

PROSAIC FOLK LITERATURE OF SISTAN AND BALUCHESTAN PROVINCE (CASE STUDY: ZAHAK COUNTY)

Maryam SARANINIA*, Mahdi KHADEMI KOULA'EI, Hamid AALIKALA'EI

Department of Persian Language and Literature, Payame Noor University of Sari, Sari, Iran.

***Corresponding Author**

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates with prose folk literature of Sistan and Baluchestan Province in Zahak County. Meanwhile introducing Sistan and Baluchestan Province and Zahak County, the author explores the Baluchi poems. In this study, happiness poems like Lailu, Nazinak, Mobarak, Halou, Lajou, Sepat and congratulations that are recited in such ceremonies as child birth, wedding, circumcision, nomination for marriage and so forth by women and men along with playing of various musical instruments like Sorud (a Baluchestan-specific stringed instrument), psalter, small tambour, Sorna (a kind of aboe), Nal (reed flute), Benjo, drum, tonbak and so forth will be investigated; moreover, sorrow poems like Liko, Mutak and Luli that are recited by men and women sometimes accompanied by the playing of musical instruments will be also analyzed. Since one of the biggest cultural and literary harms of every ethnicity and tribe is the destruction of their local dialects, the present study can somewhat achieve the important goal of preserving this cultural heritage to be handed over to the future generations so that they might not get separated from their ancestral culture and customs and carry it along in the course of time.

Keywords: public culture, Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahak, poems

INTRODUCTION

Sistan is the land of poetry and literature and culture and it has a very rich past and civilization. The large number of archaeological works that have risen up from the soil in every corner of Sistan is the best testimony to the oldness and magnificence of this territory's past civilization. The sage of Tus has mentioned the name of Sistan possibly more than any other land in Shahnameh. The first Persian-speaking poets whose names have been recorded in the history of literature have emerged from this land (Safa, 1975, 1/120). Farrokhi Sistani, one of the greatest poets composing in Dari Persian, has been a villager from Sistan (Nezami Arouzi, 1964, 58). The aforementioned cases are expressive of the idea that the people of Sistan have a great talent and verve in composing poems and such a land with such people can be the owner of the most euphonious lyrics and rural couplet poems that are enumerated amongst the spiritual heritage, beliefs, rites, customs and feelings of the people from this land and are backed up by a brilliant past beyond the geographical length and width of today's Sistan and as old as Dari Persian. Alongside Persians, Parthians, Medes and Scythians, Baluchs constitute one of the Iranian tribes. Like all the other Iranian tribes, this clan has its own specific language and culture. Part of the Baluchs' culture can be investigated through an exploration in the folk literature that can be presented in prosaic and poetical forms. This research investigates part of Baluchestan's folk

literature in two regions of the city of Sistan and the County of Zahak within the format of poetical data, including congratulations (for spousal and childbirth ceremonies), Mutak and “Muyeh” [mourning], proverbs and lullabies. The ancientness of Baluch tribe and the incidents that it has been faced with in the course of history have made it the possessor of a strong public culture which can be studied in every corner of Baluchestan with a large diversity.

Elhami (2017) performed a research called “the position and analysis of the Seytaks themes in Sistan’s lyrics” and expressed that “Seytak” is another name for couplet poems in Sistani dialect and that it is composed in a simple and fluid language hence understandable for every Persian language speaker. This type of poetry is common amongst the people of Sistan more extensively than the other kinds of carols. Javadian Koutna’ei (1991) has carried out a research named “Mazandaran’s oral literature, lyrics”; meanwhile discussing about the history of folklore, he has spoken about the reflections of these chants in the people’s life. He subsequently mentions sixty couplet poems compiled from Gha’emshahr and the villages in its periphery, especially Bishehsar. Based thereon, the present study aims at investigation of the prosaic folk literature from Sistan and Baluchestan Province in Zahak County.

STUDY LITERATURE:

Folk Culture:

Without being guided by the government based on a certain mindset, our public culture has borrowed its elements and properties in its entirety with a free disposition from the depths of its social and historical environment. This part of our culture has not completely given up to superstition, tyranny, suppression and religious bigotry and it has not become indolent in the course of suffering injustice and social corruptions and depravities as well as null and baseless beliefs and avoidance of the scenes of the battle between the light and darkness and exercising a policy of compromise rather it has been more a school of resistance and fight in all periods of distress and confusion (Panahi, 1997, p.12).

