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**RASOOL BUX PALIJO'S PERSPECTIVE ON  
SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITTAI**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper discusses the exclusive approach of Rasool Bux Palijo toward Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Shah Latif was a Sindhi Sufi poet and philosopher of the 18th century, who made an unerasable impression on the Sindhi literature with his work *Shah Jo Risalo*. The themes of divine love, human suffering, and spiritual enlightenment together with the critique of social injustices such as feudalism and inequality in Sindh are the highlights of the poetry of Shah Latif. Rasool Bux Palijo is a famous Sindhi intellectual, activist, nationalist leader, lawyer and writer. Palijo viewed Shah Latif as a Sindhi poet, Sindh philosopher, but also a social activist and revolutionary voice of oppressed and marginalized peoples in Sindh. In this paper, the Marxist and leftist ideas of Palijo in the analysis of the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai will be discussed, his ideas will be compared to those of other scholars such as GM Syed, and Elsa Qazi. Moreover, this research paper also explores the significant role of latif's literature which plays in shaping society and driving change in Sindh. It reveals how literary works like Latif's poetry can spark meaningful conversations, challenge societal, patriarchal norms, and promote empathy in the marginalized society.*

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**Keywords:** Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Shah Jo Risalo, Sufi and Revolutionist, Rasool Bux Palijo, Social Justice, Sindhi Nationalism, Sindhi Literature.

**INTRODUCTION**

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is a prominent Sufi poet of Sindh who himself has made powerful image of cultural identity, moral values and spiritual insight, not only in Sindh but at the international level. Shah Latif is extremely humane and is typically involved in the challenges and the expectations of the people of Sindh, mostly his poetry deals with the universal themes of love, resilience, and social justice. On the other side, Rasool Bux Palijo, a notable Sindhi nationalist, progressive politician, writer, and human rights advocate,

often drew on Shah Abdul Latif's works to express his vision of social equality, political resistance, and cultural preservation in Sindh. Palijo believed that Shah Abdul Latif was not just a poet of Sindh but a mentor for the oppressed and marginalized people at a global level as he challenged the social culturally norms which disturb the order of society.

The themes of justice, struggle, and the dignity of labor in Shah Abdul Latif's work resonate deeply with Palijo's mission of uplifting the underprivileged and promoting Sindhi nationalism. In his speeches and writings, Palijo considered Latif's position as a revolutionary poet whose ideas spoken could serve to become a source of motivation for movements for equality and freedom not only at his time but also in contemporary society. Furthermore, the aim of this research paper is to explore Palijo's perspective and specific interpretation on Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai, examining how Palijo framed Latif's themes in his own political philosophy and activism. In the end of this paper, Palijo's perspective will also compare with other notable scholars who has already done work on Shah Abdul Latif.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai was a Sufi poet and Philosopher of Sindh in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His poetic verses resonate with the struggles of common people and offer hope and guidance them towards justice. There are numerous articles and books about shah Latif available yet the particular view that Rasool Bux Palijo holds about Shah Latif has not been explored. Palijo was a fearless Sindhi nationalist leader and a revolutionary thinker and believed that the poetry of Latif was not merely beautiful words. Shah Latif was to him a guide and socialist who articulated the issues of the poor and the marginalized in native language, Sindhi. Palijo inspired local people to struggle against injustice, demand rights as well as safeguard their cultural heritage by using poetic verses of Shah Latif. There has been limited research on how Latif's poetry influenced Palijo's ideas and vision for social and political change. This research seeks to address this gap by exploring how Palijo interpreted and utilized Shah Latif's poetry to foster equality, justice, and hope in Sindh. It will also analyze how Latif's themes of love, struggle, and unity shaped Palijo's efforts in areas such as environmental protection, women's rights advocacy, and the preservation of Sindhi culture.

