literature/questions-peter-englund-2013.html>

(English is a language with the highest number of Nobel Laureates. The current linguistic form of Urdu is getting closer to English in some ways — perhaps some thing more interesting will happen in the future).

**Nobel Prize Literature  
113 Laureates  
From 1901 to 2016**

English	25%
French	12.38%
German	11.92%
Spanish	10.09%
Swedish	6.42%
Italian	5.5%
Russian	5.5%
Polish	3.6%
Norwegian	2.7%
Danish	2.7%
Greek	1.8%
Japanese	1.8%
Chinese	1.8%
Bengali	0.91%
Arabic	0.91%
Finnish	0.91%
Hebrew	0.91%
Hungarian	0.91%
Icelandic	0.91%
Occitan	0.91%
Portuguese	0.91%
Serbo-Croatian	0.91%
Turkish	0.91%
Yiddish	0.91%

(A very few writers in more than one language)

For more details:

[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/facts/literature/index.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/facts/literature/index.html)

Urdu language has some impressive writers with their quintessential literary accomplishments. Due to various reasons, the need to highlight the talents of Urdu writers at an international forum is becoming a growing need. Urdu language needs some enriched and multiple forms of support to gain momentum at various forums. Abbas (2012) remarks: “Urdu is a comparatively under resourced language.” In this context, some universities have developed special linguistic projects to help the Urdu language. Many universities in the Western world are working for Urdu basic learning, analyzing linguistic factors, and writing literary critics. The area of producing Urdu-Hindi literary work in various genres can also be enhanced in the programs of the Western universities. The internet technologies can also open efficient ways for the international collaboration

of authors and presenting the writings in the form of e-books—an efficient and faster mode of communication. The inclusion of hard copy production has its own benefits. A multilingual form with internet power can make the possibilities of stronger collaboration among various literary scholars. Along with other themes, one dimension is about the changing demographics and the experiences faced by immigrants. This area can bring some intriguing literary contributions. Change of countries with migration and the new linguistic environment leading to multilingualism. One possible way is also to open forums in which literary scholars can have interactions, share experiences and develop ideas. It is crucial that our current Urdu literature creation works through some effective forums for powerful international representations. These aspects include: media coverage, producing in the new forms of literature for current needs, congenial environment for authors, translations into other languages, understanding and spreading ideas about the current trends of literature in various languages, gaining insights from the higher-level literature of other languages, making a stronger voice for Urdu at multiple levels and in various demographics, technical progress, adaptations and integrating the power of Urdu diasporas.

The following is a collection of some links about the research and literary work taking place about Urdu/Hindi in various universities in Europe, USA, Canada, Japan and Tashkent. The need to make a comprehensive list is important for stronger coordination. This list may provide a starting point for awareness, understanding and coordination.

### **Urdu- Research and literature in various universities**

(Some examples, updates are possible with further coordination)

In Heidelberg University Germany

<http://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/en/>

In Tokyo University Japan

<http://www.tufs.ac.jp/english/education/ug/studies/urdu.html>

Helsinki University, Department of World Cultures

<http://www.helsinki.fi/worldcultures/>

In Tashkent:

<http://www.tashgiv.uz/index.php?lang=en>

In Konstanz University Germany

<http://ling.uni-konstanz.de/pages/home/butt/>

In Canada, University of Toronto Mississauga

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/language-studies/department-language-studies>

In United Kingdom

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/>

In USA, Chicago

<http://salc.uchicago.edu/urdu-at-chicago>

In Harvard University (USA)

<http://sas.fas.harvard.edu/hindi-urdu>

In Chicago University (USA)

<http://salc.uchicago.edu/urdu-at-chicago>

In Canada, Montreal, McGill University

<https://www.mcgill.ca/islamicstudies/people/faculty-members/pasha-m-khan>

In Washington (USA)

<https://asian.washington.edu/fields/urdu>

In USA, University of Texas at Austin (Hindi-Urdu)

<http://hindiurduflagship.org/>

In Canada, Toronto, York University (Hindi-Urdu)

<http://hindi.dill.laps.yorku.ca/>

(If the universities from South Asia are also included, the list will be longer. Some universities in the Western world only include Urdu-Hindi basic language courses, while some universities provide a range of academic programs, enriched research projects and vigorously conduct research studies.)

Rekhta is a website with large collection of Urdu poetry, literature

<https://rekhta.org/>

BBC Urdu: An effort to provide linguistic and a media presentation guide for Urdu

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کالج آف جرنلزم

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/urdu>

Urdu literature has interesting changes and dimensions in the long history and the current generation of Urdu writers face a new type of global literary landscape. As a result, the need for collaboration to bring Urdu literature to the world forum with a magnificent impact should be added in our university programs. There is also need to enrich Urdu writing in various genres. Along with Urdu poetry, the need to contribute to other genres is also important according to the current trends of international literature. Numerous new themes and styles are possible avenues for our current Urdu writers.

As it is true for other fields, the Nobel laureate of today was an elementary level student one day. Teaching Urdu-Hindi to the next generations will enhance the continuum of literary beauty with new flowers. The change of interest of audience about the type of literature they want to read or listen to can also impact the type of writings. There is also a need to expand the interest of the audience for the new writers of Urdu-Hindi along with classic experts of literature.

Urdu and Hindi share a few strong linguistic similarities too; the different script occasionally creates difficulty for the readers. If some technological ways are designed to transform the Urdu to Hindi script and vice versa, this process can help in joining the oceans of languages and facilitate understanding. This process can be extended to make it easy to understand the older and new literature of Urdu and Hindi languages. Literary awareness and collaboration can lead to a new era! In the fast-technological world, there is already an increased use of English alphabets to write Urdu and Hindi (transliteration), examples can be seen on the website of *rekhta* (<http://rekhta.org>).

Urdu-Hindi literary talents from all parts of the world need flourishing resources, powerful forums and pathways for collaboration to make exponential growth. Writers can expand their universe of literary stars by forming cognitive-nets, social-nets and linguistic-nets. The new landscape of literary interfaces can work more effectively by collaborating with all writers of the same language from various countries and by joining multilingual oceans.

Effective connectivity at multiple levels can play an incredible role in the Urdu-Hindi literary world. Two experts say: “... *successful innovation depends less on how smart you are than how connected you are....*”

-----*Mark Thomas and Stephen Shennan, University College London*

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(The beauty of education for every heart)

Unitech Publications India

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