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**CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE BULLEH SHAH'S
POEM KAR KATTAN WAL DHYAN KURRE (کر کتن ول دھیان کُڑے)**

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Abstract

Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kurre (کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے) is a famous symbolic Kaafi written by the legendary Punjabi Sufi poet Bulleh Shah. This study explores the intersection of spiritual pedagogy and social defiance in Bulleh Shah's iconic poem, "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure" (Focus on Your Spinning, O Girl). Using the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research deconstructs how Shah employs the domestic metaphor of the spinning wheel (Charkha) to challenge the rigid sociopolitical and patriarchal hierarchies of 18th-century Punjab. By repositioning the "domesticated" female figure as a seeker of divine truth, Shah subverts traditional power structures and religious orthodoxy. The analysis reveals how his discourse transforms a simple household chore into a radical act of spiritual resistance and self-actualization. Ultimately, this paper highlights how Bulleh Shah uses vernacular language to democratize mysticism, bridging the gap between the mundane and the metaphysical to incite a silent revolution of the soul.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Punjabi language, Bulleh Shah Poem, Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure.

Introduction

The Poet **Baba Bulleh Shah (1680–1757)** stands as a towering figure in Punjabi Sufi literature, operating within a turbulent period of Mughal decline and intense sectarian strife in 18th-century Punjab. His poetry is not merely devotional; it is a profound discourse of resistance, humanism, and spiritual liberation designed to challenge established social, religious, and patriarchal norms. Through the *Kafi* genre, which blends music with philosophical reflection, Bulleh Shah used local, accessible, and often allegorical language to convey deep mystical truths (Rinehart, 1999).

The poem "**Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure**" (Focus on your spinning, O girl) is a central text within his corpus that utilizes the allegory of the *charkha* (spinning wheel) to address the human soul's neglect of its spiritual duties. The poem is a direct address to the human soul (metaphorically represented as a young girl or *kurri*) by the Divine mentor or conscience. It employs domestic, patriarchal imagery to deliver a message of existential urgency. The *charkha* metaphorically represents the human body and life, while the yarn represents the actions/meditation, and the crooked spindle symbolizes a life misaligned with spiritual purpose. The core message in the poem is that, Bulleh Shah criticizes the ignorance (*agyan*) of focusing on worldly pleasures (*reess*) rather than preparing for the afterlife or the "return home" while the key linguistic features used in the poem as the text utilizes imperative verbs ("Kar" - Do, "Dhyan" - Focus), colloquial Punjabi, and direct address to establish an intimate yet urgent discourse (Ahmad, Farhat & Abbas, 2024).



"**Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure**" is a profound linguistic and spiritual intervention. Through the metaphor of the spinning wheel, Bulleh Shah urges the human being to recognize the transience of life ("Tu sada na paikay rehna aiy" - You are not going to stay at your parents' house forever) and to invest in the soul's journey. This study will demonstrate that the poem is a powerful, subversive discourse that redefines spirituality as an act of inner focus and selfless love rather than empty ritual (Ahmad, Farhat & Abbas, 2024).

Problem Statement

Bulleh Shah's poem "کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے" (Focus on your spinning, girl) uses the domestic metaphor of spinning (*kattan*) as a veil for deeper socio-political and spiritual critique. While traditionally viewed through a purely mystical lens, there is a gap in understanding how the poem functions as a discursive site for challenging the dominant power structures of 18th-century Punjab. The problem lies in the underlying tension between the patriarchal imagery used (the female spinner) and the subversive message of individual accountability and resistance against the religious orthodoxy (*mullahism*) and class hierarchy of the time. This CDA seeks to investigate how Bulleh Shah employs specific linguistic choices and metaphors to deconstruct the "moral" authority of the elite and reposition the marginalized "commoner" as a spiritually superior agent.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of the research are:

- To explore the spiritual symbolism within the poem, specifically interpreting the "Charkha" (spinning wheel) as a metaphor for the human journey, preparation for the afterlife, and devotion to God.
- To analyze the ideological struggle between material desires (materialism) and spiritual awakening, To examine the gendered discourse in the poem, analyzing how Bulleh Shah addresses the soul as a "young girl" (Kure) to highlight themes of responsibility, accountability, and the internalization of Sufi devotion in 18th-century Punjabi society.
- To examine the use of language (metaphor, imagery, and tone) as a means of advocating for unity, equality, and spiritual transformation.

Research Questions

1. Critically analyze the discourse embedded in the Bulleh Shah's famous Punjabi poem Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure (Pay Heed to Your Spinning)?
2. How does Bulleh Shah construct the discourse of spiritual awakening and anti-materialism in the poem to challenge societal norms through the metaphorical language of spinning?