#### **SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

This research paper is most important because it sheds light on the great impact of Shah Latif's poetry on Sindhi society, culture and politics. By delving into his poetic verses, we gain insight into how his poetic words influenced people's thoughts, actions, and perceptions in Sindh. Moreover, this study highlights the timeless significance of Latif's poetry, demonstrating its capacity to inspire and motivate us even today. The research also explores the significant role of Latif's literature which plays in shaping society and driving change in Sindh. It reveals how literary works like Latif's poetry can spark meaningful conversations, challenge societal, patriarchal norms, and promote empathy in the marginalized society. Furthermore, this study examines how Palijo's political vision was influenced by Latif's greatest work in poetic form. This research work also provides the perspective of Palijo about Shah Abdul Latif Palijo, which is definitely change as compared to other noteworthy perspectives.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research paper is carried out by consulting primary and secondary sources, including books and articles written by notable scholars on Rasool Bux Palijo and Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Primary sources include Shah Latif's famous work titled *Shah Jo Risalo* as well as Palijo's own writings and speeches. The study also examines secondary sources such as academic books and research articles on Sindhi literature, Sufism, and the lives of these two important figures. The key works of notable scholars such as G.M. Syed and Elsa Qazi provide valuable insights into the significance of Latif's poetry. Additionally, interviews and documentaries about Shah Latif and Palijo are used to strengthen the understanding of how Palijo applies Latif's themes to advocate for social justice, human rights and the preservation of Sindhi identity. By engaging with these sources, this paper provides a clear understanding of how Palijo is influenced by Shah Latif's poetry and how he uses these ideas to make a positive impact on society.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following questions will be addressed in the research paper:

- How does Rasool Bux Palijo interpret Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry and its themes?
- How did Palijo use Bhittai's poetry to inspire social justice and human rights movements?
- What impact has Bhittai's poetry had on Sindhi political thought and cultural identity?

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is historical-analytical and partially comparative which mainly focuses on Rasool Bux Palijo's perspective on Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. This study uses a qualitative research method, it employs textual analysis of Bhittai's work *Shah Jo Risalo* and Palijo's writings to explore how Bhittai's themes of love, struggle, and justice shape Palijo's ideas. Additionally, the comparative analysis examines Palijo's interpretations alongside those of other scholars and activists to provide a broader perspective on Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. This work is further contextualized historically within their socio-political context, while interviews with experts in Sindhi literature and political history, along with their understanding of Shah Latif provide additional insight. The study uses both primary (speeches of Palijo and poetry of Latif) and secondary sources and aims to offer a more nuanced idea of how the poetic legacy of Latif leads to the dreams of Palijo to the province of Sindh.

#### **Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai: Poet, Philosopher, and Revolutionist**

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is one of the most important figures in the history of Sindh. His poetry, wise thoughts and revolutionary ideas had not only inspired people of that time but also still encouraged marginalized people to fight for their fundamental rights. In today's time, Latif's verses still play a significant role in people's life, not only spiritual but also in every stage of life. Shah Latif was born in 1690 at Hala Haveli, Sindh, into a Sayyid family during the era of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. People considered his family background to the Imam Musa Qazim (A.S), who was the seventh Shia Imam and a descendant of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Shah Abdul Latif got early education at the Madrasa of Akhund Noor Muhammad Bhatti. There, he learned the Quran, Hadith, and various languages like Sindhi, Persian, and Arabic. Moreover, his

early experience with different cultures and ideas helped shape his works. Authors wrote that Bhattai's hobby was traveling and gatherings with indigenous people where he learnt more things about society and people. Due to traveling, he met many writers, poet, Sufi, and nationalists of that time, not only those were Muslims but also, Hindus and Christians, such as Shaheed Shah Inayat Sufi, Makhdoom Thathvi, Shah Inayat Rizvi, Shah Abdul Karim, Molana Rumi and Hindu Yogis. GM Syed wrote in his book that Shah Sahibs got most of knowledge from the local poet, nationalist and whose struggle for *Sindhi Dharti*. Sayed also mentioned that Latif lived most of his lifetime at the sideline of Sea because he liked simple life and wanted to spend his life with local people.

The noteworthy work of Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai is collected in the one document form titled "*Shah Jo Risalo*". It is the precious collection of poetry of Shah Latif which not only capturing the heart of Sindhi literature and Sufi mysticism but also deals the social and cultural conditions of Sindh. The Risalo organized into 30 chapters known as "*Sur's*," which reflects Latif's profound spiritual insights and philosophical musings. Each *sur*, often referred to as musical tagas, consists of verses that explore themes of divine love, human suffering, and the quest for spiritual enlightenment. Shah Jo Risalo considered as the bible by most people in Sindh. Latif's work contains great lessons for every segment of society. The poetic verses of Latif address people belonging to various walks of life, marginalized segments of society, poor folks, and menial workers such as potters, blacksmiths, washermen, fishermen, shepherds, and cloth-makers.

