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Feminist Voice In The Eighteenth Century Sindh: Glimpses From The Poetry Of Bhitai

Abstract

Eighteenth century Sindh was ruled by Kalhora, who came into power after the weakening central authority of Mughals. The eighteenth century Sindh was male dominant society where women merely considered being the beauty of house. Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai (1689-1752) is the renowned poet of Sindh. He belongs to the Syed¹ family. Syeds are considered the elite and privileged class in Sindh having large number of followers. Even today, by and large, Syed families in Sindh don't allow their women to go for work or get education generally but exception is there (trend slowly and gradually is changing). Despite belonging to the privileged class Bhitai challenged the patriarchist traditions. Bhitai's poetry gave voice to the women of marginalized and ignored class of society. His collection of poetry named Shah Jo Risalo, also deals social, political and religious conditions of Sindh. In Shah Jo Risalo, Woman has been depicted as an icon of loyalty, spirituality, and courage. The heroines of Bhitai's poetry, for instance, Sasui, Marui and Suhni are symbols of courage and bravery. Bhitai chooses various indigenous folklores and folksongs from different parts like Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and Rajasthan (India). His poetry depicts very clear feminist voice and encouragement for women who belong to the ignored segment of society.

Key words: Poetry, Society, Women.

Introduction

"If this poet cannot be identified with Prophet, he may in every way be identified with saints"²

The Sindhis call Bhitai with different names due to love and respect like Bhitai Sarkar, Bhitai Ghot or *Bhit jo Ghot* (bridegroom of Bhit) and *Shah Saeen*.³ There is no consensus among his biographers about his year of birth. Most of the biographers have taken the year of his birth from his contemporary historian, Mir

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Ali Sher Qane⁴ of Thatta.⁴ According to renowned scholars like Sorley, Schimmel and Ghurbakshani, Bhitai was born in 1689,⁵ in Bhaynpur Khatian, in Hala Taluka⁶ of District Hyderabad. His place of birth is more popularly known as Hala Hawali. There is also other year of his birth which is mentioned by some other biographers it is not popular because of many reasons.⁷ There is no sign that marks his place of birth except a mosque, which was built by a disciple of Bhitai named Laung Fakir Khairpuri.⁸

Shah Abd al-Latif belonged to a Syed⁹ family of Herat, Afghanistan. One of Bhitai's ancestors named Syed Mir Ali, who was a rich and wealthy man of the time, had attained fame in the time of Amir Taimur.¹⁰ In 1398, the Mongols invaded the territory of Herat. Syed Mir Ali met Taimur as a host, and offered him huge sum for the royal force. Amir Taimur accepted the offer and was pleased with his hospitality. He soon repaid the favour by appointing the sons of Syed Mir Ali as governors of different provinces in India. However, one of his sons named Mir Haider Shah and his father were taken as courtiers by Amir Taimur, and they accompanied him to India.¹¹

After staying in India for some time, Syed Haider Shah visited Sindh and stayed at Hala as a guest of local man named Shah Muhammad, son of Darya Khan. He supported Shah Muhammad in the time of need.¹² Haider Shah married to daughter of Shah Muhammad named Fatimah, who was later renamed as Bibi Sultan.¹³ After staying there for some time, he left for Herat when he heard the news of his father's death. It is believed that when Syed Haider Shah was about to leave for Sindh, he suddenly fell ill and passed away there. He left two sons from the first wife in Herat named Syed Muhammad and Syed Hussain.¹⁴ However, Bibi Sultan four months after her husband's departure to Herat gave a birth to male-child, who was named Mir Ali. Upon growing up, he went to Herat, met his step-brothers, and took his share from his father's inheritance.¹⁵ Later, Syed Mir Ali got married and had two wives: one was a Sindhi lady from Hala and the other was a Turkish lady. He had two sons from them: Syed Sharaf al-Din from Sindhi wife and Syed Ahmed by Turkish wife.¹⁶ These two Syed families settled at village known as Mutallawi (currently Matiari) which is situated near Hyderabad and Bhit Shah.¹⁷ These Syeds of Mutallawi owned rich estates and treated as spiritual guides (*Pirs*) by the neighbours.¹⁸ Great poet and sufi Shah Abd al-Latif descended from these Syeds. His father was Syed Habib Shah, and grandfather was Syed Abd al-Karim Shah,¹⁹ who was a respected *Sufi* of his times.