Literature Review

A literature review is a critical analysis and synthesis of existing research on a specific topic. It is not just a summary of what others have said, but a way to organize, evaluate, and identify gaps in current knowledge (Murtaza et al., 2025; Ahmad, Yousaf & Riaz, 2026; Mehmood et al., 2026). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhian Kure" (Pay Attention to Your Spinning, Girl) reveals a complex intersection of spiritual didacticism, social critique, and gendered metaphors. In scholarly literature, the poem is frequently analyzed through the lens of Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, examining how the "text" of spinning serves as a "discursive practice" for soul-cleansing and a "social practice" reflecting the socio-economic realities of 18th-century Punjab (Nayar et al., 2023).

Researchers often highlight Bulleh Shah's use of the spinning wheel (Charkha) as a potent ideological tool. Critics argue that by adopting a female persona (*Kafi* tradition), the poet subverts patriarchal linguistic norms to address the soul's vulnerability. Literature suggests that the "spinning" is a metaphor for *Amal* (deeds); the discourse shifts from a domestic chore to a cosmic responsibility, challenging the idle elite and emphasizing spiritual egalitarianism. Furthermore, CDA studies point out that Shah's language bridges the gap between the sacred and the profane, using everyday "low-prestige" vernacular to dismantle the "high-prestige" religious hegemony of his time. By analyzing the power dynamics between the 'Spinner' (the seeker) and the 'Merchant' (the Divine), scholars conclude that the poem functions as a counter-discourse against materialism and ritualistic hypocrisy.

Previous Related Studies

- Ahmad, (2021). A Comparative Translation Study of the Poem "Ik Nuqtay Wich Gal Mukdi Aey" by Bulleh Shah, Translated by Kartar Singh Duggal and Suman Kashyap.
- Ali, Ashraf & Tahseen. (2022). An analysis of Literary Culture in Pakistan in the light of Sufi Kalam 'Tere Ishaq Nachayaa by Baba Bulleh Shah.
- Bashir & Aziz. (2023). A Stylistic Analysis of Bulleh Shah's Poem 'It's All in One Contained' 'اک نقطے وچ گل مُکدی اے'.
- Ahmad, Farhat & Abbas, (2024). Critical Discourse Analysis of Bulleh Shah's Poetry.
- Shafique, Raza & Baber. (2025). Analysis of Translation Techniques in the English Version of Bulleh Shah's Poem "Bullah Ki Jana Mn Kon" Translated by Parvez Iqbal Anjum.
- Zafar, Honey & Wasif. (2025). Bulleh Shah's Poem "Apna Das Thikana" Through the Lense of Nida's Equivalence Model.

But there is no single research conducted on this valuable poem, consequently the researchers decided to fill this gap by using following methodology.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is the systematic, theoretical "blueprint" used to conduct research, outlining how data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted to answer specific questions. It justifies the choice of methods (e.g., surveys, experiments) to ensure study validity and credibility. It focuses on the "how-to" rather than just the "what" of a research project (Rao et al., 2023; Ahmad et al., 2025; Ahmad, Yousaf & Yousaf, 2026; Yousaf Ahmad & Riaz, 2026). To conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis of Bulleh Shah's poem need a framework that connects the linguistic choices to the broader social, spiritual, and patriarchal structures of 18th-century Punjab. This study will use a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical research design. It focuses on interpreting the "hidden" meanings and power dynamics within the text rather than just the literal translation. The data was collected from the secondary sources, scholarly translations, and historical accounts of the Mughal era's decline, and existing literature on Sufi semiotics. For this research researchers used the most effective model for this analysis is Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model. It allows you to analyze the

poem at three levels, the first one is the text description it analyzes the formal properties of the text, such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and structure. It focuses on how language is used in the text. The second is the discursive practice interpretation it focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of the text. It examines how the text is created and interpreted within a specific context. The third is the social practice explanation it examines the broader social, ideological, and power structures that shape and are shaped by the discourse. It explores the societal implications of the text.

