



## Research Article

# Abdullah Bakhtani's Contributions to Pashto Drama: A Study of Sidhu Malang

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## ABSTRACT



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In Pashto literature, Abdullah Bakhtani's narrative works have a notable and distinctive place. The author's narrative works, especially his tragedies (Sidhu Malang), give sharp criticism of immoral acts and behavior as well as important subjects relevant to modern society at large. His pieces provide vivid descriptions of the political struggle for social reforms that was going on at the time. Bakhtani draws inspiration from the Pashtun environment and only uses Pashtun characters in his story compositions. While faithfully portraying every aspect of Chersi's life, the drama "Sidhu Malang" sharply condemns the struggles that he faces. Young Pashtun people have come under fire and criticism for their disgusting and immoral behavior, which they have done in the name of self-expression and intoxication. The Sidhu Malang drama's structure complies with the essential rules of theater composition. In connection to other dramatic components, the action, characters, place, and time are all structured in a logical and cohesive way. The characters' words and deeds have the most significance. The play has been studied in great detail.

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## Introduction

Similar to numerous other widely spoken languages, Pashto has an abundance of well-known individuals who might be chosen as topics due to their distinct viewpoints, artistic accomplishments, or individual traits. His efforts have yielded notable advancements in the Pashto language's poetry and prose genres. His story books are well regarded in the literary community. There are numerous references to him in the literature from that era. He became well-known for his short stories, dramatic compositions, and deft word use. Bakhtani is a skilled and learned writer with a focus on creating narrative pieces such as plays and short stories (Reza, 1995). Two well-liked and fascinating subgenres of creative writing with a rich cultural heritage that dates back thousands of years are drama and performance art. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various forms, compositions, and elements of dramatic and allegorical art (Hashemi, 2010). Presently, a wide range of parts and materials are used to construct stage structures of different kinds. This book explains the fundamental components of the radio drama genre and the limited opportunities for long-term work within this field.

## Objectives

- To evaluate and clarify the playwright Bakhtani's Sidhu Malang in terms of both content and structure.

- To ascertain the contribution of Abdullah Bakhtani to the development and progression of Pashto play.

## Research Questions

- The Sidhu Malang drama's content and structure relate to how it is put together overall and what it covers.
- What role did Bakhtani have in the emergence and growth of Pashto drama?

## Methodology

This research is classified as bibliographic and employs a descriptive and analytical methodology. Researchers have diligently utilized a variety of literature on the life and works of Bakhtani to ensure the thoroughness of this literary research.

## Literature Review

Undoubtedly, the life and literary pursuits of Abdullah Bakhtani will have been diligently studied. This research is distinct from the others mentioned. Researchers have observed various publications and writings by different writers that discuss Bakhtani's life and works from diverse perspectives. These sources highlight the scientific and cultural significance of Bakhtani's character, indicating the need for further exploration and study. Efforts should be made to further explore and investigate the aspects that have not been examined previously. Several publications have been written about the life and literary contributions of Bakhtani, which are mentioned here: True

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Servant is a literary creation by Mr. Lal Pacha, wherein he provides detailed insights into the life and endeavors of Bakhtani. The author has analyzed Bakhtani's publications up to the year 1379, analyzing them independently based on their content and form, without offering any specific commentary or analysis.

A master's thesis titled "Analytical and Comparative Study of the Literary References of Prof. Sadiqullah Rekhtain and Prof. Abdullah Bakhtani" by Mr. Mirwais Khaliqyar explores the writings of Bakhtani, with a particular focus on the literary allusions. The following text is intended to fulfill the requirements for graduation from the Pashto master's degree at Nangarhar University's Faculty of Languages and Literature in 2016. Abdul Rahim Bakhtani authored a book titled "Short Introduction to Prof. Bakhtani's Printed Works."

### Abdullah Bakhtani and Pashto Drama

The genre of drama, which originated in the second decade of the 20th century, has made its way into Pashto language literature and has shown to be quite captivating. The term "drama" originates from the Greek word "Drau," which translates to "action." Consequently, within the realm of drama, this term has also been translated as "doing and showing." Drama, in literary terms, refers to a form of prose, artistic, and narrative literature that has been defined and characterized by literary experts in many ways (Ahmad, 2016). The incorporation of drama, both in the realm of art and history, has a profound impact in the following manner: It lacks the words of storytellers and is typically written for the theater.

