



RESEARCH PAPER

Gul Bangulzai: Author of the first Novel “Dreehav” in Brahui Literature

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to explore Gul Bangulzai's contribution to the emergence of Brahui literature, particularly his socio-cultural representation in *Dreehav* (1989) as being the first Brahui novel and its critical portrayal of Baloch tribal society. Brahui is an old language that has a solid oral tradition but only tardily, it began to deal with the post-modern fiction. The journey from folk literature, through short stories in the 1950s and ultimately to the novel is part of a wider societal and literary evolution. Gul Bangulzai was a prominent figure at this time that forms the modern Brahui prose. The method followed by this inquiry is a qualitative literary analysis of the primary texts and their critical reception in an attempt to offer interpretations of themes, characters and socio-historical references. The research claims that *Dreehav* powerfully articulates nomadic lifestyle, tribal hierarchies, class exploitation and gender discrimination in Baloch society. Bangulzai articulates rural marginality and feudal exploitation with vivid characters and narratives. His writings span oral tradition and contemporary fiction contributing to the canon of pacesetter genre in modern Brahui literature. More studies on the comparative analysis of Brahui novels and translations should be conducted. Universities need to consider Brahui literature so that this infant literary tradition is preserved and enhanced.

KEYWORDS Gul Bangulzai, Brahui Language, Baloch Society, Novel, *Dreehav*, Short Stories

Introduction

Brahui, one of the oldest living languages in the South Asian region is spoken primarily throughout Balochistan which comprises western Pakistan areas and south eastern parts of Iran and Afghanistan. Compared to its ancient heritage, Brahui literature continued on a relatively later date in written and modern literature. Historically, the language derived its literature from its rich oral traditional-music forms including, poetry, folktales, sayings and proverbs, to name just a few; *Leli mor*, *Barnaz na barnaz na* and *Lelady lady* are examples of songs that show the way in which the values of society have been preserved. Brahui literary history underwent a radical transformation in the mid-twentieth century with the transition from oral literature to modern written texts. This transformation could be easily adopted by writers to portray the critical issues of pressing time i.e. social, political and cultural issues with modern genres like short-story and novel. Behind this transformation, the role played by Gul Bangulzai has been pioneering that he had written a unique first novel in Brahui literature titled *Dreehav* (1989).

Literature Review

There is a consensus among the scholars that both global and regional literary movements heavily influenced development of modern Brahui literature. Abida Baloch emphasizes that the progressive literary currents originated from anti-colonial movements

in Western literature and travelled to Balochistan mostly through Urdu, which naturally become impregnated with English influences. Security of Lahore was restored and production of literature in Brahui continued during the power struggle. Consequently, Brahui literature adopted modern narrative techniques and thematic concerns during its third and contemporary literary phase.

The first modern Brahui short story is Haibat Khan's *Musafir* (1955), which was published in *Nawa-e-Watan*. This shows that Brahui literature did not evolve according to the same trend as English literature, where the novel followed the short story. This genre was given a boost by Dr. Taj Raisani when he published his first short story's collection "*Anjeer Na Pull*" (1982), which encouraged the writers for novel writing of the same spectacles.

Historians such as Dr Shah Muhammad Marri and others highlight literary magazines like *Nawa-e-Watan* and *Balochi*, as well as progressive circles, including Latt Khana led by Abdullah Jan Jamaldini. It was on these platforms that writers such as Gul Bangulzai could learn to express western ideas while adopting contemporary literary forms. (Marri, 2013)

Material and Methods

The current study utilizes a qualitative research design, informed by textual analysis of Gul Bangulzai's novel *Dreehav* and associated short stories. Critical essays, historical accounts, and critical views are included to help place to contextualize the literary and socio-cultural significance of his work.

