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**UNVEILING THE EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAH
ABDUL LATIF'S POETRY**

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explains the educational significance of Shah Latif's poetry in its depiction of Sindhi language, history cultural and moral values. His poetry is a powerful source to understand the multiple dimensions of Sindh and its ancient heritage. Through critical analysis of his poetry the main objectives of this research is to highlights its real potential to transfer the landscapes, linguistic variations, historical and cultural contexts of Sindh to the new learners and students. Also, this research emphasizes the importance literary analysis to dig out the cultural values rooted in Shah Latif's poetry and promoting inter-cultural appreciation within education. Shah Latif's poetry can contribute to a more comprehensive and culturally responsive approach to teach the language and literature. In connection, this research paper emphasizes the impact of Shah Latif's poetry on Pakistan's educational system.

Keywords: *Shah Latif, Poetry, Education, Language, History, Sindhi Culture*

INTRODUCTION

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, is the greatest poet of Sindh is famous for his profound contribution to Sindhi poetry. He was born in 1689 CE in the village of Hala Haveli currently District Matyari Sindh, Pakistan. He gave new thought and form to the Sindhi poetry. He traveled far and wide in the remote corners of Sindh and outside and observed himself the simple and rustic people of his soil and was in love with life and its mysteries. He understood the sentiments and feelings of the people and their attachment with the land and its culture and feelings of the people and their attachment with the land and its culture and social life. He portrayed all about the soil

and its sons in the finest language human mind can conceived of. Through simple folk-tails and their characters he expressed profound ideas about universal brotherhood of mankind, patriotism, struggle against all kinds of injustice and tyrannies and above all the romance of human existence. He is peace maker for every generation and genius of Sindhi literature (Bhatti, 2002). The collection of his poetry is known as “Shah Jo Risalo” which is comprised of 30 chapters.

His poetry covers a wide range of themes, addressing virtually every aspect of human life. Although the existing literature offers valuable insights, it reveals dualistic trends in research approaches. The first trend delves into the intrinsic value of Shah Latif's poetry. Scholars have analyzed its artistic and literary characteristics, poetic terms, metaphors, and similes. This kind of research aims to appreciate the aesthetic merit of his poetry, recognizing his literary excellence and poetic depth. On the other hand, the second trend focuses on the extrinsic excellence of his poetry. However, this aspect remains relatively understudied. Few research scholars have explored into the practical applications and important aspects of Shah Latif's poetry. Moreover, a significant research gap remains in examining the utilitarian value of his poetry, particularly in the field of education. Shifting the emphasis from purely aesthetic appreciation, this research aims to explore the educational significance of Shah Latif's poetry, specifically in the domains of language acquisition, historical understanding and cultural values.

Problem Statement

Shah Latif's poetry, despite its cultural and literary significance, lacks comprehensive research on its educational significance. This gap hinders the understanding of how his poetry can effectively teach language, history, and cultural values, offering students the opportunity to engage with this valuable cultural heritage. This research aims to address this knowledge gap by exploring the educational significance of Shah Latif's poetry its practical implications of language learning, cultural understanding, and character development.

Research Objective

Elaborate the educational significance of Shah Latif's poetry to propagating language, history, and cultural values.

Research Question

How does Shah Latif's poetry hold significance to present education in propagating language, history, and cultural values?

Limitation of the Research

The main focus of the research is on the educational significance of Shah Latif's poetry within the educational context highlighting its potential for teaching language, history, and cultural values. It is primarily focused on the educational context in Pakistan. The research is not extensively investigated into other aspects of Shah Latif's poetry. This research maintained its primary focus on exploring how Shah Latif's poetry can be effectively used as an educational resource.

Literature Review

The literature review seeks to delve into Shah Latif's poetry by examining both its intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. The intrinsic value focuses on the inherent characteristics of Shah Latif's poetry, including its aesthetic and literary merits. Additionally, the review explores the extrinsic value of Shah Latif's poetry, considering its broader impact on cultural appreciation, social understanding, and identity formation. To provide a comprehensive perspective, this literature review also draws a comparative analysis by evaluating the educational importance of Shah Latif's poetry about world renowned literary artists such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Allama Muhammad Iqbal etc. whose works similarly possess educational significance.

