



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Sultan Bahu's Poetry: A Sociological Analysis of Sufi Poems**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explores the themes of divine love, spiritual awakening, and the human experience in Sultan Bahu's poetry. The research seeks to shed light on the mystical teachings and philosophical insights revealed in his works by closely examining his lyrics. A contemporary perspective on Sultan Bahu's mystic poetry by acknowledging several narratives of thinking. Define metaphor, identity, value, ideology, belief, and appraisal. The study is qualitative in nature, using the purposive sampling technique to choose various passages from Bahu's poetry. The study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Sultan Bahu's mystic poetry by examining these themes. Results of this study show that Bahu preaches Allah's (God's) holy message to his people using varied metaphors derived from his surroundings. By studying his poetry, readers can gain insight into the divine wisdom and guidance that Bahu sought to impart to his audience. It allows us to connect more deeply with the spiritual messages and lessons he shared.

**Keywords:**      Believes, Harmony, Peace, Sufi Literature, Sultan Bahoo Poetry

**Introduction**

For centuries, Sufism has greatly influenced literature, and it is closely associated with the magnificent literary production of Islam during its golden age, which spanned the eighth through the thirteenth centuries. It played a key role in shaping the poetic and mystical aspects of Islamic culture. Sufism has left a lasting impact on Islamic literature and continues to be a source of inspiration for writers and poets today (Malik, 2018). Sufi literature began to appear. For centuries, this literature flourished and covered a wide range of topics, including mystical stories, humorous stories, metaphysics, and treatises on Islamic religion, philosophy, and mystical poetry. Sufi textbooks were created for novices. These textbooks were designed to guide learners on their spiritual journeys towards enlightenment. The textbooks often included teachings on the importance of selflessness, love, and devotion to God. They also provided practical advice on meditation techniques and ways to connect with the divine (Menhas, Akhtar, & Jabeen, 2013). The disciples were also instructed to develop a close relationship with their mentor, to concentrate on meditation, and to be devout and dedicated to God in order to achieve spiritual growth. They were encouraged to practice humility and compassion toward others. Additionally, they were taught to strive for inner peace and self-awareness. They were also reminded to always seek wisdom and guidance from their mentor. Finally, they were reminded to always trust in God's plan for them (Bahu, 1998). Some Sufis utilized narratives and anecdotes to convey themselves (Muzaffar, & Rafique, 2020). These outstanding works of literature are designed as "teaching facts," and the objective of the narratives and anecdotes was to instill a moral or spiritual message in the students. They were often used as a way to simplify complex spiritual concepts and make them more accessible to a wider audience. The underlying intention was to guide readers toward a deeper understanding of ethical principles and values (Malik, 2018). Sufi poetry is another subject where Sufi poets made significant contributions. This poetry was sung not just by followers, but also by ordinary people,

particularly illiterates. Sufi poetry in the "classical era" was produced by the Arabic poet Ibn-al-Farid (d. 1234). It was characterized by themes of love, devotion, and spiritual enlightenment. These themes were often expressed through metaphors and symbols, creating a sense of mysticism in the poetry (Kamran, 2009).