“Public Culture” is the sum of the people masses’ information and knowledge, learnt materials, culture and art and literature of the general public from the alleys and bazars. The global value of “folklore” stems from the fact that the public culture and knowledge of every nation mirrors its zeal and art and indicates its dispositions and inclinations hence it is a good means for recognition of its characteristics. This division of culture is predominantly historically, philosophically, culturally, epistemologically and religiously related to the “folklore” of the other nations. The public culture and literature can be the envoy of good will and messenger of friendship from a nation to the other nations worldwide. This part of the culture and literature is actually one of the most important factors getting the nations closer to one another and paving the way for the elimination of the international hatred and enmities.

The folk lyrics and songs and fables represent the artistic spirit of a nation and they are just obtained from illiterate and anonymous people. These are the internal voices of every nation and, simultaneously, envisioned as the source of the mankind’s inspirations and mother of literature and fine arts. The substantial part of our daily life has been formed of the habits we have inherited and its source is not national but more of a human nature because the variegated manifestations of the people masses’ life signify generality and ancientness. The people masses’ literature conveys the generality of the product of the people masses’ life in terms of both the subjects of the stories and lyrics and also in other terms. “Folklore is a newly emerged science



with it being very slippery and difficult to collect its masonry for this treasure has just been attained from the memories of the illiterate general public members and it is dependent on the perseverance and efforts spent by the educated fellows of a nation” (Sadegh Hedayat, 1999, p.233).

Folk Literature:

Public literature is the internal voice and the artistic spirit of every nation and it is envisioned as a branch of every territory’s literature and culture and it deals with various life aspects of every society’s general public. This branch of literature includes stories and fables, slang lyrics, mottos and proverbs, riddles and local words specifically common amongst the people of the villages and neighborhoods that have less intermingled with the foreigners and kept the originality of their race (Mirnia, 1990, p.377).

The slang poems and proverbs are the language of the people from alleys and bazars; the language of anonymous speakers who composed poems without even knowing the science of eloquence and recognizing the poetical principles and even the simple rules of the poetical language with their ordinary life affairs and abrupt social, political and economic changes and evolutions having been the source of their inspirations. A substantial part of the folk literature pertains to the current life affairs. Our forefathers have had a special way of expression for every part of their life. They used to mix their lives that have been full of struggle and effort for sustenance with the sweetness of their self-constructed words and sweeten the fruit of their works with the honey of their words and put them into the mouths of their children with utmost love. Such a type of affectionate feelings and love for the family, neighbors, relatives and even strange passersby was increasingly flooding out of their heart and became interwoven with their nature. Upon encountering a matter contradictory to their national virtues, religious traditions and/or social culture and being unfairly mistreated oppressively by the government and powerful persons, the people immediately rose up in protest and confrontation. However, if it was not possible for them to engage in a face-to-face battle, they devised such strategies as composition of poems and simple words to engage in a battle with the tyrannical rulers. Nobody realized the speakers and composers of those words but they were spread rapidly from mouth to mouth; and, the people were informed and the governing power was immediately suppressed because these poems explained the people’s moods and statuses and originated from a twisting pain in the heart of a nation.

Utterances were expressed in these poems in the form of irony, jest, satire, burlesque and facetiae and they had public anger and national dissatisfaction latent in them. In the same way, a poisonous grin was hidden in their joking appearance and expressed the general public’s hatred and aversion in a case-specific manner. People’s harsh grinning at and ironical treating of the west orientations and self-alienation are amongst the most distinct of these examples wherein peak of the society’s protest to the foreign civilization and its expansion can be seen. When it comes to religion and Iranian beliefs and traditions, words go beyond sarcasm and witticism and are arranged in the form of facetiae and everyone steps into the battlefield with all his or her existence and with all the available weapons and engage in defending his or her beliefs.

Study Method:



In the course of collecting the required materials in this study, similar and occasionally contradictory ideas were found about the study samples and subjects so some adjustments were made in the course of the investigation of the corresponding documents and reasoning to finally substantiate the study on the most credible and the most logical of them.

