Impacts of the Saint (Sufi) Mast Tawakli Marri Baloch Poetry on Baloch Society

Abstract: Sufism is associated with the expression of devotion towards God and spreading the message of truth. The Sufis in Pakistan and Balochistan remain the ambassadors of love, peace, respect for humanity, and social harmony. The Sufi Saints have contributed significantly to the literature, philosophy, and theological ideas. The study employs an anthropological perspective to examine the impacts of Saint Mast Tawakli’s poetry on the Baloch Society by using qualitative research methods. The technique of triangulation and translation was used to verify the data. The research has been conducted in the district of Kohlu, Balochistan. This research reveals that Saint Tawakli is a famous poet of the Balochi language whose poetry is full of messages of love and respect for humanity. His work accurately depicts a lover's emotion and affection, precisely a source of inspiration for young people.

Key Words: Tawakli, Baloch, Culture, Poetry, Nationalism, Sufism, Society

Introduction

Sufism's multifaceted manifestation evident through poetry, dance, music, mysticism, orders, saint, and shrine culture that makes it a complex concept. However, Hazrat Inayat Khan, a Sufi philosopher, and practitioner, straightforwardly describes Sufi as a person and mystic tradition by means of his poetry and actions in Baloch society. He stated, “Any person who knows both outer and inner life is Sufi”. Etymologically word Sufi is a vague impression. Some scholars connect the word with 'Safi,' meaning 'The Pure,' and some scholars refer it to Baghdad's people who wore 'Sufi' (As-saleh, 2005). Usually, Sufism is connected with Islam, but Sufis and Saints' religious philosophy remains associated with humanity and love for humans. The Sufis remain extraordinarily kind and considerate towards people of all cultures and creeds; hence they had a profound influence on every religion (Sharda, 1974). Whatever the etymological roots of Sufism may be, it is inevitable that Sufis, who had a profound impact on Asia's social structures, is a well-organized group within the context of Muslim culture.

These Sufis were great scholars and intellectuals, well-read, and widely travelled men. Most of them were eloquent speakers of the subject, men of letters, and poets of eminence. Because of their merits and morals, coupled with their spiritual attainments, they succeeded in making a powerful impact on the lives of the people they settled (Hussain, Zanjani, & Sarbuland, 2011). It was by no means an achievement to change the religion and transform millions of people's entire social lives in the subcontinent. All human beings have an instinctive love for the Creator, and Sufism not only encourages that love but also makes a practical effort to reduce the pain of separation from their Creator. In this regard, Sufi lyrics and music culminate spiritual ecstasy. Iranian history and culture had a tremendous impact and influence on Sufism. Sufi impacts of teachings can be observed in the daily lives of people (Ghadamyari, 2012). The impacts of Sufism can be measured and followed through various societal norms and folklores. Among the societies where Sufism is known as popular culture, it impacted the marriage patterns, funeral practices, and even the names of a newborn (Solagberu, 2012). Sufism is deep-rooted in the culture and traditions of the Indian subcontinent. The Sufi school of thought's content and quality are almost the same among all religions of India subcontinent. Besides Muslim's, it impacted and influenced Hinduism and Sikhism as well (Mratkhuizina, Bobkov, Khabibullina, & Ahmad, 2019); and its influence can be seen in the lives of the people who have been living in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The influence of Sufis upon Society is evident from the literature. Similarly, the preaching of Sufis has been influencing in modern societies. Sufi has been part of the structure of the society as an institution.
regulating certain functions in society to spread Islam and create harmony between people. In this regard, Sufism was a source of forming the society based on the union of relationships [Copp, 1992].

The Baloch Society of Pakistan, which is traditional and tribal in its nature; and people are strongly connected to each other on the basis of clan, tribe, language, and region. It is said that Baloch Society is famous because of its rich culture and traditions. Baloch people are prominent due to their hospitality, bravery, dress patterns, music, art, craft, and poetry. Especially poets and storytellers are always being praised in the Baloch society. Balochi's poetic legacy has closely linked with people's everyday lives. Especially Balochi Sufi poetry beautifully explains the themes of Baloch tribalism, love, beauty, bravery, Baloch moral values, hospitality, and wars. It's both didactic and aesthetic in nature. Balochi poetry, music, and dance are a source of Baloch's ethnic identity and reveal the real picture of Baloch history and culture. Baloch poet shares the stories of wars and history via poetry [Dashti, 2012].