### **Literature Review**

To comprehend Sultan Bahu's poetry, one must read the entire literature on the subject, which analyzes and cites numerous significant primary and secondary sources. This comprehensive approach is crucial in order to fully understand the depth and complexity of his work. Reading Sultan Bahu's poetry in isolation may lead to a superficial understanding of his profound insights and spiritual teachings. The lesson of Sultan Bahoo applies to all of humanity, not just a select few. Faqr, meditation, austerity, self-actualization, and similar subjects are covered in both his poetry and prose. These subjects are pertinent to every person, regardless of caste, religion, or race. Sultan Bahoo challenges us to see the world from a comprehensive perspective. Because ephemeral worldly objectives like the desire for money and power invariably result in chaos and disputes (Naeem & Zafar, 2023). Sultan Bahoo believes that most social, racial, linguistic, regional, and societal problems will be resolved if every member of a society acknowledges that the divine reality is the thing that is closest to the essence of a human being. False sentiments of pride, vanity, and superiority will be eliminated from national and international civilizations with this kind of self-awareness. Instead, individuals will strive for humility and unity (García, 2020). The fundamental source of all conflicts in cultures, societies, and regions is human egoism. The idea of self-recognition put out by Sultan Bahoo is essential to ending these confrontations and disputes. Every human being experiences a reduction in inner conflict and the emission of a beam of peace and reconciliation upon discovering the one true nature of the soul. Sufis' message was so powerful that varied societies, such those in South Asia, were able to maintain centuries-long societal harmony and peace (Baig, Naeem, & Zafar, 2023). Idea of Perfection Another crucial element of Sultan Bahoo's teachings is the mentor. In his poetry, he conveys how a mentor helps a disciple recognize his own self and enlightens him about the Oneness of Allah. A mentor's role is crucial for a student to attain the core of spirituality. Initially, the mentor purges him of all negative ideas related to ego, hatred, vanity, and worldly lust. As a result, he discovers the truth of his inner self, and piety and tranquility surround him (Zafar & Jabeen, 2022). Sultan Bahoo places a strong emphasis on studying the actual nature of man in order to foster love and harmony among all people. In addition to teaching, strengthening, and adorning the physical body, Sultan Bahoo exhorts people to uncover their inner selves, purify, and beautify their spirits. He believes that by doing so, people can reach a state of spiritual enlightenment and divine love. This state of spiritual enlightenment and divine love will lead to peace and unity in the world (Bales, 2020). Sufi theology offers a cosmic map that enables individuals to comprehend their position in regard to God. It explains what humans are and ought to be in equal measure. It offers practical advice and exercises for developing a deeper connection to oneself and the universe. It lays forth a method that can help people go from their current circumstances to the ultimate objective of life, or from imperfection to perfection. It provides guidance on how to achieve spiritual enlightenment and fulfillment. It is a comprehensive guide for individuals seeking personal growth and self-improvement (Yasmin, 2020).

### **Material and Methods**

Using a framework, this qualitative research offers a content analysis of a few poems by Sufi poet Sultan Bahu. In this study, the purposive sampling method is used to choose pertinent literature. The analysis focuses on identifying common themes and motifs in Sultan Bahu's poetry, providing insights into his spiritual beliefs and practices. By utilizing a framework, the study aim to provide a structured approach to understanding the depth and complexity of Bahu's work. Several postulates are used to assess the chosen texts. The descriptive method of the research is applied in relation to the study's goal of identifying

stories that offer a means of interpreting a selection of Sultan Bahu's mystic poetry. The study facilitates the discovery of Sultan Bahu's poetry's underlying themes and meanings. Ultimately, the goal of the research is to deepen understanding of Sultan Bahu's spiritual teachings.

## **Results and Discussion**

The framework for Sultan Bahu's poetry, which includes narratives determining, metaphor, salience, identification, ideology, belief, and assessment), is examined in this research. The last sentence of the input is. This research provides a comprehensive analysis of Sultan Bahu's poetic framework and sheds light on the various elements that contribute to the richness and depth of his poetry. Additionally, it offers valuable insights into the cultural and historical context in which his poetry was created. The findings of this research will be instrumental in furthering our understanding of the impact and significance of Sultan Bahu's poetry.

### **Sultan Bahoo life and work**

The year 1629 AD saw the birth of Sultan Bahoo in the Pakistani region of Shorkot, Jhangs. His devout mother raised him when his father passed away while he was a little boy. His mother was a Sufi, and it was through her combination of spiritual guidance and maternal care that he attained greater levels of detachment. He went on to become a prominent Sufi saint and poet in the region. His teachings and poetry continue to inspire and guide many to this day. She gave him the name Bahoo, which means "with" in Arabic and "Hoo" for Allah Almighty. Sultan Bahoo wrote more than 140 books on mystical knowledge in Persian. He also wrote in Punjabi. Sultan Bahoo's teachings emphasize love, devotion, and spiritual purification. His teachings have had a lasting impact on the Sufi tradition in South Asia, and his poetry continues to be studied and revered by spiritual seekers around (Batool, 2018). Sultan Bahoo's poem in Punjabi concludes with the word "Hoo." From the notion of "Hoo," it is clear how Sultan Bahoo's Abyat has influenced meditation. Sufis have traditionally regarded Hoo as the pinnacle of the position of "Zat, the Almighty." It symbolizes the oneness of God and the unity of all creation. Hoo is often chanted during Sufi gatherings to induce a trance-like state and achieve spiritual enlightenment. The repetition of "Hoo" is believed to bring the practitioner closer to the divine presence (Tafhimi, 1980). Sultan Bahu, the poet whose work is being studied, has utilized the metaphor of wine to express the depth of his love, since love for the Creator cannot grow in a tangible sense. Spiritual gladness is achieved through the concept of wine and its pure intoxication. This study will show the importance of understanding the symbolism and imagery used in poetry to convey deeper meanings and emotions. Understanding the symbolism and imagery in poetry can lead to a more profound appreciation of the art form. It can also enhance the reader's ability to interpret and connect with the poet's message on a more personal level.

