



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Socio-political Commentary in Bina Shah's Novel "A Season for Martyrs"

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## ABSTRACT

The current study examined the worst condition of Pakistani people under the influence of Americans and Britishers in early 19th century in Bina Shah's novel "A Season for martyrs". New-Historicism as a theoretical framework applied to this study to depict and show the history of Pakistan in general and Sindh specifically. It comprehended the work through its historical context and knows intellectual as well as cultural history of that particular era of 19th century in this piece of literary work, readers came to know that how Pakistani people were suppressed, depressed and living under the influence of white men. On the other hand, how the beauty of Pakistan and Sindh is depicted in this novel. Bina Shah, a Pakistani English writer deals with issues such as: gender discrimination, gender inequality, and women education. She portrayed the historical realities of Pakistani society and the Sindhi rulers like Talpurs, especially. She showed the myth of Pakistani society with the real historical era of 2007. She not only portrayed the psyche of Pakistani Politics but also the conspiracies of western powers behind its manipulation. Therefore, this paper displayed the historical background of Pakistan's society with respect to socio-political perspectives.

## KEYWORDS

Intellectual History, Manipulation, New-Historicism, Socio-Economic Upheaval, Sufi Saints, Western Powers

## Introduction

This study examined the novel "A season for Martyrs" by Bina Shah (2014) from the perspective of New-Historicism. Shah (2014) talked about the feudal, Pir-Enthralled, poetic and anti-colonial era. The coming up of Benazir Bhutto and her return from exile was mentioned. This novel was filled with historical and biographical touches. It was a combination of Fact and fiction. In this beautiful piece of literary work, she tried to knit the episodes from the Pakistani society. For example, Mustafa, H & Haiyan, F. (2018) have worked on the novel "A season for Martyrs", they worked on Analysing American Desire for Power in Bina Shah's A Season for Martyrs. They were of the view that even the colonialism was ended but the colonial legacy had not left third world countries from its power politics. They stated that America even today interferes into the social, economic, political, and religious issues of developing states like that of Pakistan. Bina shah depicted the American influence over the characters of her novel where Ali became worried for US visa to go there. She stated that the Americans were following the new model of imperialism that might be called Neo Imperialism. In this form, the weaker states remained

powerless before a giant superpower state like that of America. Furthermore, this study was conducted to display the richest history of Sindh and the vulnerability of people living in it. Furthermore, the current study followed the Qualitative Research Method where text was the major source of data analysis.

Kumar (2011) defined “Qualitative research or unstructured approach, based upon the ideology of empiricism. It followed an open and broad approach to examine goals which are definable than measurement. It involved feeling and perception rather than facts and figures” (p. 11-13); and it also followed the New Historicism that emphasized the contextualization of the texts. New Historicists emphasized that “texts do not originate in a historical vacuum; but certain historical and social situations are required to produce the text (Schmitz,p.160).

The current novel was a good match to apply this theory. It followed two research questions that talked about the richest history of Sindh and the supremacy of great powers on them. The following lines might clearly show the attitude of British government who used the local rulers over there in a wrong way. “The British governed Sindh hand in hand with the local rulers, achieving their supremacy through a delicate balance of collaboration, bribery and brutality pioneered by Napier and carried on by a proud line of Governor Generals with equally high-bridged noses and clerks of questionable education and dubious health”(Shah,p.3). Therefore, this paper helped readers to penetrate on the policies of these powers to suppress the people of the land of the pure.

Bina Shah is a literary figure of Pakistan. She is a writer, columnist and critique of Pakistani society. She lives in Karachi. She acquired a B.A. in Psychology from Wellesley College and M.Ed. in Educational Technology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA. Shah is the creator of four books and two accumulations of short stories. Her epic *Slum Child* was published in 2010, while an authentic fiction novel about Sindh, “*A Season for Martyrs*” was published in November 2014 by Delphinium Books on which the current study is conducted. Moreover, Shah has been a contributing assessment author for the International *New York Times* and an opinion piece reporter for *The Dawn Pakistan*. She has composed for Al Jazeera, the Huffington Post, the Guardian, and the Independent. Shah writes broadly about Pakistani culture and society. Hence, her sections and her blog “*The Feministani*” has set up Shah as one of Pakistan's chief women's activists and social reporters. Her short story “*The Living Museum*”, won Sesachari prize from Weber University's scholarly diary, Weber - The Contemporary West.

### Literature Review

Kumar (2011) defines “The literature review is an integral part of the research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step.”

In this chapter of literature review, researcher is going to describe the treatment of Pakistani people by English men and their cultural impacts on the mind of Pakistani public which are highlighted by different scholars in the light of “*The season for Martyrs*”. Moreover, the reader of this study would come to know about the characters of the novel that how they talk about social issues of Pakistani people.