Balochistan covers 44 percent of the total land of Pakistan and known as the largest province of Pakistan with the least population. According to the 1998 Census of Pakistan, the total population of Balochistan is about 6,511,000. Balochistan geographically is bounded by 60 52' east longitudes to 24 54' north latitude and 70 17' east longitudes to 32 6' north latitude [Census Report Balochistan, 2001:58]. Balochistan, the land of Baloch inhabitants, is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multilingual territory. The dominant ethnic groups are Bloch, Barohi, and Pashuns. Tribalism is an old and prominent feature of the Baloch Society. Traditionally, the Baloch Society is known as a patriarchal tribal Society. These tribes spend the nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life. Tribal identities work under the umbrella of Baloch ethnic identity. Each tribe has its leader known as Sardar or Nawab; each tribe is also divided into subtribes led by a leader titled Vadera or Mir. The Vadera or Mir looks after that clan or sub-tribes internal and external affairs and keeps them in close coordination with the Chief Sardar [Baloch, 1974]. Baloch tribal society usually follows the tradition of the joint and extended family system. Family recognition is associated with the name of the grandfather or great grandfather. The household head or the head of a family is Motbar or Takri [Baloch, 1974]. The Balochi language is expected the standard way of communication. Traditionally, The Baloch tribesmen transfer their culture from generation to generation, mainly via Balochi folktale and poetry [Dashti, 2012].

The teachings of Baloch Sufis played a vital role in the development of the Baloch Society. Baloch lands remain rich in the context of the spiritual effects and teachings of Sufis. Baloch tribal society has earned not only religiously but also humanitariam from Sufi poetry and literature. In Balochistan, there are several famous shrines of Sufis and Shuyookh that performed a significant role in the social reforms of Baloch Society. Sufis teaching and poetry had a prominent influence on the culture and politics of South Asia [Hassanali, 2010]. There are different opinions about Sufi's participation in any society. Sometimes they remain busy in their spiritual practices, and sometimes they actively participate in uplifting the Society [Dilpul, 2016]. Sufis' school of thought has always remained different from rigid or radical religious people. The Sufi perspective revolves around respect and love for humanity [Dilpul, 2018].

Saint [Sufi] Mast Tawakli Marri Baloch was born in 1825, near Kahan tehsil of District Kohlu. The orphan shepherd boy has grown up traditionally by his relatives [Dilpul, 2016]. From his childhood, like other Marri tribesmen, he spent a nomadic life along with his clan. He was also a good warrior during his adulthood and fought many tribal wars. But it was the year 1858, which changed Mast Tawakli's life forever. One stormy night Tawakli was travelling with his close friend, however, caught by a storm and stayed in a nearby by the tent to save their belongings and arms.

As stated in a Ballad stanza:

"Bro Hamoda Ke Hayma ey Hairi; Hathyaar Hondi Bant Mani Meeri"

Go there, where is a blessed tent, so that your worthy weapons are safe.

The tent in which Mast stayed belonged to a lady named Sammo. Mast saw Sammo's first time in the lightening of the sky when she came to fix the tent. He fell in love with her at first sight. As the saying goes, 'the first sight of love is the last of wisdom' the naive Tawakli was no longer Tawakli; he became Mast. Tawakli was unable to eat and sleep at night. In the morning, Tawakli shared with his friend about the incident and said: "the housewife has captured my heart; I am of no use anymore."

After that night, Mast Tawakli, spent his entire life like a vagabond. He spent most of his time in the company of poets, Sufis, and saints. Over time his poetry was traversing from heart to heart and people to people. There are some miraculous events attributed to Mast Tawakli, which earned him the fame of a saint in the populace. Mast Tawakli's love for Sammo was endless. Mast Tawakli died in 1892, some sources say
1895, and other sources document 1896. The tomb of Mast Tawakli is now a famous shrine, and many traditional festivals are celebrated there (Marri, 2007).

