
A NEW HISTORICIST ANALYSIS OF
BINA SHAH'S NOVEL *A SEASON FOR MARTYRS*

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to analyze the novel Bina Shah' novel A Season for Martyrs, from the perspective of New Historicism. This novel presents history of Sindh blended with fiction. It highlights the main Historical events of Sindh; from the arrival of the British in 1827 and occupation of Sindh by Charles Napier till the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in present century. Shah has narrated the history to show its link with the present political and social situation of Sindh. The novel has focused social and political discourses of Sindhi society such as: Significance of love with the land and people' faith in mystics. The novel has narrated various myths and tales about famous mystics belonging to Sindh. The novel presents story of Ali, a young media reporter, who faces identity problem because of social and psychological issues but when he realizes that his land needs his services, he becomes political activist. This study analyses historical facts and some social and political discourses presented in the novel. Effort is done to interpret the novel according to the theory. Cultural context and social environment of the author is analyzed by observing facts from her social and personal life. Social and political situation of present era are discussed to find the impact of present situation on the interpretation of the author.

Keywords: Society, History, Saint, Martyr, British, Sindh.

INTRODUCTION

This research is conducted to critically analyze Shah' novel *A Season for Martyrs*. Pakistani English writers have contributed little in English literature in comparison to Indian English writers, especially in early period after the independence of the country. But now the trends are changed, many Pakistanis are also producing noteworthy English literature. *A Season for Martyrs* is published in December, 2014. It is one of the important additions in Pakistani English literature. Shah has specifically portrayed Sindhi Society in this novel. This novel shows both past and present of Sindh province (Pakistan). It has focused various issues related to psychology of individuals, as well as the influences of culture and society on the personality of people.

This research is done to get the answer of the query that: What does Shah's portrayal of history and discourses of Sindh reflect about society of Sindh?

Background of the Author and Story of the Novel: Shah is a Pakistani English writer. She was born in early 70s in Karachi Pakistan. She belongs to a land owner family of rural Sindh. She has got her education from U.S.A. She is Graduate in Psychology from Wellesley College and M.Ed. from Harvard. She started her professional career as an editor of Pakistan's internet magazine *Spider*. She is well known journalist as well as fiction writer. Shah has written five novels, and two short story collections. She is a regular column writer in various national, and international newspapers, and magazine. Her books are translated in many languages. Shah has mostly highlighted the issues of gender discrimination, class system, minorities living in Pakistan, religious extremism, ethnic discrimination etc.

Story of the Novel: This novel is consisting of twenty chapters. Shah presents myths about famous mystics, and main events from political history of Sindh from the Period of Talpur rule in Sindh to present era, such as: invasion of Sindh by Charles Napier, 'Hur movement', 'Khilafat Movement', atrocities of British rulers against native people of Sindh, political struggle of G.M. Sayyad, hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; a Sindhi elected prime minister of Pakistan, and martyrdom of Benazir Bhutto. The other ten chapters of the novel narrate the story of three months of a media reporter Ali's life. Ali is son of a land owner and politician from rural Sindh. Before a significant change in Ali's personality he hides his identity as a son of a land owner from the rural Sindh, as he lives in Karachi, and in his social circle people's concept about land owners is quite negative, they believe that land owners are feudal. Ali always listens negative remarks in his urban social circle about land owners. Ali feels ashamed about his identity; he hides his actual identity even from Sunita his Hindu girl-friend, to whom he wants to marry. In his social circle, he introduces himself as a son of a late bureaucrat.

Ali works as a reporter in a media channel City 24. He goes for media coverage of Benazir Bhutto's rally when she comes back to Pakistan after a long period of self-exile. Haroon a Sindhi working as a camera man in the City 24 accompanies him. They observed that a huge crowd mainly Sindhi people had come to give warm welcome to their beloved leader Bhutto. Haroon feels very happy, but then two bombs exploded in rally, many innocent people lost their lives including Haroon. Ali feels shocked at the tragic demise of Haroon. Ali feels more shock when he notices that the media channel City 24 gives no moral or financial help to Haroon's family.