Intrinsic / Aesthetic Value of Shah Latif's Poetry

The previous literature mostly deals with the intrinsic value of Shah Latif's poetry which encompasses its aesthetic, literary, philosophical, and mystical qualities (Lajwani, 2021), and contributes to its enduring appeal. The artistic expression, evocative language, imaginative power, vivid imagery, symbolism, and metaphor, provide glimpses into the human condition, challenging readers to explore complex ideas and contemplate life's mysteries. (Lajwani et al., 2015) Many writers have analyzed the literary techniques employed by Shah Abdul Latif, such as symbolism, metaphor, allegory, and their application in conveying universal messages that resonate with modern readers.

Extrinsic / Utilitarian Value of Shah Latif's Poetry

Here the literature on Shah Latif's poetry takes three tracks, focusing on its practical benefits such as language acquisition, cultural understanding, and moral development. Previous research has highlighted the effectiveness of using poetry as a tool for discussing and teaching values. By considering

poetry as a creative medium rather than an objective source, it becomes a tool for critically examining themes such as gender, race, queerness, and marginalized voices. In this context, Memon & Aman (2011) argued that Shah Latif's poetry highlights the socio-political conditions of 18th-century Sindh, advocating for equality and social justice. He celebrated the lives of ordinary Sindhis and called for a society free from discrimination, inspiring the masses to fight against exploitation and "Shah-Jo-Raag is an institution of social interactions:" (Lajwani et al., 2015, p. 130) The study highlights how these cultural aspects reflect the spiritual essence of Sindh, drawing from Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's first-hand observations during his extensive travels. Bhatti (2002) explored that the poetry of Shah Latif is the expression of feelings and aspirations of the Sindhis. It provides the solutions to the problems of our then society. The main solution was in shunting off with the diversity and duality. The solution was suggested in ending with religious and sectarian differences, which were forming the bases of hatred and enmity between the various parts of society. National and social unity is a must for the advancement and progress of free and respectable society. His poetry is a true picture of Sindhi society of his time, so it is the need of the time to incorporate Latif's poetry in education emphasizing its universal nature and advocating for the integration of noble ideas, the spirit of love, fraternity, respect for others, and character development into the curriculum for a just and compassionate society.

Research Gap

As for as, educational themes or ideology of Shah Latif's poetry is concerned their remains a research gap in fully exploring and connecting its potential for language acquisition, historical understanding, and cultural values within educational institutions. While some studies have recognized the aesthetic aspects of his work and its relevance to contemporary times, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on the practical applications and educational significance of his poetry. This presents an opportunity to investigate how Shah Latif's poetry can be effectively used to facilitate language learning, historical understanding and promoting cultural values in education. By addressing this research gap, the main aim of this research to bridge the gap between scholarly analysis and the practical implementation of Shah Latif's poetry in education.

Research Methodology

The research used qualitative approach to collect and analyze the data. The research employs a range of data sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The collected data is carefully analyzed using the thematic content analysis technique and key themes, patterns, and insights to address the research objectives and research questions. Moreover, it is based upon both primary and secondary sources, so far as primary source, such as transcribing the verses of Shah Jo Risalo. Secondary sources acquired from books, articles, and research journals and from other sources.

Reflection of Sindhi Culture in Shah Latif's Poetry

Shah Latif's poetry resonate with admiration for the notables of Sindh, illuminating their bravery and generosity, while his portrayal of women as loving wives and resilient individuals embodies the core values and roles within Sindhi society. The mentioning of the sea, seashore, ships, vessels, galleys, and boats evokes the coastal heritage and maritime traditions that have shaped the region's identity. Shah Latif skillfully captures the essence of Sindhi rituals, festivities, and folklore, celebrating the resilience and contributions of various social groups, including farmers, artisans, traders, weavers, fakirs, and fishermen. Within these verses, Sindhi culture comes alive, reflecting the harmonious blend of peace, tolerance, and resilience that defines the spirit of Sindh.