Results and Discussion

In the examination, *Dreehav* is seen to be a reflection of Baloch society as a whole, realistic and representing its nomadic and tribal life as well as its poverty, seasonal migration, feudal oppression engage social injustice. Bangulzai introduces realistic characters from everyday life of a Baloch: Mir Wali Dad is the representation of feudal terror, while Jamal a typical sufferer whose tragic end reflects institutionalized injustice.

The work sublimely foregrounds women's problem as represented in *Nazo*, focusing on domestic violence, economic dependence and patriarchal control. Critics such as Dr Abdul Razaq Sabir and Professor Javed Akhtar say Bangulzai opened up once-forbidden themes – especially oppression of women – in Brahui fiction.

Moreover, Bangulzai's translation work of progressive literature was a significant factor in the modernization of Brahui literary sensibility and inculcating critical thinking and social consciousness. Not only that he gave the novel a status in the Brahui literature as a respectable genre, but also it gave ample inspiration to up coming writers of future generation to discover and reveal their realities in their mother tongue.

The beginning of creative fiction in Brahui literature was under the impact of English and Urdu literatures. When writers began to engage with modern story forms, they'd frequently lift ideas from the themes threaded through these well-known literatures and adopted how stories that were light years ahead of their contemporaries in what was already a rapidly changing popular culture. This shared learning has assisted Brahui writers to mature by enabling them to look at social issues, cultural identity and human experiences of today in their writing.

Mss. Abida Baloch writes about the opening stages of Brahui modern literary works:

"The geographical boundaries were equally affected by the movement that started against British colonial in India and the literary movements that began in the world. It was bound to happen that India and then Balochistan began to be influenced by the world-wide stream of these progressive literary movements. The imbibing language involved in the literature of Brahui was Urdu. Urdu men of letters and intellectuals were more affected by English language and literature. Therefore, when the Urdu literature began treating the experiences of English language and literature its own experience, so Brahui literature also accepted its influence. Thus, the same experiences came into Brahui literature. The third phase of Brahui literature today is regarded as a modern and mature stage of Brahui language and literature. Western fictions were also well studied and researched in Brahui language during this period." (Baloch, 2015)

Ghamkhwar Hayat writes about the beginning of short stories in Brahui literature:

"This region's ancient language "Brahui" also uses the present form of the story, i.e., the short story. The tradition of short story writing introduced much earlier in other languages like English and Urdu Literature than Brahui literature. In the history of Brahui Literature, we have the first short story that was written by Haibat Khan in the title of "Musafir" (Traveler) which was published in "Nawa-e-Watan" monthly Magazine Karachi 1955 after the creation of Pakistan." (Hayat, 2023)

If we take an outside perspective by looking at Brahui literature vis-à-vis other literatures of the world, we can see that the types of stories have changed over time. In modern literary traditions, the evolution of fiction writing tends to go from oral tales and folk stories to novels, and short stories come after novels. However, in Brahui literature short story was introduced firstly and novel later. For instance, in English literature short stories after novels but in Brahui, it was reverse. According to the history of Brahui literature, the first of the short stories was published in 1955, and the first novel even later, in 1989.

In Brahui literature, the short story was the first type of modern fiction to emerge. This allowed writers to explore themes that were important to their culture and society in a brief format. The publication of Dr. Taj Raisani's "Anjeer Na Pul" (Flower of Fig) in 1982 was a significant turning point and the beginning of further work in this realm for it constituted one of the earliest collection of short stories ever published in Brahui literature.

Following the first burst of short story writing, the novel began to rise in importance as a literary form. One of the pioneer Brahui novels is "Dreehav" by Gul Bangulzai published in 1989. This demonstrates that there is a reverse order of evolution in Brahui literature, where writers first produced short stories because they are more direct and immediate in effect, then took up novel form as their theme increased.

It is important to note that the historical, cultural underpinnings of Brahui literature could also be observed in this regard. The short story form provided an easier conduit for the literary community, such as it was, to reach out and spread awareness about some of the most pressing problems affecting society. This type of writing provided an opportunity for writers to develop their own distinctive voices and focus on themes that would connect exceptionally well with readers.