Nothing except literature has the power to reflect and express the age, society, people and their sentiment, feelings and thoughts. It is society that creates literature and thus literature mirrors society.

Thus, writer like Bina Shah portrayed the true picture of Pakistani society in her writings.

Hina Mustafa and Fazal Hayan have worked on the novel "A season for Martyrs", they worked on the topic namely, Analyzing American Desire for Power in Bina Shah's A Season for Martyrs. They were of the view that even the colonialism was ended but the colonial legacy had not left third world countries from its power politics. They stated that America even today interferes into the social, economic, political and religious issues of developing states like that of Pakistan. Bina shah depicts the American influence over the characters of her novel where Ali gets worried for US visa and though US as a superior state to the world. She stated that the Americans are following the new model of imperialism that may be called Neo Imperialism. In this form, the weaker states remain powerless before a giant super power state like that of America. Bina further quotes a few lines from Arundhati Roy's commentary on the issue of imperialism, it is quoted that Roy thinks about US as a noteworthy neo imperialist nation. She has guaranteed about the takeover of individuals' territory and assets through discount corporate in her work Broken Republic (2011) which is an immediate assault on Indian arrangements. She depicts that the United States has a privilege to eat up any of its subjects on the grounds that they think of it as their ethical right allocated to them specifically by God. Roy (2012), additionally censures globalization, neo-colonialism and private enterprise of US in her article, Capitalism; A Ghost Story. So, Roy is a prominent commentator of neo-government and her judgment is set apart in every last bit of her works (qtd in Dar, p.46). Hina Mustafa and Fazal Hayan further state about Globalization, they quote the following over view about the reaction of Globalization. 'Globalization in a fundamental sense discusses the snappy far-reaching interconnectedness' (p. 2). It very well may be related to the national, local and the nearby. From one viewpoint the connection is made among social and financial dealings and systems, composed on a nearby/or national dimension and then again, it partners financial and social contacts and systems framed on vast scale, the nearby and overall joint efforts. The political and monetary strategies molded by neo-progressivism and globalization rise the power and abundance of cosmopolitan organizations and driving gatherings. It is a prevailing philosophy that is forming our reality in the present time. As Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005) express that 'we live in the time of neo-progressivism' (p. 1-6). Neo-progressivism is mostly the restoration of radicalism which implies freedom. For Harvey (2005) the world has swung to neo-progressivism in regard of monetary and political practices and thinking since 1970s. It is itself a self-overseeing and creative theory not a resurrection of progressivism. Because of neo-radicalism today, the world methods are in the hands of a hardly any rich individuals and lion's share of needy individuals of the undeveloped nations have less access to the assets of manufacture. They have constrained riches and openings for work. In this way, they work on inadequate compensation to meet their fundamental needs. Today, Pakistan is dependent on world Bank and IMF. Thus, Bina shah has depicted the influence of western countries specially America over the psyche of the people of the pure land. Thus, it can be sad that America manipulates third world countries due to her lust of being super power in international arena. For example, cultural values of America, her language and beliefs of liberty are the tools which US utilizes to control the mind of people.

Keeping in mind the challenge of 9/11, Moore Lindsey quotes Gerrit-jan Berendse and Mark Williams that they exhort for the requirement of " not only depoliticized modes of understanding but also a new grammar of response". It means that there should be an alternative to war on terror. They talk about such a harsh rhetoric of Bush and Blair. Their interference in middle east. Their troops raped women in Afghanistan and suppressed them too. In this article, the 2<sup>nd</sup> novel of Nadeem aslam " Maps for lost lovers 2004" is quoted for new paths of building British Muslim identities after the incident of 9/11. Krista

Hunt and Kim Rygiel ask questions about war on terror. They say, which nation or government is taking birth by this story of war on terror? Who needs safety and is the protector? How certain people get benefitted from such stories? Thus, in this article Salman Rushdie further tries to get our sight to his depiction of literature as “the one place in society where.....we can hear voices about everything.....(“is nothing sacred)? (429.) The writer is of the view “we need to make a difference between terror and terrorism. Why US always subjugate the eastern blocks? Why her influence is still placed into the psyche of developing countries like that of Pakistan? Hence, it is discussed ahead that US bombed on Iraq in 2003 , Israel attacked in Gaza in 2008-9. Edward said puts “we are never terrorist”.(152). Judith butler’s “Precious Lives” examines the US reaction in response to the incident of 9/11. Since the era of Millennium, the British public talks about multiculturalism. Therefore, the writer Aslam depicts the imperialist attitude of England generally and America’s particularly as she-America focused on the rhetoric of war on terror. Hence, this concept is highlighted too in the novel of “A season for Martyrs” by Bina shah, which would be discussed in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of this assignment in a detail.