Wilhelm Geiger has divided Baluchi language into two primary dialects, namely northern (borderline) Baluchi and southern (Mokrani) Baluchi. He has also additionally divided the southern Baluchi to eastern and western groups and northern Baluchi to northern and southern groups. Sistani is one of the important dialects of the Persian language and it is spoken by the people from Sistan. This dialect is currently predominantly spoken in such regions as Zahedan, Zahak, Hirmand, Nimruz, Iran's Zabol, Nimruz and Farah, Zabol and Kandahar, Herat, parts of Afghanistan and plain of Gorgan as well as southern Khorasan and Razavi Khorasan (Bahari, 2008, p.13).

This dialect is, on the one hand, most lexically and grammatically associated with the existent and past dialects of Khorasan and, beyond it, with the dead dialects of Mesopotamia and current Tajikistan and it, on the other hand, shares a lot of its words with Baluchi (Mohammadi Khamak, 2000, p.11). Sistani is amongst the dialects associated with western Iranian languages and it is enumerated amongst their southern branch hence belonging to the languages of India and Iran (Barjasteh Delafroz, 1993).

RESULTS:

Prosaic literature can be categorized into joy and sorrow poems.

The happiness poems include Lailu, Nazinak, Mobarak, Halou, Lajou, Sepat and congratulations recited in the childbirth, wedding, circumcision, marriage nomination and other ceremonies by men and women occasionally accompanied by playing of musical instruments like Sorud (a Baluchestan-specific stringed instrument), psaltery, small tambour, Sorna (a kind of aboe), Nal (reed flute), Benjo, drum, tonbak and so forth.

Sorrow poems include Liko, Mutak and Luli that are recited by men and women sometimes accompanied by playing of musical instruments.

1. Happiness Poems:

1.1. Lailu or Lailuk:

Lailu or Lailuk is the very Persian lullaby. Lailu is composed of words stemming from the affectionate heart of a mother speaking about her wishes for the meeting of an expected child. Although Lailu is recited with a sad tone of voice and a hesitant tempo, such a sad tone of Lailu song serves showcasing the mother's waiting for the meeting of her expected child. In such a song, the mother remembers her memories and speaks out her wishes.

“Lailu Lail Mani Bechiga/ (Mani) Bechig Nopesit wa Grite”

Meaning: my child deserves all the good descriptions and extolments/my child does not sleep and s/he cries”

“Sha Gin Guanzag wa Maidin Band/Shagin Guanzag Ti wa Ab Jahant”

Meaning: your cradle is beautiful and decorated and its strap by which I shake the cradle has been made of original sheep wool I have spun around a spindle and that beautiful and ornamented cradle will be your sleeping place”.

1.2. Nazinak:

It is the name given to the songs recited on the first six nights after wedding ceremony. The text of Nazinak lyrics differs for bride and groom. Nazinak has been derived of the term “Nazinag” which means admiration. Nazinak includes poems recited in wedding and circumcision ceremonies and sometimes after a prisoner has been freed or also for the elders and great figures coming from the other regions.

It is somewhat different from Persian odes. In Baluchi language, rhyme words are carefully observed in a poem in the several beginning hemistiches (at least two) and the rhyming words are changed afterwards and the metres are also subsequently changed.

“Kamitan Tardag’e Buran Nadarant/Yalan Goruh Ta Chi’e Gap A Gozarant”

Meaning: horses and horse-riders are present in this assembly and horses turn around and the group of horse-riders discuss about the horse-riding game.

“Mani Wa Ajeh Homa Ant Shir/Tarsani Baregin Bour’e Sawarant”

Meaning: my lord and elder (Salunak) is like a hunting lion/he is riding on a leaping and horrifying horse.

“Peh Chap’e Aspre’e Rast’e Sagarant/Kaman Sarkupegan, Lanak’e Katarant”

Meaning: the groom (Salunak) is holding a shield on his left hand and a sword on his right hand; he has arrows and bow on his shoulder and there is a Katar (bandolier) tied to his waist.

1.3. *Mobarak:*

Wedding ceremony has various stages in different regions of Zajak and every stage is held through observance of certain rituals and because both the groom (Salunak) and the bride (Banur) are praised, this old culture has been continued generation after generation and it is here that the folk literature, especially prose literature, gains its special concept in holding the wedding ceremony’s stages.