Many writers and movements who were indifferent to the social changes, gradually nationalistic, have also served Brahui literature. The notable magazines such as *Nawa-e-Watan* and *Balochi* were instrumental in assisting Brahui writers to express their feelings and uphold fresh ideas. These magazines offered writers, poets and intellectuals a platform to discuss social, cultural and political issues. This contributed to a spirit of creativity and debate in literature.

In addition, the literary circle led by Mama Abdullah Jan Jamaldini, known as "Latt Khana," was important in bringing together thinkers, writers and philosophers who wanted to talk about present topics and openly exhibit their original ideas. These like-minded people not only contributed to the expansion of Brahui literature, but also assisted in promoting the social and cultural development of Brahui-speaking society. This circle reinforced sharing of ideas and opinions that went beyond old traditions, further prompting writers to engage with new topics and connect with the world today.

Famous Baloch historian Dr. Shah Muhammad Marri writes about this:

"Ghulam Muhammad Shahwani kept the pen and mind exercised with his semi-literary, semi-political journal "*Nawa-e-Watan*", Azad Jamaldini through his purely literary "*Balochi*" and Abdullah Jan Jamaldini with an advanced political literary society curtailed "*Dima Rukheen Olas*." (Marri, 2013)

The significance of Gul Bangulzai in his literary life as well as for the development of Brahui literature, are partly toughed by being among the company of Mama Abdullah Jamaldini and the circle around him (Latt Khana). Latt Khana Known as a Centre of progressive tendencies and literary movements, the Latt Khana served as an important venue for intellectuals, poets and scholars in Balochistan. It was in this vibrant striving literary environment that Bangulzai benefited from the rich experience living among the innovative minds and multicultural transaction-taking place around him.

Gul Bangulzai writes in his autobiography about the beginning of literary works:

"I and Comrade Abdul Haq and his brother Abdul Latif and Noordin would sit together over a cup of tea at Latt Khan. We would have discussions ...those days with Dr. Khudaidad, Anjum Qazalbash, Azad Jamaldini and other friends. There we got books for our lessons. He would also receive Sahi Kamal Khan Sherani at times. We would meet with Masoom Achakzai and other young people there as well." (Bangulzai, 2017)

Gul Bangulzai had also started his work with friends Hameed Kurd and Comrade Abdul Haq during the 1950s. They began by going to the offices of *Nawa-e-Watan*, a monthly magazine in Karachi which was central to Balochistan's literary and cultural history. Aided by the editor, Ghulam Muhammad Shahwani, *Nawa-e-Watan* emerged as an important mouthpiece of progressive ideas and literature. It was a place for writers and thinkers to think freely and express themselves.

At the start of his work, Gul Bangulzai saw the importance of enabling Brahui speaker to access significant works. In order to enrich his readers' perspective and enhance the local literary environment, and to furthering Brahui literature, he translated numerous short stories and novels from other languages into Brahui. He dedicated specifically for the translating and spreading of the work of progressive thought. This endeavor not only highlighted his language fluency, but also exemplified his commitment to promoting progressive ideas and cultural awareness in his local area.

Gul Bangulzai helped to break down cultural walls when he translated progressive literature into Brahui, providing his readers with ideas and views new to them. These translations contributed to the modern literature and world issues of Baloch people by introducing leading social, political and literary contents.

Gul Bangulzai mentioned Abdullah Jan Jamaldini as one of leading teachers when he was translator. Bangulzai was inspired by Jamaldini's advice and his ideas on which literature to follow. This helped him select works that were of cultural importance and reflected the progressive ideas he hoped to propagate through his translations.