Historical Dimensions of Sindh in Shah Latif's Poetry

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry provides valuable insights into the historical aspects of Sindh, offering glimpses into the names of cities, their distinct features, and the social structure, including the castes and attitudes of the ruling classes during that time. Within the verses of Shah Latif Bhittai, an appealing journey through Sindh history unfolds. Latif's poetry describes the heritage of Sindh, where Sindhi surnames echo the ancestral lineage of its people. From the serene lakes and ponds to the vast oceans, towering mountains, and arid deserts, his verses paint a vibrant portrait of the natural landscape that has shaped the history of Sindh. He describes the stories of the people, their customs, and folklore, immortalizing the love stories of seven queens Sassui, Suhni, Marvi, Momal, Sorath, Leela, Noori and preserving the spirit and essence of the land for generations to come. Incorporating these tales in student learning these help them to discover local wisdom and cultural values.

Linguistic Aspects of Shah Latif's Poetry

Shah Latif composed his poetry in Sindhi, but also influenced by Hindi, Arabic, Persian, and other languages too. He also used indigenous poetics genres such as Abyats, Vai and usage of poetic terminologies can be used effectively to present authentic language, encourage latent learning, and gain intercultural communication competence.

Educational Significance in Shah Latif's Poetry

When students read Shah Latif's poetry, they are exposed to rich metaphors, similes and symbolism, which need to analyze and interpret the deeper meanings. This practice stimulates their cognitive abilities and enhances their capacity for critical analysis. The use of Shah Latif's poetry in education not only promotes cross-cultural understanding and also emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity.

Discussion

Shah Latif, a famous mystic Sufi poet of Sindh, Pakistan, is one of the well-known figure who expresses different aspects of life in his poetry. His poetry is not only the real picture of the heritage of Sindh but also embraces the linguistic richness of Sindhi language and the cultural values of the Sindh.

Reflections of Sindhi Culture in Shah Latif's Poetry

Shah Latif's traveled whole Sindh and other parts of the region for three years and depicted the sights, culture of his people and their way of life. Shah Latif also pays tribute to the bravery and generosity of notable individuals in Sindh, as seen in references to the owners of the Indus (rich tradesmen), emphasizing the significance of trade and commerce in the region's culture. The declining water level in lakes or ponds reflects the impact of water scarcity on the livelihoods of fishermen and rich tradesmen, symbolizing the reliance on the river and the concerns associated with drought. Bhattai says,

ڪر ڪي ڳالھڙيون، ڪندا ! ڀور ڌڻين جون،
ڪنن سي راتڙيون، ڪنهن پر ڏينهن گذارين؟
سر ڏهر.. د. 1. ب. 1

Translation

Tell me Kanda, some anecdotes of the lords of Dhoro,
How where the nights, how were the days then?

ڀور نه اڳين ڌار، مهند ملاحن لکيو،
موڙي چوڙيا مڪڙا، پسي پاڻيءَ پار،
جسودن جيها يار، پيڙا وير و ماس ۾.
سر ڏهر. د. 1. ب. 10

Translation

Water is not flowing as boatmen had seen it flowing before,
Seeing small quantity of water boatmen diverted their boats,
Friends like Jasodhan are dumb founded.

The importance of fishing as an occupation is highlighted in the portrayal of active and experienced fishermen. Trade and commerce are emphasized as businessmen set sail after a favorable wind, and the plea for the safety of boats reflects the spiritual beliefs and reliance on divine intervention within Sindhi culture. The mention of the Hindu Diyari (Eid) celebration showcases the religious diversity³⁵ of the region, while the depiction of the wife embracing the rudders reflects the significance of marital bonds in Sindhi culture. He portrays

سڙه سنون، لاجو نوان، مهاڻا سندن مير،
ساڻي سفر هليا، ٿيا ستاوا سير،
جي اڇن سان اڪير، سي پيڙا رکين پاڄهه سين.
سر سريراڳ. د. 1. ب. 13

Translation

Their sails are set, ropes new, and boatmen skilled,
Seafarers have embarked on voyage and neared the mid current,
O Allah! Kindly protect the boats that are sailing zealously.

