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Revolution in Narrative Form: The Arab Spring in Contemporary Arabic Novels

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Abstract

At the end of 2010 the Arab world witnessed a series of massive protests across Arab world which have changed the entire region. It started with peaceful protests against the dictatorship, corruption, unemployment and above all to restore democracy but with the passage of time it turned into violence and civil wars. These incidents are known as "Arab Spring". Contemporary Arabic novels played a crucial role to narrate Arab spring incidents. This paper will study Arab Spring as narrated in Arabic novels and the major issues and aspects discussed in those novels.

Keywords: Arab spring, Arab spring revolution, Arab spring in Arabic novels, Narration of Arab spring, Revolution in narrative form, Contemporary Arabic Novels, Arab protests, Unrest in Arab World, Arab spring in Arabic fiction, Arab spring in Arabic literature.

Introduction:

In the beginning of 21st century the world has witnessed many historic protests and revolutions the most significant one was "Arab spring" which has changed a lot, some for the better and some for the worse. The term "Arab spring" refers to a series of protests started in December 2010 for civil rights, freedom and democracy but with the passage of time it turned into violence, killing and destruction and finally it entered into bloody civil wars. Arab Spring attracted worldwide attention since it started. This historic event was discussed, analyzed and criticised by historians, academicians, political and social scientists and intellectuals. It also provided a wide space for poets, authors and writers for writing and describing these events from their perspective. Topics related to Arab spring attracted the contemporary Arabic literature a lot and it produced a huge volume of prose and poetry on various aspects of this revolution. Arabic novel played a crucial role in narrating the unfolding events of Arab spring.

Etymology of Arab Spring:

The "Arab Spring" is a term referred to a series of protests, uprisings, armed rebellions and revolutions that spread in the Arab world at the beginning of 2011.

The term "Arab Spring" was used for the revolutions of 1848 held in Europe. After the Iraq War this term was used by many experts who predicted an uprising for democracy in the Arab World.^[1]

The person who used the term 'Arab Spring' first for the events of 2011 in the Arab world is Dr. Mark Lynch, Professor of Political Science at George Washington University.^[2]

Professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History at Columbia University, Joseph Massad said: The term is part of an American strategy to control the goals and objectives of the movement and direct it towards liberal democracy on the Western style.^[3]

The Arab Spring is often compared with the revolutions of 1989 that took place in Eastern Europe and the Second World in terms of importance and size.^[4] Although they are fundamentally different.

Brief introduction of Arab Spring:

At the end of 2010 the Arab world witnessed a series of massive protests across the Middle East and North Africa which have changed the Arab region, those protests are referred to as "Arab Spring".^[5]

It was sparked by the protests occurred in a Tunisian town Sidi Bouzid on 18 December 2010 following the self-immolation of a young Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi who set himself on fire on 17th December 2010 publicly on a busy street of his home town Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. He took this extreme step as a protest against the harassment and humiliation by a municipal official and widespread corruption, irregularity, injustice and dictatorship in the country.

This incident created anger among the masses against the Tunisian government and massive protests erupted across the country and gradually became a revolution resulting in overthrowing the Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on 14 January 2011. The flame of Tunisian revolution spread in many other Arab countries like Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and Sudan.^[6]

So far, these revolutions succeeded to overthrow governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Arab spring resulted in major social, political and economic reforms in almost all Arab countries.

One of the most popular slogans chanted across the Arab region during the 2011 uprisings "الشعب يريد إسقاط النظام" "*Ash-sha'b yurīd isqāt an-nizām*" "The people want to topple the regime" was an echo of a verse by the revolutionary Tunisian poet Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi:

إذا الشعب يوماً أراد الحياة فلا بد أن يستجيب القدر

"Idhā ash-sha'bu yawman arāda al-ḥayāta

fa-lā budda an yastajība al-qadar"

"If, one day, the people want to live, then fate must answer their call."

The primary reasons behind this widespread revolution are dictatorship, corruption, unemployment, economic hardship, extreme poverty, human rights violations and a number of demographic structural factors. It is strongly believed that the Arab Spring got such popularity due to dissatisfaction of youth, unions and common people with the local governments.

Arab spring passed through different phases; we can categorise them into three phases:

Pre-Arab Spring phase:

Arab spring revolution did not happen suddenly but it has a historical background also, dissatisfaction and anger of people have been gathering over the time like a volcano which erupted suddenly and burned the entire Arab region. Arab spring was forecasted years

before it happened; as the region witnessed many similar protests against the local governments.

