

## ANALYSIS OF FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN SIRAIKI POETRY

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### **Abstract**

*This article explores the emergence of feminist themes in contemporary Siraiki poetry, highlighting its role as a powerful platform for advocating women's rights and addressing social injustices. Through an examination of the works of notable poets such as Nazir Faiz Magi, Sabahat Urooj, and others, the article reveals how poetry articulates the struggles, aspirations, and resilience of women in a patriarchal society. It emphasizes the importance of presenting women's issues from a feminine perspective and critiques harmful cultural practices such as karo-kari and honor killing. By analysing the contributions of both male and female poets, the article underscores the transformative potential of Siraiki literature in fostering social change and promoting gender equality. Ultimately, it argues that modern Siraiki poetry serves not only as a reflection of societal challenges but also as a catalyst for dialogue and action toward a more just and equitable future for women.*

**Keywords:** Siraiki poetry, feminism, women's rights, gender equality, cultural practices, social change.

### **Introduction:**

Siraiki poetry has long been a vital form of artistic expression, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and social realities of the Siraiki-speaking population in Pakistan. In recent years, this literary tradition has increasingly engaged with feminist themes, using poetry as a powerful medium to explore and advocate for women's rights. As contemporary poets articulate the struggles, aspirations, and resilience of women, Siraiki literature emerges as a significant voice in the broader discourse on gender equality. This article examines the contributions of various Siraiki poets, both male and female, in addressing the pervasive issues surrounding women's rights and empowerment. It highlights the importance of presenting women's issues from a feminine perspective, as well as the critical role that poets play in challenging traditional norms and oppressive practices. By analyzing the works of notable poets such as Nazir Faiz Magi and Sabahat Urooj, the article reveals how contemporary Siraiki poetry not only reflects societal challenges but also advocates for change.

Through an exploration of themes such as honor killings, societal expectations, and the call for gender equality, this article aimed to underscore the transformative power of poetry as a tool for social justice. By giving voice to women's experiences and struggles, Siraiki poetry contributes to a vital cultural dialogue that seeks to uplift and empower women, challenging entrenched gender disparities in society. As we delve into the landscape of modern Siraiki poetry, we uncover how these poetic expressions not only enrich the literary tradition but also inspire hope and action for a more equitable future.

## Discussion:

Feminism, Womanhood, or the Women's Liberation Movement is essentially a series of feminist ideologies rooted in social, political, and societal contexts. Its aim is to establish gender equality across social, political, economic, and personal spheres. In reality, the word feminism originates from the Latin word *Femina* and has become a recognized term in English literature. This movement has spread its objectives far and wide, reaching every corner of the world. The purpose of this movement is to address the challenges that a woman faces from birth to death, seeking solutions for them, with these solutions being presented from the woman's perspective. From ancient times, women have been subjected to oppression and deprivation within society. Many philosophers throughout history have addressed this issue, with some supporting and others opposing women's rights in their thoughts. In Plato's *Republic*, the role of women is defined, while Aristotle declares men as rulers and women as the ruled. As time has passed, ideas about women have also evolved and changed.

Mary Wollstonecraft is regarded as a pioneer of feminism. Her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, published in 1792, focused on the issue of women's share in private property. It emphasized the idea of equal rights for men and women. The movement aims to protect women's rights, including reproductive rights, economic equality, protection from violence, and freedom from harassment. The primary goal has been to secure gender-specific rights and ensure policy reforms in line with changing times.

The history of this movement is complex and multifaceted. It has experienced highs and lows across different periods, but every era achieved some significant objectives. The first wave of feminism towards the end of the 19th century focused on basic legal rights and political representation. Key demands included the right to vote and property rights. Prominent figures of this period include Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the United States, and Emmeline Pankhurst in Britain. Notable achievements during this wave were the Seneca Falls Convention, the Property Act, and the Married Women's Property Act. In 1910, March 8 was declared International Women's Day. After the Russian Revolution, under the leadership of Comrade Lenin, socialist governments granted women the right to vote and participate in governance. In Britain, it was not until 1928 that women received the legal right to vote, but with conditions—women needed to be at least 30 years old and property owners to exercise this right.

The second wave of feminism emerged after the 1960s. During this wave, key objectives included reproductive rights, workplace equality, the elimination of discrimination, and sexual freedom. Prominent figures of this era were Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Simone de Beauvoir.

