

Religious Literature in Urdu Written By Women (Selective Study)

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Abstract:

Women writers in Urdu religious literature actively participated in developing spiritual content which shaped both morality and Islamic academic theory concerning female perspectives. Throughout history, women of the subcontinent have used their literary skills to compose religious texts that highlighted their understanding of faith as well as moral standards and household religious rituals. The religious texts which focus on Quranic interpretation and Hadith study alongside Islamic spirituality deliver distinct understandings about how women function in spiritual life and social practices. Many famous Muslim women scholars have dedicated themselves to this literary field shaping both personal prayer devotion and broader religious discussions¹ in public life. The written works present Islamic concepts related to modesty alongside simultaneously covering subjects such as women's education and rights along with empowerment under Islamic teachings. Religious texts authored by women in Urdu have gained wider distribution leading more people to participate in theological dialogues thus establishing a female-friendly scholarly environment. This research investigates the historical value and diverse topics alongside modern applications of religious Urdu literature created by women. Additional academic analysis of women's intellectual contributions to Islamic thought becomes necessary to understand their complete spiritual and intellectual value.

Keywords: Urdu Literature, Women's Religious Writings, Islamic Scholarship, Faith and Morality, Gender and Religion

1. Introduction:

Islamic religious discourse alongside moral standards with gender interpretation has been significantly influenced by female writers who write in Urdu. Their writing has proved crucial for developing spirituality and influences religious doctrines and provides moral teachings together with social guidelines. Through religious literature women have continuously maintained their pivotal role in documenting Islamic knowledge as the tradition thrived historically. Women in the subcontinent actively took part in Islamic scholarship by composing vast literature focusing on Quranic interpretation and studies of Hadith and Islamic spiritual teachings. The texts demonstrate female interpretations of faith in addition to addressing key

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societal issues about education as well as women's Islamic empowerment and rights (Shaikh, 2019).

Despite the constraints which historically blocked women from formal religious education numerous important female scholars and writers effectively contributed to Islamic scholarship development. Female scholars present religious teachings through their writings to create a connection that captures religious text alongside real-life societal conditions. Female religious writers used their publications to demonstrate women's domestic responsibilities and at the same time promoted female learning and spiritual growth (Ahmed, 2021). Women have utilized their dual role as devout individuals together with public scholars to reshape Islamic scholarship by demonstrating how they shape religious discourse.

The written religious literature produced by women creates value that reaches beyond individual spirituality. The literary works of female scholars explore Islamic basic principles including modesty, patience, piety and justice along with prominent modern issues about female education and leadership and social positions. The writings present opposing views to male-oriented religious doctrine by introducing a women-focused approach that examines the gender-specific conditions in which females navigate their faith (Siddiqui, 2020). Female religious writers have established their critical position in theology through their work to redefine religious thought and towards more inclusive interpretations of Islamic beliefs.

Wider theological dialogue participation has become possible because of recent growth in Urdu religious texts written by women which fosters an inclusive environment for Islamic studies scholarship by female authors. Digital media platforms together with new publishing methods have enabled women to share their perspectives in religious discussions thus obtaining recognition from both scholarly and popular religious communities. Such transformations have increased female religious literature accessibility while reshaping cultural views about women participating in Islamic scholarly domains.

The authors review how Urdu women writers created religious works from their inception to contemporary times alongside topics they explored and their enduring value in current times. This research establishes women scholars' intellectual and spiritual contributions to Islamic knowledge thus insisting on advanced academic studies because of their impact on Islamic thinking. This study examines female authors who concurrently shaped religious discourse and developed Islamic academic theory through work interpretation. Research demonstrates that female voices within religious writings form an essential basis to understand Islamic history and create theological insights for modern times.

2. Literature Review:

Academic writing about women's participation in religious texts which focus on Urdu has received scholarly interest yet remains overlooked in conventional Islamic academic research. Through poetic and prose works and scholarly compositions women have historically enriched theological and moral understanding (Ahmed, 2021). Women have participated in religious scholarship despite social barriers while their contributions follow the patterns of historical and cultural evolutions (Shaikh, 2019). Islamic literature appears to be mainly accomplished by male scholars but women have achieved important spaces within this intellectual tradition. Islamic teachings experience societal influence through the writing of women who play dual roles of personal devotion and public discourse (Siddiqui, 2020). Bhutto and Ramzan (2021) studied gender issues, feminine injustice, and media transmission in Pakistani press reports. Javaid et al. (2024) systematically reviewed the religious coping and mental well-being along

with impact of religious festivals on prejudice reduction among interfaith university students (Javaid et al., 2025).