“Mobarak Bat Tora Salunak Mobarak/Mobarak Bat Tora Banur Mobarak”

Meaning: congratulations, O’ the groom; may it be blissful to you/congratulations, O’ groom; may it be blissful to you.

“Mobarak Bat Te’ei Kut’e Gure’eig’e/Mobarak Bat Te’ei Pag’e Sar’eig’e”

Meaning: O’ groom, may the coat you have put on and are wearing be blissful to you and may the Pag (headband or turban) you are wearing around your head be blissful to you and I congratulate all this to you.

“Yalin Salunak Mani Cham’e Cheraq Ant; Yalin Salunak Mani Omid’e Bagh Ant”

Meaning: this hero groom is the light of my eyes and this champion is the future hope of my life’s garden and rosary that bestows hope upon me with its greenness.

1.4. *Halou:*

The final stage of the wedding ceremony is the groom’s taking of a bath. Halou is recited during the time that the groom is washing his body. This music is solely related to wedding ceremony and it is not performed at any other time.

“Babi Holu Halou Kon At Salunak/Nawwab Ant Man Gol’ei Chenan”

Meaning: Babi (father) and fathers come and sing a song in praising the groom for he is a famous and commander man so I pick up a flower for him.

“Babi Holu Halou Kon At Salunak Kasan Ant Man Goli Chenan”



Meaning: fathers come and sing a song in extoling the groom for he is small and I pick up a flower for him.

1.5. *Sut (sound):*

The content of these songs include amorous matters and beauties of the nature. Sut is usually recited along with playing of several musical instruments. Lyrics of Sut are very diverse. In Sut, text matters more than music and lyrics of Sut are often rhythmic. Suti is the name given to the reciter of Sut and he is most often a hero who recites epical and historical poems. Suti takes part in wedding, circumcision and marriage nomination and other ceremonies that are also accompanied by dancing and bumping the feet on the ground in harmonic motions (Afshar, 1993, pp.3-5).

Most of Sutis live in the north of Baluchestan in the border between Zahedan and Khash. Sut is common in Zahak region as well as most of the regions in the south of Baluchestan to the borders thereof.

“Mobarak Mani Salunak Torara wa Shi’ei Bat”

Meaning: may this feast and wedding ceremony be blissful and lucky to you/I congratulate you; may you be always happy.

“Mobarak Mani Delbar Torara wa Shi’ei Bat”

Meaning: O’, beloved (Salunak), may this feast and wedding ceremony be blissful to you and I congratulate you; may you be happy.

1.6. *Lajou:*

Besides Sut, Nazinak and Lajou are also recited during wedding ceremonies in the regions of Zahak with Larou being recited by men and women (Afshar, 1993, p.306). Larou is recited in the regions in the south of Baluchestan. In mountainous and arid and dry regions, Larou is usually the song of choice. These songs are predominantly in the form of strophe poems.

“Lazhi Lazhi Lazh’e Lare’e”

Meaning: this hemistich does not have a special meaning rather it is recited for beauty and it serves making the other verses rhythmic from the perspective of the reciter and there are many distinct examples of such a type of verses for which no special meaning has been mentioned; they usually come in the beginning of a song.

1.7. *Sepat:*

Sepat is usually recited after the delivery and birth of a child. Such a type of Sepat-recital is very common in regions like Sarbaz, Zahak and Chabahar. The Sepat poems’ format does not exist in Persian.

“Sepat’e Thanayan Khoda La Yaqan’e/Rasul La Yaqan Man Septi Jenan”

Meaning: praise and extolment belongs to the eminent and magnificent God and all the good descriptions are worthy of the God and his messenger; I hereby want to describe and admire them.

Margi Garib In Guanak’e Janat’e/Biayat Keh Mo’men Atakag Ant”

Meaning: a bird was shouting amongst the strange birds that come that the believers have come and gathered around.

1.8. *Congratulations:*

Congratulations are usually spoken by the people during wedding and childbirth ceremonies. This public culture has never been outdated in the region and it will be



never forgotten. All the tribes of the region are bound to the performing of congratulation ceremonies. An amount of money is given in congratulation ceremonies to the instrumentalist or performer.