Ali wants to go to America to make his career; he gets admission in an American university, but just at the moment when his name was called for visa interview, he quits the Embassy as he realizes that American people are not giving due respect to Pakistani immigrants. He comes to Karachi, and

thinks about worst political situation of the country because of military dictatorship. He feels that as a son of soil his land needs his services. Great change occurs in his personality; he joins the people's resistance movement for restoration of democracy. Police arrests him for taking part in a protest, but SHO Police releases him because of his family background. His identity crisis resolves, he becomes confident about positive image of his family background when he realizes that land owners of rural Sindh are not feudal. The novel ends when Ali becomes the eye witness of another historical tragedy. He goes for the media coverage of Benazir's Rawalpindi Rally on 27th December, 2007 and he sees the great leader martyred by a gunshot.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Seasons for Martyrs has presented history blended with fiction. It highlights sufferings of people of Sindh because of British rule. Many novels are written in this context such as: *Twilight in Delhi*, *Burnt Shadows*, *Kanthaputra* etc. which reveal native writers' point of view about British rule in India.

New Historicism: New historicism is a literary theory generated in 1980's under the influence of Foucault's ideas about culture. The term New Historicism was coined by Stephen Greenblatt in 1982. Greenblatt (2007) explains that to interpret any work of literature, it is necessary that the critic must have knowledge about the background and cultural context of the author of the work. Because the work reflects author's own opinion and ideologies, which are influenced by the social and cultural context in which the author lives. Casper (2014) says "Literature must be interpreted and studied within the history of the critic and history of the author". According to Casper not only work of literature but its criticism also has impact of its social environment and culture. Tyson (2006:285) says that according to new historicist, "individual identity and its cultural milieu inhabit, reflect and define each other". Thus, for the critical analysis of any literary work, text and context both are equally important. Tyson suggests that to get new historicist perspective of any literary work analysis should be conducted about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meaning operating in time and place in which text is written. Tyson (2006) has mentioned about Foucault ideas that mere factual details do not describe history, these facts are more evidences that how events are interpreted, these interpretations tell us about the interpreters.

History and Culture of Sindh: According to the theory of New Historicism it is necessary to know about the history and cultural context of the author to interpret any work of literature. The author of this novel is a native Sindhi, therefore various books are studied about Sindh to know the cultural and historical background of the author. *Tahifat-ul-Kiram*, *Tareekh*

Masoomi, and *Chach Namoo* all these works translated by Makhdoom Ameer Ahmed provide valuable information about history and culture of Sindh. Kanay (1957) present history of Sindh from the rule of 'Rai' to 'Kalhoras'. Major portion of this book is about the details of various scholars, poets and saints. Kanay describes that Sindhi are peace lover, sympathetic, and hospitable. Many mystics came from other regions and settled in Sindh on the request of native citizens; Sindhis loved them and had strong faith in their spiritual powers. Siddiqui (1996), Jonejo (1973), Leghari (1992) describe that Sindhi people love Sindh.

According to British writer Burton (1851, 2017) Sindhi are uncivilized, and barbaric. He comments that Sindhis are superstitious they believe that mystics will solve their problems. Burton (1851) comments reflect colonialist' approach towards native people of Sindh. Burton (2017) has given details about *melo* (annual celebration at the death anniversary of the saint) of a saint Mangho Pir. According to Burton people of Sindh including male, female, young, old, without any discrimination of cast and creed attend and enjoy the *meelo* of saints. Ondaatji (1996) writes that people of Sindh still have great respect and love for the saints. He writes, "The Sindh that Burton knew and loved in mid nineteenth century was a very different place from the Sindh and Pakistan of today. Sindhis remain a proud people, however they very conscious of their history and culture" (Ondaatji, 1996:39).

Discourse of Mysticism: *A Season for Martyrs* reflects the significance of saints in Sindhi Society. Hundreds of books are available about the concept of mysticism and lives of great saints born in the valley of Sindh. Khamisani (1994:29, 249) says: "Islamic mysticism or *tassawuf* has its origin in Holy Quran and Hadith". Ondaatje has quoted the words of Burton in his book: "There is nothing more remarkable in Sindh than the number of holy men which it has produced and extent to which modification of pantheism called *Tassawuf*, throughout the world of Islam is spread among the body of the people". People of Sindh are great admirers of saints. Many people visit their shrines, and annually celebrate their *Urs* (death anniversary).