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ruled Tunisia since 1987 for nearly 24 years. Although he claimed that his government was democratic, but in fact it was nothing except a kind of authoritarian and dictatorial government.

He suppressed political opposition, silenced the dissent and imposed restrictions on the media. Ben Ali's economic policy supported the interests of the capitalists who control industry and commerce. And it paved the way for the establishment of foreign companies in Tunisia, which led to the closure of local companies and made thousands of workers unemployed. Those foreign companies violated the rights of workers. As a result, unemployed young generation began to migrate to Europe in search of work by sea on boats. Many of them drowned. On the other hand, corruption spread in the public sector on a large scale. All this led to unemployment and economic crisis. These incidents brought outrage among the masses against the Ben Ali regime. Meanwhile, the wealth of the Ben Ali family increased rapidly and became the richest family in the country. Many of the unemployed people were young graduates of the leading universities of the country and aspired to better opportunities, but their dreams were shattered when they remained unemployed for years due to corruption and nepotism. This sparked anger among the qualified educated youth.

When some people tried to protest against corruption, unemployment and abuses, the authorities suppressed those protests and arrested the protesters.

Tunisia experienced a series of protests during the three years leading up to the Arab Spring, like *Gafsa* protest against mining irregularity in 2008 which continued for many months.

Hosni Mubarak became the president of Egypt in 1981. He eliminated political opposition and took control of Egypt for thirty years as the head of the state. He dealt harshly with anyone who criticized him and has banned freedom of expression, peaceful gatherings, demonstrations and all democratic activities. His regime became an absolute dictatorship. He eliminated political opposition and abolished all anti-government organizations-imposed restrictions on the media, civil societies and human rights organizations.

Mubarak used the The Emergency Law No. 162 of 1958 to crush the opposition and dissent. The law provides additional power to police, repeals constitutional rights, legalizes censorship and abolishes habeas corpus. It limits non-governmental political activity, including demonstrations, political organizations and unregistered financial donations. The law prohibits exercising democratic rights like protests, public meetings, strikes, demonstrations, and censors all types of print and electronic media. This has resulted in the human right violations, prolonged imprisonment and torture of activists and opposition and the refusal of employment in government jobs on the basis of their political affiliations.^[2]

In the years before the Arab Spring, economic conditions collapsed, unemployment and poverty rose, and public services such as electricity and water supplies and health services became in the worst condition. Corruption spread in all sectors.

Businessmen close to Mubarak enjoyed additional facilities and opportunities and became more powerful in the field of economy; on the other hand, they held high profiles in politics and government. They took control of Parliament and government committees. The government institutions began to operate according to their interests.

These factors led to widespread poverty and unemployment in the country. Which angered the people and they started to protest which turned into the revolution of the Arab Spring.

Egypt witnessed several strong labour movements during years prior to Arab spring, like workers' strike on 6th April 2008 at the state-run textile factories of *Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra*, outskirts of Cairo. Just prior to Arab spring, protesters held a number of rallies, sit-ins and strikes, during which many of them were killed, wounded and arrested.

The first Libyan civil war began in 2011 between the forces loyal to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and rebel groups backed by the West who were seeking to overthrow the Gaddafi government^[8].

The roots of the Syrian civil war go back to the history of oppression, tyranny and cruelty to the citizens of by the regime of Bashar al-Assad and his father Hafez al-Assad over the last four decades. The history of the Assad regime is full of violence and massacres. Over the past forty years, Assad's forces have carried out many massacres. Both the regimes of Hafez al-Assad and Bashar al-Assad committed serious human rights violations. ^[10]

International organizations such as Human Rights Watch have criticized the deteriorating human rights situation in Syria.^[11] The government gave the security forces ultimate authority to crush anti-government voices. People are arrested without an arrest warrant and without any explanation, they were arrested and imprisoned for years without any trial or legal procedures. Anyone who does not agree with the government's policy suffers the most severe punishment.

Relatives of activists and government opponents have been subjected to various types of torture. Their women, young children and daughters were taken hostage for months or years, and subjected to torture, even rape and sexual harassment. All these things were used as a weapon to force activists and opponents of the government to surrender and stop their activities.

One of the factors of people's anger against the Assad regime is the systematic deprivation of the majority Sunni Muslims of opportunities and equality.

