

A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AS PORTRAYED IN SHAH'S POETRY

Dr. Saima Shaikh *

Ali Murad Lajwani **

Ms. Fehmida Memon ***

Abstract:

The same as in the social science, the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai interprets the structures, mechanisms of social order and cooperating behaviors of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. The basic unit of this collectivity for individuals is family and then religion, education, peer groups, community centers, human organizations, departments and wider social connections. These social institutions are functioning for the constancy and better social growth of society. Formation of these institutions is not artificial but depending on the sense of cooperation and better relation building of individuals. Agreeably the very core-subject of Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai's poetry is on human interactions, collective groups, social and cultural congregations. All around the sphere, this poetry reflects like fascinating colors for individuals to live together to build strong human-chain in society and keep cooperating while achieving the social welfare. There are multifarious signs and symbols portrayed where individuals and groups are regenerated in a better way to form pure unions and build long-lasting castles of patience and tolerance through institutionalization. This research paper presents some glorious glimpse on sociological analysis of social institutions as portrayed in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai.

Keywords: Takia (a place of spiritual visits of Shah Latif), Shah-Jo-Raag (Spiritual-music).

1. Introduction:

It is fundamental characteristic of humans to form social interactions in order to meet the daily social needs. It is one of the social realities that they have natural tendency to formulate societies and accomplish collectively. This making of small groups, livings in small units and then development of societies are an embryonic element of institutional formation. It functions like planting the sense of cooperation and enabling social reality. The social institution is any structure or mechanism of social order which governs the set of positive behaviors of individuals in the society. In this way, the social institutions are identified through societal outputs or cooperative human behaviors. In the perspective of sociology, the social institutions are human organizations, which are established or standardized patterns of rules. If we go for further in its specific types - the social institutions include: family norms, schooling systems, religious practices and other informal social settings in highly developed societies as well as in small town or villages. Karl Marx has viewed in Marxist theory that social institutions serve to maintain the power of dominant class but at the same time it gives equal space to oppressed segments to achieve the goal. The social institutions operate as base for promoting sense of cooperation for people. It starts function from family, to school, religious centers and organizations. It is like social-chain that connects people of different colors, castes and creeds at a single plat-form to make further development. Any individual in the society performs his/her responsibility in a creative way contributing to social change but he/she cannot bring about social change until and unless he/she can be the part of any social institution. Working together in a team formally and informally is one of the examples of social institution. The effective social institutions can bring about social change in society with collective initiatives of people. Also the paradigm of social change is directly proportionate with the level of connectivity and collaborative efforts of people in the social sphere. Bellow is the diagram feature of social institution.

Diagram 1:1*Diagram Feature of Social Institutions*

Source: <https://www.google.com.pk/socialinstitutions>

The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is the subject of human being. It carries a message of coordinated endeavors, patriotism, and other socio-dynamic characteristics. It has a focused theme of universal love for people from different regions belonging to different castes and creeds. The poetic collection is arrangement in the form of aligned verses which is further divided in chapters. Each chapter has profound flavor for the realization of communion with personal inner feelings and outer circumstances. Shah has narrated the concept of institution as interlinked with union of soul that is in-fact a foundation for peace building and accommodating humans widely. He has symbolized the message with birds where they fly together and make strong union to manage day-to-day surviving activities. *He said:*

وگر کبوترن، پرت نہ چنن پاڻ و،
پسو پکيڙن، ماڻهنان مٺ گهڻو.

*There is great deal for man to learn from the birds that live and move in flocks.
They foster love and co-existence among themselves.*

The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai has presented a flavor of Sindhi folklore, folkways and mores. These folkways and mores are the foundations for creating social thought among the people to hold peace and tolerance in the society. The genuine flavor of the poetry of Shah Latif helps people to come across through the process of socialization and institutionalization. The seven Queens were celebrated throughout Sindh in subject matter of Shah's poetry to build relations and unions while avoiding from the disintegration. The poetry has demonstrated these seven Queens with leading roles towards systematic way of socialization due to their highly dignified social values and good-qualities i.e. honesty, integrity, piety, loyalty, determination, and sense of cooperation. In this way the poetry firmly highlights the reflections and potentials of living together. It gives clear lesson of avoiding from the isolation and loneliness that could be a major threat to social phenomenon. *He says:*

ڏڻ ڌارڻ، ڌارو رهڻ اڃا نه سنگهارن ست،
 ڪاهي ايندا ڪڏهين، مٽي وانو وهت،
 جڙهائو هونگي هت، ته به او لاهه مران جو.
 (سوڏهر، ۴-۲۷)

You lead a life of shepherds and then you wish to live apart from your friends, relations and the fellow-professionals. This is neither proper nor sensible. Once you will have to drive your cattle to the jungle. At that time you will be concerned with the protection of your cattle from the thieves and highwaymen. Because you never know, when they can create trouble for you.