The third wave of feminism featured personalities such as Judith Butler and Kimberlé Crenshaw. Nearly a decade later, feminism re-emerged through digital activism. Major issues that gained prominence in this phase were online harassment and gender-based violence. Notable feminist thinkers of this era include Tarana Burke, Malala Yousafzai, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Keira Cochrane. Across all these phases, feminist movements have successfully secured significant rights for women.

This is a brief overview of feminism and the progress achieved within its scope, highlighting the key figures and the rights gained during different phases. When we examine Siraiki society in the context of the Indus Valley Civilization, we observe a tradition of respect towards women. The ancient cities of the Indus Valley (such as Mohenjo-Daro) have yielded artifacts like the statue of the "Dancing Girl", which, along with the matriarchal system of the Dravidian people, serves as evidence of women's elevated status in that era.

However, with the arrival of the Aryans, women's status changed, and a patriarchal system was established. Under the strict structures of Hinduism, women faced many challenges. In Siraiki literature, the injustices against women are clearly depicted. Siraiki writers raise their voices forcefully against the oppression faced by women. As Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Farid wrote:

عمر فرید بھائی روندیں  
 متھڑے دی تحریر (1)  
 ماں، پیو، ویرن مول نہ بھاندی  
 منے ڈیوم بردی باندی  
 سینگیاں سرتیاں کر دیاں عار (2)  
 ڈکھ تھئے بانہہ بلی دویار  
 ہتھیں آیم اکیلی دویار (3)  
 بڈو کھڑیں کارٹ جانی ہم  
 سولیں سانگ سائی ہم  
 درد اندیشے سکرے سورے  
 بیا نہ بھین تے بھائی ہم (4)

Siraiki poets have vigorously championed the cause of women by aligning their work with the feminist movement. The poetry of Sain Riffat Abbas, a recipient of the Presidential Award, serves as a testament to this struggle for women's rights. His verses not only highlight the injustices faced by women but also celebrate their strength and resilience in the face of adversity. Through evocative imagery and powerful language, Riffat Abbas sheds light on the societal norms that confine women and calls for their liberation. He eloquently articulates the challenges women endure and emphasizes their right to equality, dignity, and self-expression. By intertwining personal narratives with broader social issues, these poets create a compelling discourse that encourages reflection and inspires change. Their work continues to resonate, urging society to recognize and uplift the voices of women.

اساں گواہی ڈیندے ہیں جو تربیت پوری ہے پئی  
 آدم وانگوں حوا دا وی قصہ پورا ہے بیا (5)

بٹھ تلواریں دا چکارا بٹھ کڈیا قوتی  
 بس قبیلیاں وچ تربیتیں بن چراغ چمکدن (6)

پہلے پہلے تربیتیں آئیاں کنگھی شیشہ گھن کے  
 پچھوں ندیاں آئیاں وت اے جنگل آئے (7)

آپ تربیتیں ساڈے کولوں ڈھیر بہادر رفعت  
 ایہ سرفی ہک نیر ہے پیا کھل کے جیون والا (8)

Modern Siraiki poetry not only introduces new themes but also brings attention to the issues surrounding women's rights. The kafi (a form of poetic expression) of Murtaza Zahid exemplifies this. In his works, Zahid eloquently captures the struggles faced by women in contemporary society, intertwining personal experiences with societal critique. His verses address topics such as gender discrimination, societal expectations, and the quest for autonomy. By using rich imagery and poignant language, he emphasizes the need for change and empowerment for women. Zahid's poetry serves as a powerful vehicle for advocacy, urging readers to reflect on the inequalities that persist and inspiring action toward a more just society. Through his art, he gives voice to the silent struggles of women, making their experiences visible and relatable.

ایہا رمز الی و سری نہیں  
ایہو منتر حالی و نجیائیں

بھانویں سعدی لکھ کتاباں گئے  
جو تریبت ڈھیر مکار نر ہے  
اس کوڑی گالھ کوں نیانیں

بھلا حاکم جیویں جو بولے  
پیاقاضی بھانویں جو کرے  
اساں ملاں کوں وی کھنیا نہیں

اجھو بھید جھمردا کھل پوسی  
کیئنجھا کرماں والا ڈیس نہ ہو سی  
ساڈاول اجز تیں بھنیا نہیں (9)