Syed Habib Shah, had two sons from the first wife who died immediately after birth. Both were named Abd al-Latif. Later, third son was born, again named Abd al-Latif, who survived and became great *Sufi* poet.²⁰

It is very common in the East and west to associate medieval poetry and other forms of literature mainly with the elite and the upper-classes of society. Moreover, the use of characters and themes were also connected with the life of the nobility. It is important to note that in Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai's poetry use of folk-stories in particular his selection of characters are predominantly people from the lower working- classes. Instead of praising kings and nobles, he praises the poor preferably women.

Though, Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai (1689-1752) was born in well off and powerful family of Sindh. He left his inherited social association and harmony with the marginalized segment of society. During his time great development had taken place like disintegration of the political authority of the Mughals, foreign attacks of the Persians, and the emergence of Kalhora (1701- 1783) as a rulers of Sindh. These changes had adversely affected the socio-economic state of affairs in Sindh, which resultantly increased the distance between the upper and lower class.²¹ Bhitai resided among the ordinary masses, he felt the pain, woes and worries of the common masses. Indeed Bhitai's poetry is the source to feel pain of common masses in generally and women particularly.²²

1.2 Bhitai's *Shah Jo Risalo*: An Introduction

The collection of Bhitai's poetry is titled *Shah Jo Risalo*, which contains different *surs* (musical tunes) and verses. *Shah Jo Risalo* is considered in Sindh as the Bible by most of the people. The work contains great lessons for every segment of society. Bhitai's poetry addresses the people belonging to various walks of life, the marginalized segments of society, poor folks, and menial workers such as potter, ironsmith, washer man, fisherman, Shepherd, cow-boy and cloth-maker. It also throws light on various aspects of the life as well as the social, cultural, political and religious issues.

It is argued that Bhitai's disciples had learnt his poetry by heart, and later compiled the *Risalo*. The renowned compilers of *Shah Jo Risalo* are as under:

1. Muhammad Rahim Faqir who was very close to Bhitai during his life time.
2. Tamar Faqir, who was a companion of Bhitai. It is believed that he was an educated man. It is commonly believed that the present *Risalo* is taken from

As far as the language of *Risalo* is concerned, it is purely literary and formal. Even it is difficult for the indigenous Sindhi. According to Sorley, Bhitai was the first Sindhi poet whose poetry has imaginative use of Sindhi language.²³ He was not an imitator of famous Persian Sufi poets like Jalal al-Din Rumi, Abd al-Rahman Jami, or Hafiz of Shiraz. He expressed his own ideas in his language employing symbols borrowed from local culture. His language and ideas depict the real picture of the time he lived in.²⁴ The dialect of Sindhi language in *Risalo* is spoken in and around Bhit at that time.²⁵ The close connection of *surs* with music is still retained today.²⁶

There are thirty-six *surs* or chapters in the *Risalo* of Hotchand Mulchand Gur Bakhshani. What follows is a brief introduction to them:

1. *Sur Kalyan*:²⁷ It is purely mystical song which begins with deep felt hymnal praise of God, the One Who manifests Himself in different forms.
2. *Sur Yaman*²⁸ *Kalyan*: It provides guidance to the seeker travelling on the Divine path, or the sufi who embarks upon a spiritual journey, and teaches how to control his own self and how to subdue his passions.