Saeed Ahmed Rid has written an article about Sindhi Diaspora in USA. He gives a general view of Indian sindhi and then Muslim-Pakistani Sindhi. Hindu sindhi migrate to overall the world. They do business over there. But the Pakistani Sindhi do not go abroad to do business etc. Though they are a big community, reluctant to have a job in any foreign state. In this research, the researcher highlighted thirty to forty organizations which are the groups of Sindhi people Working in USA. They are Pakistani migrant, by the way. These organizations are working in USA for the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are, SANA,(Sindh Association Of North America), WSC,(The world Sindhi congress), and WSI,( The world Sindhi Institute). He further opines that Pakistani Sindhi used to go abroad only for Asylum but now they are improved and civilized citizens of Pakistan, so they fight for their rights in abroad. This article talks about Pakistani sindhi group, not about that of Indian Sindhi. These organizations are divided into different American states Canada and UK. He collected the data through in-depth qualitative interviews, and from websites of these said organizations. The researcher also talked about MRD movement and zia,a military regime. In that era of 70s and 80s sindhi people compelled to migration. Therefore, the ideology of syed Ghulam Murtaza is depicted in this articles where he only talked about the rights of Sindhi people. When I got this review of literature and compared to my studies of the novel “ A season for Martyrs”, I come to know that how sindhi people were fearful of the military regime of dictators of 1970s.

Matthew A. Cook writes a book namely, WILLOUGHBY’S MINITUE: Treaty of Nownahar, Fraud, and British sindh where he talks about the political condition of sindh in 1842. It talks about mir Ali Morad. Mir Ali Morad committed a mistake to alter the treaty. Treaty of land possession of the East India company. Now it is quite ambiguous that whether Ali Morad had to give lands to company or company was granted land by Ali Morad! But he broke the treaty and a chaotic condition was emerged. This book is written by John Pollard Willoughby, a civil servant of company and a member of Bombay council board. The book debates about the control of sindh by British. It talks about a protocol and the departmental relationship between civil and military authority with in the East India company. Colonialism is criticized in this book. And it is said that the battle of Miani was the turning point of the emergence of British. Talpurs were defeated brutally in this battle. On the other hand, Kaushik Roy, “in war, culture and society in early modern south Asia is of the view that the people of south Asia- Indigenous sovereigns waged war with British not only to defeat them but as a weapon for “Political bargaining”. P 1-2. Fighting a war was an important talk of the day. They were subjugating the people of Sindh under their tyrant policies. Nownahar battle was waged in sindh. It was a battle between Ali Morad and Roustam khan. They were relatives but enemies of each other. Britain took benefit of

their personal grudge. They were from state of Khairpur ( a symbol of rich culture of sindh is depicted). Ali Morad was supported by the company. Now, one can analyze that how foreign forces dominates indigenous people of Sindh . Sir Charles Napier was the designer of every plan. So, the writer titled company with the name of "Impolitic and Unjust". He did not like the treacheries of sir Charles Napier. Their happens a clash between Napier and James Out ram, who was the main negotiator in sindh. To keep in mind certain tussles, the labour got bifurcated and a disturbance happened. Napier killed three arbitrators in sindh on 24<sup>th</sup> august 1843. Eastinck condemns Napier for this immorality. (P.13). Slowly, they annexed Sindh (p.15). In this way Mirs were defeated and Dalhousie condemns Ali Morad for not fulfilling the terms and conditions of treaty which he promised earlier. (p.16). Therefore, British Cultural hegemony, imperialist approach and colonialism were practiced on the people or Sindh.

Bina Shah writes as a guest (about the Pakistani novelists and their works) in the Journal of Commonwealth literature. She is a columnist and novelist who lives in Karachi, Pakistani. She quotes Anatol lieven and his nonfiction book *Pakistan: a hard country* (2011). It is said about the works of this said writer that he views Pakistan's diversity in a great strength. For instances, Pakistan is a country where multicultural and multi ethnic groups are living. Their religion is different, their languages are different, their way of life are different as well. But the common problem they face; is a problem of Identity. Pakistanis stand up to ask questions their everyday life, such as were