The learning is a natural phenomenon that intensifies the tendency of every human to explore innovative notions. This journey of learning begins from very early stage and composing of poems is one output of learning. Shah's poetry promotes learning and offers sense of simplicity and hospitality. The poetry creates sense of relation building. Many people enjoy the reading poetry and listening spiritual music (Shah-Jo-Raag) have reflected positive role among the society. Shah has demonstrated very strong ties with people and he has titled them with different names. Each title reflects love and respect. *He said:*

سنهي سٺي سڀيو، مون مارن سين ساھ،
 ويائي ساربان سومرا، گولڙا ۽ گاهه،
 هنئون منهنجو هت ٿيو، هت مٽي ۽ ماھ،
 پکن منجهو پساھ، قالب آهي ڪوٽ مر
 (سر مارئي، ۷-۱۲)

Marvi says that my soul has firmly attached myself with my dear ones, how can I break this relationship. Oh Umer, the King I always remembers that flower and grass. Physically I am here, but my mind and soul are in my homeland Malir. I remember my native huts and here alas, I find myself confined in a fortress.

It is believed that five primary institutions are found among all human groups. These five components are designated as the primary institutions. (1) In determining Kinship; (2) in providing for the legitimate use of power; (3) in regulating the distribution of goods and services; (4) in transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next; and (5) in regulating our relation to the supernatural relation. Basically these five basic institutions are called the family, government, economy, education and religion.

Sociologists operating in terms of the functionalist have provided the clearest explanation of the functions served by social institutions. Apparently there are certain minimum tasks that must be performed in all human groups. Unless these tasks are performed adequately, the group will cease to exist. The groups are different but most of their resemblance is identified with some particular symbols that are basic foundations for institutional development in any society. Shah's poetry optimizes the methods and techniques of recognizing these symbols. *He says:*

ڪورين ڪاڀائون، تنهن جون لکن لک هزار،
 جي سڀ ڪنهن جي سين، درس ڌارون ڌار،
 پرين تنهن جا پار، ڪهڙا چئي ڪهڙا چوان.
 (سر ڪلياڻ، ۱-۲۴)

You appear in innumerable forms and shapes, but the same spirit permeates every form, but you reveal yourself in different forms. I do not have the power, my beloved, to describe your various manifestations.

2. Literature Review:

The literature review introduces conceptual views that are helpful for understanding the dynamics of a social institution. The definition, kinds and functions of social institutions have been discussed while reviewing different pieces of writings.

a. What is a Social Institution?

The term, “social institution” is to refer to complex social forms that reproduce themselves such as the family, human language, schools, universities, hospitals, business corporations, and legal systems. A typical definition is preferred by Jonathan Turner “a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organizing relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment”. (Turner, Jonathan 1997:6)¹. Anthony Giddens says “Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life.” He goes on to list as institutional orders, modes of discourse, political institutions, economic institutions and legal institutions. Giddens, Anthony. (1984:24-31). The contemporary philosopher of social science, Rom Harre follows the theoretical sociologists in offering this kind of definition “An institution was defined as an interlocking double-structure of persons-as-role-holders or office-bearers and the like, and of social practices involving both expressive and practical aims and outcomes.” He mentioned following examples schools, religious places, shops, post offices etc. Harre, Rom. (1979:98). The John Rawls have elaborated the principles of justice are the real fundamental of institution. The social institution is the systematic way of operating norms in a sustainable society Rawls, John. (1972).

b. Essentials of Social Institutions:

¹ Source: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-institutions/>

Culture and tradition are ritual, beliefs or object passed down within a society and still maintained in the present. It means the way of transmitting, handing-over, to give something for safekeeping is the concepts of social institutions informally Olin Levi, Warner (1995, volume: 54, Issues 3-5). The social customs of Sindhi society are highlighted in the verses of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai in different chapters e.g. in Sur Khambhat, Kohyari, Sarang, Samoondi and in other chapters. Verses of Sur Khambhat delineate the Samo period social mores of professional minstrels, mendicant, and musicians singing for reward at the door of the feudal lords at the break-dawn. In the Sindhi society there are different folkways, and mores like marriage events, dress, and in mores ethical and religious concepts. The sustainable operating system of these principles is one type of social institutions Sayed, Dr. Dure-e-Shahwar (1988:5). Paul has defined that folkways are simply the customary, normal, habitual ways a group does things and different societies have found wide variety of workable patterns. A group may eat one, twice, or several times each day; they may eat while standing, seated in chairs or squatting on the ground; they may eat together, or each may eat in Mores some of folkways are more important than others. Those which should be followed as a matter of good manners and polite behavior and – those which must followed because they are believed essential to group welfare. The concept of welfare defines social institution in the society (Hurten, Hunt 2007). The following types are the most commonly found in all different societies i.e. Family, cultural conventions, school, music schools, hospital, religious places, Takia, public and private departments, Universities, Tourists Resorts etc.