ڏني ڏياري، سامونڊين سڙه سنباھيا،
ان کي مند اتر جي، اوچتي آني،
وٽجارن وائي آهي پرئين پار جي.
سر سامونڊي. د. 3. ب. 17

Translation

As the Dayeri sets in, the sea traders set sail,
The wretched wife of the sea trader clings to the oar, weeps,
The pain of separation would kill her at dawn.

Scenic descriptions of Keenjhar Lake with lotus flowers on the shore and the portrayal of dark-skinned fisherwomen, although not conventionally attractive, reflect traditional beauty standards and the economic role they play by selling full baskets of fish. The arrival of the rainy season, accompanied by the playing of musical instruments, signifies the celebration of nature. The sight of grassy low-lying areas and grazing buffaloes represents the agricultural richness of Sindh. The mention of cucumber, mushrooms, and pubescent cucumber as food sources highlights

regional culinary practices. Hospitality of guests which is a foremost component of Sindhi culture and people is shown beautifully. Praying for relief from sadness and worries demonstrates the spiritual beliefs deeply ingrained in Sindhi culture. He captures:

ڪاريون، ڪوجهيون، ڪوڙيون، مُور نه موچاريون،
وڻي ويڻيون وات ٿي، ڪڪيءَ جون ڪاريون،
اُئين جون آريون، سمي ري ڪيرُ سهي؟
سر ڪاموڏ. د. 1. ب. 11

Translation

Black complexioned, ugly, ill-mannered and by no standard, pleasant,
They sit beside the road with basketfuls of stinky fish for sale,
Who else would bear their uncouth manners except the Samma.

Historical Dimensions of Sindh in Shah Latif's Poetry

Shah Latif, through his poetry, presents a rich tapestry of the history of Sindh. His verses provide insights into the cities of Sindh, their distinct features, and the attitudes of their ruling people. He portrays the stories of various rulers and their kingdoms, such as Raja Nando of Mirpur Mathelo, the king of Umarkot and the Rajput kings of Girnar and Kathiawar. He also captures the historical significance of places like Karachi, which was once a small village called Kolachi, and describes the folktales of Suhni Mehar, Leela Chanesar, Sassui Punhu etc., immortalizing them in the history of Sindh. The poet vividly depicts the natural landscapes of Sindh, including lakes, ponds, oceans, deserts, mountains, rivers, valleys, and plains. His portrayal of the tribes and clans of Sindh reflects their historical traditions. By linking historical and cultural perspectives, his poetry serves as a valuable source for understanding and appreciating the history of Sindh. He describes

وڳنڏ وري آيو، ڪوٽڙيان ڪلاڻ،
سندو ڪرڙ ڪاڻ، هنڻ نرڳيءَ کي نڪڻين.
سر بلاول. د. 4. ب. 12

Translation

Wagand has come again, an ill-mannered from Kotri,
Strike this hellish creature with a thorny caper bush.

سُنئيءَ ڪين سمجهيو، اوري آريءَ ساڻ،
ڪري پيڪُ پنهونءَ سين، پاڌار ياتين پاڻ،
جَت وڃايو جاڻ، پانسڻ ٻروچن سين.

سر سسئي آبري. د.1. ب. 10

Translation

Sassui could not comprehend Aari, though she was near him,
By getting acquainted with Punhoon, she exposed herself,
The unwary Brahman woman lost herself by being with Baluch.

اڄ رَسِيلارنگَ ، بادل ڪڍيا بُرجِنِ سِينِ ،
سازَ سارَنگيون سَرندا ، وچائي بَرُ چَنگَ ،
صُراحیون سارَنگَ ، پَلتُونِ ، راتِ پَدَامِ تي .

سر سارنگ. د.2. ب. 5

Translation

Today, clouds formed pleasant colorful peaks,
whole Desert resonates with music of Sarangi, Sarando and Chang,
last night clouds poured jars of rain water over “Padhaam” plains.