### **Metaphor**

Sultan Bahu uses a wide spectrum of metaphors from the surrounding natural world in his poems to explore a range of love, from heavenly to human. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory which investigates how metaphorical speech originates from cognitive metaphors, clarifies this further. It suggests that our understanding and experience of love are shaped by our physical interactions with the world around us. Bahu compares the components of nature to represent the characteristics of the Divine using a variety of analogies. Sultan Bahu compares everything with wine. In his poems, he expresses his deep love for the Creator and how, since it cannot thrive materially, the idea of wine and its pure intoxication aids in achieving spiritual jubilation.

**Excerpt 1: Verses and Interpretation**

وحدت دے دریا اچھے جل تھل جنگل دینے بو  
عشق دی ذات منیندے نابن سانگان جھل پتینے بو

The river of unity flowed down, satisfying the thirst of jungles as well as of deserts. If God's appreciation is not cultivated in your beliefs, you will be deprived of God's blessings and will be in a state of impatience in a deserted environment, which is a result of ignorance.

The poet metaphorically compares his Lord's Oneness to a powerful river, using the phrase *وحدت دے دریا اچھے* to emphasize its power. A river of divine love can transform a desert into a forest, as seen in *بو جل تھل جنگل دینے* it is unfortunate that people who are unable to understand God's mysteries live ignorant lives and are doomed to exist in this world. As the saying goes, they are victims of deceptions and illusions. *پتینے* indicates that it means to deceive. Thus, this metaphor uses a vast, nourishing river to represent God's ultimate unity. His hegemony thrives in both the material world and the human soul. The poet rejoices in the power and humility this bestows. This validates how readers understand the notion of divinity. Sufi doctrine is based on the Kalima, which affirms God's Oneness. Its religious appeal is undoubtedly increased by joining it with a large river and adding an eco-linguistic dimension. Thus, considering Sufi poetry from an eco-linguistic perspective sheds light on the interconnectedness of humanity and nature.

**Excerpt 2:**

الف ہلا چمبے دی بوٹی، مرشد من وج الی بو  
نفی اثبات دا پانی ملسیں ،  
بررگے بر جانی بو۔

God has planted a jasmine plant of His divine love in my bosom, which has fragranced my soul and this scent will guide me to the paths of virtue. It will further grow, if my acts are framed according to His teachings.

The metaphors of plant growth used in the text to represent God's role as a guide serve to frame God as the nourished. As a result, he usually expresses thanks to the spiritual guide for the role that he played in fostering a sense of holiness and humility. In closing, the text emphasizes the beneficial spiritual influence, drawing a comparison to the aroma of budding flowers. The word collocation makes it clear that the poet is his Murshid, or spiritual mentor, who deposited Allah's luminous essence as a comforting presence in his heart. In contrast, Sufism frequently uses love for the Creator as an analogy. "Listen to the reed flute and the story it tells," Rumi once said in a poem. Divine love serves as the framing notion, which is implanted in the form of a jasmine plant in purified hearts

**Excerpt 3**

جے رب نہاتیاں دھوتیاں ملدا، ملدا تڈواں مچھیاں بو  
جے رب ملدا مون منایاں ملدا بھینڈاں سسبیاں بو  
رب اوہناں نوں ملدا بابو نیتاں جنہاں اچھیاں بو

If God's love could be obtained by purifying our physical existence, then frogs and fish would be more accessible. If God's love could be obtained by removing your hair, then

cattle would deserve more than anything else. But the case is that God's love is awarded to those, whose souls are purified from evil contemplations and deeds.