Furthermore, at the time of Shah Latif, the society was male dominated in Sindh. Man was considered to be superior to women. Shah Latif highlighted many qualities and characteristic of women in his work, and it has become the greatest lesson for the society about women by Latif. Shah Latif represents women as symbol of patriotism, spirituality and courage. The heroines of shah Latif's folk tales like Marvi, Momal, Sassui, and Sohni. Who are symbols of courage and bravery, as well as the Sufis. All these heroines are known as the queens of Sindhi in the Latif work *Shah Jo Risalo*. Latif gave them status of royalty in the *Shah jo Risalo*. Shah Latif has pointed out the strength of woman and her determination that she crosses the mountain in search of her beloved. It symbolizes the search for a soul to find the

real beloved. These women stories are still celebrated through Sindh for their positive qualities like honesty, integrity, piety, and loyalty. They are also valued for their bravery and willingness to risk their lives in the name of love.

The core aspect of Shah's Risalo displayed the individual's journey towards self-realization and cultivations of divine qualities and underscoring the unity of existence. Additionally, Shah Latif's poetry in the risalo highlighted the socio, politico and cultural issues of Sindh. Because the social conditions of Sindh were very critical during the eighteenth century. There were several obstacles, like invasions and civil wars due to the weakening of the central authority of the Mughals, and the power struggle between petty landlords to gain power. On the other hand, the war between Kalhoras and Talpurs further weakened the social fabric of society. The British east India company had also stopped its trade with Sindh. Consequently, the common people of Sindh became vulnerable in social terms. Despite these socio and politico upheavals, Latif's poetic verses had not only source of hope and strength but also criticized the social injustice in Sindh, addressing the issues like feudalism and inequality in the male dominated society. However, Shah Latif was also a philosopher of Sindh. The Sufism influenced in his poetic work. He believed in the unity of existence, seeing God in everything around him. His philosophy emphasized self-realization and an inner spiritual journey. Latif traveled throughout the region where he met numerous mystics and ascetics. The large number of Sufis who came to Sindh during the invasions greatly enriched his philosophical outlook. Latif's philosophy is best reflected in his depiction of legendary lovers like Sassi and Punnu. Latif was very liberal minded for his generation to portray woman this way as strong, independent women who could decide their own future. Shah Latif was worried about the dignity of labor as another significant aspect of his poetry. He believed all forms of work were noble and that the true measure of a person's worth lay in their character and actions, not in their status in society.

Shah Latif was not just a poet and philosopher but also a revolutionist. who challenged the strict social and religious norms which divide and create injustice in Sindh. Latif addressed the issues of social justice, equality, and the trouble of marginalization through his poetry. He dreamt of a society which was free of cast, creed and

class divisions and people loved each other. Many of his ideas can be heard even today in a discussion on social change and human rights. Hence, with reference to the life and works of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, it shall be justified that he was par excellence a poet, philosopher and revolutionary.

### **Rasool Bux Palijo: The Intellectual and the Activist**

Rasool Bux Palijo was a Sindhi nationalist, Marxist and ideologically a Maoist, political worker, and strategist. He was a lawyer, journalist, progressive and revolutionary leader. He was a scholar, a prolific writer, a reformer, a fiery orator, and a social-political activist. He was one of the most prominent Sindhi political leaders who left a lasting mark on the History, Politics, and society of Sindh. He had propagated a pure and rigid stance of progressive nationalism. He had a socialist approach to the multiple issues of economic and political disparity and social degradation of the society in Sindh.

He was born on 21 February 1930 at the village Munger Khan Palijo, Jung Shahi, District Thatta, Sindh. He got early education at his village in Madrasa in 1935 and for further studies then he went to Karachi for higher education in Sindh Madrasatul Islam and, he completed a law degree from Sindh Muslim Law College Karachi in 1953. He is considered a progressive, leftist, and Marxist leader. He was a scholar, lawyer, writer, journalist, and progressive politician. He wrote 30 books in different language on various themes particularly on politics and history, Sindhi culture, language, Sufism and many other topics. Palijo's writings reflect his deep understanding of Sindh's socio-political issues and his vision for a just and equitable society.

Palijo started his political activities from an early age. Through his writing he created awareness among the people of his area and through conscious indoctrination he changed the thinking of the common men. During his early career he was member of Muslim Student Federation and Sindhi Adabi Sangat. From the start he played a positive role in student politics. His political career started in 1953, when he joined Sindh Hari Committee and joined an alliance between different parties which name "*Sindh Awami Mahaz*" both parties was founded by G. M. Syed and other Sindhi leaders. He remained a member of the National Awami Party (NAP) during the late 1950s. He

established his political party “*Sindhi Awami Tehreek*” in 1978. Palijo was a writer and a multi-dimensional politician who worked and utilized different platforms. During Zia’s regime he was then member of Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), and president of Sindh Water Committee. He played significant role in the protest rallies against the Kala Bagh Dam. He led many political movements against the oppressive polices of various regimes in the country. He played a key role in the formation of political alliances like *Sindh Muttahida Mahaz*, Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM), *Sindh Adabi Sangat*, Anti One Unite Front, and many others.