Research Findings

Table 1

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 1	Stanza 2	Stanza 3
نیت مَتِیں دیندی ما ، دھیا کیوں پھرنی این اینویں ، آ دھیا نہ شرم حیا نوں گوا دھیا توں کدی تاں سمجھ ندان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	چرخہ مفت تیرے ہتھ آیا پائیوں نہیں گُجھ کھول گوا یا نہیوں قدر محنت دا پایا جد بویا کم آسان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	چرخہ بنیا خاطر تیری کھیٹن دی کر حرص تھوری ہونا نہیوں ہور وڈیری مت کر کوئی اگیان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 1:

In the first stanza of the poem Bulleh Shah employs a symbolic discourse that uses the domestic activity of spinning thread (kattan) as a metaphor for spiritual preparation and moral diligence. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lens, the text reveals a didactic power dynamic where the "mother" represents the divine conscience or spiritual guide (Murshid), providing constant counsel (Nit mateen dendi ma) to a soul that is portrayed as "innocent" yet "negligent" (nadan kure). This discourse highlights the urgency of the human journey and the societal expectation of "sharam haya" (modesty/grace), which the poet recontextualizes from a gendered social norm into a spiritual necessity for salvation. The repetitive refrain "Kar kattan wal dhayan kure" (Pay heed to your spinning) serves as a resistive discourse against worldly distractions, framing the "spinning wheel" (charkha) as a symbol for life itself a gift given without cost that must be utilized with care before the "departure" to the afterlife. Ultimately, the poem challenges the individual's "ego and pride" (shan guman) by emphasizing that spiritual success requires active, humble labor rather than aimless wandering.

Stanza 2:

In the second stanza of the poem Bulleh Shah employs a discourse of purification and spiritual labor to critique the human tendency toward complacency and vanity. Using the Charkha (spinning wheel) as a central metaphor for the human body or life itself, he highlights a power dynamic between the "gift" of existence and the "responsibility" of spiritual merit. The line "چرخہ مفت تیرے ہتھ آیا" (The spinning wheel came to your hand for free) serves as a discursive tool to deconstruct the ego; by emphasizing that life was granted without personal cost (palliyan nahin kujh khol gawayya), the poet exposes the subject's failure to value the effort (mehnat) required for spiritual growth. This discourse challenges the reader's self-perception, moving from a position of "pride and self-ego" (shaan guman) to one of urgent accountability (dhyān). By adopting a feminine voice, Bulleh Shah subverts traditional patriarchal structures to address the soul directly, framing the act of "spinning" as the essential work of earning divine grace before returning to the "Creator". Ultimately, the text functions as a critique of societal and spiritual negligence, warning that once this "easy" opportunity of life passes, such a unique vessel (aisa charkha) cannot be crafted again.

Stanza 3:

In the third stanza of the poem Bulleh Shah employs the discourse of spiritual wake-up call, employing the Charkha (spinning wheel) as a central metaphor for the human body and life itself. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lens, the poet challenges worldly ignorance (agyan) by subverting the domestic imagery of spinning—traditionally a woman's chore—into a rigorous

spiritual labor necessary for the "afterlife" or the "in-laws' house". The lines "چرخہ بنیا خاطر تیری" (the wheel was made for you) and "کھیٹن دی کر حرص تھوری" (reduce your greed for play) establish a power dynamic between the ephemeral world and the eternal soul, urging the seeker to abandon superficial distractions (khedan) in favor of meaningful deeds (kattan). By addressing the soul as a "girl" (kure), Bulleh Shah utilizes a common Sufi discursive practice of adopting a feminine voice to symbolize humility, vulnerability, and devotion before the Divine. Ultimately, the discourse critiques social complacency and ideological blindness, framing spiritual discipline not as an option, but as an urgent necessity before the "ignorance" of youth fades and the inevitable journey home begin.

Table 2

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 4	Stanza 5	Stanza 6
چرخہ تیرا رنگ رنگیلا ریس کریندا سبھ قبیلہ چلدے چارے کر لے حیلہ بو گھر دے وچ آوادان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	اس چرخے دی قیمت بھاری توں کیہہ جانیں قدر گواری اچی نظر پھریں ہنکاری وچ اپنے شان گمان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	میں گوکاں کر کھلیاں باہیں نہ ہو غافل سمجھ کداہیں ایسا چرخہ گھڑنا ناہیں پھیر کسے ترکھان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 4:

In the fourth stanza of the poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure" (Pay Heed to Your Spinning), Baba Bulleh Shah employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lens to challenge social complacency and religious hypocrisy through everyday domestic metaphors. The "charkha" (spinning wheel) serves as a central symbol for the human life span and the soul's labor, where the act of "spinning" represents the accumulation of good deeds and spiritual devotion. By addressing the soul as a "young girl" (kure) who must prepare her dowry (virtues) before moving to her in-laws' house (the afterlife), Bulleh Shah subverts patriarchal domesticity to emphasize individual spiritual accountability over empty communal pride. The phrase "Rees karinda sabh qabeela" (The whole tribe envies/imitates you) critiques the deceptive nature of social status and "shan guman" (egoistic pride), suggesting that worldly admiration is a distraction from the urgent, "backbreaking" work of self-purification. Ultimately, the discourse shifts the power from external rituals to internal "hilla" (effort/strategy), warning that if the soul remains "ghafil" (negligent), it will face "wakht akalli" (difficult times alone) when the temporal "charkha" can no longer be repaired.