Islamic scholarship received contributions from women since the birth of Islam. The traditional Hadith narration serving as vital to establish future Islamic jurisprudence was established through scholars including Aisha bint Abu Bakr (Ali, 2018). Female academics and poets in South Asia prospered through Islamic discourse throughout the Mughal era through Persian and Urdu writings (Khan, 2017). Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain and Tayyaba Bukhari rose to become major female scholars who advocated women's rights based on Islamic principles (Rehman, 2022). The writers dedicated their time to theological works and simultaneously addressed present-day social issues at the religious gender perspective (Malik, 2020).

The central subject matter in religious Urdu writings produced by women encompasses both Quranic exegesis and Hadith studies. Dr. Farhat Hashmi has provided comprehensive research in modern Quranic interpretation which women can easily access due to her work (Hashmi, 2015). The author focuses her research on Islamic principles that define women's spiritual duties and legal rights (Ali, 2018). Women authors in Urdu religious literature explore moral education by discussing subjects that include modesty and ethical conduct. Through their writings they explore how personal growth connects to social morality (Hussain, 2021). Muslim women find guidance in a structured living through religious texts that also increase both personal reflection and religiosity (Rehman, 2022).

Female religious writers have played an important role by advocating formally teaching women. Tayyaba Bukhari and Shaista Ikramullah have stated that women must receive religious and intellectual empowerment (Bukhari, 2019). The writers challenge traditional educational limitations for women through their argument that Muslim teachings support knowledge acquisition for everyone equally irrespective of gender (Khan, 2017). Numerous religious texts of today guide readers about both home-based worship and family ethos and social obligation (Malik 2020). Women follow a distinctive religious perspective about spirituality which teaches them to perform religious commands as part of their daily routines (Hussain, 2021).

Modern technological advancements created better access to religious material written by women in Urdu during the previous decades. Female religious scholars can now share their knowledge with more people due to digital platforms and social media platforms together with online forums (Siddiqui, 2020). The organization Al-Huda International serves as an essential platform that provides contemporary women with Islamic education (Hashmi 2015) even though female Islamic scholars encounter various ongoing challenges. The combination of social expectations with institutional discrimination with insufficient training pathways blocks women from having a role in theological discussions (Ali, 2018). A minority of orthodox religious groups whose beliefs conflict with traditional roles question how women should take authority in Islamic scholarly activities which results in constraining their involvement in broad theological dialogue (Khan, 2017).

Existing studies have revealed the substantial role that women played in Urdu religious literature yet additional academic research continues to be required. The introduction of gender-inclusive methods to Islamic studies produces complete comprehensions about faith and spirituality according to Ahmed (2021). The impact of female scholarship on modern Islamic knowledge development alongside its performance in shaping gender-related religious attitudes needs academic investigation (Rehman, 2022). Women played an essential role in Urdu mystical texts but their work remains neglected by mainstream researchers. The religious writings of Muslim female authors supply meaningful perspectives about faith together with

morality standards and gender positions as they challenge conventional interpretations and promote an inclusive approach to religious learning. Scholars who study these contributions understand better how sacred writings work separately for self-improvement as well as culturally for spiritual advancement and societal empowerment. Future investigations should study how female scholarly contributions to Islamic learning continue to change to ensure women maintain important participation in religious academic pursuits.

3. Significance of the Study:

The academic fields of literature as well as religious studies recognize Urdu religious literature penned by female writers as being extremely important. Among the crucial functions of female scholars and writers for Islamic interpretation and sharing of theological knowledge has been systematically neglected by modern theological studies. Through the examination of women's religious Urdu literature throughout history and themes and modern relevance this research demonstrates their profound influence on Islamic thought.

The research provides major value by examining how Islam manifests through gender perspectives within its scholarly domain. From a traditional perspective many religious stories were written by men which created public stereotypes about theological beliefs and moral concepts. These perspectives contain a broader perspective of morality which promotes faith awareness from different viewpoints. This research proves the way women scholars enhance Islamic religious discourse when they interpret Quranic teachings alongside Hadith studies and moral philosophy.

The study holds great importance for education fields together with women's empowerment initiatives. This research analyzes women's religious works to understand their contributions in support of Muslim women's rights education together with Islamic spiritual development. These works evaluate modern subjects by exploring female engagement in religious practices as well as their role in achieving gender equality.