Poor economic conditions also played a role in this war. In 2010, Syria's per capita GDP was only \$2,834, less than poor African countries like Nigeria.^[12]

Unemployment rates were high, especially among the youth. People got rid of these cruelties and oppression and suppression by the Assad regime and the Arab Spring revolution brought hopes for them. Government dealt with the demonstrators with excessive force which turned into a bloody civil war.

Early Arab Spring phase:

The first sparks of the Arab Spring were ignited in Tunisia when twenty-six-year-old Tunisian "Mohamed Bouazizi" set himself on fire and burned himself in the middle of a crowded street to express his anger at his unemployment and government corruption. In fact, he did not set himself on fire alone, but he put the entire Arab world on fire.

This was not an isolated incident but it was a reflection of the frustration of the young generation in Tunisia who were facing crisis like unemployment, corruption, dictatorship, human rights violations and poor living conditions.

Nationwide protests and demonstrations began after the Bouazizi's suicide. Police responded to the peaceful protesters with firings and tear gas.

On November 28, 2010, Wiki Leaks revealed secret files on the corruption and repression of the Tunisian regime. This information added more fuel to the protests that began few weeks later.^[13] The police used excessive force to stop the demonstrators, and on the other hand, many unemployed youths tried to commit suicide following Bouazizi.

Protests continued and the president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was forced to resign on January 14, 2011. He left the country after that a state of emergency was declared in the country. The national army was widely deployed in Tunisia.^[14] About 338 people were killed and more than two thousand were injured during these demonstrations and clashes.^[15] After the end of the Ben Ali regime, the fight for power began.

The flames of Arab Spring reached from Tunisia to the entire Arab region. Massive protests started in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and other Arab countries.

After overthrowing Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali after massive protests, many political analysts predicted that Egypt would be the next country in which such revolution would occur. Most Egyptians were tired of Hosni Mubarak, his dictatorship, injustice, failed economic policies and 30-year tyranny. After the successful Tunisian revolution, massive protests erupted across Egypt. Millions of Egyptians occupied many public places throughout the country, including Tahrir Square in Cairo. Thousands began to gather in Tahrir Square.

As the number of demonstrators continues to rise, police tried to crush them with force. Thousands were arrested throughout the country. The government suspended internet and telecommunications services. Several journalists who were covering the protests were arrested and tortured by the government and Mubarak supporters^[16].

After nationwide protests and demonstrations of millions of people on February 11, 2011 the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak resigned from his post and the military took over the rule in the country. This was great news for the demonstrators in particular and the Egyptians in general, so celebrations started throughout the country. Millions took to the streets to celebrate this historic moment. Marches and gatherings went out across the country to express their joy. At least 846 civilians died and more than 6,400 were injured during the Arab spring protest till February 11, 2011.^[17]

The true Arab Spring revolution lasted only for two years and during this period it toppled down the regimes of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011, Libyan ruler Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in August 2011 and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh in February 2012. In other countries massive protests continued.

Violent protests and Civil war Phase:

In early 2013 massive protests began against Mohamed Morsi the elected Egyptian president came to the power after Arab spring revolution which led to internal conflicts among the supporters of different political entities who were earlier united for Arab spring revolution. Meanwhile armed protests erupted in Syria and other Arab countries.^[18]

The first Libyan civil war began in 2011 between forces loyal to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and rebel groups supported by the West seeking to overthrow the Gaddafi

government. Some activists and political and human rights organizations held demonstrations on February 17, 2011 against Gaddafi. Pro- and anti-government protests erupted in major cities. In Benghazi, protesters took over the streets, looted weapons from security headquarters and took over the local radio station and started their own broadcast under the name "Voice of Free Libya".

Demonstrators burned and vandalized several government buildings in Tripoli including the national parliament. Clashes took place in Green Square between anti-government and pro-Gaddafi demonstrators.

Gaddafi accused foreign powers of fomenting violence and unrest to fulfil foreign agendas to take control over Libya. NATO started air strikes on pro-government forces, defence airports, army bases, tanks and the government establishments. NATO aircrafts bombed throughout the country on both military and civilian areas killing many civilian as well. Many political experts accused that NATO and allied countries attacked Libya, not to protect civilians but to achieve its goals and political agenda.