Stanza 5:

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of these verses from Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure" reveals a profound subversion of social hierarchies through spiritual metaphor. By using the spinning wheel (Charkha) as an allegory for human life and the soul's work, Bulleh Shah challenges the power dynamics of vanity and materialism that define the "ignorant" and "haughty" (hankaari). The discourse shifts from a mundane domestic instruction to a moral critique: the speaker's "high gaze" (uchi nazar) represents a social and spiritual ego that blind them to the true "worth" (qadar) of their existence. Through CDA, we see Bulleh Shah positioning the "spinning" of virtuous deeds as a form of resistance against the temporary status and pride (shaan gumaan) of the material world, ultimately advocating for a democratization of spiritual value over inherited or worldly ran

Stanza 6:

In this passage from Bulleh Shah's Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure, the discourse functions as a profound spiritual ultimatum, utilizing the domestic allegory of cotton-spinning to critique human negligence. From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, the poet subverts the traditional power dynamic of a mother lecturing a daughter to represent the Divine warning the human soul. The "open arms" (khulliyān baahin) symbolize an urgent, final call to consciousness, stripping away

the comfort of ignorance (ghafil). By asserting that "such a spinning wheel (charkha) will never be crafted again," Bulleh Shah uses existential discourse to frame human life as a non-renewable gift and a singular opportunity for spiritual labor. The mention of the "carpenter" (tarkhan) challenges the ego's sense of permanence, situating the human body as a temporary vessel that cannot be repaired or replaced once the "time of spinning" (earthly life) has ended.

Table 3

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 7	Stanza 8	Stanza 9
ایہہ چرخہ توں کیوں گویا کیوں توں کھیہ دے وچ رلایا جد دا ہتھ تیرے ایہہ آیا توں کدے نہ ڈابیا آن کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	یت مٹیں دیاں ولئی توں اس بھولی، کملی، جھلی توں جد پوسی وکھت اکلے توں تد ہا با کرسی جان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	کمڈھوں دی تون رجک وٹونی گوہڑیوں نہ توں گنتی پونی ہن کیوں پھرنی این نموں جھونی کس دا کریں گمان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 7:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of these verses from Bulleh Shah's "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure" reveals a layered socio-spiritual critique that uses gendered metaphors to challenge human negligence and ego. The Charkha (spinning wheel) serves as a primary symbol for human life and the body, a divine gift "obtained for free" that the seeker has squandered or "mixed with dust" through worldly distraction. By adopting a feminine persona (Kure / girl), Bulleh Shah positions the human soul in a state of vulnerability and domestic duty, framing spiritual devotion as the "spinning" of virtuous deeds necessary for the "afterlife dowry". The discourse critiques the "arrogance" (guman) of those who hold their heads high while failing to perform the essential internal work of self-purification, using the "mother's" advisory voice to represent the urgent, guiding wisdom of a spiritual mentor. Ultimately, the text exposes the tension between temporal vanity and the inevitable spiritual accountability that follows a life of "forgetfulness".

Stanza 8:

In his poem Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure, Baba Bulleh Shah employs a critical discourse that bridges the domestic and the divine, using the metaphor of a young girl spinning thread to represent the soul's preparation for the afterlife. In these specific lines, the discourse shifts toward a cautionary and transformative tone, addressing the human ego—the bhooli, kamli, jhali (innocent, mad, and obsessed) soul—that remains distracted by worldly "play" and material greed. By highlighting the soul's current state of agyan (ignorance), Bulleh Shah critiques the societal preoccupation with vanity and status (shan guman). The discourse emphasizes a sense of impending isolation and accountability (jad posi wakhat ikalli nu), warning that when the moment of departure arrives, worldly arrogance will transform into desperate lamentation (ha ha kursi jaan). Ultimately, this passage functions as a call for spiritual purification and the annihilation of the self-ego, urging the individual to refocus on their "spinning"—their internal spiritual work—before the opportunity to create a "virtuous dowry" for the divine home is lost.

Stanza 9:

In the poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure" by Bulleh Shah, the spinning wheel (Charkha) serves as a central metaphor for the human life and the soul's preparation for the afterlife. A critical discourse analysis reveals that Bulleh Shah uses common domestic imagery—traditionally associated with women's labor—to critique the ego and spiritual negligence. In these specific lines, the poet addresses the soul as a young girl who has failed to "spin" any yarn, symbolizing a life spent without performing good deeds or spiritual devotion. By questioning why she wanders with a "bowed head" yet still holds onto pride, the discourse highlights a tension between material vanity and spiritual poverty. The text functions as a moral exhortation, urging the reader to focus on the "essential work" of the soul before facing the "hardships" of the metaphorical in-laws' house (the afterlife).