Sociocultural researchers benefit from this research because it helps explain how religious texts determine Muslim women's social positions. Through digital platforms women now can access Urdu religious literature which enables broader participation in theological discussions so they obtain greater religious scholarship representation. Christian women writers demonstrated how faith-based publications created know-how for integrating religious elements into family structure and domestic spirituality.

This research creates valuable connections between traditional religious perspectives and contemporary understanding to investigate changing roles of women in academic theological circles. The study seeks additional scholarly research about women authors and introduces a broader Islamic educational framework that appreciates different religious scholars in theological dialogue.

4. Research Methodology

This research uses qualitative research that incorporates historical interpretation along with thematic content analysis joined by contemporary discourse analysis for its methodology. The research follows a systematic methodology which contains these major aspects:

4.1. Data Collection

The research explores religious writing by women in Urdu through complete analysis of Quranic interpretation, Hadith evaluation, poetry compilation and ethical literature. Tayyaba

Bukhari and Shaista Ikramullah along with contemporary scholar Dr. Farhat Hashmi represent prominent authors in this study. Academic books together with journal articles and research papers that discuss women's contributions to Islamic literature and religious studies and gender in Islamic scholarship make up the secondary sources for this research. The analysis includes evaluations of modern digital platforms such as Al-Huda International which provide religious texts from women to understand their increasing digital presence.

4.2. Thematic Analysis

The study uses content analysis to discover frequent concepts which appear in female religious written works. A thorough investigation of the following thematic breakdown takes place:

- Quranic interpretations from a female perspective.

The subject of Hadith research examines female roles and their duties.

- Moral and ethical discussions in religious texts.

The topic of education together with empowerment emerges within the context of Urdu religious literature.

- Household and social roles in Islamic teachings.

4.3. Historical Contextualization

A historical method is used by this research to document the progression of Urdu religious compositions written by women from Mughal times until today. This study analyzes the effects of colonial activities and religious reform activities alongside recent social and political events that enabled women to participate in Islamic scholarship.

4.4. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis guides the research to study how Muslim women writers use their writings to either perpetuate or break traditional gender norms in Islamic religious discourse. The analysis studies how female religious scholars implement Islamic perspectives regarding modesty standards and gender-related positions as well as women's rights.

4.5. Comparative Analysis

The research examines Urdu religious literature written by women by comparing it with various texts. The researches will analyze Islamic scholarship mainly dominated by men for the purpose of revealing distinct perspectives. A comparison of feminine religious literature written in Persian and Arabic will demonstrate transnational religious influences throughout the study.

4.6. Interviews and Expert Opinions (Optional)

The research includes possible interviews which target scholars who focus on Islamic studies as well as gender studies and Urdu literature if the interviews can be successfully scheduled. The expert opinions derived from this research will assist in validating identified results while giving modern ideas on how female religious writings affect the field.

4.7. Limitations of the Study

The research investigates Urdu religious writing while confining its examination to South Asian feminine religious scholars. The lack of primary religious texts written by women becomes challenging to obtain because of limited documentation and low availability. Believing that religious texts require interpretation leads scholars to develop different interpretations about their meaning. The study employs a multidisciplinary approach which strives to deliver an extensive understanding about female participation in Urdu Islamic religious literature. This methodology enables high-quality examination of historical elements and thematic composition together with contemporary insights into how female scholars impact Islamic thought. This paper serves to enhance religious scholarship and literary inquiry since it promotes investigations of female religious contributions in academic settings.

5. Results and Findings:

This research work presents detailed knowledge about the historical weight and thematic depth and current value of religious literature produced by Urdu women writers. Qualitative evaluation based on historical contextual methods together with thematic study and discourse analysis produced several vital findings.

5.1. Historical Evolution of Women's Religious Writings in Urdu

5.1.1 Early Contributions and Historical Recognition

The research proves that female participation in Islamic learning began immediately following the establishment of Islam through scholars like Aisha bint Abu Bakr who became prominent Hadith narrators and theological contributors (Ali, 2018). South Asian women started to actively write religious literature during the time of the Mughal Empire when they produced Persian and developing Urdu religious texts according to Khan (2017). At the beginnings of Islamic scholarship women obtained religious knowledge through writings which taught morality and household devotion in addition to devotional poetry while upholding standard gender norms (Rehman, 2022). Male dominance in religious interpretation caused many female contributions to Islamic scholarship to be hidden from mainstream Islamic knowledge centers (Siddiqui, 2020).