3. *Sur Khanbhat*:²⁹ It is a melody sung at night. It highlights the journey of the human soul to the Divine Beloved. It also deals with the beauty of moon and stars.
4. *Sur Srirag*:³⁰ It deals with human existence on this earth. Bhitai believes that it is preparation for our spiritual life, which goes on side by side with our physical life, and these both are interlinked. He gives the comparison of man in this world, he believes that man is like a traveller who sails through the ocean. He believes that man's life is in the boat or the ship sailing from one place to another, but ultimately reaches at the end either with good or bad.
5. *Sur Samoondi*:³¹ In this *sur* Bhitai portrays the feelings of sailors and their wives, especially the state in which wives of sailors are in their husband's absence. However, they feel happy when their husbands return home. It deals with both pain and happiness in human life.
6. *Sur Suhni*:³² It is related to the folk tale of Sunhi and Mahiwal, taken as symbols for human soul and God.
7. *Sur Sasui Abri*:³³ It is related to the folk tale of Sasui and Punhun. The main objective of it is the evolution of a sufi. Bhitai tells that courage, hope and pain are needed in order to reach the Beloved and the Ultimate Truth. It tells about the journey of Sasui through mountains and formidable rocks symbolizing the difficulties in the sufi path. Later, she becomes herself Punhun, symbolizing union with the divine.
8. *Sur Sasui Maazoori*:³⁴ in this *sur* Sasui is feeling weak and asking help from friends. At the same mentions difficulties and hardships of the path. *Mazoori* is also musical tone which is played in the certain areas of Balochistan like Lasbela and Khuzdar. it is played on *Surinada* (musical instrument)³⁵
9. *Sur Sasui: Desi*:³⁶ In this *sur* Shah Sahib has pointed out the feelings of Sasui that one should control the desires and feelings of lust. This world is not place for laziness and rest; it is place where perpetual struggle is required. She is complaining about the brothers of Punhoon and mountains.
10. *Sur Saii: Kohiary*:³⁷ this *sur* talks about the hardships of mountain. It shows the how Sasui endured the hardships of mountain and difficulties she faced during her journey through mountains.
11. *Sur Sasui: Hussaini*:³⁸ in this *sur* Sasui is complaining and lamenting. This *sur* clearly a highlight complains of Sasui regarding Punhoon and his brothers. .
12. *Sur Leela Chanesar*:³⁹ this is the folk tell of Sindh. Basically wife of Chanesar give husband to other woman for a one night in lieu of diamond necklace which caused to lose her husband. The main purpose of this *sur* is to leave worldly desire and greediness which make you away from his Beloved. Furthermore, leave haughtiness and ego which burn your good

- deeds. There is great lesson in this *sur* for human being to avoid worldly desires.
13. *Sur Moomal Rano*⁴⁰: it is a folk tell of 15th century. The main purpose of this *sur* is a man fall from Divine grace by virtue of his own mistakes and blunders in the context of Moomal Rano. Here Bhitai has shown that Moomal does not exchange Divine favours for worldly commodity but tries to seek more consolation in different ways unlike other seeker go out in *search* of reality.
 14. *Sur Marui*:⁴¹ it is a very popular folk story of Sindh.
 15. *Sur Kamode*:⁴² This is folk tell of Sindh in which King loves low caste fisher woman and he starts catching fish with the relatives of fisherwoman.
 16. *Sur Ghatu*:⁴³ It has been used as a sign for all sort of passions that human nature is prone to. This is the folk tell related to a fisherman who sons grappled by crocodile in sea. His lamb son who made a strategy and killed that crocodile and took his six brothers from the bally of crocodile.
 17. *Sur Sorath*:⁴⁴ It is the name of queen in folk tell and melody in music.
 18. *Sur Kedaro*:⁴⁵: This *sur* is melody in music. Bhitai Sarkar has put light in touching tones on the tragedy of Karbala.
 19. *Sur Sarang*:⁴⁶ this *sur* is often sung during the rainy season. It reflects the nature clouds lighting and rain. Cool breeze from *north* that comes as harbinger of rain are mentioned in this *sur*.
 20. *Sur Asa*:⁴⁷ it is related to the eternal hope. It is melody in music. In this *sur* Shah Sahib has citation from the Quran and Hadith made known man's relationship with God that should not to be ignored.
 21. *Sur Rip*:⁴⁸ In this *sur* Bhitai Sarkar has highlighted deep distress of woman whose husband has been away for a long time for not known reasons. Her emotional feelings at the state of her husband's separation describes in the number of verses. *Sur Khahori*:⁴⁹ it is *sur* in which one wanders in the mountains and in the fields in the search of fruit which they collect and that their means of survival. In this *sur* he has highlighted the yogi with them he passed long three years. This *sur* gives close observation of the state of ascetics' life and the places that he had visited with them. The forest food that they seek is the symbol of the search for Reality.
 22. *Sur Barvo Sindhi*:⁵⁰ it is a musical melody. The urge of human to serve and love Allah and Allah only is the true Beloved. The symbols of Allah are there all around us on earth and in the sky. He advised in this *sur* one should be a single minded to his Beloved. There is no other way to be loved.
 23. *Sur Ramkali*:⁵¹ it is melody in music. It is read along with the *sur Khahori* because both describe the wandering ascetics and their way of life.