they live, who their families are, the place they go to class, what occupations or callings they embrace, who they wed, how they bring up their youngsters, and how they adore. Edward Said writes in "The World, The Text and the Critic" (1984/1983: 16-24), that these can be isolated into familial and national bonds (affiliation) and the ties that are deliberately gone up against (connection). Pakistanis create both for the time period of their lives as a tool for framing personality in a place where what you were given during childbirth does not satisfy all the adults especially to their requirements. Robin Cohen opines that character is fragmentary and socially nurtured, taking note of that any subject can expect "various conceivable social characters, contingent upon the circumstance" (Cohen, 245). This extremely powerful works in Pakistan, given its immense, moving narratives and religious settings bearing on personality development. Pakistani religious character envelops the incredible developments of the Indus Valley, agnostic religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam with the Arab invasion of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Christianity with the English attack from the 1700s to the 1900s. India was administered by Hindu lords, at that point Mughal Muslim lords, and then the British, conveying incredible ease to our political character. Pakistanis were Indians until 1947, when a hundred million Indians at that point progressed toward becoming Pakistanis by method for topography, religion, and migration; the nation was additionally broken when East Pakistan progressed toward becoming Bangladesh in a ridiculous war of steady loss that prompted a mortifying annihilation for Pakistan's military against India in 1971. Out of this incredible strain among distinction and society, and the chronicled occasions of the twentieth century – the finish of expansionism and the birth, among other national what's more, territorial builds, of present-day South Asia – the postcolonial writing development risen, formed by over a time of British guideline over India and the injury of Parcel. It was an artistic development which helped the two scholars and pursuers to make a increasingly advanced and complex comprehension of current South Asian character than one proposed simply by brain research or humanism. Post-pilgrim, post-Partition, and contemporary South Asian writing helped countries recently rising up out of the shadow of dominion and abuse to outline the inquiries of new character, by responding to the quick talk of expansionism, and by going up against issues of de-colonialization and political and social autonomy of once oppressed countries and their kin. It was a worldwide artistic development that

carried on a ceaseless evaluate of writings with bigot and neo-provincial connotations, as found in the compositions of Chinua Achebe, Isabel Allende, V. S. Naipaul, Anita Desai, Derek Walcott, and Salman Rushdie. Postcolonial writing has been condemned for being excessively fixated on the delayed consequences of expansionism, and for utilizing English as the essential dialect of its talk. Be that as it may in South Asia, it has filled in as a critical development that has been crucial in making a difference clashing societies to arrange the minefields left in our brains. Therefore, in this article Bina Shah talks about the secular thinking of Quaid e azam, speeches of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto against minority groups like Ahmadis, Pakistani English novelist like Bapsi Sidhva and Nadeem Aslam etc, her only view is to represent Pakistan from colonial era of Britain till today. In this regard, it can be said that Pakistan is a country where one can find the influence of English Language, English culture and Western philosophy of the great leader of the pure land. I am also exploring the very powerful nature of British in my study, "A season for Martyrs" by this same author of this article( Bina Shah). Hence, identity crisis has remained a genuine problem of Pakistani public.

Accordingly, it has been shown that New Historicism is nothing but the events and words of the past replaced the world and events of the past. Its aim is not to display the past as it really had been, but rather to come up with a new reality by re shaping it. Thus, New Historicism says, 'How has the events been interpreted'? And 'what do the interpretations tell us about the interpreters?'. So, it resists the notion that ".....history is a series of events that has a linear, causal relationship: event A caused event B; event caused event C; and so on. (Tyson).

### Theoretical Framework

The current study employed the Stephen Greenblatt's New-Historicism theoretical framework to examine the richest history of Sindh and influence of the people of America and Britain through the lenses of this theory. This theory could help discover historical significance, impact and meaning. In 1982, Stephen Greenblatt, a forerunner of this group, wrote an essay for a special issue of the Journal Genre in which he used the term "New-Historicism." Thus, it emphasis "the aspect of social action through text (Schmitz,p.161).

It was said "Modern literary theory and ancient texts opines that this theory of New Historicism emphasizes the contextualization of the texts (Schmitz, T p.160). It meant that it reviewed and investigated the text historically. New Historicists emphasized that "texts do not originate in a historical vacuum; but certain historical and social situations were required to produce the texts". And the knowledge of these situations did not harm to the interpretation of the reader of such texts. Thus, New Historicism was far different from older theories and it attempted to review history in both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Montrose (2013) was of the opinion that New-Historicism had given a new dimension of intersexuality which did not aim to put authors and texts in an historical dialogue but it rather made a dialogue synchronically within the same cultural system. New-Historicism emphasized on the aspect of social action through text (Schmitz, T, p.161). New Historicism said that power was a product of social productivity. Hence, when a powerful force lives in powerless state, it gets its root strong i.e. British colonial influence in sub-continent. Its purpose was to show historical events, geographical location and local culture in a form of music and writing. It was the way to unfold the beliefs of people throughout history. Race, Milieu and moment were top features of New-Historicism. In the novel, "The season for Martyrs", all these said features were found easily. Greenblatt (2007) suggested that to interpret literature, it was a must step that the critic had knowledge about

the author and his or her age for it reflected the very ideas of a writer into his or her work. Tyson (2006) opined that new historicists focused on individual identity and its social practices that reflected in an individual. So, critical analysis of text, social setting and context were important (p. 285). Historical events of text showed the recognition of New Historicism. New Historicism had become a vital tool to investigate the background of writer and setting of the novel. Thus, it tried to reintroduce the concept of history through a literary text. Finally, one can say that New Historical criticism is concerned with giving a voice to history, culture and human beliefs through a literary text.