The play, in its present shape and concept, was introduced to Pashto language and literature in the early 20th century, originating from Western literature. Since then, it has been assimilated, evolved, and flourished under various social and political circumstances, persisting until the present day. The earliest recorded theatrical production is attributed to Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar, who wrote a play titled "Three Orphans." In his work on Drama, Afzal Raza describes the first Pashto play, "Three Orphans," which was staged by students at At manzo High School to celebrate the school's anniversary. The theatrical production took place in the year 1927. In this drama, Mr. Abdul Akbar Khan highlights the influence wielded by the privileged members of society between about 1928 and 1930. He showcased plays like "Tahzeeb Jadid" and "Tealim Jadid", which are renowned as successful examples of early Pashto natural tragedies (Reza, 1995). In addition to the aforementioned plays, Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar has authored several other plays, including Tarbur, KhudaeiKhidmatgar, and Junghara. The majority of Pashto artistic prose genres has flourished in Pakhtunkhwa, hence Pashto dramas, along with other forms of Pashto literature, have thrived in this region with the aid of television (Bajawari, 1297).

During the Enlightenment phase, certain writers provide readers with glimpses of the dramatic events unfolding in Afghanistan. For instance, we can refer to a collection of conversations included in the textbooks authored by Maulawi Saleh Muhammad, with particular emphasis on the dialogue titled "A Day's Absence". Syed Mohiuddin Hashemi provides written commentary on this topic. However, in the year 1300 AD (1921), there was several impactful dialogues of Hudud, penned by Maulvi Saleh Muhammad and performed on stage by students of education in the presence of His Highness Ghazi Amanullah. One of the theatrical performances is titled "One Day Absence," which the children staged at Habibi's school in the presence of Ghazi Amanullah Khan. The user's text is empty (Hashemi, 2010).

Abdul Hai Habibi, a late Afghan writer, composed a Pashto drama called "Toriyal Pashtun" in 1316. However,

Abdul Rahman Pajhwok also authored a play that adheres to the fundamental principles of theater and is comprehensive and precise. The play, known as "Kalimadara Rupi," was initially created as a drama in the form of free verse in 1317. It was subsequently printed and published by the Pashto community in 1337. Subsequently, drama writing emerged as a significant component of Pashto literature, prompting numerous skilled writers and playwrights to devote their lives to the profession and contribute to the advancement of Pashto drama. Abdullah Bakhtani is one of the playwrights who have created plays in the Pashto language. Pashto dramas saw significant development throughout the time of awakening. Bajouri states that during the 19th century, the writers of the 19th Awaken Youths Movement viewed drama as an effective means of disseminating their ideas and messages. In the year 1326, a compilation of works by members of the 19th Movement was published, which included the play "Da Kalo Ranzor" written by Abdul Rauf Benwa. Abdul Rauf Benwa consistently produces plays that have a lasting impact during his era. Qeamudin Khadem wrote under the pseudonym "Sor Gul", Mohammad Din Zhwak titled his work "Mat Khanak", Mohammad Akbar Pamir used the name "Bandi", Siddiqullah Rekhtain wrote under the name "Pashtun Women", Khaled Roshan wrote as "Shirshahi Pesh", Ghulam Rahman Jarrar wrote as "Secret Fighter", Abdullah Bakhtani wrote as "Sidhu Malang", Noor Muhammad Taraky wrote under the title "Freedom Paradise", and Jan Mohammad Paktia authored several plays (Bajawari, 1918).

Regarding Bakhtani's plays, it seems that he has authored works in Pashto, as well as other forms of artistic and literary prose. Bakhtani possesses exceptional skill in artistic prose genres and folk literature. The weight of attention and critical analysis is substantial in his artistic writings. The best examples are a compilation of Pashto short stories and the Sidhu Malang Theater. Bakhtani holds a significant and unique position in the historical examination of Pashto artistic prose writing in Afghanistan. Bakhtani produced a variety of writings during the 1930s and beyond, including short stories, narrative pieces, legends, and anecdotes. However, all of these writings may be categorized as narrative in nature. The study of prose inside a framework is essential, as these writings possess the qualities of narrative prose and may be categorized into several genres of creative prose based on their structure.