سانينم ! سدائين ڪرين ، مٽي سنڌُ سُڪارَ ،
دوست ! هئا دلدارَ ، عالمَ سڀ آباد ڪرين .

سر سارنگ. د.4. ب. 11

Translation

Oh my Lord! Bestow prosperity on Sindh forever,
O my sweet friend, shower blessings on all the world.

Here, Shah Latif has expressed his sympathies with Sindh and also with the whole world. He possessed international spirit and well wishes so he has prayed here for the prosperity and well- being of the whole Universe.

Language Acquisition Through Shah Latif's Poetry

Shah Latif utilized the local Sindhi version in his poems and dohas, distancing himself from non-local techniques. Studying the poetry of Shah Latif, offers students a unique opportunity to enhance their language acquisition skills. Bentley (2009) argues that poetry challenges even fluent readers, creating a level playing field in the classroom. With short and repeated readings, students can absorb the language, imagery, and ideas. Writing poetry bridges students' native languages with promoting self-expression and cultural lessons while enriching vocabulary. Bhattai's poetry is written in a rich and expressive language that showcases the beauty and versatility of the Sindhi language. Students can enhance their vocabulary, improve their understanding of grammar and syntax, and develop their reading and comprehension skills. In addition to language learning, his poetry can also be used to teach literary analysis, critical thinking, and interpretation skills. Students can delve into the themes, symbolism, and

poetic devices employed by Latif, fostering a deeper appreciation for poetry. The roaring voice of the sky and the mourning of birds, animals, and deserts through personification and vivid imagery amplify the emotional depth of the verse, resonating universally with readers. He reveals

رُجْنٌ ۾ رڙڻي ، ڪَر سارنگي ساز،
 اِيءَ عِشَقِ جو آواز ، ماڙهو رَڪَنَ مُنڌَتي.
 سر معذوري. د.7. ب. 20

Translation

The cry heard in mirages sounds like that of Sarangi,
 It is a sound of love, people attribute to woman.

Shah Latif also utilizes vivid imagery and symbolism to illustrate the treacherous nature of the worldly ocean. Through contrasting images of countless waves, black whirlpools, and white waves, he symbolizes the challenges and dangers of life's journey. This serves as a warning to the careless, urging them to awaken and remain vigilant. By employing poetic devices and evocative language, Bhattai effectively conveys the metaphorical significance of the ocean as a representation of life's trials and the necessity for awareness and caution. Bhattai's symbolism extends to his descriptions of rain and clouds as well. By comparing rain to the reddishness of sealing wax and depicting clouds as colorful designs resembling embroidery or flowery patterns, he evokes a sense of beauty and intricacy associated with nature. The mention of rain falling near the Bhit and filling up the low-lying areas of Karar Lake adds a sense of place and familiarity, connecting the poetic landscape to the physical surroundings of Shah Latif's tomb. He portrays:

ويا جي عميق ڏي، منهن ڪانو ڏيئي،
 تن سپون سو جهي ڪڍيون پاتاران پيهي،
 پسندا سيني، امل اکڙين سين.
 سر سريراڳ. د.2. ب. 11

Translation

When they went deep down in the sea with mask of glass on their faces,
 They brought out from the depths pearls producing oyster shells in which
 pearls spout,
 They are the people who perceive the priceless pearls.

Personification is another technique Shah Latif skillfully employs, particularly in personifying rain. By attributing human-like qualities to rain and directly addressing it, he establishes a connection between the

continuous falling of rain and the ceaseless weeping of lovers for their beloveds. This personification enhances the imagery of rain, evoking a sense of longing and yearning that resonates deeply with human experiences.

وَسَتْ اِكْرِيْنِ جِنِن، جِي هُونْدَ سِڪِنِين ، مِينِهِن !
تِه هُونْدَ راتو ڏينهن ، بس بُونڊِينُونُ نه ڪرين.

سر سارنگ. د. 1. ب. 20

Translation

O rain! If you learn to rain like my eyes,
You would rain day and night and would never stop dropping.