### **Material and Methods**

In this chapter, researcher will provide data regarding investigation and tools for assembling data. The analysis and assessment of data have also been explained in this chapter. The present study is based on **Qualitative research** which leads towards the method of grounded theory for data collection

The approach to inquire answers to my research question is unstructured approach or qualitative research. It is a type of research based on something impossible to measure accurately or statistically.

**Denzin and Lincoln** in the hand book of Qualitative research in 2005 define Qualitative research as:

“Qualitative research involves an illustrative naturalistic approach to the world. This simply leads to the idea that qualitative research is done in the natural criteria, accomplishing to make sense of or phenomenon is illuminated and simplified in relations of meaning people bring to them.” (p. 9)

**Bryman and Bell** in 2007 define Qualitative research as:

This type of research is a design that demonstrates the relationship between theory and research and its emphasis on the theory that is generated.

In the hand book of research Methodology 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (A step-by-step guide for beginners)

**Kumar (2011)** defines:

“Qualitative research or unstructured approach, based upon the ideology of empiricism. It follows an open and broad approach to examine goals which are definable than measurement. It involves feeling and perception rather than facts and figures.” (P. 11-13)

### **Tools**

The present study provides understanding, critical analysis, synthesis, exposition, comprehension and interpretation of data that has been collected through internet, different articles, various books and certain websites.

### **Textual Analysis**

The data has been taken from Bina Shah’s “A season for Martyrs”, which identified the cultural as well as political history of Pakistan generally and Sindh’s particularly. Chapter four will examine the data and consequences of the research.

## Results and Discussion

New-Historicism compacts with the question to understand cultures and mainly those that are alien to the opponent's own culture by depending on merely on the script and one of the most key parts in any culture is the power force itself. Power and its stream through the said culture and the part of texts in depicting that is important in new historicism (Ngugi, 1977, p. 54).

The current paper is based on the theory of New-Historicism. This theory stood for showing the historical events of past history. Thus, the novel "*A season for Martyrs*" became a clear depiction of past events of Pakistan and Sindh province. The reader of this study would come to know in this chapter about the superior role of The US and Britain and the beauty of Pakistan and Sindh through the text.

### Culture of Sindh Portrayed in Novel

Whenever there was a discussion of Sindhi culture, Sindhi literature came to mind and whenever there was discussion of Sindhi literature; poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai came to mind, which was widely evident through the beginning of novel the season of martyr penned by Bina Shah in 2014, who started her masterpiece with lines of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai:

*Oh God! May ever you on Sindh Bestow abundance rare;*

*Beloved! All the world let share Thy grace, and fruitful be.*

*shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, Sufi scholar and saint (1689-1752)*

Bina shah started to write her novel through the above poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai. She loved her home land and her culture that was why she quoted a prayer- (poetry) for the prosperous Sindh. She also prayed for the peace being prevailed in the world.

### Richness of Sindh in Folk Tales

*"It was never easy being a Sufi saint, even if you were one of the Panj Pir. Even if you were regarded as the guardian of all waterways, oceans, seas and rivers; and loved and worshipped by the people of Sindh- Hindu and Muslim alike- you could tire of riding a palla fish up and down the thousand miles of the Indus River dolphins leading up and down to herald your arrival (Shah, 2014, p.22). In the latter years of the 20th century, another burden was placed on the shoulders of Khawaja khizr: to protect the land of the Indus from the war that had broken out between the Hindus and the Muslims (Shah, 2014, p.25).*

Folk literature was a kind of literature which included myths, epics and folktales. It became popular from generation to generation. Likewise, the mythical stories of Sindhi literature were very appealing as like the character of khwaja Khizr who was the hero of waters or guardian of waters. He was loved by the different propel of different religions. People got his help in bringing peace in war time as well. Hence, these tales are still popular in Sindh told by grandmothers and grandfathers to their children.so, one can see the rich tradition of Sindh through the lenses of the selected novel. Thus, new historicism motivated readers and scholars to go back in the records of history to root out the norms, beliefs and practices of people in their particular times. This theory amazingly investigated the age-old myths practised by people of Sindh and of course somewhere else in the world as well.



### Poetry of Shah Abdul Latif- A True Symbol of Love

*A few seers came up to shah Latif, spotting him standing a small distance from the crowd. Dressed in their robes with begging bowls hung around their necks. They greeted him and sought blessings from him, a few lines of new verse to be sung at the festival tonight. But shah Latif was silent, and soon they dropped away from him and melted back into the crowds. The truth was that his heart had been broken by the slanders, and he had nothing left to give to any of them. He turned and walked away again, and as he walked, he recited the verse that he had written soon after his marriage, never telling anyone that he had written it for her:*

*“The heart has but one beloved, many you should not seek: Just give your heart to one,  
Even hundreds may seek; Weasels they are called, who get betrothed at every door”*

(Shah, p.45).