On April 24, a NATO air strike destroyed Gaddafi's headquarters in Bab al-Aziziya, which the Gaddafi government deemed an attempt to assassinate Gaddafi. The Libyan government has confirmed that NATO airstrikes have killed 718 civilians and wounded more than 4,000 since the start of the bombing campaign.^[19]

NATO planes fired on the convoy of Gaddafi forcing him to take shelter in a pipe and the rebellions took him out and killed him brutally in public in front of camera.^[20] Several countries and international organizations called for an investigation into Gaddafi's death, considering it extrajudicial killing and a war crime.^[21]

On October 23, the head of the National Transitional Council, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, officially declared that Libya was "liberated" and that the war would end.^[22]

The Arab Spring protests erupted in several Arab countries since January 2011, but Syria remained calm until mid-March 2011 due to fear of the government. When protests intensified in the Arab world and the governments were overthrown in Tunisia and Egypt, the Syrians dared to protest against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. The protests in Syria began when the police arrested and tortured 15 students who wrote anti-government slogans on the walls of a school in Daraa. Protests spread across the country. The Syrian army fired on the peaceful protests in several places.

As the protests intensified, the government increased the use of force to quell resistance and killed hundreds of protesters. The security forces besieged the city of Daraa, which became the center of the protests and stopped all necessary services such as water supply, food supply, electricity and telephone.

Before the end of 2011, the regime was overthrown in the Arab countries in which the Arab Spring revolution intensified, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya, except for Syria, because the Assad regime used all its power and the government institutions to suppress the protests. The government launched indiscriminate fire on the demonstrators, arrested thousands, and brutally tortured, kidnapped members of the demonstrators' families, bombarded civilians, deployed tanks inside cities and villages, blockaded and stopped essential services such as food, medicine, water, electricity, and telephone. The government prevented the wounded from accessing health services and treatment, and the Syrian government committed crimes against humanity.^[23]

With the passage of time and the increasing repression of the Syrian army, the protests turned into an uprising and an armed rebellion. The opposition fighters became better equipped. On July 29, 2011 "Free Syrian Army" was formed to fight against the Assad regime and seek to overthrow the regime and became the first organized opposition military force.^[24]

With the passage of time Syrian civil uprising entered into civil war due to brutal response from the government and heavy military operations against protesting civilians. In 2014 Houthi militants in Yemen rebelled against Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's government which came to power with an absolute majority clinching 99.8% of vote in a post Arab spring election. Houthi insurgency pushed the country into a civil war.

Arabic novels described all these developments from various perspectives.

Arabic novels narrating Arab spring:

Literature is the mirror of the society and the contemporary Arabic novel proved it. Since the beginning of Arab Spring in Tunisia then in other sister countries like Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria, Arabic novelists have been observing and recording these events very carefully. Arab spring shook the Arab society as the decades long anger blew up suddenly and this anger is clearly reflecting in Arabic novel and its writing style. It has a great impact on Arabic literature in general and Arabic novel in particular.

Let's have a look on Arabic novels of different phases:

Arabic Novels prepared ground for Arab Spring:

As I mentioned that the Arab spring revolution is a result of decades-long oppression, injustice and dictatorship so there is no surprise that Arab intellectuals have been raising their voices and showing their resistance for a long time. Arabic novels have been addressing those issues and produced many revolutionary novels which played a great role to prepare the ground for Arab spring revolution.

For example, Mustapha Khalifah's *The Shell* (2008) contributed to the Arab Spring in many ways. *The Shell* narrates the imprisonment of a Syrian director just because he made a sarcastic comment against the then Syrian president Hafez al-Assad. *The Shell* uncovered the horrific methods of torture against political prisoners by Assad's soldiers. The novel played a great role in bringing about Syrian revolution 2011 as this novel was widely discussed among the common people and it inspired them a lot.

Muhammad Saleem Hammad's *Tadmur: Witness and Witnessed* (1998) tells stories of the torments of the Assad regime in Palmyra Military Prison. It is an account of oppression, humiliation and insult to the dignity of every inmate in this inhuman prison. Thousands of Arab and Syrian prisoners, including the Jordanian writer Muhammad Salim Hammad, a student of engineering witnessed the inhuman torture and cruelty inside it. The novel describes the condition in Syria in Assad regime prior to the Arab spring.

Sun'a Allah Ibrahim wrote *That Smell* (1966) to criticize the Egyptian regime and its brutality. More than half century passed still it is alive in the memory of people. *That Smell* played a very influential role in raising awareness among the people regarding their rights.

Habib Selmi's *Nisa Al-Basateen* (2010) talks about the world of a modest family in a suburb of Tunis struggling for the daily livelihood. The novel discovers the reality of economic crisis

and unemployment in rural Tunisia which is one of the main factors behind the revolt against the Tunisian government.^[25]

Before and During Arab spring period these novels were widely discussed through social networking sites and people were motivated and inspired by those novels. In this way these novels played a key role in preparing ground for Arab spring.