Socio-Political Discourse: Aziz (2008) writes that Sindhis consider their motherland as symbol of honour for them, and they give more preference to motherland over their own lives. Spirit of courage in the field of politics, in other words discourse of do or die is still circulating in Sindhi society.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A Seasons for Martyrs presents political history of Sindh, from the period of Talpur rule in Sindh to present era. Shah depicts social, and political discourses of society. To conduct this study two main discourses

circulating in Sindhi Society from generation to generation as presented by Shah: Honour is more precious than life, Sufi saints are asset of the Sindh, and details about political history of Sindh are analyzed according to the perspective of New Historicism theory.

Honour More Precious Than Life: Shah has depicted this discourse of Sindhi society. The novel shows that people of Sindh give more preference to their honour than their lives. Their main symbol of honour is their native land for them. Shah quotes words of British Deputy Commissioner Lucas, he gives advice to British rulers in these words in the novel, “Any government that wishes to succeed in Sindh must always remember this point: that honour is equivalent, in their eyes to power, and even if that honour is symbolic; they will do anything to sustain it (p.105)”. This quoting show that Shah wants to portray that discourse of protection of native land, protection of girls, and protection of social values is travelling in society of Sindh since ages. Sindhis consider their land, women, and self-esteem as their honour. They can sacrifice even their lives to save their honour. To reinforce this discourse, Shah presents some fictitious and some real characters from the chapters of history, who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Sindh. Shah’ various characters such as: Jeandal Shah, Subghatullah Shah, G.M.Sayyed, Zulifqar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, and Ali Sikandar reveals that Shah herself supports the discourse traveling in Sindh.

Jeandal Shah an officer in Talpur court does not care for his own life, and job and goes to Thatta to stop British to travel through Indus, as he realizes that hidden interest of British is to survey the Indus for invasion of Sindh. He says, “The safety of Sindh was at stake, and man of honour could not sit idle and allow besotted kings to let its soil slip their fingers like grain of sand on a beach” (p.73). The ruler had given permission to British to go to Lahore through Indus River, but Jeandal Shah stops their journey. Pir Subghatullah Shah the spiritual leader of Hur community of Sindh was hanged by British government in 1843 on the charge of rebel against British rule is presented in novel as brave hero of Sindh. Shah narrates that Sindhi people have given title to the Pir, “Suriha Badshah” (p.174) means brave king. G.M.Sayyad says, “My brother I offer myself to Sindh in her service forever” (p.139). Sayyed further says, “We must never accept oppression in our beloved Sindh, no matter who oppressors are or where they come from” (p.139). Sayyed words show his love, and determination for the cause of Sindh. Shah describes that at the death of Sindhi Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto, “Sindhi of all ages and classes come to pay homage to their slain martyr” (p.205). Z.A. Bhutto’ government was dismissed by army commander in 1977, and after a trial in court he was hanged in 1979. Shah’ description of this character shows that people of Sindh love Z.A. Bhutto, they consider him ‘slain martyr’ because he did not surrender before the army dictator.

Benazir Bhutto' Character is highlighted in the novel. Shah quotes Benazir's poetry which she has written in her exile, she says,

Were I to breath my last, living
Away from the home I loved
My body won't imprison me.

Benazir's poetry reveals her love with the land of Sindh. Benazir decides to come back to Pakistan and serve her people, though she had received life threats from different militant groups from Pakistan. Shah says, "She was like the Seven Queens of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, that Sufi poet who wrote so movingly of the women of Sindh who fought oppressors, led wars, lost lives for lovers" (p.212). Shah depicts Benazir as a bold lady like the female characters of Bhittai poetry. Benazir was assassinated shortly after her arrival in Pakistan. The novel conveys the meaning that Benazir has become another 'slain martyr' for people of Sindh. Ali Sikandar the central character of the novel works as a media reporter, but when he observes that military government is usurping basic rights of people, he leaves his job and joins people' resistance movement and he tells his father, "I care about Sindh" (p.234). Ali's words depict that people of Sindh love their motherland, whenever they see Sindh in any kind of danger, they become ready to sacrifice their lives.