Congratulation is a term made of two words in Persian, namely Shad [happy] and Bash [be]; it is abbreviated as Shabash which is an interjection indicating admiration. It is also used to refer to an amount of money given during the feasts and ceremonies to the instrumentalists and performers and/or poured on the head of the groom and bride. The following is an example of congratulation ceremony by Suzani:

“If you give silver coins, I will admire you a thousand of times and, if you give gold coins, I will congratulate you a thousand of times” (under the term “Shad Bash” [congratulation]).

According to the above descriptions, congratulation ceremony is held after the birth of a child. The congratulation ceremony sometimes lasts several days if a family happened to have a child after some years.

The congratulation ceremonies are commonly held in all the regions in the north of Baluchestan. Zahak has also reserved a room for this old culture and it is becoming more highlighted day after day. This congratulation ceremony has been expressed also within the format of the following ode:

“Jay Bahou’e Sahab’e Samin/Bia, Bia Gun Pol’e Yasamin”

Meaning: O’ the morning godly breeze, may I be sacrificed for you; come to us along with flowers and Jasmin and please promise to come; or, in other words, I wish to have a glower and the real Jasmin (i.e. a child); may God grant my wish.

“Te’ei Bu’e Antar Bi Al-Yaqin; Khoshbutar Ant Az Moshk-e-Chin”

Meaning: surely, the odor and scent of yours is more fragrant than the Chinese musk, to wit my child will be better and more odorous than all the musks.

2. *Sorrow Poems:*

2.1. *Liko:*

Liko is originally recited from the north of Baluchestan (borderlines) to the southern Baluchestan by shepherds along with playing of Nal (flutes).

“Jay Zari Nowdan Kouhsaran Charat/wa Shagushi Guatani Markaba Sawarat”

Meaning: O’ my darling, watch the fog at the seaside and on top of the mountains; it is as if they are riding on the horses of wind.

“Trongelin Arsan Ma’ei Sara/Torapekin Trempan Peh Shanzegan Guarat”

Meaning: O’ tears that are shed like hail; pour on my head/O’ the small droplets of rain, pour down slowly on my head.

“Zargari Lutin Peh Del Suza”

Meaning: invite a goldsmith to make me my adored golds.

2.2. *Zahriuk or Zahirig:*

Zahiruk or Zahirig is the very sound recited mournfully and grievously by a person in the memory or nostalgia of and for the homeland and commiserates his or her heart by speaking certain words.

There are various reasons making individuals recite Zahirig. The following is but one example of Zahirug recited in this region: a person named Karimdad was a member of Hut clan and resided Sistan. After a dispute came about between the two tribes of



Hut and Gorgij, Karimdad inadvertently kills a man named Hut Beyk Muhammad from his own tribe and this happening strips Karimdad's tranquility away from him in the whole region.

This Zahiruk was carried from Sarbaz region to Zahak County and it is recited usually in the form of ode:

"Del Zahirani Toranga Rish Ant/Cham Mani Hunani Shalaneshlan Kurant"

Meaning: my throat has been ulcerated out of the great many of Zahiruks I have recited; my eyes are shedding blood instead of tear and I have become blind.

"Del Mani Jush Wa Lant Mani Khoshk/Dim Mani Cheh Chargana Zardant Ant"

Meaning: I feel pain in my heart for my beloved and it is a fire is burning in it/my lips have become dry and my face has become yellow out of long waiting for my beloved.

2.3. Luli:

The following Luli is specific to the lost children. This type of Luli is recited in the entire breadth of northern Baluchestan hence in the region of Zahak, as well. It is a common culture of the region's people that the God gives us the children and it is him who takes their lives. Thus, this type of Luli is also recited in the region of Sarbaz and within the format of strophe poems.

"Luli Dian Lal Wati/Lal Wati Luli Dian"

Meaning: I recite lullaby for my gem; I am reciting lullaby for my gem. In the above verse, Lal means child.

"Mani Didag Wa Zard Morad/Zeham Jinn wa Nam Dar Ar/Bachi Mani Cham Cherag"

Meaning: O', my child, you are the light of my eyes/you are a swordsman and a well-known person.