Therefore, the novelist Bina Shah revealed the spiritual nature of the Poet Shah Abdul Latif who never liked the worldly things and material love. Hence, he said that love should be secured for the one whom you wish to live with forever. He did not like disloyalty. Therefore, Sindh was the land of pure Sufi poet and people who had always given up materialism over spirituality. This displayed the soft nature of people of the land of the pure that always respected foreigners and welcomed them warmly.

### Annexation of Sindh, Charles Napier and Talpurs; the Ruler of Sindh in Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century

*“Napier clenched his hand, and then brought it down onto his table with such force that Jephson jumped in his seat. His face dark as a bark of a burnt tree, he proclaimed: ‘six thousand dead at Miani. Five thousand at Dubba. I have Sindh and for that I have been paid sixty thousand pieces of silver.’ The persecution of Mir Rustam and his escape into the Thar desert, pursued by Napier and a group of his very best English officers and native sepoy. The thousands of Sindhis marching into the battle of Miani Forest, falling to their knees as their bodies were blown apart by the English cannons. And the Talpur traitor, Ali Akbar, who called off the Sindhi cavalry at the last minute during the battle of Dubba, his bribe money jingling in his pockets as he fled the hamlet on his dappled stallion, another gift from his grateful employer: Napier himself (Shah,2014, p.02)*

In these lines, the betrayal of Talpur rulers was highlighted that they took bribe from English men and submitted their loyalty to them rather to accompany with their own people. These lines showed the British power over the indigenous people of Sindh. They killed, controlled and plundered Sindh. Two battles were under discussion, one was at the field of Miani and other was that of Dubba. They killed people brutally, raped women and spread their culture as they could hold their control over the poor people of Sindh. Hence, it proved that English people destroyed peace of the land of Sufis. New-Historicism looked the record at length, no matter it was the superior nature or colonized nature of the people of Britain. So, the lenses of New-Historicism reintroduced the very back-channel conspiracies of Britain on this land of Pakistan.

### British Governed Sindh

*“The British governed Sindh hand in hand with the local rulers, achieving their supremacy through a delicate balance of collaboration, bribery and brutality pioneered by Napier and carried on by a proud line of Governor Generals with equally high-bridged noses and clerks of questionable education and dubious health” (Shah, 2014, p.3).*

English men used the primitive people of the land. They got their job done by them. Sometimes they trapped them in giving bribe and sometimes they punished them for labouring into fields for cultivation. The English Generals were proudly in nature. Thus, they collected the wealth of the people of Sindh and left them in lurch.

### **Sindh with its Rich Arabian Deserts and Sufi Saints**

*“Sindh was the land of Sufi saints, who wandered all over south Asia, converting millions to Islam, that relentless religion that had roared out of the Arabian deserts with all the strength of an army of lions. With their gentle ways and their message of peace and love, the Sufi Saints sang and composed poetry and bewitched the Sindhis into the worship of Allah and love for his messenger, long before the British ever set foot on their shores” (Shah, 2014, p. 03).*

Bina shah herself was the resident of province of Sindh that was why she knew very well about the history of Sufi saints of Sindh. It was stated before that there were saints who were spreading the message of Islam throughout the Arabian deserts (South Asia). They were the people of love and peace. They worshiped one God. And believed in spirituality and virtues. Before the coming of Europeans, they were very happy and living in peace. But, the presence of English people disturbed them a lot. Here, the writer showed the humble nature of Sindhi people and the blow they got at their back by the man in suits and ties.

### **The Arrival of Benazir Bhutto**

*“Ali Sikandar sat at his desk, surfing the web while fact checking the special programme his television channel was preparing for the arrival of Benazir Bhutto. She was to fly into Karachi tomorrow from Dubai after eight year of exile; Ameena Hai, Ali’s producer, had just told Ali that not only did he has to write the copy for the background segments of the report, but also go with the cameraman and sound technician to interview people at the airport for their reactions to Benazir’s return (Shah, 2014, p.05).*

A very popular and significant event in the history of Pakistan, when Benazir Bhutto landed in Karachi. Karachi was known as the city of lights. And it was one of the biggest cities of Pakistan. In reality, people knew that Benazir had been there on exile in Dubai, and now she came back to Pakistan. Whatever happened in Karachi, it became a tragic history of the country. In the novel, with this episode, it was also depicted that the past moments of a young guy, Ali, a journalist, who was ready to take an interview from common masses of the city about the worth of Benazir Bhutto. Thus, the elements of New-Historicism were to be discovered as Ali went back to the ruling tenure of BB and got wonderful responses from people. People loved BB and she was also very loyal to them. So, this approach was set to wear the lenses of this theory of New-Historicism.

