

## AN ANALYSIS OF DIALOGISM IN SHAH LATIF'S SUR SUSSAI

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### **Abstract:**

*Dialogues are the sources of communication between people. Dialogues are always used to show any particular relation with objects. Objects can be physical things, concepts, and ideas. The words in dialogues remain same for different ages, but their usage and meaning vary from person to person due to variant socio-historical backgrounds. Dialogues used in literary texts also associate the author and readers with each other (Bakhtin, 1984). Keeping in view this concept, this study applies Mikail Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism (1984) on 'Sur Sussai' from 'Shah Jo Risalo (1992).*

*The findings of the study show that the main character, Sussai, narrates her life struggle in dialogic form. She reveals her sincere, faithful, and true love for her lover, Punhu. In dialogic form, she expresses her love for Punhu and reveals that deep love for her lover is not letting her to sit in one place and wait for him, but it is creating more pain and sorrows within. Therefore, she leaves her home and starts a journey in search of Punhu. Moreover, the dialogues in story of Sussai enable readers to associate it with social life and uncover many hidden realities of life. At the social level, the story shows that in Sindh's past history, women have remained strong and bold in terms of their love, affection, and intimacy. Sussai passed through many disasters and faced hurdles in the search for Punhu, but never lets her intentions fade. She stands firm like a rock and continues her struggle to find the love. Hence, the study emphasizes that Sussai's untiring struggle sets the background that the aim of life is not achieved just by sitting in one place, but one needs to come out of the comfort zone, continue life struggle and move forward with a meaningful purpose. Moreover, this Sur and its dialogic conversation is also full of spiritual concepts as well. It stresses that one does not need to search God from the external sources; God lives within. There is just a need to know thyself.*

**Keywords:** *Dialogism, communication, environment, struggle, faithful love, Sur Sussai, Shah Latif*

### **Introduction:**

This study is based on the concept of Dialogism taken from Russian writer Mikail Bakhtin. The study applies the concept on Sur Sussai from Shah Latif Abdul Latif's collection of poetry, "Shah Jo Risalo". There are many dastan in this sur but for this study, first, second, and third dastan are used for the analysis.

Shah Latif is known as "the poet of women". He has presented seven women, Suhni, Sussai, Marui, Noori, Sorath, Moomal, and Leelanand, their difficulties through the poetry written in dialogic form. Among such women, Sussai is one of them who continues her life struggle for her beloved Punhu in "Sur Sussai". This Sur is written in the form of Dialogues. Dialogue is the conversation between two people. Similarly, Sussai sometimes addresses Punhu in the dialogic form, and sometimes she talks directly of the difficulties that she comes across. Shah Latif also responds to her pains and motivates her through the dialogues whenever she is feeling down from the ups and downs of life. Thus, in "Sur Sussai" Shah Latif presents dialogues of

Sussai and reveals her persistent hard work, sincere and unending love for Punhu. Sussai travels through a mountainous path in search of Punhu and talks in a dialogic form where she highlights her difficulties.

Moreover, in the case of literary text, dialogues can be interpreted in different ways by different people. One dialogue can have one meaning for one person, while at the same time that same dialogue can possess another meaning for another person. Therefore, all can evaluate and analyze the same dialogue in different ways and can extract multiple meanings. Likewise, researchers have interpreted dialogues of Sussai based on her struggle and associated them with the lives of common people. The researchers shows how the same words in dialogues taste differently for different people. Words are the same from centuries, but people interpret those words differently because of their different situations and conditions. This can be witnessed in the case of Sussai's dialogues. Her dialogues not only point out her faithful love and eagerness for destiny, but they also contain some hidden meanings and lessons. Those meanings can be social and spiritual.

#### **Research Objective:**

To explore Bakhtin's concept of dialogism in Shah Latif's "Sur of Sussai".

#### **Research Question:**

How does Bakhtin's concept of dialogism manifest in Shah Latif's Sur Sassui?