In modern Saraiki poetry, the concept of women has completely changed. Be it poets or poets, respect and honor for women can now be seen in their words. They want an excellent and good place for women in society. They want women to be valued. Women's wisdom should be taken advantage of in all spheres of life. Today, Siraiki poetry values women. Throughout history, the social place of women has evolved significantly, and today, women are increasingly recognized as equal contributors to society across all sectors. Now in our country c, women are leaders in politics, business, education, and science, playing crucial roles in shaping communities and driving innovation. The growing emphasis on gender equality has opened doors for women to pursue careers, education, and personal ambitions without societal constraints. Moreover, women are celebrated for their resilience, empathy, and ability to balance multiple roles as professionals, caregivers, and community builders. This positive shift is transforming societies, promoting diversity, and fostering more inclusive environments for future generations. Mudasar Bhara is a new and energetic voice in modern Saraiki poetry. He believes in new ideas and philanthropy. There is respect for women in his poetry:

ایہو تریبت ہووٹن بہوں نکڑا ہے

بھانویں خواب نویں کوئی دُٹ دی پئی  
بھانویں پھل نویں کوئی چُٹ دی پئی  
ایہو تریت ہووٹں بہوں تکرڑا ہے  
بھانویں عشق دی راہ تے رُدی پئی  
بھانویں سنگ اپنے دو مڑ دی پئی  
ایہو تریت ہووٹں بہوں تکرڑا ہے  
بھانویں روپ نویں وچ ڈھل دی پئی  
بھانویں کھڈ نویں وچ رلدی پئی  
ایہو تریت ہووٹں بہوں تکرڑا ہے (10)

تریت جتھاں اگوں رُدی، اینجھا شہر ویسوں

آپ درازے ویسوں، ونج کے پھل تو اکھویسوں (11)

Presenting women's issues from a woman's perspective is the essence of this term. Female poets passionately articulate these challenges in their verses, highlighting societal expectations and personal struggles. Their poetry reflects themes of empowerment, resilience, and the quest for equality, resonating deeply with readers. Through their creative expression, these poets significantly contribute to the discourse on feminism, ensuring that women's struggles are acknowledged and addressed. As Sahar Siyal writes:

ساڈا نکلے باجھوں متھا  
ساڈے کلنگن وانجے ہتھ  
ساڈا چھاں توں خالی ویڑھا  
ساڈی پکھیاں واندی چھت  
اساں شیشہ کج تے رکھنا  
ساکوں ما، ساڈی دی مت (12)

In the verses of the revered ones, God is often invoked to emphasize the significance of motherhood. The Creator of the universe compares His love for His creation to a mother's love. Among blood relations, the bond of sisterhood is also significant. This relationship is so sincere that a sister is seen sacrificing for her brother at every opportunity. Feminism advocates for equality, asserting that a woman should be a partner in life with men on equal grounds. Under this social contract, both share in each other's joys and sorrows equally. Both are guardians of each other's rights. Sadia Shakeel explores this partnership in her poem *Duskaar*.

دُسکار

ہک تریت گالی بھولی  
کملی کجڑی دل دی تھولی  
گھر وچ نوکریں وانگ سڈیجے

پے توں وی او روز کٹیجے  
سے سے طعنے، سو سو منے  
ڈیر، ناناں، سس دے جھیرے  
میکوں آکھیں سُن ڈی سعدی  
میں جگ تے بے موہتی تھئی ہاں  
آخر میں وی کہیں دی جئی ہاں  
میڈے سردا سیں ہے ظالم  
کئی تاں اوکوں وچ سمجھاوے  
میں تے نہ ہن ظلم کماوے  
میں بے وس گنگ دام تریت  
میڈے نہ ہن درد و دھاوے  
کیوں جو میڈا رتبہ وی رب  
اوں کولوں کئی گھٹنی جوڑیا  
اوہے رب داتا نوب جیکر  
میں وی تاں رب دی مخلوق ہاں  
جیویں میڈے پیریں کہیں دی جنت  
اونویں اوندی جنت وی تاں  
کہیں تریت دے قدمیں وچ ہے  
اوں تریت کوں ماء آہدے ہن  
ماء تے ظلم کریندا کائناتی  
تریت نال لڑیندا کائناتی  
تریت پھل غلاب دا ہوندے  
پھلئیں دا احساس کریندے  
ساگاسک داتوڑ نہیندے  
اووی تاں ہے دھیریں والا  
جیکر اووی کہیں دی جئی تے  
ظلم کریے، قہر و سیے  
کیا اورب کوں منہ ڈکھلیے (13)

Siraiki poetry not only highlights the common sufferings of women but also raises a powerful voice against unrefined traditions such as karo-kari, wanni, and honor killing. The late Nazir Faiz Magi's poem "Karo-Kari" addresses these injustices and the violence inflicted upon women. Through his poignant verses, he exposes the harsh realities that women face due to these harmful practices. The poem serves as a critique of societal norms that perpetuate violence and discrimination, shedding light on the emotional and physical toll

inflicted on women who are victims of such customs. Magi's work reflects a broader movement within Siraiki literature to challenge oppressive traditions and advocate for women's rights. By articulating the pain and suffering caused by these practices, he not only gives a voice to the voiceless but also calls for social change and justice.