Shah Latif's poetic excellences offer immense value for students. It enhances their literary analysis skills, enabling them to examine deeper into the text and interpret its various elements. Moreover, his poetry explores universal themes and emotions, nurturing emotional intelligence and empathy among students. Overall, the study of Shah Latif's poetry provides a valuable educational resource that enriches students' understanding of literature, human experience, and the development of language and writing skills.

Educational importance of Shah Latif's Poetry

Shah Latif's poetry offers students a great deal in the context of educational values. Through his poetry, Shah Latif encourages unity, cultural harmony, patience's, tolerances empathy, hard work, and humility. He emphasizes the rejection of egoism and dualism, promoting the value of oneness and interconnectedness among individuals. It teaches the negative consequences of arrogance and pride, highlighting the importance of self-awareness. Love is an important theme of Shah Latif's poetry he urges to individual to avoid negative thinking and gave lesson for the betterment of the society. He presents,

”آئون“ سين اُن پار، ڪڏهن تان ڪو نه پيو،
”ان الله وتر يحب الوتر“، نيني بيبي پار،
هيڪڙائيءَ وٽ هار، هنجون جي هٿ جون.

سر آسا. د. 1. ب. 2

Translation

No one reached the other side with 'I'
“Verily Allah is one He likes Oneness”, burn duality in all forms,
Shed tears of being before Oneness.

منجهه محبت مڃ، ٻهر ڏوڏا ڏوڏ سين،

چڏيانون چر لهي، ڪوڙ، ڪلڪن، ڪڇ،
 اوڳڻ اوڏا نه ٿيا، ڳڻ ڪيانون ڳڇ
 جيئن سڙن تنن سڄ، جنن سڙن تنن سنرا.

سر رام ڪلي. د. 5. ب. 8

Translation

Their inside is ablaze with love and outside is all dusty,
 Having got to the bottom of things they gave up falsehood vice and evil,
 They never went near anything bad and acquired much virtue,
 As they burn they become true and happier.

By exploring these themes, students can develop a greater understanding of selflessness, personal growth, and the value of experiences. It encourages individuals to leave the laziness, recognize and appreciate their own capabilities and the different paths to success. Bhattai's verses also emphasize the importance of truthfulness, unity, and love through the examples of birds, promoting harmonious relationships and supportive communities among students.

ڪاري ڪيرانو، مٿي مٺي موٽيا،
 سودو ڪن نو سون جو، وڏا وهانو،
 موتي جي مهراڻ جا، تن جا طاماعو،
 سامونڊي سانو، لٽڪا لويي آنيا.

سر سامونڊي. د. 3. ب. 9

Translation

The explorers of salty waters entered in sweet water,
 being big traders, they do not trade in gold,
 they aspire for the pearls of Mehran,
 the shipping magnets have earned a fortune by trading in Sri Lanka.

وڳڙ ڪيو وٽن، ڀرت نه چئن پان ڳ،
 پسو پڪيڙن، ماڙ هننن ميه گهڻو.

سر ڏهر. د. 4. ب. 5

Translation

The cranes fly in flocks they never break bonds of love,
 be hold birds, they are more affectionate than humans.

Overall, Shah Latif's poetry serves as a valuable tool for students to explore and internalize important pedagogical values. It encourages self-reflection, empathy, and appreciation of diverse cultures.

Conclusion

By researching into the extrinsic realm of Shah Latif's poetry, it provides a deeper understanding of its linguistic, historic, and cultural contexts, thereby revealing its profound potential as a multi-dimensional and holistic approach to education. Through his poetry, learners and students can learn about the agricultural abundance, natural biodiversity and traditions including rituals, celebrations and culinary practices specific to Sindh. Studying Shah Latif's poetry also encourages students to engage with the linguistic, historical and cultural context of Sindh. This exposure to diverse cultural expressions fosters a sense of openness, acceptance, and respect for different ways of life. His poetry serves as a powerful tool for nurturing critical thinking, and empathy, and cultivates a sense of interconnectedness. The present research advocates for the inclusion of Shah Latif's poetry in the curriculum, not only as a means of preserving cultural heritage but also as a powerful educational tool for language acquisition, cultural and historical understanding of the region, and the internalization of educational importance for students.

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