Gul Bangulzai narrates his describing assignments of translation:

"I took assistance for translating the same from Ghaor Sahib, Zubairani Sahib and Abdullah Jan Jamaldini sahib. I have translated a lot of books, on the guidance of the honorable Abdullah Jan Jamaldini." (Bangulzai, 2017)

Bangulzai decided to translate books that frequently contained progressive ideas, perhaps values such as equality, fairness and standing up against unfair treatment. He wanted to challenge individuals to think and discuss significant social issues and unjust conditions in his community. He has translated these books because of people that they could read these books and understand their condition.

Bangulzai's translations were of great value to the development of Brahui literature in recent years. Gul Bangulzai also expanded the literary horizon by presenting contemporary stories and write-up, which influenced many other writers to dive into new subjects and ideas through their writings.

His writing also projects the true depiction of Baloch people's living style who live on agriculture and cattle breeding. His reports also reveal to the extreme difficulties they encounter daily. The lives they lead, living in the open and moving from place to place, resonate with Gul Bangulzai. His work references not just the challenges of that lifestyle, but also the deep traditions and values that determine who we are as Baloch. Gul Bangulzai has made an important mark in today's literature by sharing his community's true story, letting readers connect with the powerful stories that come from the heartland of Balochistan.

Farming, trade and animal husbandry are equally important for survival of the Baloch community. Many Baloch groups were herders who raised sheep, goats and camels for centuries. The significance of these animals goes beyond culture; they are also a means to gain money and protection. Livestock enable them to trade and signal their social status in the community, as well as providing food – meat, milk and wool.

Agriculture is used to sustain most tribes in this region, other than the ones that live in the desert regions. They cultivate different crops, including wheat and barley, apples, apricots, cherries and other fruits and vegetables that provide a livelihood for them and a source of food. Farming practices are also determined by seasonal changes and access to water sources – which can be difficult in drier zones.

Professor Nadir Qambrani writes about Gul Bangulzai's life,

"Gul Bangulzai has lived a rural life. He has a real sense of human suffering and grief. He has immersed in all spheres of tribal life and the chieftaincy institution. Before him are the lives of shepherds, farmers and traders. His heart experiences the labor,

hunger, poverty and pain of his people. His fears are augmented by the ignorance and disunion of the people. The masses do not know their friends and enemies. He who does well to them, they are pleased with him. Chieftains have kept common people under their control and always exploit their resources." (Qambrani, 1993)

Notable works Bangulzai's novels and short stories have brought new story-telling trends in Brahui, giving voice to modern narratives that depict the everyday struggles of living a Baloch life. His work bridges the gap between contemporary literature and traditional story-telling techniques, discussing issues such as tribal life, personal identity and community struggles.

Gul Bangulzai's "Dreehav" was first novel of Brahui and it came out in 1989, which is landmark event in the history of Brahui literature. This important work is not only a First in the field of Brahui literature but it unfolds as well a sensitive aspect of the Nomadic life of Baloch people.

In his book Dreehav, Gul Bangulzai excellently captures the norms, problems and daily lives of the Baloch. He demonstrates how much the human beings are part of their surroundings recreating with brilliant story-telling and detailed description, a life-style. The book visits many aspects of nomadic life, such as seasonal migration, social structure, and cultural practices.

Professor Javed Akhter writes about the theme of novel:

"Gul Bangulzai has highlighted the real life style of the common people, their pain, trials and tribulations a normal treatment on how they are spending their lives at the foot of Rocky Mountains. They are impoverished, they live in a drought, in natural disasters, in severe weather. Water-searching, herding and the harsh weather conditions make them live a nomadic life. They do seasonal migration. They migrate in winter to Kachi and the plains of Sindh, and return to the valleys of Quetta and Kalat during summer. Their seasonal migration has such ancient history that imprints of it are found as far away as Mehrgarh." (Akhtar, 2023). Gul Bangulzai, in his novel Dreehav, delves into the complex organization of Baloch tribes, where a semblance of force and control often dominates. He portrays through the character Mir Wali Dad, a rude society where there is no justice with common person and power is misused.