### **Luxurious Life Style of Americans on Land of Sindh**

*“Jehangir, Ali and various other friends hung out together, got drunk and talked about all the great issues of life, such as what the Americans were doing to the Muslim world, which tycoons were cleaning up on the stock market and which were addicted to cocaine, and who were the sexiest and most available girls in town. Jehangir participated eagerly in all these conversations, pretending to all his friends as well as his family that he had a healthy interest in women. For someone who might be gay, though, he certainly knew a lot about the scandalous habits of the girls in Karachi” (Shah, 2014, p.48).*

Now, one could see that how the people of Pakistan wondered to the life style of Americans. They, Americans drank wine and had sexual relationships openly. They did

not hesitate to do so. Hence, in Karachi they enjoyed themselves recklessly that was against the rules of Pakistan and Islam simultaneously.

### **Control of non-natives over natives**

*“And not just the French: Americans, Germans, Dutch, British people flocked at French beach. They had windsurfed, barbeque, tan, and drink, and you could hardly see a Pakistani anyway on the beach. In early seventies the foreigners lived in Karachi without fear their children went to international and local schools, and everyone loved having them around hosting them at dinner parties and picnics” (Shah, 2014, p.58).*

Thus, it was not only Americans who were living and enjoying in Pakistan but also other foreigners who were living in Sindh without any fear. It could be said that they had been totally dominated on the Land of the Saints. Even, the local residents did not dare disturb them. New-Historic analysis was depicted in this novel, as this novel penetrated into the annals of history of non-native masses controlling the native land.

### **Indus Delta and British Conspiracies in 1827**

*“Jindal shah recited the name of Allah that guaranteed victory over one’s enemies: Ya Fattah, Ya Fattah, Ya Fattah, in time to the urgent gallop of his steed’s hooves, as he raced down the bank of River Indus. He only had a few moments to catch Alexander Burnes before the man sailed up the river in the galley that was anchored in the Indus Delta, ready to go all the way to Lahore. And if Jindal shah failed to do that, then all was lost, and Sindh was surely destroyed” (Shah, 2014, p .69-70).*

Jindal shah was the courtier at the court of Talpurs, the rulers of Sindh. He had firm belief in Allah-Almighty. Whenever, any difficulty occurred, he recited Allah’s attributes Ya Fattah. An incident happened; it was a lame excuse from the side of British that she had to present a gift of horses to Ranjeet Singh from the king William IX. But Jindal shah tried to stop them from crossing the river Indus. Hence, their motto was to monitor the very routes of Indus Delta as in future, the British could come and attack over Sindh. Hence, one could say that it was a trap of annexation of Sindh by the powerful Navy of British. Hence, brave and loyal courtiers like Jindal Shah saved that conspiracy genuinely. This is nothing but a thirst of power of these forces.

### **British Gifts to Pirs of Sindh**

*“The British know that all they have to do is have the pirs in their pockets and we are their slaves!” ‘Hmmm....’ pondered the Mir (Shah, 2014, p.72).*

The British manipulated the very asceticism of Pirs of Sindh to giving them expensive gifts: jewelled turbans and white robes etc. It meant that British never missed any chance to overcome the land of Sindh completely. Bina shah truly explored the historical events in her novel, “A season for Martyrs”.

### **The Value of American Passport and Visa**

*“Ali couldn’t tell if he was serious or joking, until Jehangir grinned and confessed that he had An American Passport. He followed the people to the turnstiles and got into the line for the US embassy” (Shah, 2014, p.91).*

*“And the people were divided into two groups: those who were returning in triumph, others who had been rejected and looked like they were going to commit suicide” (Shah, 2014, p.107).*

For a person from Sindh, it was an honour to get a Visa of America. So, Ali was very happy. He might be having daydreaming. It was a long queue of people waiting for their turn to collect their visa, so, Ali waited in the line and expressed himself in the mood of ecstasy. But, it was also a matter of fact that those who got their visa were happy while rejected thought of committing suicide. One could analyse that how Pakistani people were intellectually being slaves of Americans and British simultaneously.

### **The Incident of 9/11 and Pak-America's Ties**

*"Had either of them known what kinds of horror they were going to subject Pakistan to when they began the war on Terror? In the six years since 9/11, the country was now fragmented, a civil war was going on in the northern area, and fundamentalists were causing havoc everywhere. The president was firmly sticking to his position of supporting American policy in the Afghan war, which affected Pakistan much more than the war in Iraq" (Shah, 2014, p. 94).*

The horrific incident of 9/11 was the cause to promote America's strict policy towards Pakistan. America wanted Pakistan to lead this mission of America in Afghanistan. Pakistan accepted its rhetoric and resultantly faced the harsh consequences of suicide bombing attacks within the country. Bina Shah opined that America had involvement even in 2007, when Benazir came to fight elections. So, America's influence was still fresh in the minds of Pakistani people.