#### **Significance of the Study**

The current study is significant because it uses Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism to analyze Shah's "Sur of Sussai" from "Shah jo Risalo". The study shows that the words and dialogues used by Shah in "Sur Sussai" are multilayered. The researcher interprets the dialogues of Sussai according to the personal approach and extracts different meanings. The researcher analyzes the same language of the poetry and brings out new and innovative concepts and ideas based on the current scenario.

This study is also significant because it applies Russian writer Mikail Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism to Sindhi poet's poetry translated into the English language. So, it shows the universality of Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism, which can be applied to any work.

#### **"Shah Jo Risalo" and "Sur Sussai"**

Shah Latif is known as the mystical and spiritual writer of Sindh. He is famous for his monumental work "Shah Jo Risalo". This Risalo is the compilation of Shah's poetry. The Risalo contains different Surs (chapters) relevant to different aspects of life. Shah's poetry covers multiple topics relevant to divine spirit, spiritual thrust and knowledge, love and longing, and so forth. Along with this, Shah Latif speaks of social life, which is bestowed by Almighty Allah to man for his purification of soul in this social world (Memon and Aman, 2011). Shah's poetry basically revolves around folklore and tales such as Suhni-Mehar, Sussai-Punhu, Marui-Umer, Noori-Jam Tamachi, Sorath-Raidyach, Moomal-Ranu and Leelan-Chanesar. Characters of these tales symbolically represent the spiritual life and journey of humans in this earth (Lajwani and Mirjatt, 2021). Hence, the example of "Sur Sussai" highlights the predicament of the lover when they are separated. Sussai and Punhu loved each other deeply, but were parted by Punhu's brothers. Therefore, in search of Punhu Sussai starts her journey towards mountainous tracks and deserts.

#### **Research Methodology**

The present study is based on textual analysis and close reading of "Sur Sussai". Textual analysis is the best source to find out, to explore, to observe, and compile the relevant text of the study. Textual analysis is an educated guess (McKee, 2002) where a single text is evaluated and analyzed through different perspectives by numerous readers, and multiple meanings are extracted out. Close reading analyzes how the text conveys meanings, main concepts, motifs, and themes. Thus, for the current research, the researchers have focused on the text of "Sur

Sussai”, its reading, and analysis it in the light of Dialogism by Mikail Bakhtin. Therefore, for the analysis of “Sur Sussai”, different relevant chunks of poetry from the initial three Dastans relevant to the theoretical framework have been chosen. In this regard, different poetic lines are explained at the literary level along with the hidden moral and spiritual lesson. Moreover, for the analysis of the study’s original text of “*Shah jo Risalo*” is the primary source for the compilation of data in the research, while relevant articles, journals, and reviews are used as secondary sources.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The word dialogism denotes the concept of dialogue. A dialogue normally requires two or more persons or voices (vaagan, 2006). Dialogue is a two way process of communication. This communication occurs through any language where two people exchange their ideas and influence each other’s behavior in some way. In this regards humans are the best example who transfer their thoughts to each other with the help of words. Even humans are called as social animals. It’s impossible for them to live without having communication with each other. So, all humans communicate with each other in dialogic form (Stephens, 1997). In this regard Mikail Bakhtin profound literary figure of Russia has presented his concept of Dialogism in his work “The Dialogic imagination” (1984). Bakhtin is called as “one of Russia’s most prominent modern polymaths” due to his contributions in the field of linguistics, Literary criticism, education, cultural studies and philosophy (Hitchcock, 1998). Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism is very philosophical and is based on the way in which texts enter into dialogic relation (Bakhtin, 1986). For him truth is neither born nor can be found inside the head of an individual person but is born between people’s collective search for truth in the process of people’s dialogic interaction (Bakhtin, 1981).