Jamal is just a common person, and he is horrifically treated by the feudal lord Mir Wali Dad in the book's most infuriating scene. This event is evidence of the arbitrary behavior by those in power that is strongly woven into the story. Jamal's experience mirrors the larger challenges confronted by ordinary people every day, living with fear and control. In the novel, he personifies the brutal side of tribal rule, where power is essentially synonymous with cruelty. Bangulzai uses the same character to indicate the ugly side of Baloch society's feudal life. In the story Mir Wali Dad does injustice to Jamal and gets him killed by his own servants while Jamal is on the way. Such incidents are common in Baloch society. An innocent person could be disfigured or killed if he speaks against the feudal system and its brutal violence.

Gul Bangulazi's novel is not only a picture of the role of women in Baloch community, but it also shows the odds and hurdles that women have to encounter, depicting their fight for recognition and fundamental human rights in a society reigned by patriarchal traditions. The protagonist, Nazo, represents the situation of large majority of women in societies where autonomy and respect are a consequent deficit created by developed gender-role stereotypes. Nazo's life becomes a hard one when she marries a

farmer who is obsessed with his ploughing. Nazo finds a painful and frustrating experience during her husband's return to their home. His physical and emotional abuse towards her serves as a reflection of the harsh reality that many women face, where their value is often reduced to their roles as wife and mother, with little or no independence. Bringing to light larger issues that women of the Baloch tribal society face, such as domestic abuse, economic dependence and struggle for equal rights through Nazo's experiences. Gul Bangulzai's powerful stories encourage readers to think about these injustices and urge them to speak out in support of women's rights and dignity for all. In raising these important issues the novel presents a case for change in Baloch society and is linked to gender-based writing about women's rights at large.

Dr. Abdul Razaq Sabir analyses on the novel "Dreehav" and says:

"Incidentally it is to be notice that all character of the novel Dreehav are common like a characters around us in real life. A tyrant like Mir Wali Dad, a brave one like Waris's father, an innocent like Nazo the daughter of Waris, who is the helpless victim of customs and traditions, a loyal friend like Abdu, a careless person like Musa, a quarrelsome mother-in-law like Musa's mother, a benefactor like Mir Kamal Khan, greedy people like Karimo and Rasoolo are found everywhere. In this novel, Gul Bangulzai has combined the characters with each other in a very good way that the reader feels himself in the same environment." (Sabir, 2025)

Further Professor Javed Akhtar analyses about the theme of novel Dreehav and says:

"The theme of Gul Bangulzai's novel is the powerlessness of women in a patriarchal, bourgeois society with a few features of semi-tribalism and semi-feudalism. The fact that social and political subjugation of women continued until now was because of the predominance of male chauvinism. This topic was a taboo tree in Brahui literature until recently, but Gul Bangulzai has resolutely and remarkably rose her voice for this theme and fought against violence against women and male chauvinism. The personages of this story are not magical, they do not belong to an imaginary or fantastic universe. All these characters are real-life people, drawn from the social fabric of Balochistan, which still has vestiges of semi-tribalism and semi-feudalism." (Akhtar, 2023)

The success of Gul Bangulzai has motivated a younger generation of Brahui writers to write in their own language, and tell their own stories. By this example from literature, Bangulzai inspires others to experiment with different styles and themes that resonate with their individual life stories and eventually helps in the expansion of Brahui literature.

Dreehav's novel established a precedent for comparable work by later Brahui writers, who continued to investigate these same topics and the intricacies of Baloch life. Bangulzai broke the ground, which enabled a diverse field of outlooks to find expression in subsequent literary productions.

Conclusion

In summary, it is a classic book in the literature of Brahui language and reflects the author's deep knowledge and love for the nomadic life of Baloch nation. In addition to enriching his community's literary tradition, this book also enabled subsequent writers to find ways to express and tell their own stories in their language. His writing is a testament to the power of Baloch culture and how literature can help us understand what it means to be human.

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