Ultimately, the discourse challenges the hypocrisy of social status by emphasizing that true worth is found in humility and divine love rather than worldly arrogance.

Table 4

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 10	Stanza 11	Stanza 12
<p>نہ تکلا راس کراو نہ بایڑ ماہل پواو کیوں گھڑی مڑی چرخہ چاو توں کرنی این اپنا زیان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے</p>	<p>ڈنگا تکلا راس کرا لے نال شتابی بایڑ پوا لے جیونکر وگے نیویں وگا لے مت کر کوئی اگیان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے</p>	<p>اج گھر نویں کیاہ کڑے توں جھب جھب ویلنا ڈاہ کڑے رُوں ویل، پنجاون جاہ کڑے پھیر کل نہ تیرا جان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے</p>

Stanza 10:

In the verses from Baba Bulleh Shah's poem Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals a complex intersection of spiritual instruction and gendered metaphors. Bulleh Shah utilizes a discourse of purification and spiritual discipline, where the act of spinning (kattan) serves as an allegory for the constant remembrance of the Divine (Zikr). By addressing the soul as a young girl (kure) who is failing to maintain her spinning wheel (charkha)—neglecting the spindle (takla) and the drive-band (mahal)—the poet constructs a narrative of spiritual negligence and self-inflicted loss (ziyan). From a feminist CDA perspective, this reflects a "male-female voice" paradox; while Bulleh Shah subverts social hierarchies by adopting a marginalized feminine persona to express humility and devotion, he simultaneously reinforces patriarchal tropes of domesticity and "passive femininity" by framing spiritual success through the lens of a "good" girl's household diligence. Ultimately, the discourse operates to critique ego and worldly distraction, urging the seeker to "straighten the crooked spindle" of their inner self before the opportunity for salvation is lost.

Stanza 11:

In his poem Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure, Bulleh Shah utilizes a critical discourse that challenges worldly ignorance and spiritual complacency through the metaphor of a young girl spinning at a wheel. The specific verses—"Dinga takla raas kara lay / Naal shitabi bayr pua lay" (Fix the crooked spindle / Quickly put the driving band in place)—function as a call to rectify one's character and align the soul with divine purpose before time runs out. By instructing the girl to "Jiunkar wagay tiwen waga lay" (Keep it spinning however it works), the discourse emphasizes pragmatic perseverance and spiritual focus over material perfection or vanity. The concluding warning, "Mat kar koi agyan kure" (Do not remain in ignorance, O girl), highlights a power dynamic between the enlightened guide and the oblivious soul, critiquing the social and spiritual "agyan" (ignorance) that prevents individuals from preparing for the "afterlife" or union with the divine. This discourse transforms a mundane domestic task into a profound act of spiritual resistance against the ego and societal distractions.

Stanza 12:

In his poem Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure, Baba Bulleh Shah employs a critical discourse that challenges worldly negligence by using the domestic metaphor of cotton-spinning as a site of spiritual labor and accountability. In the specific lines provided—"Today there is new cotton in the house, quickly set up your spinning wheel"—the "new cotton" (nawin kapah) symbolizes the fresh opportunity of human life or the current moment of existence, while the "spinning wheel" (veilna/charkha) represents the human body and breath. The urgent command to "quickly set up" the wheel serves as a discursive intervention against the procrastination of the soul, warning that "tomorrow your life will not remain" (pher kal na tera jaan kure). By addressing the soul in a feminine voice (kure), Bulleh Shah subverts traditional power dynamics, placing the agency for salvation directly on the individual's "spinning" or meditative deeds. This discourse moves from the

mundane to the metaphysical, framing the act of spinning as a necessary preparation for the inevitable "departure" to the "in-laws' house," a culturally grounded allegory for the afterlife and divine judgment.

Table 5

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 13	Stanza 14	Stanza 15
جدوں رُوں پنجا لیاویں گی وچ سیاں پُونیاں پاویں گی مڑ آپے ای پنی بھاویں گی وچ سارے جگ جہاں کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	تیرے نال دیاں سبھ سیاں نی کت پُونیاں سبھناں لِنیاں نی تینوں بیٹھی نوں پچھے پَنیاں نی کیوں بیٹھی این ہُن حیران کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	دیوا اپنے پاس جگاویں کت کت سوت بھروٹھے پاویں اگھیں وچوں رات لنگھاویں اوکھی کر کے جان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 13:

In this excerpt from "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyān Kure," Bulleh Shah employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to challenge worldly vanity through the metaphor of spinning cotton. The "carding of the soul" (rūn pinja) represents a violent but necessary deconstruction of the ego, shifting the discourse from physical appearance to spiritual readiness. By addressing the soul as a young girl (Kure), the poem subverts traditional societal expectations of beauty; instead of external adornments, her "attractiveness" (bhāvein gī) is redefined as the purity attained through divine labor. The "eyes of the world" (sāre jag jahān) serve as the critical audience, representing a social shift where status is no longer derived from material wealth, but from the disciplined preparation of one's spiritual "dowry." Bulleh Shah ultimately uses this domestic imagery to dismantle hierarchical pride, suggesting that true social and spiritual validation comes only through internal transformation and humility.