c. Function of Social Institutions:

The function of social institutions is the stability of society. The economy is the social institution that organizes a society's production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. As institution, the economy operates in a generally predictable manner. Johan J. Macionis: (Seventh Edition:418). The people function according to those norms which have developed during social interactions in the institution. The institution, in this way, creates an order and control thought and the behavior of people. Taga, Abdul Hameed. (2009 - 2010:286). Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry interprets that a lover and dedicated has to suffer in order to attain a higher goal. He gives the example of a kiln, which must burn patiently day and night without allowing heat to escape, so that the

required results may be achieved. Even he refers in another context of the mountain journey and sacrifice to reach the goal and pursue the destination. This image symbolizes the necessary of man's suffering to achieve the goal in this world at the hands of God, who in His greater wisdom makes men suffer from their own betterment which is basic essential of social institution. (Agha Yaqoob, Muhammad. (1985: volume iii pages-1178).

3. Methodology:

The qualitative research methodology has been adopted and the concepts of social institutions are explored as portrayed in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. The concepts of social institutions i.e. family norms and folk lifestyle in Sindhi society have been explored through this research. The power of poetic words was systematically arranged in form of qualitative data. The interviews were arranged in very informal way and respondents of different age-groups were involved in the inquiries. The main focus of this investigation has been seeking and documenting the concept of social institutions as explored by different investigators and different personalities at wider level. The sociological poetic art of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai in Sindhi language represents cultural heritage and life-style of different people in gorgeous manner. Therefore, present study is indeed for different stakeholders not only for the taste of revival of the rich culture but it is for exploring a new thematic-avenue for further investigation. The measures have been taken to ensure rigor in the research design in responding to criticism. The respondents who regularly participate in the spiritual customs at shrine were contacted and they were included into the inquiries. There learned persons, scholars, folk-pots, devotees performing music at Bhit Shah and listening on regular basis (Sufi Faqeers), and women and men from Sindhi society belonging to religions and they had their different professions. This process of data source has been used as one aspect of internal validity and this has helped effectively for present research.

Questionnaire/Implemented Research Tools

In present research study a questionnaire was implemented. There were ten sub-questions/statements and response was divided in three rating scales Yes-3, don't know -2, No-1. The main question that current study has catered is how the social institutions are portrayed in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai?

These questions have been developed on realistic approach and with a care of social norms among the society. This questionnaire has been developed for the face-to-face semi-structured interviews. These questionnaires are consisted on ten different questions and at the end personal comments of the interviewee informally. The questionnaire has been simplified after pre-testing and used in Sindhi language and later on translated in English language. The simplified version has been implemented in the field and data has been gathered from different people across Sindh. The sub-questions were asked from the participants and their responses were gathered in qualitative form and the in answers were in “yes-3”, “doesn’t know-2”, “no-1”. These responses have been included in data management and data analysis was done.

4. Data Analysis:

The data analysis and presentation aims at presentation and analysis of the collected data through a questionnaire semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The list was prepared of 143 regular visitors who were visiting at shrine since ten years. The Raosoft sample size calculator was used and sample size was determining 105. The respondents were from all five regions of Sindh province. The data is collected through focusing on Takias of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. The breakup of respondents is given as below:

Table 1:1

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents from five regions of Sindh

	Frequency	Percent %
Lar (<i>Southern Region of Sindh</i>)	19	19%
Thar (<i>Eastern Region</i>)	21	20%
Vicholo (<i>Central Region</i>)	24	22%
Uttar (<i>Northern Region</i>)	18	18%
Kachho (<i>Western Region</i>)	23	21%
Total	105	100%

Source: Survey results of data collected in 2014

The above mentioned data in table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents from five regions. The 19% respondents were from Southern Region (Lar), 20% Eastern (Thar), 22% Central (Vicholo), 18% Northern (Uttar), and 21% from Western Region (Kachho). The mother tongue of these respondents was Sindhi but dialects were different because they belong to different regions.