Bakhtani has authored works in all genres of creative prose, predominantly focusing on short stories and literary compositions. However, he has also ventured into writing dramas and shows, like "Sidhu Malang," which was penned by the educators of Nangarhar. It was a component of the theatrical movement aimed at presenting dramas and performances (Anzor, 2014).

This analysis will examine the overall features of Bakhtani's narrative prose writing, followed by a focused study on Bakhtani's written play (Sidhu Mlang) as a specific genre of narrative prose, considering both its content and form. Bakhtani Artistic-narrative writing possesses the following characteristics: The language used in his essays and stories is both smooth and straightforward. The period he belongs to has typical features of literary prose. In the preface to the Pashto edition, he states that he has gathered this compilation from the events and stories he has witnessed and heard in society. Additionally, there are few genuine anecdotes where my impact is little. In my writing, I have endeavored to maintain a seamless and authentic tone, thereby resulting in a minimal or nonexistent presence of romanticism (Bakhtani, 2010). The teacher's stories and language have been infused with a touch of witty sarcasm. The narrative works of Hazrat Baz, a renowned comedy artist from Nangarhar, are notable for their amusing elements. He skillfully presents comical anecdotes in a narrative format. At times, the

lyrical element takes precedence over the narrative part, as shown in the prose piece titled "The Poet's Love". My heart urged me to construct a permanent dwelling that is impervious to flooding. Ensure your safety and criminals will have no opportunity.

A house whose area is very wide

My friends' hearts will not be narrowed.

In an area that is full of flowers in autumn and spring.

In winter and summer, there is moderate and one air, on top of a high hill...

(Bakhtani, 2010)

The text appears to be influenced by the structure and manner of Pashto folk legends and narratives, for instance, when a young woman adorns herself in traditional attire. Mr. Ajmal Khattak provides intriguing insights into his stories. States: The primary flavor and essence of this book is derived from Bakhtani Sahib's language and charming folk manner of expression (Vinarang), which encompasses the subtlety of salt and pepper. The author demonstrates a high level of proficiency and deep consideration in their use of the Pashto language. Literature has enhanced the aesthetic and fertile qualities of the country.

I believe that Pashtun Bakhtani from Nangarhar's Sarrud Socha is engaging in the creation of Pashto literature through the use of short stories. He aspires to compose concise narratives, but he refrains from mimicking them. A brief narrative cultivated in the external realm transfers Pashto literature to one's place of residence. His diligent efforts consistently astonish many, yet never fail to meet their expectations.

Bakhtani is an erudite individual who has extensively studied the most esteemed works of literature from throughout the globe. He is well-versed in the renowned literature in several languages around the world, particularly having dedicated time at the birthplace of Gorky and Chekhov. If someone possesses a deep understanding of fairy tales, then we can emulate his skills in crafting short stories (Bakhtani, 2010). Consequently, it would not be unexpected for us to encounter a short story that resembles a fairy tale, however with a Pashtun twist. His newfound interest in foreign art leads him back to his Pashtun roots, which may come as a surprise to those who are unfamiliar with his Pashtun identity, innermost thoughts, and motives. In regards to subject matter and substance, it encompasses the prevalent themes of its era, including the youth, wealth and affluence, denunciation of oppression and tyranny, as well as the struggle against other societal flaws like as corruption and injustice. Promoting intellectual advancement and addressing various deficiencies, fostering a culture of education and enlightenment, empowering individuals with knowledge of their entitlements, and more. The text and substance of Wazee Zalmiyan and other national-political-cultural movements of the time encompass all these issues.