Mast Tawakli was a distinguished poet of the Balochi language and was a great Sufi of the era. Sammo's love was the source and pathway for Mast to get closer to God and purify his soul. As Sufism says that there is a divine presence in everything which Mast found in Sammo. He says in a stanza: "Nindo'n Kahan a Bitago'n Kohaani Marri; Wa Raza Beet o Bahaanag Sammo e Kuth ey" (I am an ordinary Marri of Kahan, not to speak of my status; it was Allah and His acceptance I earned, Sammo was a mere means). Mast's poetry remains a source of inspiration for the suffering of humanity. Among the traditional Baloch society, women remain deprived, but Mast talked about the rights of women. Tawalki's poetry is very famous among the Baloch folk singers. It works like medicine for the oppressed Baloch society, as Mast wrote against the feudal system and oppressed Baloch women. Even today, people read and sing Mast Poetry. Lovers visit the Mast tomb to gain purity (Nasir, 197).

**Objectives**

Following are the main objectives of the study:

- To uncover the detailed narrative of Mast Tawakli's Poetry
- To explore the impact the Saint Poetry and teaching on Baloch Society

**Theoretical Interpretation**

As per the functionalist school of thought, any language's function is to create meaning in the social world. Similarly, poetry is the organized attribute of any language, and it performs various functions. It is the source of appreciating beauty and discussing the reality of the world. Thorough poetry, poet and writers interpret the issues of surroundings and talk about the solutions to these problems. With the help of poetry, the poet shares understandings and feelings. Respectively, Gee's framework function of language has been adopted for the critical analysis of Mast poetry and interpretations. This framework helped to examine Mast poetry in various dimensions. Gee's framework provided seven different ways to analyze the function of poetry language. Gee (2011) explained that the objective of our writing and speaking is built in seven blocks. Those blocks are known as 'building tasks' of language.

**Methodology and Locale**

The following research is part of the longitudinal PhD dissertation and was conducted in the Kohlu district of Balochistan, Pakistan. Kohlu district is surrounded by Lora Lai district in the north, by the Dera Bugti district...
in the south, and by the district Barkhan in the east, and Sibi district in the west. During the PhD research, the researcher obtained primary data using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs), and observations. While secondary data was gathered by conducting a literature review. For the primary data technique of thematic analysis was used. However, secondary data were analyzed by using the technique of content analysis. It is essential to mention categorically that the current research article is a part of PhD research data collection. However, for this research article, only secondary data was used based on the content analysis research technique.

Result and Discussion

Socio-Cultural Impacts

Poets and poetry are considered an essential feature of any society. Like anthropologists, poets' work as keen observes. They observe the issues and problems of their surrounding then interpret these issues through their poetry. Sufi poets, based on their personal experiences, connect their poetry with cultural issues. Sufi poetry works as a remedy for the disappointed, frustrated, and oppressed society. Going through Balochistan and Baloch people's history, one can realize that Baloch Society is a historically oppressed Society. Tribalism and the feudal system always created hurdles in the way of Tribesmen's progress. Historically, poor tribesmen were treated like slaves by the Sardars and feudal lords. Women in the Baloch Society were oppressed due to the dominant patriarchal system. Mast Twalki like a revolutionist pointed out the negative aspects of Baloch Society. Through his poetry, he spotted the light on the brutal feudal system and rejected it. He also wrote about women's oppression in the Baloch society. Being a Sufi, pathfinder he guided the Baloch people on getting rid of all these societal problems. Sufis's contribution is countless. They always performed for the betterment of society through their poetry, practices, and rituals. Like Mast, most of the Sufis in their poetry spoken loudly against injustice and inequality (Anjum 2011).

Saint Mast Tawakli's teachings have been playing an essential role in the awakening of the Baloch Society. The beauty of Saint Mast Tawakli's teachings is that his poetry is the precursor of hopefulness in his time in Balochistan. Still, his work for promoting positive values and inspiration is considered very useful and soothing even today. The aesthetical element is innately ingrained in Mast Tawakali's poetry to be overlooked.

Similarly, Tawakli's teachings and sayings consist of value among the Baloch Society. The study reveals the following socio-cultural effects on the Baloch Society. There are millions of followers of Saints and Sufis around the world. The oppressed people join and follow the Sufis circles to attain inner comfort (Anjum, 2011). Ishaq and love remain the prominent feature of his poetry. In his poetry, the gesture of love is dominant over violence, hate, and anger.