Table 1:2

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by gender

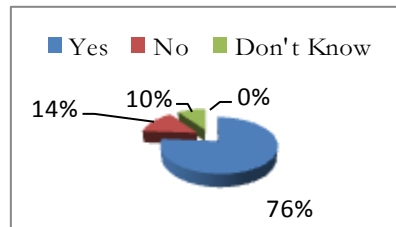
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	60	57.15%
Female	45	42.85%
Total	105	100%

Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the gender wise frequency and percentage of respondents. The male respondents were 57.15% and female respondents were 42.85%. The male respondents were in majority because artist and folk-poets belongs to male dominant society where female population has very less chances to participate in research. Despite this hindrance female were equally interested in the poetry and spiritual music (*Shah-Jo-Raag*) of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai.

Diagram 1:2

Percentage of respondents responses on social institutions are symbolized in Shah's Poetry

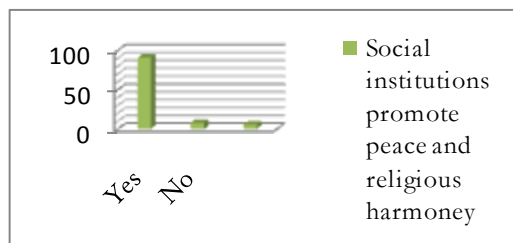


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on social institutions are symbolized in Shah's Poetry. The diagram shows that 76% says yes, 14% no and 10% don't know. The majority of respondents say yes and this gives evidence the social institutions are portrayed in symbolic way in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai.

Diagram 1:3

Percentage of respondents responses on social institutions promote tolerance religious harmony

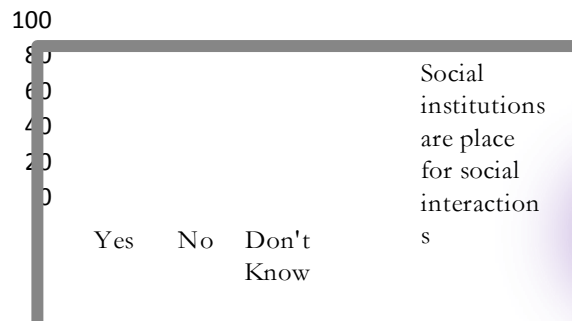


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentages of respondents on social institutions promote peace and religious harmony. The diagram shows that 85% says yes, 8% no and 7% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes" and this gives evidence the social institutions promote peace, tolerance and religious harmony.

Diagram 1:4

Percentage of respondents' responses on social institutions is place for social interaction

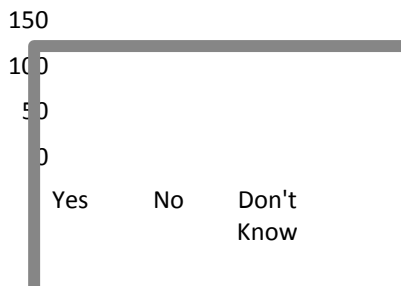


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on social institutions are places of social interactions. The diagram shows that 80% says yes, 12% no and 8% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes" and this gives evidence the social institutions are accessible place for social interactions of the people.

Diagram 1:5

Percentage of respondents' responses on social institutions is stability of society

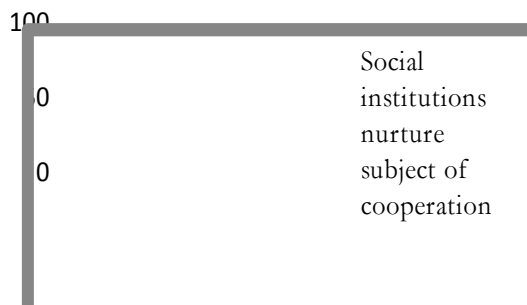


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on social institutions are stability for the smooth functioning of social norms. The diagram shows that 92% says yes, 5% no and 3% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes" and this gives evidence the social institutions are stability for the society.

Diagram 1:6

Percentage of Responses on social institutions promote sense of cooperation

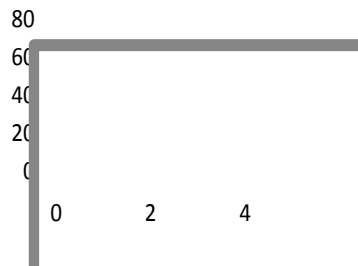


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on social institutions promotes sense of cooperation among the society. The diagram shows that 84% says yes, 9% no and 7% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes". In this way the result proves that social institutions are helping the people to build their strong relations and extend the sense of cooperation among the society.