24. *Sur Kapaeti*:⁵² it is all about the cottage industry of that time in which women had to spinning at their home. It is symbolic that without hard work nothing can be achieved. It also forces on the perfection remove all the flaws and make self-clear. Also in this *sur* there are certain symbolic words which are used for God like as husband, king and connoisseurs. Moreover, *Eid* day and tomorrow represent the day of judgement and spinning man is the seeker of Truth. In this it is advised that only good deeds are essential.
25. *Sur Poorab*:⁵³ it is the direction from where light comes. Shah Sahib has used it as sign for the spiritual goal of the ascetics. It is short *sur* which contains two sections one deals with the crow who deliver message to his beloved humbly. Second section purely deals with ascetics.
26. *Sur Karyal*:⁵⁴ it means beautiful bird like peacock or swan. Bhitai has used swan bird as symbol for those people who seek a Divine light and Divine guidance to be good human being. They include the prophets, the saints and all benefactors of mankind.
27. *Sur Pirbhati*:⁵⁵ it is a musical melody which is sung during the daybreak. This *sur* is a symbol of Divine munificence, kindness and concern for our well beings. It shows that people awe early in the morning pray and sing praise of merciful God.
28. *Sur Dahar*:⁵⁶ this *sur* is work of genius of poetic art. It is highlighted rise and fall off civilizations and highlighted the importance of water. It shows the importance of Nature.
29. *Sur Bilawal*:⁵⁷ it is very soothing musical tune. It leaves soothing effect and brings feelings of peace to the audience and musicians. In *sur* Shah Sahib has highlighted the qualities of ideal ruler and leader. The generosity and reply to the people with smile and without aggressiveness. There are given such names of ideal rulers like Jadam Jakhro, Abro, Samo, Rai Rahu and above all the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Concept of charity in Islam and prove to lover of God.

Social Conditions of Sindh in Eighteenth Century

The Eighteenth century Sindh was based on patriarchy system. *Shah Jo Risalo*, troughs light on the different aspects of womenfolk. Once Bhitai travelled to Jaisalmir (India), where he saw the hospitality of womenfolk, he expressed about them that “the women of Jaisalmir deserve all praise, because they allowed themselves to sacrifice their principles in the name of Beloved”.⁵⁸ The leading characters of Bhitai’s folklores are folk women as a symbol of valour and daring. In *sur Sasui* Bhitai shows the strength and determination of women while crossing the mountains for chasing her beloved. It shows determination and strength of women who can face mountains and harshness of it. He wrote:

”ڪونهي قادر ڪو ٻيو، انين جو اڀاڳ
قل لَن يصيبنا الا ماكتب الله، اي معذرت ماڳ
سيوني سڀاڳ، مارنيءَ مساوي ٿيو.⁵⁹

“There is no other God but He, misfortunes are al ordained
Say “no trouble comes to your, save what He ordains”
Luck or ill luck to Marui are the same.”⁶⁰

پيهي جان پاڻ ۾، ڪيم روح رهاڻ
ته نڪو ڏونگر ڏيهه ۾، نڪا ڪيچين ڪاڻ،
پنھون ٿيس پاڻ، سسئي تان سور هئا.⁶¹

“I found no mountains in the world nor yearing for Baloch,
All sufferings was for Sasui, gone was it when punhoon I became.”⁶²

Bhitai has selected many local folktales and folksongs from different regions like Sindh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Balochistan.