### کاروکاری

چھوٹا ہیک معصوم ایانا  
دل بدھ پیو دے نال آلا تا  
اباسیں توں رنج نہ تھیویں  
گالھ میڈی تے انج نہ تھیویں  
میکوں ہک وسواس پیا کھاوے  
مسئلہ میکوں سمجھ نہ آوے  
بھین "بھیرو" کوں رل مل ساریں  
گچی گھٹ تے کیوں چا مارے  
بیٹھی ہئی اووان وٹیندی  
کہیں داہنی او کیا وگڑیندی  
تیکوں حال میں ڈینداں بچڑا  
تچی گالھ ڈسیندا بچڑا  
کہیں کوں ایہو حال نہ ڈسیں  
لج دی گالھ اے، گالھ نہ ڈسیں  
گزری رات کوں دھمی ویلے  
غیر جوان دے نال کھڑی ہئی  
پانی پیار دھال کھڑی ہئی  
ابا خوف خدا توں ڈریں  
نہ کاوڑ میڈی گالھ تے کریں  
پرنتاں "پیڑے" پتروئی تیڈے  
ایہو جھنیاں ہک جرم کیتا ہا  
پرلی وستی وچ پکڑ تیج پیا ہا  
اوندے ساگوں در در پگوں رولیاں ہانی  
چٹی دے وچ ڈودھیریں گھولیاں ہانی  
اوندے آتوں ساہ چاوار یا ہادی  
اونکوں کیوں نہ ماریا ہادی (14)

Through the feminist movement, contemporary literature has strengthened the case for women. While male creators have contributed to this discourse, female poets have also boldly articulated their positions. Among these writers are Shaima Sial, Iqbal Bano, Saeeda



Afzal, Rizwana Tabassum Durani, Sahar Sial, Shaheen Darwi, Bint Ahmedani, Sadia Shakeel, and Sabahat Urooj, whose powerful voices resonate in Siraiki poetry. Modern poetry demands that men actively work to eliminate oppressive customs and gender discrimination. There is a pressing need to put an end to gender-based distinctions. For instance, consider a couplet by Sabahat Urooj:

رب دی ذات بہوں احسان اے جگ تے عورت ذات بنائی ہس  
جیکر مائتے بھین نہ ہوندی مندا مرد کوں جھٹلنا پوندا (15)

### Conclusion:

The evolution of Siraiki poetry has emerged as a powerful platform for advocating feminist ideals and addressing the myriad issues faced by women in society. Through the passionate and evocative voices of poets such as Khawaja Ghulam Farid, Riffat Abbas, Murtaza Zahid, Mudassir Bhara, Nazir Faiz Magi, Sabaht Urooj, and others, contemporary literature not only sheds light on the common sufferings endured by women but also directly confronts deeply rooted cultural practices such as karo-kari, wanni, and honor killing. These poets articulate the emotional and psychological toll these customs impose on women, transforming personal narratives into broader social critiques.

Female poets play a pivotal role in this discourse, boldly expressing their perspectives and experiences while challenging traditional norms. Their works reflect a commitment to empowerment, emphasizing women's rights to equality, dignity, and self-expression. The inclusion of voices like Shaima Sial, Iqbal Bano, and Saeeda Afzal enriches the literary landscape, showcasing a diverse range of experiences that resonate with readers and invite deeper reflection on gender issues. Moreover, Siraiki poetry serves as a vital means of fostering social change. It not only raises awareness of the injustices faced by women but also encourages both men and women to take collective responsibility for dismantling oppressive customs. The call for an end to gender-based discrimination resonates strongly within modern poetic expressions, urging society to adopt a more equitable framework in its treatment of all individuals.

As modern poetry continues to evolve, it becomes increasingly important for it to act as a catalyst for dialogue about feminism and women's rights. By amplifying the voices of women and addressing their struggles, Siraiki literature not only enriches the cultural tapestry of the region but also plays a crucial role in inspiring action toward a more just society. Ultimately, the convergence of feminist thought and poetic expression in Siraiki literature underscores the transformative power of art in advocating for social justice and equality, ensuring that the experiences and rights of women remain at the forefront of societal discourse.

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