The depiction of the discourse of love with the motherland is part and parcel of the society in which Shah lives. The people who sacrifice their lives for the sake of native land are considered as martyrs or living saints in Sindh. They are considered as mark of pride by common folks. According to Aziz (2008) poetry of Shaikh Ayaz, Ibrahim Munshi, Surwaich Sujawali and Ustad Bukhari and Sindhi fiction written by many authors such as: Tariq Ashraf, Najam Abbasi, Amar Jalil etc. inspire people for the spirit of nationalism. Hosh Mohammad Shidi's (a Sindhi journal who sacrificed his life during the battle at Miani with British army) slogan which he raised in a battle with British that: *Marsoo, Sindh Nao Daiso* (مرسون سنڌ نه ڏيسون) means we will die, but not give Sindh, has become a common quotation of Sindhi people. Political leaders use this in their speeches. Continuation of the discourse of love with the land is evident from some political events after creation of Pakistan too. Such as on 4th March 1968 many Sindhi students sacrificed their lives in their march against the Ayub government's decision of making East Pakistan One Unit. Sindhi people raised voice against this decision, because they thought that in One Unit system province of Sindh will lose its separate identity. It was unacceptable for people of Sindh. MRD movement in early 1980s to get rid from Martial Law was also started by people of Sindh, many were martyred, lot of them were imprisoned, they faced brutal physical torture but remained determined on the cause that

democracy must be restored in the country. Aziz (2008) has discussed about it in his work *History of Sindhi Literature*.

Shah (2014) has mentioned about MRD movement in *A season for Martyrs*. People's Resistance Movement is observed by Shah herself. Shah (2014) has mentioned in the acknowledgement of the novel that Sabeen Mehmud has herself given her detail about that movement. Sabeen Mehmud was an active participant of this movement, and Shah personally knew her. Shah herself belongs to a political family. Mahmood an active political worker became the victim of target killing in Karachi. Shah has observed ethnic riots in Karachi and Hyderabad. She feels worried at the attitude of discrimination against Sindhi people in urban areas of Sindh. Shah (2014) has highlighted this issue through this novel. Shah has tried to give message of peace, love with the land, and unity to Sindhi people. Shah narrates about Ali the protagonist of the novel that his personality transforms when he listens speeches of the protesters, in which they demanded arrest of 12th May culprits. On 12th may members of one ethnic group had committed target killing of many innocent Sindhi people in Karachi. Shah narrates that poetry of Shah Bhattai inculcates the spirit of patriotism in Ali. He realizes that it is his responsibility that he should contribute his efforts for making Sindh free from the rule of unjust government. Shah's narration of all these political events shows that she has played her part as a writer who wants to serve Sindh. She wants to promote spirit of patriotism in the people of Sindh. She wants to draw people's focus towards marginalization of Sindhi people in Karachi.

Sufi Saints are Asset of Sindh: Another social discourse focused by Shah in *A Season for Martyrs* is about the importance of *Sufis* (Saints). This novel gives details about various famous saints of Sindh. For example: Khiwaja Khizer, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai, Abdullah Shah Ghazi and Mangho Pir. One full chapter of the novel gives description about Khiwaja Khizer, another chapter is about Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai.

Shah (2014) has narrated different myths circulated in society, which reveals that people of Sindh have strong belief in these saints. These mystics have preached lesson of peace, love with humanity, and to live with harmony with other communities. Whenever, people face any trouble, they look towards these holy people for their help. They visit their shrines, they celebrate their '*Urs*' (death anniversary) with zest and zeal. Shah narrates about Khiwaja Khizr, a Sufi saint whose shrine is on an island in River Indus. "Gaurdian of water ways, oceans, seas and river and loved and worshiped by the people of Sindh" (p.21). Shah tells that Sindhi people believe that Sindh is saved from natural disasters because of the prayers of the mystic Khiwaja Khizr for Sindh's safety. Description given by Shah reveals strong love of Khiwaja Khizr for Sindh. He daily prays for the safe