Bakhtani's narrative works and writings feature exclusively Pashtun characters, which draw inspiration from the Pashtun surroundings. These essays depict several facets of life and fiercely criticize its drawbacks. The detrimental customs known as tarbur and tarbagni in Pashtun culture have been denounced and eradicated (Bakhtani, 2010). Overall, he has steadfastly adhered to the movement's agenda and skillfully depicted all its aspects in his narrative works. The current chronicle of Pashto literature, known as Vishtiyapahao, has provided the following assertions regarding this matter: Abdullah Bakhtani joined the party of the Vigilant Zelemy shortly after its establishment. His creation was poetry, provided that he devoted language to convey this message.

## Sidhu Malang and the Evolution of Pashto Theater

The play titled "Sidhu Malang" was released as a book on August 31, 2010, which corresponds to the month of Sanbla 1389. The author personally financed the publication, and it was published by Afghan Masaka Press in Kabul. The book consists of 69 pages. One thousand copies have been printed. This book includes the play "Sidhu Malang" by Ustad Bakhtani, as well as some other writings by the same author as an appendix. These additional writings include examples of figurative art in Nangarhar, a poem titled "O pure Nangarhar!", and a piece called "Sunder Bol" by a white artist. The speech of Bakhtani, the song of the heart, and two poems titled "Awalmir" have been published in the Research Center for the Growth, Enrichment, and Development of Afghan Music in Jalalabad, as part of their dedication to national art. At the outset of the book, in the introductory section, there is a passage authored by Bakhtani, which offers remarks on the writing style and substance of Sidhu Malang's play (Bakhtani, 2010). This document has acquired historical significance and should be archived. This drama was authored over half a century ago, precisely fifty-one years ago, and its original document is currently conserved in the library of the servant. While seeking to compile and publish my literary works, I also extracted this particular version and showcased it to the community as an exemplar of Pashto dramas from fifty years ago. During that period, the practice of writing and performing dramas was still in its early stages in our country. (Bakhtani, 2010)

In his remarks, Bakhtani highlighted that this play was written fifty years ago, during a period when many forms of literary prose, particularly short tales and plays, received significant emphasis in Afghanistan. One reason for this is that in these prose forums, writers may easily communicate their message to society. Another reason is that during that period, short stories and dramas were more popular in addition to other poetry and prose forums. As a result, the main author focused more on these genres. Bakhtani discusses the evolution of drama in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on Nangarhar (Bakhtani, 2015). Particularly, after the year 1336 A.H., the city of Jalalabad witnessed a flourishing of playwriting and performances in the Pashto language. During that period, I had the position of editor-in-chief at the recently launched Pashto monthly magazine, (Nangarhar), in the Nangarhar Press Office. It was during this time that I authored a play, which was subsequently published in the (Nangarhar Show). Mr. Sair Harati, the director, made multiple appearances on stage and was well-received and admired by the audience. I had intended for this play to be a musical throughout, but due to the setting of the last scene in an official office, music was omitted due to convention (Bakhtani, 2010).

## Language and Artistic Value of the Characters of Sidhu Malang's Drama

Sidhu Malang is a renowned play by Bakhtani, known for its social, reformative, attention-grabbing, and critical nature. The play is divided into four sections, like his other narrative writings. The play revolves around the protagonist, Sidhu Malang, who is a young drug addict. The entire play revolves around the character of Charsi Malang, providing insight into his demeanor, lifestyle, social standing, and the dynamics between the Charsi community and the rural population. He depicted the life of Charsi in a commendable manner to the members of society, showcasing the many phases of Charsi's life on an artistic spectrum. Strongly dislike the individual of Charsi descent. The Charsi community has significant social deprivation, often resulting in the severing of various kinship bonds for the purpose of practicality, such as inspecting the hashish. The book's preface indicates that this play was specifically created for the Nangarhar Municipal Show

(Nangarhar Show) and was performed during the show. However, it was not published by any particular publishing house.