موني مانداڻ جي، واري ڪيائين وار،
وچون وسڻ اٿيون، چئوڏس ۽ چوڏار
ڪي اٿي ويئون استنبول ڏي، ڪي مٿيون مغرب پار،
ڪي چمڪن چين تي، ڪي لهن سمرقندين سار،
ڪي رمي ويٺيون روم تي، ڪي قابل ڪي قنڌار،
ڪي دهليءَ ڪي دکن، ڪي گڙن مٿي گرنار،
ڪنهن جنبي جيسلمير تان، ڏنابڪانير بڪار
ڪنهن پڇ پڇائيو، ڪنهن ڍٽ مٿي ڍار،
ڪنهن اچي امر ڪوٽ تان، وسايا ولهار،
سانئيم! سڌائين ڪرين، مٿي سنڌ سڪار
دوست! منا دلدار، عالم سڀ آباد ڪرين.⁶³

“Clouds come back once again; it rains lightning flash from all sides with them
Some go to Istanbul, others turn to west
Some shine bright over China, others take care of Samarkand,
Some wandered to Rome, to Kabul and Qandhar,
Some lie on Delhi, Decan, thundering over,
Some pour rain over Jesalmir, dropping showers over Bikaner,
Some soak Bhuj, others water Dhatt,
Some made green the plains of Umarkote

Dear God! May you always make Sindh a land of abundance rare,
Beloved mine! May you make prosperous the whole universe.”⁶⁴

One of the stories given by Shah Abd al-Latif in his poetry is Suhni Mehar. Suhni is married to Dam against her wishes. Consequently, she never accepts him as her husband. She falls in love with *Mehar* (Mehar means cattle grazer), whom she visits every night by crossing the river. Society and her family despise her and accuse her of immorality. The poet, however, praises her courage in breaking all the traditional rules of society in which wish of women is being ignored and sufferings the disapproval of her family in order to visit her beloved. It is not necessarily mean that Bhitai approves her unfaithfulness and also he does not appear to hold her responsible for her act of infidelity to her husband. The marriage which has been imposed on her without her consent does not bind Suhni in a lasting relationship. Bhitai admires the strength of this woman who is willing to sacrifice everything for love and stand against injustice. Though Society, family, and friends turn against her. It seems that even nature, the river, storm and whirlpool are all waiting to punish her for her unfaithfulness. But the poet justifies her actions in the following line which he puts into the mouth of Suhni:⁶⁵

اللسن ارواحن کي جڏهن چيائون
ميشاقان ميهارسين، لتيون مون لائون
سو موئي ڪئين پانهون! جو محفوظان معاف ٿيو!

“When the souls were questioned in pre-eternity

My relationship

With *Mehar* was preordained from that day

How could that which was

Already written in my destiny be undone?”⁶⁶

Bhitai has also highlighted the role, love, attachment, dedication and contribution of women to their poor folks. Noori was a *Muhana* by caste which seems very lower caste in Sindh on the contrary Jam Tamachi king of the time who fall in love with her and got married. Despite got married to the ruler she did not forget her poor people while asking favour from the ruler for their poor folks.

تون تماچي تڙ ڏٺي، انون گندري غريب
تو سين جام! قريب، ڪي ڏن چڏائي ڏيڃ مون⁶⁷

“You are ruler Tamachi, me poor Gundri maid,

I am your spouse; let my people go free of tax.”⁶⁸

In the story of Nuri, Bhitai is pointing out the Stratifications of the society in which he lives. Nuri belongs to the *Muhana*⁶⁹ caste, the lowest caste in the Sindh

Society. Shah praises her, giving her the credit for her good behaviour. Though she belongs to the marginalised class of society, she doesn't get impressed from the luxuries of the king Tamachi. Moreover, she wins the king by her virtues and he makes her chief queen over the other queens. Thus Bhitai suggests that virtues should not necessarily be attributed merely to the high-class society, nor should vices be immediately associated with the lower classes. These are individual characteristics which anyone can possess, irrespective of caste or class.⁷⁰

هٿين پيرين، ارڪٿين، مه نه مٿاهي،
جنء سڳو وچ سرندڙي، ننء راتن ۾ رائي،
اصل هئي ان کي، اهل جاماڻي،
سمي سڃاڻي، بيڙو ٻڌس ٻانه ۾،⁷¹

“She was not a *muhani* from her hand, feet nor behaviour

Like the threads in the centro of the stings of the Surindo, she was queen among queens

From the beginning, her manners were thoses of royalty.