Palijo known as an active human-rights lawyer in Sindh, Pakistan, who was defended cases of many political activists and other victims of oppression without being afraid of anyone and tyrant governments. He was considered as a popular activist of Pakistan’s political history who was participating the protest and campaigning for the violations of human rights without any interests.

### **Rasool Bux Palijo’s Perspective on Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai**

Rasool Bux Palijo was a famous scholar, political thinker, renowned revolutionary leader and Sindhi Identity activist. He held great respect for Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, the legendary poet, mystic of Sindh. According to Palijo, Shah Latif’s poetry contained a treasure of aesthetic beauty but was also a source of profound wisdom and guidance, and inspiration to the people of Sindh. In the eye lenses of Palijo, Shah Latif as a poet of the oppressed people, a voice for justice, and a beacon of hope in the whole universal. Latif’s poetry is interpreted by Palijo as relevant to contemporary struggles for justice and equality. Also, Palijo believed that Latif’s themes of love, struggle, and unity were not abstract ideals but something that he considered practical principles for social transformation, for societal transformation to occur.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was one of the admired personalities of Palijo’s whole life because who was highly dedicated towards Sindhi nationalism, literature, Sufi mysticism, women empowerment and struggle for peasant’s rights. Palijo said that Latif’s verses explain the cycle of human existence, divine love and the search for spiritual knowledge. Palijo often highlighted Latif’s ability to express complex ideas in simple yet beautifully evocative language, making it

accessible to a large audience in Sindh. Paliyo said that Latif was not only a Sindhi poet but also a social activist who spoke out on the issues of his time and also challenged the traditional norms that were creating problems in Sindhi society.

Paliyo argued in the gathering of friends that Shah Latif lived among the common people, since he had a sensitive soul, he felt the miseries and sufferings of the people. Who analyzed social behavior of the people and challenged system of that time like social injustices, feudalism, inequality, and the marginalization of the poor. Paliyo believed Latif was a great social analyst, and champion of unity and peace, whose poetry transcends boundaries of caste, creed, religion, and promoting harmony among different communities in Sindh. Paliyo admired Latif's message of love and tolerance, seeing it as a vital antidote to the rising sectarianism and divisions in modern society. He believed Latif's teachings were relevant in the contemporary world particularly in Sindh. further Paliyo emphasized that Latif's poetry was deeply rooted in the lives of the ordinary people, through his verses Latif celebrated the resilience of the marginalized, including women, peasants.

Moreover, Paliyo argued that Shah Abdul Latif's characters, such as Marvi, Sassui, Suhni and other characters were symbols of courage and resistance against oppression and these characters showed Latif's commitment to social justice and his belief in human dignity. Paliyo drew attention to Latif's portrayal of strong female characters as symbols of resilience and empowerment. He linked these beautiful stories to his advocacy for women's rights, using Latif's verses as a source of inspiration for gender equality.

On the other side, Paliyo blindly believed that Shah Abdul Latif was not only a Sufi poet but a revolutionist of Mughal period in Sindh. whose poetry called to raise action against injustice, protect their cultural heritage, and strive for a better future for the people of Sindh. Shah Latif's revolutionary ideas significantly influenced Paliyo's life and political career. Paliyo thought that Shah Abdul Latif was a source of inspiration for his political and social endeavors. Whose teachings provided a moral and ethical framework for his struggle against oppression and his advocacy for the rights of the marginalized.

#### **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

Rasool Bux Paliyo's interpretation of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is compared to that of other scholars and activists: Ghulam Mustafa Shah

