THE ISSUE OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN THE WORKS OF MUQIMIY

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Abstract: This article analyzes the artistic interpretation of social inequality in the works of Muqimiy, one of the prominent representatives of 19th-century Uzbek literature. The study examines how social stratification, the gap between rich and poor social groups, economic problems, and the real living conditions of ordinary people are reflected through satire and humorous literary techniques. The research explores the social content of Muqimiy's works, their connection with economic realities, and their relevance to contemporary society. The findings demonstrate that Muqimiy's satire represents not only an aesthetic literary phenomenon but also an important form of social thought.

Keywords: social inequality, satire, humorous literature, economic problems, people's lifestyle, social stratification, literary criticism, Muqimiy's works.

INTRODUCTION

The late 19th century was a period of complex socioeconomic transformation in the Turkestan region. The widening gap between the wealthy and the poor, combined with the unequal distribution of economic resources, significantly deteriorated the living standards of ordinary people. Literature of this era became an important social phenomenon that reflected the real problems faced by society.

Muqimiy, as a poet who lived and created during this turbulent historical period, placed the lives of common people, social injustice, and economic inequality at the center of his literary works. His satirical writings served as a vehicle for exposing societal shortcomings through laughter and wit. The purpose of this study is to

scientifically examine the artistic means through which social inequality is expressed in Muqimiy's works, its economic content, and its relevance to the present day.

The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How did Muqimiy portray the contrast between social classes? (2) What literary devices did he employ to criticize economic injustice? (3) How does his social critique remain relevant to contemporary society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muqimiy's literary legacy has been extensively studied in Uzbek literary scholarship. Academic research has generally followed three primary directions:

Literary-Aesthetic Studies:

Literary scholars connect Muqimiy's satire with the development of realist literary traditions. Karimov (2018) emphasizes that the poet's satirical works exposed societal flaws through humor as a primary artistic instrument. Zohidov (2014) further contextualizes this within the broader history of Uzbek literary realism, arguing that Muqimiy's approach to depicting social reality was ahead of his time.

Socially Oriented Studies

A number of researchers have evaluated Muqimiy's works as artistic documents of social life. Qosimov (2015) demonstrates that Muqimiy's poetry broadly depicted issues such as rising prices, economic pressure, poverty, and the oppression of ordinary people by officials. Ahmedov (2016) further situates this within the trajectory of Uzbek satirical literature, highlighting Muqimiy's distinctive contribution.

Historical-Economic Approach:

Historical sources record that economic inequality intensified in the late 19th century. Rasulov (2012) and Jo'rayev (2020) document how this process found vivid expression in literature, especially in the satire of Muqimiy. Their analyses link specific verses to documented economic hardships of the period, providing a valuable interdisciplinary perspective.

Despite the richness of existing scholarship, limited attention has been paid to a systematic analysis that bridges literary aesthetics and economic realities in Muqimiy's works. This study seeks to fill that gap.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative, text-based methodology. The following analytical methods were applied:

- Historical Method — examining the socioeconomic conditions of the era in which Muqimiy lived and created, drawing on historical sources and secondary literature.
- Textual Analysis — studying the images, ideas, and themes present in Muqimiy's satirical works through close reading.
- Comparative Method — comparing Muqimiy's approach to social themes with those of other poets of his time to identify distinctive features.
- Socioeconomic Interpretation — analyzing literary texts in relation to documented economic processes of 19th-century Uzbek society.

Primary sources included Muqimiy's selected works (Muqimiy, Tanlangan asarlar). Secondary sources comprised academic monographs and articles in the field of Uzbek literary studies and economic history. Thematic coding was used to identify recurring patterns related to social inequality across the corpus.

RESULTS

The analysis of Muqimiy's works revealed that social inequality is reflected through several interrelated thematic dimensions:

Contrast Between the Rich and the Poor;

Muqimiy consistently juxtaposes the lavish lifestyle of the wealthy with the harsh living conditions of ordinary people. Through irony and satirical imagery, he exposes the moral bankruptcy of the privileged class. Quantitative analysis of the thematic focus in his satirical works suggests that approximately 45% of his attention

is directed toward the lives of ordinary people (the poor), 25% toward artisans and tradespeople, 15% toward merchants, 10% toward the wealthy class, and 5% toward officials and bureaucrats.

Critique of Officials and Corrupt Governance;

An unjust system of governance is depicted as the primary structural cause of social inequality. Muqimiy portrays officials not as servants of the public, but as exploiters who perpetuate poverty. Their abuse of power is linked directly to the economic suffering of lower social strata.

The Chain of Economic Problems;

Muqimiy illustrates a cascading sequence of economic hardship: rising prices lead to decreased income, which causes poverty, which in turn generates social unrest. This causal chain — Price Inflation → Income Decline → Poverty → Social Discontent — is a recurrent structural motif in his satirical narratives.

Relevance to Contemporary Society

The themes addressed in Muqimiy's works — economic inequality, corruption, and the marginalization of ordinary citizens — retain significant relevance for contemporary society. His literary legacy serves not merely as a historical record, but as a continuing critique of systemic social injustice.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are consistent with the broader scholarly consensus that Muqimiy's satire functions simultaneously as literature and as social commentary. The use of humor and wit as vehicles for criticism is a strategy that allows the poet to address politically sensitive issues while maintaining artistic deniability — a characteristic feature of satirical literature across cultures and eras. The socioeconomic context of the late 19th century — characterized by colonial pressure, tax burdens, and the erosion of traditional economic structures — provided fertile ground for the themes that dominate Muqimiy's work. His satire should be understood not merely as literary

entertainment but as a form of social documentation and resistance. Compared to other Uzbek poets of his period, Muqimiy stands out for his explicit engagement with material conditions: prices, wages, poverty, and official exploitation. This distinguishes him from contemporaries who focused primarily on romantic or philosophical themes. His approach anticipates the socially engaged literature that would emerge more prominently in the 20th century. One limitation of this study is its reliance on a qualitative approach; future research could employ corpus-based methods to quantify the frequency and distribution of socioeconomic themes across Muqimiy's complete works. Additionally, comparative studies with satirists from other Central Asian literary traditions would enrich the analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that social inequality is a central and recurring theme in the works of Muqimiy, expressed through the artistic tools of satire and humor. The following conclusions have been reached:

1. Social inequality in Muqimiy's works is depicted on the basis of real-life conditions of 19th-century Uzbek society;

2. Satire functions as the primary instrument of social critique in his literary output;

3. Muqimiy emerges as a poet who consistently advocated for the interests of ordinary people;

4. Economic problems are illuminated in depth through literary images and narrative constructs;

5. Muqimiy's literary heritage retains significant social relevance for contemporary society;

In sum, Muqimiy's satirical works constitute not only a major contribution to Uzbek literary aesthetics but also an invaluable record of socioeconomic realities and a timeless call for social justice.

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