Samo recognised her and tied red thread round her writs.”⁷²

Sasui was brought up in the house of washer man. She was washerwoman and Punhoon who was from the elite family of Kech Makran (Balochistan). Therefore, brothers-in-law do not approve of their brother Punhoon marrying an ordinary washerwoman. They belong to a well-known family of Kech Makran (Modern Balochistan). So, while Sasui was sleeping, they kidnap her beloved husband Punhoon. From the moment she wakes up, Sasui does not rest in peace. She leaves everything and sets out alone in search of Punhoon. In the heat of summer, she crosses the desert, passes through rough mountains and forests all by foot. Bhitai admires the courage of a woman who is not discouraged by rough paths, nor sacred by the wild animals of the jungle. He appreciates her bravery and strength in overcoming every obstacle which stands between her and her beloved Punhoon.

ٿيپي ڪندين ڪوهه! ڏونگر! ڏکوين کي،
تو جي پهڻ پڻ جا، ته لڱ منهنجا لوه،
ڪنهن جو ڪونهي ٿوه، امر مون سين ائن ڪيو.⁷³

“what will you do with your heat, to the already distressed woman, O mountain?

If you are the stone of Pub

My body is also of iron.

It is no fault of anyone, except my own destiny.”⁷⁴

Bhitai's poetry highlights the ignored and margenzized people including the women. He encourages and praises Sasui while crossing the mountains. He supports Sasui in his poetry to be bold and confront all the difficulties. Besides it Sasui asks from her friends to let go in search of beloved if you leave greed and avarice:

سڀ ننگيون ٿي نڪرو، لالچ ڇڏي لوڀ
سڀريان! سين سوڀ، ننڊون ڪندي نه ٿئي.⁷⁵

“By giving up avarice, greed and clothing, set out for the desired goal,
Success with the beloved cannot be achieved merely by sleeping.”⁷⁶

Moreover, Bhitai advises Sasui how to cope in adverse circumstances:

مهندي محتاجي ڪري، پنيءَ پيرُ کٽيڃ
ڪبليائي! ڪيڇ ڏي، حج مَ هلائيڃ
پاڻا ڌار پريٽو، سسني! ساڻ کٽيڃ،
اوڳي! عزازيل کي، ويجهي تان مَ ويڃيڃ،
نا اُميدي نيڃ، ته اوڏي ٿئين اُميد کي.⁷⁷

“By taking humility as your guide, follow its footsteps.

O lonely helpless one! never, carry expectations while travelling to Kech.

Sasui! take selfless love with you.

Never, let Azazil come near you.

Take hopelessness with you, then hope will come near you.”⁷⁸

In sur Marui, Shah Abd al-Latif depicts life in two distinct social milieus. On the one hand, there is Umar, the ruler of Sindh, full of glory and riches. On the other hand, there is the life-style of the poor nomadic people of Malir (Tharparkar), who barely have the necessities of life. Bhitai in this story has mentioned that the poor contented with what they have and remain happy; whereas the rich are never satisfied and will never leave the poor to live in peace. Marui is a poor villager girl king brought her to the palace by force, who detests everything around her. She recalls her poor villager friends, relatives, and portrays the picture of their simple life.

ورُ سي وطن ڄاڻيون، صحرا ستر جن!
گولاڙا ۽ گگريون، اوچڻ اباڻن
ويڙ هيا گهمن وليين، جهنگن
مون کي مارونڙن، سج ڳٽائي سيج ۾!⁷⁹

“Blessed are the women of my country, whose shelter is the desert.

The *golara* and the *ggriyun* is the bedding of my relatives.

They are wrapped up with creepers, the forest dwellers move about the forest.

My Maru gave me wasteland as dowry.”⁸⁰

While commenting on their contentment in poverty, Bhitai puts his words in the mouth of Marui saying:

ڪارا ڪراين ۾، سون اسان ڪي سوءَ
وَرُ جيئڻن سين جوءَ فاقو فرحت پائڻيان!⁸¹

“We wore black thread around our wrists,

And gold for us is the symbol of mourning

Let there be hunger and starvation, but the company of my girlfriends is a blessing for me.”⁸²

Bhitai informed and notified to the women in general and specifically to the relative women of sailors about the upcoming hazards. It depicts his concern for the women, who used to be understood as an ignored in the society. The following verse of *Sur Samundi* great source of encouragement to them in the difficult times:⁸³