5.1.2 Colonial and Post-Colonial Influences on Female Religious Writings

The time of colonization brought expanding educational opportunities for women who in return stimulated their engagement with religious literature. The era established Urdu as a main literary language through which women produced active religious and social content (Ahmed, 2021). During her time Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain together with other eminent female scholars started to defend women's rights according to Islamic principles while contesting traditional male interpretations of religious documents (Malik 2020). Religious discussions involving women were gaining prominent roles throughout the post-colonial times. The Islamic scholarship field gained two important contributors through Tayyaba Bukhari and Dr. Farhat Hashmi who established themselves as experts of Quranic exegesis and Hadith studies and modern Islamic discourse (Hashmi, 2015). Digital platforms and media promoted the wide distribution of Urdu religious texts written by women which enhanced their role in molding religious and social viewpoints (Hussain, 2021).

5.2. Thematic Analysis of Women's Religious Writings

Several main concepts emerge as central elements in religious writings produced by women authors using the Urdu language.

5.2.1 Quranic Interpretation from a Gendered Perspective

Female religious scholars provide distinctive interpretations of Quranic teachings to produce detailed examinations of women's roles in society (Ali, 2018). The approach of female scholars diverges from traditional legalistic studies performed by male scholars because they prioritize Quranic verses from spiritual and moral perspectives and personal development (Khan, 2017). Dr. Farhat Hashmi delivers Quranic commentaries which prioritize helpful religious instructions for women through discussions about personal growth and moral development and spiritual maturity (Hashmi, 2015). The approach adopted by these interpretations creates understanding among female audiences so that sacred teachings connect with daily life needs (Siddiqui, 2020).

5.2.2 Emphasis on Morality, Ethics, and Social Justice

The religious literature produced by women focuses on moral instruction which targets principles of modesty in combination with patience and justice and social obligation (Rehman, 2022). Because male scholars tend to view religious laws through legal terms female religious authors place these concepts in both social environments and personal events to enhance their practical use (Hussain 2021). Within Islamic beliefs numerous female experts fight to promote social justice along with gender equality using Islamic principles. The writers demonstrate how Islamic teachings enable women to obtain education while granting empowerment alongside social involvement (Ahmed, 2021).

5.2.3 Women's Education and Religious Empowerment

Female scholars produce significant religious texts which support the education of women intensely. The authors Tayyaba Bukhari and Shaista Ikramullah have documented how Islamic scripture motivates women to learn alongside joining religious conversations (Bukhari, 2019). The viewpoint fights against conventional beliefs which confine women's educational outreach to household-based learning without formal accreditation. Modern female academics demand full religious and academic access for women with complete equal rights to knowledge (Malik, 2020).

5.2.4 Household and Family Spirituality

Women's religious writings demonstrate a different approach than those written by men since they place emphasis on faith within everyday aspects of home life (Khan, 2017). A large number of female scholars deliver actionable guidance which demonstrates how to apply Islamic doctrine in domestic routines and familial interactions (Siddiqui, 2020). Female religious authors regularly explore these topics within their written religious manuscripts such as Muslim women typically use prayers in their homes to ask for protection and well-being of their families. The duty of women pertains to home-based religious tradition preservation activities. The moral education of children follows Islamic teachings as the foundation

6. Discussion:

The research outcomes show how women actively contribute to Urdu religious literature while influencing theological understanding and both social values and present-day religious exchanges. This article demonstrates through historical and thematic and comparative analysis that women scholars have revolutionized Islamic scholarship. Religious academia tends to erase the substantial value that women scholars have generated for the field. The research findings connect with existing scholarly work through several perspectives before showing where they diverge and what additional study is needed.

6.1. Muslim women participate in religious literature between marginalization and recognition of their contributions

Throughout history women took an active role in religious discourse but male scholars received superior recognition compared to female researchers in this domain. Early Islamic history featured a notable presence of women scholars who transmitted many Hadiths according to Ali (2018) such as Aisha bint Abu Bakr who documented 2000 Hadiths thus shaping Islamic jurisprudence. During the process of institutionalizing Islamic scholarship patriarchy established societal structures which limited women's roles (Khan 2017). The research supports Rehman (2022) who demonstrated that Urdu religious writings by women have received little attention from male scholars throughout history. Women's religious writings in Urdu language have flourished in noninstitutionalized environments like domestic spaces and their religious study groups and makeshift educational programs according to the research of Ahmed (2021). The holy discourse maintained its existence through time even after academia shut its doors to acceptance. Malik (2020) describes how modern Islamic institutions accept female religious scholars as they emerge through digital platforms. Research supports these claims through evidence documenting how Dr. Farhat Hashmi and other modern female scholars bolster their reputation by using online religious education and social media platforms to break through Islamic scholarship boundaries which historically prioritized men.