Bakhtin considers that things do not exist in themselves but only in their relation. Human language and its words are not alien but are always used in any relation. Human’s interaction between two or more people originates language (Linel, 1997). When people interact with each other, they use words in the form of dialogue to signify certain objects. Those objects can be physical things as well as concepts and ideas. According to Bakhtin, “no living word relates to its object singularly. There is always some relation between words and objects, between words and the speaking subject. There is always an environment which shapes words and their meaning” (Bakhtin, 1986). So, meaning of words is made according to environment and their particular usage. Bakhtin deems “words we use in dialogues are always used by others before and thus they carry with them meaning ascribed to them by others” (P.275). During the daily conversation, humans do not create new words, but they use the same words for different meanings according to their context. The same words can contain multiple meanings depending on the users’ ascribed meaning and their surroundings.

Bakhtin argues that dialogue is fundamental in literary language and that language originates in the interaction between two or more people. For him, all texts are fundamentally dialogic. Hence, different dialogues of an author in a work are a way of communication. These dialogues in literary text relate the author and the reader to each other (Shevtsova, 1992). So, literary texts are also a great source for communication between different people. Dialogues of an author present, social and historical background of that era. In those dialogues, an author uses a particular choice of words which represents the author’s socio-historical background, as Bakhtin says, “the living utterances between speakers show their particular historical and social environment” (277). An author does not originate new words to express his thoughts but uses the same words to convey different meanings. Bakhtin says “words are the same, but meaning differs according to socio circumstances” (1986). In this way, particular ideas, concepts, opinions and thoughts of an author are conveyed through dialogues by a particular choice of words. Further, Bakhtin explains that different words in dialogue represent the intentions and

meanings of speakers. Through the dialogues, various intentions of an author are reflected by the tone and way of speaking. Hence, every word in dialogue demands a response from the side of the reader/listener, as Bakhtin says, “every word is directed towards an answer” (279). The speaker needs a response, and that response is provided by the reader/listener. According to Bakhtin, it’s possible that response can come in contradiction. The actual meaning of dialogues can vary from person to person because all individuals have different backgrounds, therefore, there can be different utterances on the same topic as Bakhtin says “actual meaning is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgment” (281). Readers can develop different concepts and ideas from the author’s literary work. Their judgment and point of view can differ from the original author. Though the words are the same, the meaning varies from one individual to another. Bakhtin says “words to be understood in their own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions” (281). The contained meaning of words is understood according to different emotions. Bakhtin’s notion of language is “half-ours and half-someone else’s” that’s why language and its contained meanings are multi-interpretive (Padmanabhan, 2014).

### **Application of the Dialogism in Studies**

There has been much research conducted on Bakhtin’s theory of Dialogism. Various scholars and researchers have used many terms and concepts of Bakhtin to analyze their research, such as Al-Khalili (2018), who applies Bakhtin’s concept of Heteroglossia on American writer Tennessee Williams’s play “A Streetcar Named Desire”. The research finds that the play is in a heteroglot where characters are revealing their stories separately. Khalili believes that characters are distinct from each other, and this distinction of characters and their lives is seen as negative in America. The study of Padmanabhan(2014) seems like a practical study. He applies Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia, and intertextuality, and dialogism in teaching academic writing in Higher Education. Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia/dialogism/intertextuality seems as a powerful force for innovative thinking about language. Moreover, Bakhtin’s notion of intertextuality, challenges established notions of plagiarism and text ownership in higher education. Study of Nisari (2015) analyzes Dialogism versus Monologism: A Bakhtinian Approach to Teaching. The researcher has applied the concept of dialogism in practical classes and shows that teaching and learning can be made effective with the help of dialogues between the teacher and learners. Learners learn through dialogues or a two-way process of communication (communication between teacher and learners), not through monologism (a single speaker, such as a teacher). Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism is the initial point for a modern and effective learning and teaching process.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

According to Bakhtin, language does not exist in itself; there is always a relation between words and their objects. Similarly, the same association can be found through the dialogues used by Sussai for her beloved Punhu. She utters all her feelings, emotions, and sentiments for Punhu through her words. In the search for Punhu, she leaves her home and interacts with dangerous mountains, deserts, and forests. She is eager for her beloved. Her eagerness is described by Shah Latif through these words:

She was steeped in the depth of Punhun’s love.  
But her thirsting desire she could not move.  
Love’s water in gulps she did drain  
To bring to her only the greater pain  
Of the thirst that within her burned.