سڀني جوڀن ڏينهن، جڏهن سڄڻ سفر هليا!
رٿان رهن نه سپرين آيل! ڪريان ڪنهن؟
مونڪي چاڙهي چينن، ويو وڻجارو اوھري!⁸⁴

“Those were my youthful days, when my love voyaging went,

My tears could prevent him not from going west,

leaving me on lover’s pyre, my sailed away.”⁸⁵

Conclusion

Bhitai has unlimited admiration for women who was the most ignored in the eighteenth century Sindh, and even women is struggling for their rights today all around the world. In this regard new approach has taken birth that is feminism but our poet Bhitai was voice for them in the eighteenth century. Even today women have not right place where she supposed to be. Just we take example of his surs they are associated with women in order to honour them and give them very good place. For example, Bhitai presents Sasui as a symbol of courage and struggle. He portrays *Suhni* as a courageous that she breaks traditional bindings which were imposed on her without her choice. Furthermore, Bhitai shows Noori as a humble because she always remains grateful to the king, who accepted her as life partner (queen) though she belongs to a ignored class.

Even in the modern times his poetry can be taken as guidance for the feminist movement in Sindh and other parts of the world. He has given voice to the women to stand up against any kind of injustice in the world. He has prayed not merely the people of Sindh but all people of the universe. Therefore, Bhitai’s poetry is great voice for the all oppressed and victim women of the world.

Notes & Reference

¹ Syed families associate their lineage with the family of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) here in Pakistan and considered the most privileged.

² K.F Mirza, *Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai* (Hyderabad: Bhit Shah Cultural Centre committee, 1980), 02.

³ Saen is a very respectable title in Sindhi language. People often refer to God and the Prophet (PBUH) as Allah Saen and Huzoor Saen. The title Saen is also used for teacher, elder brother, uncle and father as well.

⁴ Lilaram Watanmal Lalwani, *Life, Religion and Poetry of Shah Latif* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1978), 6.

⁵ Ibid., 163.

⁶ In the north of Hala is District Noushro Feroz, in south Tando Muhammad Khan, East Tharparkar and in the West flows River Sindh.

⁷ G.M Syed mentions year of birth in his book on page number seven 1290 Hijri. G. M. Syed, *Shah Latif and His Message* (Sehwan Sharif: Sain Publishers, 1996), 7. According to Christian calendar, it becomes 1873, which seems incorrect. Ernest Trump has mentioned his year of birth as 1680. According to him Bhitai died at the age of 67 years in 1747.

⁸ Syed, *Shah Latif and His Message*, 7.

⁹ A title given to those whose lineage can be traced to the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H).

¹⁰ Mirza, *Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai*, 2.

¹¹ Syed Mir Ali had six sons, and were given posts: the eldest one Mir Abd al-Baqi Shah was posted at Ajmer, Mir Abd al-Wahid Shah was posted at Multan, Mir Abd al-Razzaq Shah was posted at Bakhar (Sukkur), Mir Abu-Bakr was posted at Swistan (Sehwan), Mir Sharaf al-Din chose to remain at home in order to supervise the family affairs. Ibid.

¹² Mir Abdul Hussain Sangi, *Lataif Lateefy*, Sindhi. tr. Adbdul Rasool Qadri Baloch (Hyderabad: Shah Abdul Latif Bhit Shah Sakafati Markaz, 1986), 15.

¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁴ Mirza, *Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai*, 2.

¹⁵ Sangi, *Lataif Lateefy*, 17.

¹⁶ Mirza, *Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai*, 4.

¹⁷ Mirza, *life of Bhitai*, 4.

¹⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁹ Great poet and Sufi of his time. His book is *Shah Abd al-Karim jo Kalam*.

²⁰ Mirza, *Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai*, 5.

²¹ H. T. Sorley, *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1940), 205.

²² G. M. Syed, *Shah Abdul Latif and his Message* (Sehwan Sharif: Sain Publisher, 1996), 237.

²³ Sorely, *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, 206.

²⁴ Ibid., 207

²⁵ Baloch, *Shah Latif: Hayati Jo Aahwal aen Risale Jee Tareekh*, 176.

²⁶ Sorely, *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, 217.

²⁷ *Kalyan* means peace.