Novels that talk about early phase of Arab Spring:

Arab spring brought about revolution not only in socio-political sector but in Arabic literature also. Since the Arab spring started, Arab authors shifted their attention and engaged more in the socio-political issues targeting the political leadership and its oppression. The involvement of the writers in the Arab spring through their works constructed a platform that challenged the regimes and broke the barriers.

For example, Tahar Ben Jelloun's "*Al-Shararah*" is among the first novels talking about Arab spring especially Tunisian revolution. No doubt Arab spring is the most significant incident of the Arab world in the recent history so the questions like 'who are the heroes of this revolution? How did dictatorial regimes fall within few months? What are the achievements and what are the failures?' are very important and Tahar Ben Jelloun is the first author to answer these questions in his novel.

This novel is the first literary work describes the true life story and self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, the young man whose suicide led to nationwide protests that entered into the Arab spring revolution.

Jelloun's novel narrates the life of Bouazizi before self-immolation. While reading the novel, the readers can imagine the experiences and frustrations of to Bouazizi's and they can feel the pain of the millions of the unemployed youths who are subjected to humiliation, deprivation and ill-treatment by the authority. The novel gives the sense that how Arab spring revolution erupted and what were the conditions in Tunis at the time when Arab spring began. In the novel the writer enters into Bouazizi's life and mind and creates the image of a man struggling for survival and dignity. Bouazizi struggles for a job, he fights for respect and dignity, he fights against corruption and when he found no means to fight against the regime, he makes his body as his weapon and he set himself on fire without knowing if others would see the light illuminated by him. But fortunately, millions saw it and considered it to be the fire in their own bodies and they took to the streets, they made their voices heard. They overthrew repressive governments.

Muhammad had to sacrifice himself due to political corruption that made his life unbearable. The regime became colonial and dictatorial. The novel tells that Muhammad was a street vendor selling fruit in the streets of his town, so he could support his mother and siblings. The local police demanded bribes as usual there. When Muhammad refused, he was assaulted by the police and his cart was confiscated, which deprived him of his source of livelihood. Muhammad got tired of the corrupt system.

The novel describes that the death of Mohamed Bouazizi was not an ordinary death. It was an organized murder, killed by the corrupt regime. The novel tells that there is a lot of injustice in the country, a lot of inequality and humiliation. It does not only narrate the life of the young Tunisian Mohamed, but also describes the social and political conditions in the country.^[26]

Hisham Khesheh's "*Sab'at ayyam fi al-tahrir*" is the first novel which talks about the January revolution in Egypt and its prominent figures and its social backgrounds in a very interesting and attractive fictional method which makes you feel your presence at Tahrir Square. It pointed out that the quest for the democracy and decades-long dictatorship and oppression and social injustice united people from different classes, ideologies and sections for a strong revolution.^[27]

Abu Bakr Al-ayadi's "*Waraqaatun Min Daftaril Khauf*" discovered the pathetic living condition in Tunisia and tells the story of a well-educated Tunisian immigrant who follows the incidents of Arab spring in Tunisia from its day one and the socio-political situation that forced him to migrate. The novel not only narrates events of Tunisian revolution but also portrays the worst kind of living condition under the dictatorship of the government.^[28]

Mohamed Saïd Raïhani's "*Adu-us shams, Al-bahakwan allazi sara wahshan*" is the first novel written about the Libyan revolution in 2011, it tells the painful reality in which Libyan people lived and how situation changed after the killing of Gaddafi.^[29]

Adnan Farzat's "*Kana Al-raeesu sadiqi*" recounts the events that took place in Syria after the revolt against the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The novel speaks directly about the ongoing events in Syria; the main character of the novel is a security officer who reveals the secrets of his work after his retirement, where he was assigned by his seniors to monitor a painting artist who paints for themes related to freedoms and human rights. During this mission he encounters with reality and brutality of his own department and his own government against the protesters. He discovers how the voices of common people were crushed with power and military might, how a head of the state declares war against his own civilians who only demand justice, freedom and dignity. This novel is very important to understand the ground reality of the early phase of Syrian civil war.^[30]

Novels narrating the phase of internal conflicts and civil war in Arab spring:

With the passage of time Arab spring protests entered into violent protests and internal conflicts which caused a massive humanitarian loss. Images of those situations reflect in Arabic novels. For example, Yousuf Alrifai's "*Madinatun lan tamut*" pointed out the instability, destruction, political split and economic collapse in Egypt in the post January revolution period. The novel tells us the reality of the political conflict experienced by young Egyptians and how they were misguided by the forces wanted to weaken their unity and integrity. The novel narrates the story of a young Egyptian boy *Raafat* who was living with a conflict after the assassination of his father a great political activist which completely changed his life into hell. In the complex political situation, he was confused between secret organizations targeting Egypt's stability and integrity and between suspicious political parties. The novel discloses the confusion and uncertainty among the young Egyptians in a post-successful Arab spring revolution. They did not know which direction they should go and to whom they should extend their support. *Raafat* realizes that young Egyptians like him have been used by anti-Egypt elements and Zionist forces to destruct the peace and stability in Egypt.^[31]

Ahmed Hawary's "*Ahfaadu Qabil*" narrates Arab Spring since it started with massive protests till it entered into the current civil war and armed conflicts through the dramatic humanitarian stories full of exciting events mixing painful reality with fiction and horror. The novel describes the biggest tragedy of the Arab world. The main characters of the novel

are an Egyptian journalist, a Libyan history teacher and a Syrian army officer. Destiny unites them together in a conflict zone. The novel discloses several war crimes. It tells that the Arab spring started peacefully with many hopes and expectations but later on it turned into bloody civil wars and terror activities. It describes how a people's peaceful movement entered into a sectarian armed conflict pushing the region back to the dark ages of wars. This is a painful narration of Arab spring showing the ugly face of the movement. The novel is not merely a sad story but a cry and appeal to the entire Arab region for peace, harmony and tolerance.^[32]

Dina Nasrini's "*Amal*" talks about Syrian revolution and civil war. It discussed beautifully how hopes of the revolution were destroyed by bloody civil war, how love for freedom and justice was countered with hate and force and how Arab spring became autumn. It tells stories of brave heroes of Syrian revolution. The novel is looking forward to a better solution of the crisis.^[33]

Ibtisam Ibrahim Teresa's "*Lamar*" is a biography of the tyranny of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and close follow-up of different phases of Syrian crisis.^[34]

Ibtisam Ibrahim Teresa's "*Mudunul Yamam*" tells the story of repression and Syrian resistance to the rule of Bashar al-Assad. The novel goes back to the history of repression and tyranny started from the regime of Bashar al-Assad's father and it continued in his regime also. Killing of innocent civilians, brutal torture of falsely convicted prisoners and use of force to repress civil right movements are the primary issues discussed in the novel. The novel discovers that Syrian has been a land of love and peace and its people have always been peaceful but the brutality, oppression and repression of the Assad government forced these peace-loving people to be violent for their basic rights. The author is optimistic and hope that the dove (symbol of peace) fled away from Syrian will come back soon.

Abdullah Maksoor's "*Aiyyam fi Baba Amr*" and many other novels tell the stories of Syrian civil war, Assad regime's brutality and humanitarian crisis in Syria.

Conclusion:

Arab spring not only brought about revolution in political and social sectors but also in Arabic literature. That is why we see a huge number of poems, novels and short stories were written in Arabic language within this short period of time. Arab writers are now more concerned about social and political issues of the region. This tendency provides a big scope for researchers of language and literature to study the literary aspect of Arab spring. Not more than five years passed on Arab spring and still going on; despite of that tens of Arabic novels have been written discussing many aspects of this historic event. These novels are very important in order to understand different aspects of Arab spring.

Contemporary Arabic novels played a crucial role to narrate Arab spring incidents. They reflect this historic moment from many angles. As these novels were written in an unstable condition and in hurry so rather than paying much attention on literary aspect most of them focused on describing the complex situations narrating Arab spring stories carefully. These novels built a strong resistance against injustice, oppression and dictatorship.

The relationship between Arabic novel and the Arab Spring comes from the strong involvement of novelists with the political life through raising awareness among common people about the drawbacks and mistakes of their political leadership. These attempts took

the shape of unofficial civil movement that confronted the military and its unlimited authority.

Arab spring novels show the depth of the social and political understanding of Arab writers as they provided insight into this complex matter. Arabic novels dared to speak out the truth without any fear from the dictators and their machineries. That is why we can say that Arab spring not only brought about revolution in socio-political sectors but also in Arabic literature particularly Arabic novel.

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