### **History of Hurs and their Killings by English Men**

*"When our troops enter their areas in strength, the Hurs flee into the Makhi Dand, a swamp in the wilds north of Sanghar, where the Hurs are to be found in greatest numbers (Shah, 2014, p. 104).*

*"Ahmed brought his sleeve to his eyes and wept then, broken-hearted, until his eyes grew bloodshot and his head grew too heavy to keep it lifted" (Shah, 2014, p.182).*

British did not like the loyalties of Pir Pagaro. They raided, arrested and then killed a large number of hurs for labelling them enemy of English men. Thus, it was a popular event or history that they hanged Pir Pagaro at the age of 34. Therefore, the foreign forces never missed any chance of suppression of the people of Sindh.

### **October Bomb Blast at Karachi in 2007**

*"Ali had not gone on a film assignment since the bombing in October" (Shah, 2014, p.110).*

New-Historicism is a critical theory which opined that through this theory, the historical events could be analysed and understood easily. Therefore, above lines reviewed the chaotic conditions of Karachi when Benazir Bhutto arrived at Karachi Airport.

### **Pir of Jhando, Audiences, British Saying and History of Sindh**

*"Pir of jhando, was speaking to the audience from behind a long table set up on the stage. 'My esteemed brothers, how many times have we heard that the British have a famous saying about us? The crowd murmured. They had heard the saying three thousand times before, but never tired of hearing it again. 'They say: Respect the Baloch. Buy the Pashtuns. Oppress the Sindhis. Beat the Punjabis!' The crowd roared its displeasure. 'Look how they attempt to divide and conquer us (Shah, 2014, p.131).*

A very sad state of the people of Sindh under British tyrant attitude was shown in the novel. Historically, it was repeated again and again that the people of Sufi land and the people of Pakistan were made to fight with one another. Thus, British was found behind every unpleasant scenario of Sindh and Pakistan. They had policy to divide locals and ruled them brutally.

### **The Philosophy of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto: A Historical Touch**

*"I did not know him, but I admired him greatly, as well as did." As he spoke, Sikandar realized he was telling the truth. Few zamindars agreed with Bhutto's ideas about liberating the poor, pandering to their greed. It would have upset the natural order of things" (Shah, 2014, p. 216).*

Bhutto Zulfiqar was in favour of the socialism. A philosophy to favour the poor class. He wanted to distribute the lands between zamindars and farmers in early 70s but people never listened to his stance. Thus, Bina Shah went into deep to discover every bit of history of Pakistan irrespective of politics, social and religious. So, this was nothing but the success of New-Historicism.

### **Conclusion**

Briefly, this paper followed the Qualitative Research paradigm by applying theory of New-Historicism. It analysed the data through the text itself. There were two questions that this study followed. First, it said that how Bina Shah clearly examined the richest history and culture of Sindh province and secondly what was the influence of America and Britain on the people of Pakistan specifically Sindh in early seventies. The beauty of Pakistan included Thar Desert of Sindh, capital city of Islamabad, beaches in Karachi, mesmerizing poetry of Shah Abdul Latif and cheerful hospitality of the people of this land. The diverse cultures, languages and foods made Pakistan the richest state in the world. On the other hand, to quote from the selected novel, it was depicted by Bina Shah that the thousands of Sindhis marching into the battle of Miani Forest, falling to their knees as their bodies were blown apart by the English cannons. One could analyse the tyrant attitude of the so-called civilized people towards natives of Sindh. Moreover, English men used the primitive people of the land. They got their job done by them. Sometimes they trapped them in giving bribe and sometimes they punished them for labouring into fields for cultivation. Bina Shah tried her level best to show reader the real picture of Sindh and Pakistan. History of Pakistani society in which people suffered a lot and British treated them with full of submissiveness. The return of Benazir Bhutto and October bombings in Karachi were the incidents shown in this novel. Bina Shah also raised her voice for the betrayal of local rulers. She had condemned the ways as English people like Americans and British treated the people of the land of the pure in a cruel way in early seventies. And, the most prominent features of her novel were the depiction of folk literature of Sindh, the mythical stories of Shah Abdul Latif, Khwaja khizr, Pir Pagaro, Syed G.M shah and Charles Napier were also praise worthy. Consequently, this novel was a complete package of the fact and fiction of the people of Pakistan and Sindh. The selected theory, New-Historicism rooted out the very spices of history through this novel.

### **Recommendations**

The novel delivers perceptions of political polarization of Pakistan, it touches on themes like activism, social change, and the dynastic politics. The future researchers can further elaborate it to highlight psychology of people living in Sindh, Pakistan and they can apply the psychoanalytic school of thought given by Sigmund Freud.

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