Stanza 14:

In "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyān Kure," Bulleh Shah uses a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lens to challenge social and spiritual complacency by subverting the traditional domestic imagery of a young girl at a spinning wheel. The specific lines ("Your companions have all prepared their cotton, while you sit in bewildered idleness") function as a sociolinguistic critique of the human soul's failure to perform the "labor" required for the afterlife. By addressing the soul in a feminine voice—a common Sufi trope—Shah deconstructs the power dynamic between the divine "Master" and the earthly "Servant," framing the lack of spiritual "dowry" (good deeds) not just as a personal failure, but as a loss of status among one's peers. The discourse shifts from simple domestic advice to a biting critique of religious hypocrisy and existential procrastination, urging a move away from external rituals toward an urgent, inner self-realization before the "wedding" (death) arrives.

Stanza 15:

In Bulleh Shah's poem Kar Kattan Wal Dhayan Kure ("Pay Attention to Your Spinning, Girl"), these verses use the domestic metaphor of a young girl spinning yarn to deliver a powerful spiritual and sociological discourse. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the "lamp" (dewa) serves as a symbol of divine guidance or self-awareness that must remain lit to ward off the darkness of ignorance. The act of "spinning yarn" (kat kat soot) represents the continuous accumulation of virtuous deeds or spiritual "capital" needed for the eventual journey to the "husband's house" (the afterlife or divine union). The instruction to "pass the night with open eyes" (akheen wichon raat langhawain) constructs a discourse of vigilance, urging the soul to transcend the "sleep" of worldly negligence, even when such discipline is "hard on the soul" (okhi kar ke jan). Ultimately, this passage challenges the audience to prioritize spiritual labor over the fleeting pleasures of material life, framing self-sacrifice and constant mindfulness as the only means to achieve spiritual liberation.

Table 6

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 16	Stanza 17	Stanza 18
ایہہ پیکا راج دن چار کڑے نہ کھیڈو کھیڈ گزار کڑے نہ ربو ویہلی ، کر کار کڑے گھر بار نہ کر ویران کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	توں سئیاں رین گزار نہیں مڑ آونا دوجی وار نہیں پھر بہنا ایس بہنڈار نہیں وچ اگو جیڈے بان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	توں سدا نہ پیکے رہنا این نہ پاس امری دے بہنا این بھا! انت وچھوڑا سہنا این وس پئیں گی سس ننان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 16:

In Baba Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure," the specific verses—"This rule in your parents' home lasts only four days; do not waste your time in idle play; do not remain idle, do your work; do not let your home become desolate"—function as a critical discourse on the transience of worldly existence. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the "parents' home" (peyka) symbolizes the temporary material world, while the "in-laws' home" (sahure) represents the eternal afterlife. The discourse shifts from a literal domestic instruction to a spiritual imperative, where the act of "spinning" (kattan) serves as an allegory for performing good deeds and spiritual purification. By framing idleness as a threat that "desolates" one's true home, Bulleh Shah critiques the human tendency toward spiritual negligence and worldly attachment, positioning the soul as a "bride" who must prepare her "dowry" of virtues before the inevitable journey to the Divine.

Stanza 17:

Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Val Dhyan Kure" functions as a radical socio-spiritual critique of human negligence and the illusion of permanence. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lens, the verses you highlighted challenge the "discourse of procrastination" by framing time as a non-renewable commodity. By using the phrase "Murr aana duji vaar nahi" (There is no second coming), Shah deconstructs the comfort of worldly delays, positioning the present moment as the only site of agency. The imagery of the "Bhandaar" (the gathering or marketplace of life) serves as a metaphor for a transient social structure where everyone is of the same "age" or "status" (han) in the eyes of mortality. This levels all social hierarchies, suggesting that regardless of earthly standing, the failure to "spin" (perform soulful work) leads to an irreversible loss. Ultimately, the text exerts a counter-hegemonic pressure on the reader to wake up from a metaphorical sleep, asserting that spiritual poverty is a direct result of falling for the deceptive safety of worldly routines.