Sussai has a deep eagerness for Punhu’s love. She has drunk the pot of love in the company of Punhu. So her thirst for love is not quenching. Her thirst is bringing pain, and cannot be burned

with just simple water. Whosoever has drunk the pot of love, his/her thirst is never quenched then. All these lines show Sussai's true and sincere love for Punhu. The researchers analyze these lines according to the present time and extracts some other meanings as well. At the surface level, Shah Latif has portrayed enthusiastic and passionate love of Sussai, but actually, these lines contain a deep message. Latif is spreading the message that if you truly love someone/something, then your eagerness, keenness, and desire never let you sit in comfort. The thirst to achieve that target should not be quenched until someone does not achieves that particular target. The thirst to acquire a target always creates pain and sorrows within. The thirst for achieving a target is just finished when one accomplishes the set target.

Shah Latif continuously motivates Sussai for her struggle of Punhu. Sussai, despite being a woman, faces all troubles bravely. Therefore, Shah Latif is inspired by her, and he constantly motivates her. Shah Latif says to Sussai, there is a river of thirst for those who have love inside. Lovers are always eager and thirsty; they never forget their loved ones. Hence, their thirst is increased more by recalling their lovers. This thirst finishes when Punhu mingles with Sussai, and he himself lets Sussai drink water from his love. Thus, Shah Latif indirectly motivates and inspires to other common people as well. Those who come across multiple issues and complexities in their daily life never forget their settled target in their mind. If someone has a specific target in mind then he/she should stick to that target. One needs to recall the target at different times so that the main focus is not diverted. By remembering aim eagerness increases more and more. Subsequently, one has to be strong and brave like Sussai, who faces all troubles and sorrows boldly.

Shah Latif repeatedly stimulates Sussai for her love; he appreciates her unending struggle and boldness. He makes her realize that she does not need to go outside for the search of Punhu. He says that those who love sincerely and truly, their love resides within them. So there is no need to wander here and there as he says

Huts are above the water  
But fools for the water of it die  
My friends are nearer than life to me  
But they find me not nor this truth can see  
And complain like a stricken band (Sur Sussai, Dastan 01,p.505)

Huts are standing above the water despite of this fools are dying due to the lack of water. Lover is nearer to breath but another person finds that lover from outside. These lines give spiritual message. Human beings search God from external sources but verily He lives within themselves. They need to find God from within themselves. There is need to explore oneself. Ones humans know themselves then they would not find God from worldly life. Hence, Shah's poetry is multifaceted; it can be interpreted at different levels.

Shah Latif has shown different changing times of life and emphasis to stick at target. He says neither be happy in comfortable life nor be sorrowful in difficult times, neither construct home nor destroy it in different situations of life. There is need to survive and never die in all these stages of the life. Here the author explains that happiness and sorrows are the part of life. This is temporary life no need to completely remain happy or sorrowful in this worldly life ( Dastan 01, p 179).

Shah Latif gives the message of spiritual love, strength and longing for love. Love seems as his religion. Therefore, his poetry reveals his strong emotions, sentiments and thoughts for love and lover. It can be witnessed from the following couplet where he says

O Sussai, Don't keep your love at distance  
Likewise twins, you have to be united with you love

Shah Latif here compares the love of two lovers with twins. He suggests Sussai that do not keep your love at distance, you have to stick with your lover just like twins. So, lovers ought

not to be separated. Unification of lovers makes their love stronger. Though, Sussai is not physically living with her lover Punhu but she has accompanied her lover inwardly. Even this inward unification of lovers strengthens Sussai and she starts her journey for the sake of love.