Women Empowerment

There is a unique, distinctive quality in his poetry that shows the path of remedy to the oppressed and helpless women of Baloch Society. His poetry not only points out the suppression of women in those times but also criticizes it. Tawakli compared the rural women living altruistic lives with those living a normal lifestyle in Sardars houses or Harams. In his poetry, he imaged the rural women living up to such a standard lifestyle, i.e., well dressed and beautified with ornaments. In his opinion, a rural woman possessed a great deal of beauty and elegance. He lamented the deplorable condition of the rural and nomadic women. He discovered the potential in them, which was never put into the light before him.

Tawakli was much concerned about women's plight and empowering them, so he uses accusatory and curses words to describe those inflicting the injustices on women. For instance, women are sensitive and are not made for doing a hard task like wandering in the grazing fields all day long with their animals and even climbing the nearby mountains to protect them, as it was a principal daily task of people living in Balochistan. Tawakli cursed those people and wished blindness for those who assign such challenging tasks to their women.

Usually, Sufi tradition does not believe in the inequality of human beings. Sufis do not follow the traditions of caste, creed, gender, status, and color. They only love and respect humanity. Tawakli's poetry is a discussion about women's problems and rights in the Baloch society. He used to say

"Jowannaenth Sammigon buzgulen mardan Buzgulimard o dirtagshalwaran."

Sammi, women, are not for the shepherd, not for the torn-clothed ones.
Mast Tawakli was unhappy with the poor conditions of women in Baloch Society. Usually, in nomadic societies, women remain involved in almost every affair of life. In Marri Baloch tribal nomadic society, women also work as a shepherd. They spend time in the barren mountains with their livestock. Mast believed Sammo also used to work as a shepherd, so he was against this hard work. He was of the view that women are beautiful creatures. Mast advocated women's problems and sufferings. He portrays Baloch women via his poetry [Marri, 2007]. He used to say that

“Dost mani bewa kankuta wando gon buzan Pad shapadi a koh bun o kodan o garan.”

Beloved of mine is shepherding in the mountains barefoot.

**Tribal Justice System**

The story and the poetry of Tawakli depict the beauty of the Baloch tribal justice system. Sammo's husband and all other members of his tribe went to Sardar and complained about Tawakli. After hearing the entire story, he said it is a matter of Sammo’s respect. Hence, she gets to decide. Finally, Sammo went to see Tawakli in a barren area. Tawakli was stunned by the closeness and beauty of Sammo. He fell to the ground and lost consciousness. Instead of killing Tawakli, she cleaned his face. In Tawakli's poetry, it can be observed that he always praised the justice system of not only the Marri tribe but also all the other tribes of the area. As Tawakli spent his life wandering, he developed a good relationship with tribal chiefs of the area and got a chance to observe the justice system closely; he understood the justice system to be pure and transparent. That is why, even today, instead of just laymen, Sardars and Vadays of the area are also in the list of fans of Tawakli's personality and poetry. Once Tawakli visited Galat, where Khanate of Galat 11 Mir Nasir Khan welcomed him wholeheartedly [Mir Nasir Khan was a very noble and wise Baloch Sardar]. In praise of Khanate, Tawakli wrote the following in a beautiful selection of words:

“Shuppgerok munghpr binti e Daman e shalant, Mir Nasir khan e paishdurro mahal e saknat, goran suni e moshrain sayvi e shalanat.”

At night the thundering and sparkling clouds shower rain on the mountain. Clouds shade the high place of Mir Nasir Khan and then finally showers at Sunni, the famous city of Sibi.

**The Message of Peace and Love**

Since childhood, Tawakli spent most of his time with goats and sheep instead of playing with children. He rarely participated in the routine work expected of boys in that society. He did graze cattle as a shepherd and was always found in his animals' company away from the population; this is a lifestyle he continued for the rest of his life. He ever paid respect and homage to all other society members, whether from his tribe or another. Even at his young age, he was known to be peace-loving and made sure to stay away from tribal disputes, which is common amongst tribal societies. He was a sensitive individual, and his disapproval and hate for killings are prevalent in his poetic verses. His poetry condemns the culturally accepted disputes and fights amongst the tribes and depicts his prevalent and consistent thoughts where only love, peace, and affection can be found. In one of his works, he narrates the story of the famous fight of Chumbri, where he was in the front row with all the fighters; however, he left the war because he was against fighting. He speaks

"shur ent jingani badin booli, kaiy wati dostain mur do maan rooli.”