Stanza 18:

In this stanza from Bulleh Shah's poem Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure, the discourse functions as a sharp socio-cultural critique of human negligence through the extended metaphor of a bride's transition from her parental home (peeke) to her in-laws (sas, nanan). By utilizing a gendered lens, the text naturalizes the patriarchal inevitability of "separation" (vachoor) and the harsh arrival at a demanding new household, which critically represents the soul's eventual departure from the material world to face divine accountability. The discursive shift from the comfort of the mother's presence (amari) to the authoritative figures of the mother-in-law and sister-in-law creates a power dynamic that reinforces the urgency of "spinning" (kattan)—a metaphor for spiritual preparation and good deeds. This framing exposes a social ideology where worth is tied to productivity and preparedness, warning that the "playful" negligence of the present will lead to inevitable suffering if one remains "ignorant" (agyaan) of their ultimate destination.

Table 7

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 19	Stanza 20	Stanza 21
کت لے نی کجھ، کتا لے نی بُن تانی تند انا لے نی ٹوں اپنا داج رنگا لے نی ٹوں تد بوسیں پردھان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	جد گھر بیگانے جاویں گی مڑ وت نہ اوتھوں آویں گی اوتھے جا کے پچھوں تاویں گی گجھ اگدوں کر سمیان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	اج ایڈا تیرا کم کڑے گیوں ہوئی این توں بے غم کڑے کیہہ کر لینا اُس دم کڑے جد گھر ائے مہمان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 19:

In this stanza from Baba Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyhan Kure," the discourse operates through a complex layering of domestic metaphors that critique the human soul's spiritual negligence. By employing the feminine voice of a young girl spinning thread, Bulleh Shah subverts traditional gendered labor to highlight a universal existential crisis: the lack of "provision" for the afterlife. The repetitive imperative to "spin something" (kat lay ni kujh) functions as a discursive strategy of urgency, framing time as a finite material that must be converted into spiritual merit (daaj or dowry) before the soul departs its earthly "parent's home" (peka) for the "in-laws" of the divine realm. The mention of becoming a "leader" (peradhan) if the dowry is colored (daaj ranga lay) critiques social hierarchies by suggesting that true status and "authority" are not inherited through caste or class, but earned through the labor of self-purification and devotion. Ultimately, the discourse reveals a tension between worldly "ignorance" and the necessity of "internal understanding," where the spinning wheel (charkha) serves as the site of both bodily struggle and spiritual liberation.

Stanza 20:

In a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of these verses from Bulleh Shah's "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyhan Kure," the poet employs a gendered allegorical framework to challenge worldly materialism and highlight spiritual urgency. By addressing a young girl (kure) and using the metaphors of a parent's home (paika) versus a stranger's/in-law's house (begane ghar), Bulleh Shah creates a binary between temporal earthly existence and the irreversible transition to the afterlife. The discourse shifts from the comfort of the familiar to the "stranger's house," symbolizing the soul's inevitable departure from the world to meet the Divine. The warning that "you will never return" establishes a discourse of spiritual finality, while the instruction to "prepare in advance" (agdon kar samyan) reframes the cultural tradition of a bride's dowry as the accumulation of righteous deeds and divine love. Ultimately, Bulleh Shah uses the social hardships often faced by women—such as leaving home and enduring the strictness of in-laws—as a vehicle to critique human vanity and emphasize the necessity of inner purification before the "wedding" with the Creator.

Stanza 21:

In these verses from Baba Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyhan Kure," a critical discourse analysis reveals a powerful subversion of traditional domestic roles to convey a spiritual and social warning. By addressing the soul as a young girl ("Kure") negligent of her spinning, the poet employs the spinning wheel ("Charkha") as a central metaphor for the human body and the "thread" of good deeds required for the afterlife. The lines "Aj adda tera kam kure" (today your work is half-done) and "Kyun hoi ain tu be-gham kure" (why are you so carefree) function as a critique of human complacency and the ego's distraction by material pursuits. The discourse shifts from a domestic setting to an existential one with the mention of the "Mehman" (guest), a common Sufi symbol for death or the divine messenger, posing a rhetorical challenge: what will you have prepared when accountability arrives?. Ultimately, the text resists the era's rigid social structures by suggesting that true worth is not found in status or outward vanity, but in the "spinning" of internal spiritual purification and readiness for the inevitable transition beyond the material world.