arrival of fishermen who do soiling in deep waters for fishing. He prays for rainfall, so that dry land could be irrigated and Sindh may get prosperity. Khiwaja Khizr becomes dishearten at the selfish attitude of people, but even then he does not leave Indus, he says, “they may not value me, but still they need me” (p.24). The novel describes the myth that Indian planes failed in their bombardment over Hyderabad in 1965 war because weather became cloudy in results of Khiwaja Khizr’s prayers for Sindh. Shah narrates that now day, fishermen at Karachi harbour notice unusual death toll of fish on beach, they think, “It was because the people of Indus had fallen out of favour Khiwaja Khizr, their protector and guardian. And disaster could only follow” (p.28). Ali the central figure of the novel thinks Khiwaja Khizr his protector. At the time when he is arrested, he feels very much afraid, but by chance SHO is the *mureed* (follower) of Khiwaja Khizr, when he comes to know that Ali is descendant of the saint, he agrees to release him. Ali closes his eyes and thinks, “Would it too hypocritical to offer a prayer of thanks to the saint, who saved his neck, even though he never asked for favor (p.229).

One full chapter of novel is written about Bhattai, one of the famous mystic poet of Sindh. The novel portrays Bhattai as not only a great poet, but great mystic too. The novel shows that Bhattai prays for whole world, but especially for Sindh. People of Sindh visit his shrine to get spiritual help from him. Jeandal Shah gives several drums of Biryani to the poor at the shrine of Bhattai, he feels that it is due to the blessing of the holy saint, that he became successful in his effort to stop British to travel through Indus (p.77). Majority of characters in the novel from common illiterate servant Yousuf to highly educated person of Prime Minister Rank Zulifqar Ali Bhutto expresses their strong faith in mystics. They seek help from these saints. Bhutto prays Qalandar Shahbaz famous Sufi saint for help, when he appears for a trial in high court. He was very weak and unable to speak, but because of his prayer he gets strength. Shah says, “He spoke eloquently for four days” (p.215). The novel depicts that majority of Sindhi irrespective of their class, gender and education have faith in the discourse that mystics have power to rescue them. Jan Mohammad Junejo wishes successful holding of Khilafat movement meeting in Larkana. He says, “I will feed a hundred people. No, two hundred! Shahbaz Qalandar would not let us down” (p.124). Yousuf a servant of Bhutto tells tales about Mangho Pir. He says: ‘Pir Mangho can cure any disease. Not just skin disease” (p.240). He describes that huge number of Crocodile live near the shrine of the saint, but they never hurt any murid of the Pir, because they themselves are disciples of Mangho Pir.

Shah has given details about hot and sulfur springs at Mangho Pir, enchanting look of the shrines, love, respect and expectations of people for these holy people. She has described a mystic’s love for God in these words,

“Wish to be one with lord was universal desire; if one practiced the correct ritual every cell would be awaken and sing the praises of the creator” (p.41). G.M. Sayyed who possess great political vision says for mystics at the end of his speech, “The welfare and security of Sindh and her people is dependent upon our taking care of those sublime souls and the places where they reside” (p.138).

All these details given in the novel reveal that Shah admires saints. *A Season for Martyrs* is an effort to highlight the greatness of saints and propagate the idea that Sufi saints love and take care of Sindh. Sindhi people are obliged to them for all their love, care and blessings. They regularly visit shrines of these saints. *Urs* the death anniversaries of famous saints are celebrated on official level. Governor and Chief Minister of Province personally come to attend the ceremonies. Souvenirs are published to give awareness about the lives of the saints. Lot of literature is written about the lives of saints such as: *Tarikh wa Tazkira buzrgan Sindh* by Shafi Mohammad. Shah herself is descendent of great mystic poet Bhattai. She says in the acknowledgement, “I owe great debt to the poet himself, as he is my ancestor and guiding spirit of the novel”. Burton visited Sindh in nineteenth century and Ondaatje visited Sindh in present century, both have mentioned in their travelogues about Sindhi people’ strong faith in spiritual powers of mystics. Sindhis irrespective of any cast, creed, and religion visit the shrines of the saints to pay their homage.