The conversations of quarrels are not good why one should put their beloved one in problems.

Mast Tawakli preached the message of love and respect through his poetry. Love, peace, and respect for humanity are the basic theme of his poetry. He used to say

Is piry pully ma sare daran
Rad knankatara yazeedgy a

Will protect her with a shield of flowers rejecting the swords of Yazeed.

**Religious Impacts**

Saints remain in direct relation with God; this concept had a profound influence over their followers, which is primarily why followers of saints come to visit their shrines and pray. Tawakli became a saint in the love of Sammo. It is said that Sammo was just a source of the journey from *Ishq e Mejazi* (Love of God's creation) to *Ishq e Haqiqi* (Love of Truth). Though the journey from Tawakli to Mast [Saint] was extremely difficult, he eventually became a Sufi. A Sufi was aware of the knowledge of the inner and outer world. The life history of
Tawakli depicts life. He walked through jungles, deserts, and hilly areas. He walked in search of getting purity. Most of the time, he stayed at different Mazars, khanqahs, mosques, etc. in Balochistan, Sindh, and Delhi (India).

There were some miraculous events attributed to Mast Tawakli, which earned him the fame of a saint in the populace. Once, Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari invited Mast Tawakli for a pilgrimage to Mecca. Sardar Jamal was in the habit of testing Tawakli's saint-like powers. He ordered his subordinates to throw Tawakli in the sea in the middle of their voyage. When they reached Mecca, Tawakli was also there before them. Tawakli foretold Sardar Jamal about the withering away of trees in his village and his death on return. Sardar Jamal did die on return to his town.

Another such incident depicting his miraculous and saint-like powers is the dragging of a big stone. Mast Tawakli travelled to Dera Bugti; on his way there, he uttered the following words, "O Sammo's stone, come with me," and the stone followed him. The stone is still in Dera Bugti and is named after Mast Tawakli, Mast's Stone.

As spiritualism and mysticism are the basics of Sufism, Tawakli was blessed with these qualities. In the poetry of Tawakli, it can be observed that he always prayed to Allah and spend his life in search of Allah. Even today, lovers come to his tomb to pray. It is a widespread belief that all prayers made at his tomb/shrine come true. Many festivals are celebrated at his shrine/tomb every year.

Another famous incident from the life of Tawakli also shows that he was a Saint with many mystical powers. Once a man whose name was Gidda from the Sammo tribe tried to kill Tawakli. He pushed Tawkli from a high mountain. But the man was surprised to see that Tawakli came down like a bird – without a scratch. In his poetry, Tawakli says

"Yak goaiaray mavaik goaiaray Gidda, Ma her doo mard jawani e nahoon sud e."

Me on one side and Gidda on the other, we both were not in senses.

Several incidents clearly show that Allah granted Tawakli with many mystical powers. This is the reason Tawakli is even praised and respected amongst the religious circles too.

Economic Patterns
Shrines of the saints contain spiritual relations as well as impacts on the economic patterns of the area. Similarly, the Tawakli shrine is directly the source of income for many people in the area. The followers and visitors pay tribute (Nazrana, Charhava) in money, gold, or other valuables. All those valuables are then used by the people associated with the shrine. Then the small market near the shrine provides flowers and Chadars to followers. That's another source of income for the local people.

In Tawakli's poetry, the lifestyles and patterns of the people of the different areas ranging from Balochistan to Delhi can be found. He explained the subsistence patterns of the other areas wherever he went. He speaks

"shahir Dilli ent chash wdashani, much atant hindi siah paghain kani, hkal wohoraet yazidani, dehka wodhorait lghorani".

Delhi city was full of noise; there was a gathering of lazy Hindustani. There were many other cowardly people, as well.

Respect for Social Norms and Values
Respect for social norms and values is another social indicator to evaluate a society. Mast Tawakli's life and poetry are the epitome of respect for society and the norms and values. He was a man of his words and principles. For instance, when the tribal chief concluded that Tawakli's love for Sammo is pure and involves no evil intentions, he was allowed to roam around Sammo's tent, to which he was used to. Tawakli quotes that incident in his poetry that after the decision by tribesmen, Sammo's husband never intended to think negatively about Sammo or Tawakli. Such was the level of respect for norms, values, and elders.