Diagram 1:7

Percentage of Response on folkways and mores are social norms

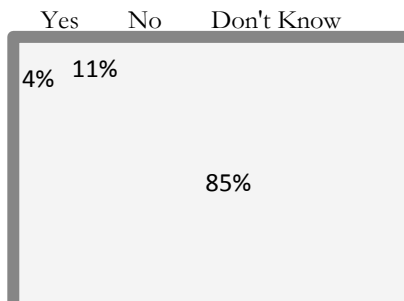


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents' folkways and mores are social norms. The diagram shows that 78% says yes, 12% no and 10% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes". In this way the result proves that folk-ways and mores are social norms that connect people with their origin and cultural heritages.

Diagram 1:8

Percentage of Responses on social institutions offer folk- Wisdom

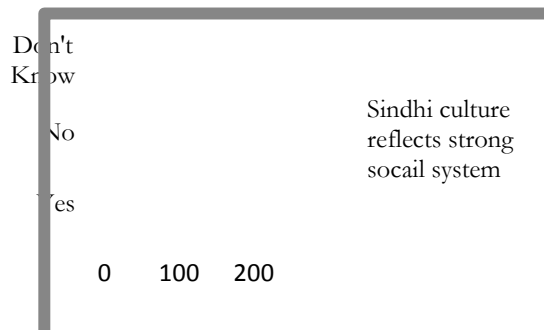


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on social institutions offer sense of folk-wisdom. The diagram shows that 85% says yes, 4% no and 11% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes". In this way the result proves that social institutions offer sense of folk-wisdom.

Diagram 1:9

Percentage of Respondents on Sindhi culture demonstrates a model social system

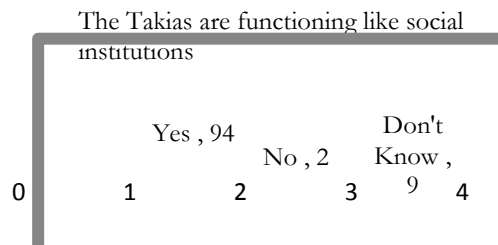


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on Sindhi culture demonstrates a model social system. The diagram shows that 96% says yes, 3% no and 1% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes". In this way the result proves that Sindhi culture demonstrates a model social system as base for the development process of social institutions.

Diagram 1:10

The Percentage of Response on Takias Functioning like Social Institutions

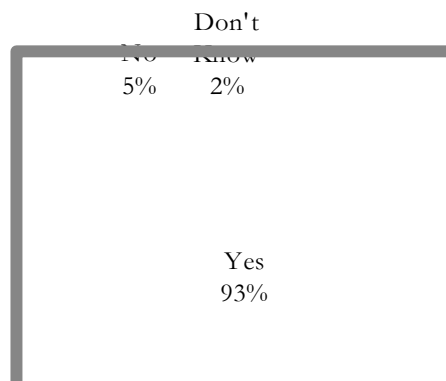


Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on Takias are functioning like social institutions in Sindh. The diagram shows that 94% says yes, 2% no and 4% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes". In this way the result proves that Takias are functioning like social institutions in Sindh.

Diagram 1:11

The Percentage of Responses on Takias are established where Shah Latif had visited



Source: Survey results primary data collected in 2014

Above mentioned diagram shows the percentage of respondents on Takias were established during the visits of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai in those days. The diagram shows that 93% says yes, 5% no and 2% don't know. The majority of respondents say "yes". In this way the result proves that Takias were accurately established in those days while Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai had visited Sindh along devotees and followers.

5. Conclusion:

Present research paper includes 105 respondents. As mentioned in data 19% from Southern Region (Lar), 20% Eastern (Thar), 22% Central (Vicholo), 18% Northern (Uttar), and 21% from Western region (Kachho/Kohistan). The themes discussed are social institutions as symbolized in poetry. The places of social interaction and institutions are important for smooth functioning of social system. The "yes" was the answer of almost 75% - 95% respondents which is validating the theme of social institutions is portrayed in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Furthermore the social institution is constitutive element of social entities,

such as cultural and developed societies. The poetic stanzas highlight the social trends and social functions of institutions with reference of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry. This poetry aimed to resolving any particular issue or discussing personal feelings in both happy and troublesome situation. This paper explores from the poetry to realize, and explore the social needs of individuals and groups of people to come together and generate a collective agenda for formation of strong social system i.e. social institution. The justice and balance in any society is a form of social institutions as portrayed in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. The verses from poetry highlight the subject of human rights and sustainable well-being of people through collective and joint initiatives. This fascinating subject aims to promoting institutional thought for public well-being at wider level and this needs further investigation.

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