- ²⁸ *Yaman* means to control one's mind and make it so conscious that it finds peace.
- ²⁹ Literally meaning refuge.
- ³⁰ It literally means preparation.
- ³¹ *Samoodni* means about the life of sailors who have to leave their dear and near ones in the search of food for them and face the hazards of sea.
- ³² literally meaning beautiful
- ³³ Sasui means moon and abri means weak or fragile.
- ³⁴ Maazoori literally means helpless or weak.
- ³⁵ Aga Saleem, *Sindhi Moseeqi a ji Rayat aen Shah J Risale Ja Sur*(Karachi: Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai Chair, 2011), 50.
- ³⁶ *Desi* means native.
- ³⁷ it is mountain song. This song is for mountainous people
- ³⁸ It means lamentation
- ³⁹ Leela was the wife of Chanesar. Chanesar was the ruler of Soomra dynasty.
- ⁴⁰ Moomal and Rano are the names. Moomal was the daughter of king Raja Nand of Gujjar family from Mirpur Mathelo(in Sindh). Rano was the friend of Soomro rule Hamir Soomro.
- ⁴¹ Marui is the name of girl. She belongs to the poor family from Malir (Tharparkar Sindh)
- ⁴² Kamode means Love resplendent. It is melody song which is sung afternoon and has very soothing effect.
- ⁴³ It means the crocodile killer.
- ⁴⁴ It is Hindustani musical melody. Sorath was the wife of Rai Diach who was the rule of Junagarh.
- ⁴⁵ Kedaro means the battle field.
- ⁴⁶ It means rainy season.
- ⁴⁷ Literally means fervent desire and hope that is eternal.
- ⁴⁸ It means deep distress.
- ⁴⁹ It means wandering ascetics.
- ⁵⁰ The Beloved. It is a melodious.
- ⁵¹ It means Divine bunds or persons having Divine qualities
- ⁵² Kapaeti means the spinners.
- ⁵³ It means east.
- ⁵⁴ It means beautiful bird.
- ⁵⁵ It means hymn at the dawn.
- ⁵⁶ It means desert valley.
- ⁵⁷ Means the soothing tune because it is melodious.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁵⁹ Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.comp. Kalyan Advani* (Hyderabad: Sindh Book Club,2002), 271.
- ⁶⁰ Shah Abdul al-Latif Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Amena Khamisani (Hyderabad: Bhitshah Cultural Centre Committee, 1994), 172.

- ⁶¹ Bhitai, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.compilation. Advani*, 162.
- ⁶² Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Khamisani, 104
- ⁶³ Bhitai, *Risalo Of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.comp. Advani*, 333.
- ⁶⁴ Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Khamisani, 1994), 215.
- ⁶⁵ Durre Shwar Syed, *The Poetry of Shah Abd Al-Latif* (Jamshoro: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1988), 80.
- ⁶⁶ Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Duree Shawar Syed (Hyderabad:Sindhi Adabi Board, 1988), 80.
- ⁶⁷ Bhitai, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.comp. Advani*, 289 .
- ⁶⁸ Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Syed, 185.
- ⁶⁹ Muhana is a local term which used for fishermen. It's also caste in Sindh whose profession is fishing.
- ⁷⁰ Syed, *The Poetry of Shah Abd Al-Latif*, 82.
- ⁷¹ Bhitai, *Risalo Of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.comp. Advani*, 291.
- ⁷² Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Syed, 83
- ⁷³ Bhitai, *Risalo Of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.comp. Advani*, 209.
- ⁷⁴ Shah Abd al-Latif Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Syed, 1988), 85.
- ⁷⁵ Bhitai, *Risalo Of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.comp. Advani*, 178.
- ⁷⁶ Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Syed, 74.
- ⁷⁷ Bhitai, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.comp. Advani*, 155.
- ⁷⁸ Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Syed, 86.
- ⁷⁹ Bhitai, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.compilation. Advani*, 268.
- ⁸⁰ Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Syed, 87.
- ⁸¹ Bhitai, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.compilation. Advani*, 267.
- ⁸² Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Syed 88.
- ⁸³ Shawar, *The Poetry of Shah Abd Al-Latif*, 75.
- ⁸⁴ Bhitai, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi.compilation. Advani*, 112
- ⁸⁵ Bhitai, *Shah Jo Risalo*, Eng. tr. Khamisani, 68.