According to the academics, the writer must assist the audience, listeners, or readers in comprehending the many components of his play by any available methods, in order for them to derive pleasure and appreciation from the performance. Comprehend the communication. The success of this piece hinges on the playwright's skillful use of language. Bakhtani has also addressed this matter in his play (Sidhu Malang). However, in the context of radio and television dramas, there is a significant cost associated with production. Additionally, it is crucial for the author of the drama to have a deep understanding of the intended audience, as this knowledge allows for effective communication. This issue is particularly prevalent in rural areas and remote villages, where a large portion of the population is typically illiterate. Therefore, it is essential to use language that is familiar and accessible to these individuals, ensuring that the message is comprehensible and ultimately impactful. By accurately identifying and understanding the audience of a play, the playwright can effectively strategize the necessary components and elements of the screenplay.

- The characters or actors of the drama.
- The events of the drama
- The times of the events of the drama
- The places where the events of the drama take place
- The Conflict
- The theme of the drama

### The Beauty and Music of Sidhu Malang Drama

The aesthetic appeal and melodic elements of the drama are intricately tied to its presentation. A well-executed presentation is what enhances the drama's aesthetic appeal and beauty (Khaliqyar, 2020). The selection of suitable music according to the time and occasion, transitioning between different shows or screens, and establishing connections between them relies on the expertise, preference, and understanding of the performer of the performance. In order to ensure a harmonious auditory experience and align the emotional state of the audience with the events depicted in a sorrowful scene of a drama, it is imperative that the accompanying music accurately reflects the prevailing mood. Furthermore, in the event that the performer (actor) of a theatrical production lacks strength, music can serve as a crucial tool in mitigating their shortcomings. Therefore, it is advantageous to select appropriate music that aligns with the concept and content of the scene in question (Folady, 2008).

Bakhtani devoted his complete focus to the aesthetic and melodic aspects of the play Sidhu Malang, as he explicitly states in the play's preface. Due to the individual's moniker and personal routine, music was not permitted in the official workplace space. From the above mentioned and also from the first parts of the drama of Sidhu Malang, it is evident that this drama is mostly musical and for the beauty of the drama, full attention has been paid to the music part. Most parts of this drama are poems and musical. For example, here is a part of the first screen (Bakhtani, 2010):

(Singer's voice from a distance):

It's dawn tomorrow, people leave all their work  
Lala is buzzing, sleepy.)

Mother: Children, it's late, when he wakes up, they will eat  
ZarZaqum (something)

(Singer's voice):

Those who are awake till late night  
So, he sleeps till noon

I do not care if give birth to a male cow (it is proverb)

(Bakhtani, 2010)

The playwright has meticulously focused on the form of the exposition, the narrative composition, the choice of verbs, and the construction of phrases in the drama. In Bakhtani's narrative writings, particularly in the Sidhu Malang drama, he effectively portrays the characters' attributes such as age, place of residence, rural traits, aspirations, intimate companions, assessments of them, adversaries, his personal viewpoint on the characters, their predicaments, and ambitions (Ahmad, 2016). Their language has been employed and elucidated in its appropriate context, and the cognitive or psychological condition of the characters has also been accurately explicated. The writer has attempted to enforce the usage of terminology, terms, and phrases that align with individuals' roles, while also selecting appropriate names and positions for them. Based on the artistic analysis, it can be concluded that the Sidhu Malang drama is an exceptional and outstanding piece of Pashto Language Theater.

### Conclusion

Bakhtani has authored numerous narratives and dramas in order to advance and enhance Pashto literature, with the aim of instigating societal reform and awakening individuals from detrimental practices such as coerced marriages, moral decay, celibacy, dowry, and usury. A significant contribution of Bakhtani is the creation and performance of a theatrical play in the Nangarhar show. He initiated and executed this project with the assistance of his colleagues. Bakhtani has authored numerous works in the domain of Pashto narrative literature, with some of them being periodically published in the national press. However, a substantial portion of his literary and narrative writings remains unpublished. An example of such a production is the Sidhu Malang drama, which has lately been published and has received significant recognition from the teacher. However, certain narrative pieces have been published in publications without being specifically printed. Generally, Bakhtani's (Sidhu Malang) drama adheres to the structural rules of drama. The content of the drama is a social critique that focuses on the life of a Chersi individual. It aims to draw attention to societal issues and urges the audience to refrain from addiction and other negative behaviors. Additionally, the drama emphasizes the importance of education, knowledge, and pursuing legitimate business ventures.

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