In Sussai's time period it was not easy for a woman to love a man. In that situation Sussai not only loved Punhu but she unendingly struggled to regain her love. Hence, Sussai reveals her struggle for love in the following lines

I have no knowledge of the waste of scrub. I drink  
No drop of water. How the hills assail me and the heat  
Pours forth its fierceness. (Hot winds blow amain,  
The poet says, upon a hapless soul) Come hither, come  
O friend of mine, be with me for I am alone.

Sussai speaks here in dialogic form and reveals her external difficulties and shows her internal attachment with Punhu. She says she does not know anything about scrubs, plants and herbs. That is why she has not carried any drop of water with her during the search of Punhu. High mountains are releasing heat and pouring their fierceness. At that time Sussai calls her Punhu that he should accompanied her during the journey of love otherwise she is alone, although Punhu is not physically there but Sussai gets warmth through the name and feelings of Punhu. She Attaches her spiritual feelings with Punhu and feels the existence of Punhu within herself. Therefore, she asks for the help of Punhu. Similarly, there are some humans who are unable to see their particular goal and aim with naked eyes but they keep themselves energetic and active just through their spiritual feelings with the target. For them their particular goal remains within them. Therefore, they need to search it out through their affection. Along with social and worldly meaning religious meaning is also overt here. Humans have not seen hereafter but they have internal feelings that this world is mortal and nothing will be left one day everything would be destroyed. There will be a day when all humans will awake up once again and that would be Day of Judgment. Therefore, humans need to prepare themselves by having good deeds and actions.

Thus, Shah Latif's poetry conveys universal truths related to all human lives. Everyone can relate it to personal life and can extract out specific meaning.

Further Shah Latif responses to Sussai and says

Go with thine heart towards thy love.  
Cease, Sasui, wanderings of thy feet.  
Ask not the sand how lies the path.  
To travel soul-fully is meet( Dastan 03, p 509).

Sussai you should not go towards your love just through feet, you have to go there with your heart, tenderness and passion. Shah Latif says do not see the depth of sand during the journey of love but pass it soul-fully and spiritually. There ought to be enthusiasm and keenness for the love, just moving forward for love is not everything. There must be curiosity, interest and intrigue. Hence, just facing physical pains and sorrows is not enough to achieve specific destiny but there is need of some spiritual eagerness. One should have spiritual attachment for destiny and there is need of will power as well. All these things collectively assist to gain success.

### **Conclusion:**

All of the above discussion shows that dialogues are the best source to communicate with each other. Dialogues help to convey ideas and concepts from one person to another. This complete world and its people are associated to each other with the blessing of dialogues. This is one of the blessings of dialogues that people share languages and words with each other. But language and its words are used according to the needs of users. That is why Bakhtin says language is half ours and half others. All these concepts of Bakhtin regarding dialogism can be easily found from Shah Latif's "Sur of Sussai". In this Sur Shah Latif shows that Sussai comes out of the

home lonely in the search of Punhu but she communicates to people, her lover and world with the help of language in the dialogic form. Shah Latif shows upheavals of Sussai in the poetic form. So, the poetry of Shah Latif is written in the dialogic form. Through this poetry Sussai's eagerness and keenness for love along with her immense struggle is discussed. Therefore, dialogues of Sussai help her to share her all feelings, sentiments and emotions with others and put her external and internal life in front of the world. In this regard present researcher has extracted out double meanings from the dialogues of Sussai. Initially Sussai's dialogues and their meaning is explained that she loves deeply to Punhu and is unable to live without her lover. Thus, her thirst for Punhu and his love is not quenched until and unless she comes out of the home and starts her journey towards deserts. In the second meaning of dialogues the researcher relates dialogues of Sussai to the common human life. Dialogues of Sussai are analyzed from multiple perspectives by the researcher. That is why these dialogues contain social, spiritual and religious meanings. Through Sussai's dialogues Shah Latif informs readers that they should have internal eagerness and curiosity to achieve any target of the life otherwise bearing just physical pain in the search of target is not everything. Dialogues of Sussai also enthralls humans that they ought not to find God from external sources of the world in real sense God lives within human beings. There is need to know thyself.

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