Similarly, on the occasion of Sammo's death, when Tawakli reached the grave of Sammo, he was a bit angry and sad because the family of Sammo did not wait for Tawakli and buried her without informing him. In such a situation, the husband of Sammo asked Tawakli's forgiveness for ignoring his wish. The husband of Sammo immediately gave Tawakli permission to exhume her body and bury her at a place of his choosing. Tawakli did not, however, take up the offer.
Any society can prosper if they respect decisions, norms, and values and above all for people. Such prosperity will be based on solid foundations because individuals are the unit of society. Even today, people respect Tawakli and his poetry and consider it a source of inspiration.

**Impacts on Literature**

Man is nothing but a storytelling creature. To tell a story, he needs a medium. Literature is the most extraordinary cultural artifact and medium. Literature can make and break societies. Tawakli's poetry touched such social problems that were never voiced. As mentioned above, he talked about women empowerment, romance, love, spirituality, humanity, bravery, norms, cultural traits of his society, and peace. Tawakli never wrote his poetry. He was such a respected figure among people that people memorized, if not all, most of his poetry. After his death, written work was done.

Music is also part of the literature. Today at shrines and in local cultural festivals, Tawakli's poetry is composed and translated into beautiful music. Music not only talks about the thinking of the people but also influences people. Tawakli's poetry, translated into music, influences people and gives a message of love and peace. Music touches people's souls; Tawakli's poetry added value to that music.

**Traits of Marri Tribe**

The poetry of Saint Tawkali is enriched with the traits of his tribesmen. At many places, he explained the bravery, beauty, and masculinity of Marri tribesmen. He also wrote about the battles; his tribesmen fought those. He writes about the courage and struggle of those men. In one battle, he was also part of the Marri army, but before the fight started. Cowardice was not the reason he left the war because he disapproved of killing and fighting.

Similarly, when he was caught and thrown in jail during his journey to Delhi, he was missing the company of his brave tribesmen. He was sure that nobody was able to capture him in the company of those brave Marri fighters. He says, "Goon na etan goon munn bach muryani" I was sad as the Marri sons were not with me. He beautifully describes how inspiring the Marri sons look like when they wear the battle dresses and decorate their bodies with swords. At many places, he also talks about the hospitality of Marri people. Marri people pay respect and homage to their guests.

**Contextualization of the Poetry**

The content analysis of Mast poetry given in previous pages categorically reflects Mast's association with Baloch culture, care for Baloch people, critics about harmful gender practices, appreciation for the justice system, dream about prosperous Baloch Society, and love for the land. In this regard, on the one side, Mast was mystic, while on the other side, he was reformist. Both of these aspects were deriving from the association with the land. He went through the very famous Sufism process, which linked with "Love for God's creation and then Loved for the truth for God". The reflection Mast has given in his poetry is in one or another way a direction and association with Baloch land and with Baloch people, which can be interpreted in the modern-day concept of Nationalism. So, in this way, the dynamics of Mast poetry are not restricted to mystic aspects but can be interpreted in the contemporary discourses of Nationalism and its movement in Baluchistan.

**Conclusion**

Mast Tawakli's poetry reveals the dynamics of the socio-cultural life of Baloch tribal Society. It challenges and criticizes the harmful and traditional practices concerning the social role and status of Baloch women. Specifically, he has emphasized women's empowerment in the Baloch society. The poetic accounts of Tawakli also reflect his associations, affiliations, and belongings with Baloch land, culture, language, and society. He appreciated the tribal justice system and named it as a relief for poor tribesmen. It can be stated that Mast poetry is the true depiction of the Baloch Society in terms of Marris's bravery and all other Baloch tribesmen. The Saint Mast Tawakli preached the teachings of love for humanity in Balochistan's vast plains and on the tops of its mountains. Mast Tawakli's love for the Baloch people and Sammo was endless. Therefore, the shrine of Tawakli is respected among all the circles of followers. It is the need of the hour to revive his teachings to maintain peace and harmony in Balochistan as he did in his poetry. Mast's poetry is a source of inspiration for Balochistan's young generations and can be useful for the prosperous and progressive Baloch Society.
References