6.2. Thematic Contributions: Traditional Roles vs. Modern Empowerment

6.2.1 Quranic Interpretation from a Female Perspective

The main outcome from this study reveals how female scholars within Urdu religious literature present Quranic teachings through a deeper perspective which considers gender dynamics. Hashmi (2015) supports the notion that women religious writings primarily concentrate on personal spiritual growth alongside self-transformation by building better moral character rather than embracing rigid legal interpretations as established by traditional male scholars. Some women who study religion try to uphold traditional roles without questioning or changing boundaries which establish gender norms (Siddiqui 2020). This study provides partial evidence regarding this argument due to the fact that women authors in Urdu religious literature discuss spiritual matters related to home life and family duties. Muslim women even in traditional spaces promote empowerment through educational opportunities and spiritual knowledge and community activism according to Ahmed (2021). Some religious works maintain traditional storytelling but other Urdu writings generate innovation by granting women active roles through Islamic principles.

6.2.2 Morality, Ethics, and Social Justice

Personnel of Urdu religion focus their works on inspiring ethical conduct through emphasizing modest behavior alongside patience and upholding social justice principles. Female religious scholars pursue practical Islamic ethics based on their direct understanding of faith applications according to Hussain (2021). According to Khan (2017) several religious texts written by women uphold traditional gender roles by emphasizing female religious dress rules plus obedience and household responsibilities. The research data backs this up somewhat because numerous Urdu religious publications promote traditional virtues including respectfulness and personal sacrifice alongside devotion to family. The 21st-century perspective of Rehman (2022) supports how modern female religious writers use Islamic principles to demonstrate gender equity contrary to conventional moral interpretation. Recent religious writings by women demonstrate that they have adopted the path of achieving social justice and women's

rights through Islamic teachings despite earlier religious texts that promoted traditional values. Religious discourse about gender is evolving towards new directions in this present era.

6.2.3 Women's Education and Religious Authority

Research demonstrates that contemporary Urdu religious literature from women shows clear support for teaching women and their gaining legal rights. Many female scholars assert in Bukhari (2019) and Malik (2020) that Islam requires equal educational opportunities between male and female students because of its teachings. Religious writings authored by women tend to present education as an approach that empowers the mind as well as the spirit according to the findings of this research study. According to Siddiqui (2020) female religious writers support education but avoid making direct challenges against patriarchal religious institutions. Modern female scholarship continues to face barriers which are established through traditional religious organizational frameworks.

6.3. Modern Digital Influence: Expanding Access vs. Institutional Barriers

Digital platforms now enable women religious scholars to reach wider audiences as well as gain enhanced influence in religious scholarship. Hashmi (2015) supports the notion of social media and digital religious courses and online platforms enabling women to become self-reliant learners by getting past traditional learning obstacles. Religious academia continues to confront institutional prejudices that restrict formal acceptance of female experts according to Rehman's (2022) research. The advent of modern technology enables female scholars to express their ideas but institutional prejudices restrict their access to genuine religious power positions. Digital media allows both freedom of engagement and preserves institutional-based religious inequities because of unresolved structural impediments.

6.4. Challenges and Future Directions in Research

Several problems persist according to the research data collected. Membership institutions continue to show limited support for female engagement in Islamic law practice and leadership positions (Ahmed, 2021). Within theological interpretation female scholars demonstrate either traditional conservative positions about gender roles or they take progressive approaches to interpretation. Additional research must evaluate what role different religious perspectives play in forming religious identity according to Siddiqui (2020). Digital scholarship complements traditional academic knowledge but does not serve as an alternative to formal religious education. Future academic work needs to investigate the effects that digital education has on religious organizational frameworks (Rehman, 2022). Future investigations should analyze the cultural comparison between women's Urdu religious literature and Arabic and Persian and English publications to establish a wider framework of Islamic female academic work.

7. Conclusion

This research shows that women who write religion-based literature in Urdu have substantially influenced Islamic thought as well as gender understanding and religious moral values. Throughout history female scholars generated Quranic interpretation along with moral teachings while also advocating for women's education. The discussion shows two aspects in female religious texts - some sustain established gender roles yet many others work to empower women in line with Islamic doctrines. Female scholarship finds more available exposure through digital platforms despite institutional barriers which prevent formal religious academic recognition. Research in this field supports expanding academic discussion about women in Islamic scholarship by emphasizing the development of women's religious work. To advance

research an investigation must delve into institutional reluctance to recognize women scholars and electronic engagement and multicultural consequences of their religious works.

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