Historical Details: The title of the first chapter of the novel is ‘Peccavi’ latin word which means I have sinned. The novel narrates that Napier wrote these words to East India Company to acknowledge them about his victory of Sindh. The word symbolizes that occupation of Sindh by Napier was a sin. This chapter highlights negative aspect of Napier and his family’s character. It is said that Nappier captured Sindh to get blood money from the directors of East India Company. Shah comments, “A delicate balance collaboration, bribery and brutality pioneered by Napier and carried on by a proud line of governor generals with equally high bridged noses and clerks of questionable education and dubious health” (p.3). These words point out towards arrogant behaviour of the British Empire towards the native people of colonized areas. The same kind of depiction of colonialists’ behaviour towards Indian people is given by Ali (2007) in *Twilight in Delhi*. He describes various facts from Indian history such as: dethroning of Aurangzeb, victimization of Muslims, and coronation ceremony of King George in Delhi as the British acts to demoralize the native Indians. *A Season for Martyrs* highlights the fact that the British government was interested in occupation of Sindh much earlier than 1843. Burnes had come to Thatta in 1827 to go to Lahore through ships, but Jeandal Shah explains the reason of Burnes arrival in these words, “The real reason this British man and his band

of spying, lying thieves had come to Sindh was to survey the Indus River” (p.70). Shah narrates that British got entry in Sindh by using unfair means.

This novel depicts British Rulers’ cruel attitude with native people. Shah quotes accounts from the diaries of Lucas, works of Burnes and Burton. Those details are extracted from these books, which provide the evidence that British ruled Sindh with main and might. Lucas writes in his diary Sindh is land of ‘suspicion’ and ‘Intrigue’, to control it ‘iron fist’ and ‘stern heart’ is needed. British were very proud, they thought themselves superior than native people. Shah quotes the words of Lucas, “we recognize no God, but our own, we value nobody’s honour but that which belongs to our own beloved Queen Victoria, after all the true empress of this land” (p.106). The novel presents historical facts about Hur Movement and Hanging of Pir Sibghatullah Shah. These details portray the brutality of British authority. The Pir was criminal in the eyes of the authority, but he is portrayed as brave hero of the nation by Shah (2014). Shah narrates that Ahmed Jailor of the prison sees ‘a super human’ in him, he comments about the Pir, “a king in every sense of word” (p.174).

The novel mentions that western countries are still interfering in affairs of Pakistan. War of Terror in the northern areas of country is one of its examples. The attitude of western countries, especially of America has become arrogant towards Muslims. Ali decides not to go to America, until the Americans’ attitude changes for Muslims. Shah (2001) has pointed out the racist attitude of Americans toward Pakistanis living in America after the event of 9/11, also through her novel *Where They Dream in Blue*. She has portrayed historical facts from the perspective of a writer of postcolonial era. Post-colonial literature generally highlights the atrocities of colonialists, and emphasizes on spirit of nationalism. Shah has mentioned the names of books from which she has taken historical information. For example: *The life and time of Sayed Sibghatullah Shah* by Khadim Hussain Soomro, *the British in Sindh: Immoral entry and exit, and the path not taken*. *G.M. Sayyed: vision and velour in the politics*. All these works reinforce the spirit of nationalism. Shah is a regular writer in national and international magazines and newspapers. Her writings reflect her political insight. In present era people of Sindh are facing various problems. They are facing issue of ethnic discrimination especially in urban areas of Sindh. Shah (2004) has raised this issue in her novel *The 786 Cybercafé*. Shah portrays that she feels concerned with present political situation of the country as herself a native citizen of Sindh. The social, political, and historical details narrated in the novel reveals that shah (2014) desires to inculcate the spirit of nationalism and love for the mystics of Sindh, in Sindhi people therefore she has portrayed history and social discourses which depict spirit of love with the mystics, common people, and land of Sindh. Shah feels love and respect for mystics of Sindh.