In the couplet, Bahu visualizes God through nature, presenting parallel situations that identify Him. He visualizes God bathing in divine waters, recognized by creatures like frogs and fish. He also expresses the idea that if God were seen removing his hair, he would be identified by woolly creatures whose wool is clipped. This verse promotes eco-linguistic awareness, presenting the beneficial side of nature. Bahu aims to exalt God by recognizing Him with Earth's beauties. However, identity can be controversial, leading to social discord. Instead, Bahu emphasizes shared human identity, ensuring growth in societal harmony. This reflects the 18th-century social setting and the religious conflicts that Bulleh Shah denounced. Despite living in a diverse community, Bulleh Shah took an egalitarian, universal stance, like Bahu. He projects self-improvement in his teachings, like Bahu, who believes in self-purification. Bulleh Shah asserts the notion of self-purification to achieve universal paradigms, exemplifying Sufi's belief in self-purification and ego-driven traits.

## Discussion

The interpretation of conceptual analogies of natural objects found in the Sufi poetry of Sultan Bahu serves as the foundation for this study. Sultan Bahu's extracted couplets are interpreted using various metaphors as a result. The following are the primary metaphorical expressions that are examined in various couplets: the ocean of love, the game of love, the river of oneness, the nector Kalima, and the last one, which is referred to as an extended metaphor because the entire couplet elucidates an allegory. The first one emphasizes the central teaching of Sufism, known as "Wahadat de Dariaa," or the river of oneness, which draws a comparison between the Creator's vastness and oneness and the river. This helps the reader understand the idea of God and behave appropriately. "Kalima" has also played a significant role in Sufi theology as it upholds the idea of tauheed, or the unity of God. If taken into consideration and assessed, aspect of this philosophy has contributed to enhancing the sweetness of the flavor of religion by likening it to a fluid rich in sugar (nector). Reading Sufi poetry, which is already captivating, from a perspective thereby aids in further molding and stimulating our ideas. In addition, sufi poetry frequently uses the other two metaphors, "Ocean of Love" and "Game of Love." The usage of "Jithe paun ghazab deean laiharaan," which describes God's love as tumultuous waves that are fully death-stricken, gives the love of God and linguistic dimension. Subsequently, he articulated the idea of God's love as "Ishq dee baazee har jaa khedee," meaning that it is the one game that all people play, regardless of wealth. The Sufi saint used phrases like "Seenaa shaihar daseendaa hoo," which compares the human body to a splendid metropolis and includes, as the metaphor analysis goes on. The Sufi doctrine, which holds that God inhabits the human body, has been extolled and romanticized via comparisons to a magnificent city.

## Conclusion

In summary, research and discussions pertaining to actual and hypothetical works associated with conceptual metaphor theory are likely to occur. The results of this study indicate that conceptual metaphor theory has a great deal of empirical merit. Sufi literature has major significance for promoting global peace and harmony. Sultan Bahoo's *Abyāt* and books on mystical teachings emphasize the importance of Faqr (spiritual excellence) in fostering inner consciousness, purifying the heart and soul, and realizing the higher purpose of life through divine recognition and intimation. These teachings align with the Quran and Hadith. Despite the fact that it does not fully explain the traits of metaphoric beliefs and language use, it has a great deal of explanatory power and should be considered a foundational theory for both broader conceptions of human perception and other inclusive theories of metaphors. Even though the research has looked at Bahu's writing and offered his method a fresh perspective, it is clear that this is a departure from the Sufi poets' traditional method and gives the genre a more modern feel. Reading beyond the text is made

possible for readers. And, to some extent, create meanings with the natural world. This will extend their perspectives and assist them in connecting the book to contemporary works. The study found that poetry and the natural world have a long history together. Readers may appreciate this idea and become more in tune with nature.

### **Recommendations**

In order to better understand the universe, Sufi literature has also promoted the idea of metaphysics. It has been incorporated into the curricula of world-class universities for the purpose of developing character and principle-centered leadership, which not only meets the demands of the global business and economic community but also fosters a sense of social responsibility and environmental awareness by encouraging self-actualization, introspection, and responsible leadership that brings harmony to organizations, societies, nations, and the world at large.

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