2.4. Mutak or Mudag:

Mutak or Mudag is specific to elegy and mourning and commiseration ceremonies. Mutak is equivalent in Persian to Mueh meaning mourning and it is performed by women in group but without playing musical instruments. This method of performance is currently less frequently seen. Mutak features free metre and it is solely recited along with playing of Ghaychak [a sort of bowed lute] (Afshar, 1995, p.307). In Mutak, verses are recited by women about the deceased during washing his or her body or when taking him or her to the graveyard and/or when sitting at the side of his or her body. In these poems, the expression "Lā Elāha Ellā Allah" [there is no God except Allah] is sometimes recited in these verses.

This type of Mutaks is very common in the northern regions of Baluchestan. In Zahak, recital of this type of Mutak is also very common. This type of Mutak is usually recited within the format of strophe poems or in several stanzas.

"Shiru'e Sam He Talahin/Kapzhi Molla Beraim Ham Sar Ant Peh Sang'e Shahim"

Meaning: Shiru is wearing a golden woad and he and the other heads of tribes and also Kapzi from amongst the heads of Jadgal and also Molla Ibrahim and all the other leaders use weights to keep the scale balanced; it means that one plate of the scale is bearing a certain amount of weight and another plate is bearing the other heads of



the tribes and they are equal and they have been amongst the capable and competent persons who have been killed.

“Shap Zemestani Lali wa Artagun Sardi E’ei Del’e Band”

Meaning: O’ beloved, I have tolerated the coldness of the winter nights and I have suffered a lot to meet you.

“Kur Bebit Dej Man Allah Te’ei Pad’e Gardi”

Meaning: O’ God, may blind be the enemy who is looking for you (beloved) and wants to destroy you.

CONCLUSION:

In this study, the prosaic Baluchi literature was investigated in two parts of happiness poems, including Lailu, Nazinak, Mobarak, Halou, Sut, Larou, Sepat and congratulations, and sorrow poems, including Liko, Luli, Zahiruk and Mutak. The study also investigated the poems from Baluchi prosaic literature in the region of Zahak with diverse and extensive themes as well as the musical instruments commonly played (like Sorud, drum, tambour, Sorna, Nay, Beno and Ghaychak) and also the format of the poems (ode, sonnet, four-part poems, distiches, quatrain, couplet, ballade, poems with redundant parts in their rhyming words, strophe poem and poems made of several stanzas) and also the metre, rhyme words and various kinds of puns. The contents of the poems and their melody were also analyzed. It can be stated in a subtle and extensive glance at the prosaic folk literature in Baluchi dialect that the Baluchi dialect which is one of the rich dialects of Islamic Iran has accommodated a lot of lean and eloquent and fascinating words within its prosaic and folk format. Mokrani Baluchi dialect is inseparably connected to Persian language. The words of Dari Persian language that have admitted a new form of meaning in the today’s standard Persian language are still being applied in Baluchi language and, especially, Mokrani dialect with the same meaning and function in the daily and colloquial language.



References

- Afshar, I., (1993), *Chabahr and Fars Sea*, 1st ed., Seddighi Publication Institute.
- Ahmad Panahi (Panahi Semnani), Muhammad, (1997), *Lyrics and composition of lyrics in Iran*, Tehran, Soroush Publication Institute, p.18.
- Bahari, M. R., (1999), Investigation of the dialects of Sistani people, Sistan and Baluchestan University.
- Barjastedh Delforuz, B., (1993), *Etymological and comparative dictionary of Sistani dialect*, MA dissertation, Shiraz University.
- Elhami, F., (2017), *Position and analysis of Seytaks’ themes in Sistan’s lyrics*, public culture and literature, 5(18).
- Hedayat, S., (1997), *Preface of Neirangestan*, Iranian people’s public culture, compiled by Jahangir Hedayat, Tehran, Cheshmeh Publication Institute, p.33.

Javadian Koutna'ei, M., (1991), Oral literature of Mazandaran: lyrics in the realm of Mazandaran, v.1, by the efforts of Hussein Samadi, Gha'emshahr, pp.150-200.

Mirnia, A., (1990), *Culture of the people*, Tehran, Parsa Publication Institute.

Mohammadi Khamak, J., (1999), *Sistani dialect in translating the holy Quran in Sistan's Matikan*, collection of Sistani's articles, Mashhad, Vajiran Publication Institute.

Nezami Arouzi Samarqandi, (1964), *four articles*, revised by Muhammad Ghazvini, Tehran, Avicenna Library Publication Institute.

Safa, Z., (1975), *treasure of words*, Tehran, Tehran University Press.