(G.M. Syed), Nabi Bakhsh Baloch and Elsa Qazi. Shah Latif was seen as a mystic, spiritual philosopher and nationalist by G.M Syed's book titled "Shah Latif and his Message", but Nabi Bakhsh Baloch documented and preserved Shah's poetic verses extensively while Palijo's interpretation has a unique lens on Shah Latif as a revolutionary thinker, socialist and champion of social justice. Like Elsa Qazi's works, Palijo also reveals the poetic beauty and universality of Shah's poetry but goes out of her way to explore the sociopolitical importance of Shah's characters, Marvi, Sassui and Sohni and their role as symbols of resistance against oppression.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was in Palijo's analysis a revolutionary figure through poetry as a means for social change. Palijo read Shah Latif from the perspective of his Marxist and leftist ideology focusing on the poet's pen of critique of social hierarchy and to stand with the oppressed. Additionally, Palijo thought Shah Latif's teachings were particularly important in contemporary struggle for social justice and human rights. He said that Latif's stress on love, tolerance and humanity endowed a moral and ethical basis for the addressing of contemporary social and political challenges.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the discussion and the findings of this study, several recommendations could be suggested to the scholars, academic institutions and cultural activists working on Sindhi literature and political thought. To begin with, it is necessary to conduct more research concerning the intellectual activity of Rasool Bux Palijo in relation to Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, especially by examining the speeches, essays, and political works of Palijo through close reading. The majority of the research done has been on political activism of Palijo, or the mysticism of Shah Latif, but the fact that Palijo treated Latif as a revolutionary and socially conscious intellectual has been left unaddressed. This association is the dimension that should be looked into thoroughly by future researchers in order to have a clearer picture of how classical poetry impacted the modern political thought in Sindh.

Secondly, Sindh and Pakistani universities and research institutions are supposed to provide more academic space to native thinkers such as Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and Rasool Bux Palijo. Their

work need not only be part of literature departments but also a part of courses concerning history, political science, sociology, and gender studies. Palijo's understanding on Latif shows that Shah Abdul Latif poetry is not only spiritual in nature but also deeply related to problems of social justice, resistance, women's dignity, and the rights suppressed groups. Like these perspectives can help students to develop a more critical and socially aware understanding of Sindh's intellectual heritage.

Besides, literary and cultural organizations are urged to facilitate conversations, seminars and publications that may bring out the relevance of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai in modern society. As revealed in this paper, Palijo thought that the poetry of Latif can be used not only to help an individual grow spiritually, but to also collectively fight injustice and inequality. Reinventing this would assist in dismantling the limited or strictly romantic views of Shah Latif and reunite his message with the actualities of everyday people.

This study also suggests that social and political activists should take lessons based on the philosophy of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai as understood by Rasool Bux Palijo. Latif and his rationales on dignity of labour, unity, tolerance and resistance to oppression have of great relevance in current Sindh where feudal oppression and gender discrimination, as well as economic inequality, are also still being witnessed. The approach of Palijo reveals the way in which literary thought can be turned into a certain means to create the political consciousness and social reform.

Lastly, it is recommended that efforts should be taken to preserve, translate and digitize the works of Rasool Bux Palijo and classical Sindhi literature including Shah Jo Risalo. Several valuable writings, speeches, and interpretations are not available to the younger generation and researchers. Effective documentation and preservation of the intellectual history of Sindh will not only protect the intellectual history of Sindh, but also promote further studies based on local knowledge, language, and experience.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this research-based paper has showed that both Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and Rasool Bux Palijo played a significant role in Sindh. Both are considered the greatest figures in the history of

Sindh because both have been leaving an indelible mark on the region's cultural, social and political landscape. A great visionary, mystic and a revolutionary poet, Shah Abdul Latif left his mark on Sindhi literature with his brilliant spiritual insights and his critique of social injustice. His poetry continues to inspire people from generation to generation, and to this day, the timeless themes of love, struggle, and unity are clearly present in his poetry.

Rasool Bux Palijo, a notable Sindhi nationalist, Marxist and political leader of Sindh has deeply revered Shah Abdul Latif and integrated his teaching into his own political and social activism. According to Palijo, Shah Latif was not only a Sufi poet, but also, he considered him a revolutionary poet because Latif had challenged the societal norms which caused troubles to women and every class of society in Sindh at that time.

However, Palijo's understanding about Shah Abdul Latif was unique. According to Palijo's insights Latif was progressive and radicalistic who wanted new people with new thoughts and new Sindh land where everyone feels equal and free. Palijo believed Latif was the first radical thinker who advocated the rights of marginalized people. While other scholars focused on Latif's mysticism and love for Sindh land's perspective and feminist point of view, but Palijo highlighted his role as a social worker and a champion of the oppressed communities of Sindh. This perspective echoes Palijo's own Marxist and leftist ideologies and his unwavering commitment to social justice.

Moreover, Latif's and Palijo's legacy still inspire and guide the people of Sindh to fight for basic rights. The ideas and struggle of both about social justice, human rights, and cultural identity remain relevant in today's world. By studying their lives and works, we can gain valuable insights into the history and culture of Sindh and continue the struggle for a more just and equitable society.

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