Shah (2017) column in *Dawn* on the topic of terrorist' attack on the shrine of famous mystic Qalandar Shahbaz in Sehwan shows her admiration for mystics. Shah writes that these attacks cannot stop lovers of the mystic from visiting the shrine of the saint. The same discourse; the significance of mysticism is presented by Shah (2004) in her novel *Where They Dream in Blue*. Karim the protagonist of the novel, who evaluates every object on the basis of logic, realizes that saints are not use less they give at least the psychological support to help less people in their needs.

Shah herself is a native citizen. She feels hurt at the sufferings of native people of Sindh. All main characters of the novel such as: Jeeandal Shah, G.M. Sayyad, Sibghatullah Shah, Zulifqar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Ali Sikandar are portrayed by Shah as the persons who love Sindh, who have surrendered their lives for the cause of Sindh. They are presented as 'men of honour', like Dodo Soomro who gallantly fought with enormous force of Indian ruler Allaudin Khilji, Raja Dahir who gave his life in fight with Arab invaders, and Hosh Mohammad Sheedi who bravely fought with British army to save Sindh from foreign rule. According to histories of Sindhi Literature by Jonejo (1973), Laghari (1992), and Aziz (2008) Sindhi poets have composed poetry to pay homage to those great brave personalities who gave their lives to save Sindh from foreign rule. Great Sindhi poet Bhattai (1994) has also highlighted courage of Dodo Soomro through his poetry. According to the histories of Sindhi Literature a large portion of Sindhi literature inspires people for patriotic feelings. Sirajul Haq (1979) novel *Parado So ee sad* (پٽاڏو سو ئي سڌ) (echo and the call are same), and Diplai (2010) *Sanghar* are based on themes which inspire people for nationalism. About Sibghatullah Shah Soomro (2006) has written the book *Freedom at Gallows: Life and Times of Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro*. He has described Pir Pagaro as a national hero of Sindh. G.M.Sayyad is the person who was kept under house arrest after creation of Pakistan till his death, by Pakistani government for his ideology about Sindhi nationalism. Amnesty International had declared G.M.Sayyad as prisoner of conscience. Shah is the only Pakistani English fiction writer who has dared to include this nationalist but politically controversial personality of Sindh as one main character of her novel. Many other Pakistani English fiction writers have taken issue of politics as theme of their novel, such as: Hanif (2008) *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, Shamsie (2017) *Burnt Shadows*, but none of these writer have portrayed the personalities of Bhutto Zulifqar, and Bhutto Benazir from the angle of 'Slain Martyrs' of Sindh as Shah has portrayed them.

CONCLUSION

A Season for Martyrs has depicted various aspects of Sindhi society. It has portrayed mind-set of the people through presenting various examples

from history and present time. The novel shows that people of Sindh have great love for native land. Safety of country is matter of honour for them. They can give their lives to save their honour, when British occupied Sindh, people of Sindh struggled to get rid from the foreign forces. That spirit is still present in people of Sindh. After independence of Pakistan when country was occupied by military tyrants, again people of Sindh came forward to restore democracy. Many people embraced martyrdom in the struggle.

As discussed above, the novel conveys the philosophy that in Sindh season of martyrs is a season continues from ages. Different fictitious and actual historical facts and way of narrating these facts makes it clear that *A Season for Martyrs* encourages the discourse of love with motherland, and conveys the message that people who sacrifice lives for sake of country are martyrs. Another social discourse which is encouraged in this novel is; mystics are blessings for the land of Sindh. Shah has described *Sufi* a person who yearns for spiritual union with God. He is a person who gives message of love and peace. The *Sufi* saints belonging to Sindh are shown as figures who love Sindh and pray for the safety of Sindh. The shrines of these *Sufis* are source of spiritual satisfaction. This depiction of saints encourages the love and respect for these holy figures. Shah has given historical details in this novel, especially she has portrayed British era in Sindh. She has highlighted the facts, which show that British considered themselves follower of superior faith. They thought native people foolish and savage. Shah has quoted words from diaries of Lucas, history written by Burns to show arrogant attitude of British rulers towards native people. Shah herself is one of the native citizens of land, so she has depicted history from the lens of a native citizen. She has also tried to clarify urban people' misconceptions that Sindhi land owners are feudal.

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