Table 8

کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 22	Stanza 23	Stanza 24
جد سبھ سیان تر جاون گیان پھیر اوتھوں مول نہ اون گیان آچرخے مول نہ ڈابون گیان تیرا ترنجن پیا ویران کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	کر مان نہ حُسن جوانی دا پردیس نہ رہن سیلانی دا کوئی دنیا جھوٹھی فانی دا نہ رہسی نام نشان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے	اک اوکھا ویلا آوے گا سبھ ساک سین بھج جاوے گا کر مدد پار لنگھاوے گا اوہ بُلھے دا سلطان کڑے کر کتن ول دھیان کڑے

Stanza 22:

In this stanza from Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure, Bulleh Shah employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to challenge the materialist delusions of the ego by deconstructing the social and temporal structures of village life. By using the "Trinjan" (the communal spinning circle) as a metaphor for the worldly assembly, he highlights the power imbalance between human agency and inevitable mortality. The "spinning" represents the performative labor of the soul; the "Saiyaan" (companions) departing signifies the dissolution of social identity and the collective. His discourse shifts from the communal to the individual—"Tera Trinjan piya veeran" (Your circle lies desolate)—to expose the fragility of worldly belonging. Through this lens, the poem functions as a counter-discourse against vanity, urging the subject to recognize that social status and companionship are fleeting constructs, eventually silenced by the "desolation" of the afterlife where worldly tools (the spinning wheel) lose their utility.

Stanza 23:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of these specific lines from Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure reveals a powerful subversion of worldly vanity through the lens of spiritual urgency. By employing a moralizing discourse, the poet (Bulleh Shah) dismantles the social and physical constructs of "beauty" (husn) and "youth" (jawani), framing them not as assets, but as deceptive "veils" (parda) that distract from the ultimate reality. The lexical choice of sailani (traveler/tourist) and pardes (foreign land) establishes a metaphorical framework where the material world is presented as a temporary, alien space rather than a permanent home. By stripping away the permanence of one's "name and sign" (naam nishan), the discourse challenges the human ego and the social hierarchies built upon lineage or physical prowess. Ultimately, the text functions as a counter-hegemonic critique of materialism, using the inevitability of death (fani) to shift the power dynamic from the external, social self to the internal, spiritual laborer.

Stanza 24:

This stanza from Bulleh Shah's Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure serves as a profound memento mori, utilizing a critical discourse that juxtaposes the temporary nature of material kinship with the permanence of divine intervention. By warning of a "difficult time" (okha vela)—a metaphor for the moment of death or ultimate spiritual reckoning—Bulleh Shah disrupts the comfort of worldly identities, asserting that all social and biological ties (sakh sain) will inevitably fail the individual. The discourse shifts from this isolation to a plea for the "Sultan of Bulleh" (his spiritual guide, Shah Inayat), positioning the Murshid as the only force capable of navigating the soul through existential crises. The recurring command to "focus on your spinning" (kar kattan wal dhyan) functions as an allegorical imperative: the "spinning" represents the accumulation of righteous deeds and spiritual remembrance (zikr) required for the soul's "dowry" in the afterlife. Ultimately, the text challenges the reader's complacency by framing life as a finite period of labor where only internal devotion, rather than external relationships, offers true salvation.

Discussion

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Wal Dhyan Kure" (Focus on your spinning, girl) reveals a profound subversion of social hierarchies and gendered labor to

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critique spiritual negligence. In the discussion of this text, the "spinning wheel" (charkha) acts as a central metaphor for the human soul's earthly conduct and the preparation for the afterlife. Bulleh Shah employs a paternal yet challenging discursive tone, addressing the soul as a young woman tasked with preparing her dowry. Through CDA, we see that he isn't merely reinforcing traditional domestic roles, but rather utilizing the socio-cultural "common sense" of 18th-century Punjab to communicate a radical spiritual urgency. The "dowry" represents the accumulation of good deeds; by failing to spin (meditate/act righteously), the subject faces social shame (divine rejection).

Furthermore, the poem deconstructs the power dynamics between the material world and the divine. Bulleh Shah uses the language of the marginalized—the domestic sphere of women—to bypass the rigid, patriarchal structures of the religious orthodoxy of his time. The "discussion" in a CDA framework highlights how he bridges the gap between the mundane and the metaphysical. He suggests that the "Self" is in a state of constant ideological struggle against "Ghaflat" (negligence). By framing spiritual practice as "work" (kattan), he democratizes holiness, suggesting that salvation is not found in elite scholarly discourse but in the rhythmic, disciplined devotion of the common individual. Ultimately, the poem functions as a counter-discourse to worldly vanity, urging a shift in focus from the transitory "fairground" of life to the permanent reality of the Divine encounter.

Conclusion

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Bulleh Shah's poem "Kar Kattan Val Dhian Kure" (Focus on your spinning, girl) reveals a profound subversion of eighteenth-century sociopolitical and patriarchal structures. Through the central metaphor of the spinning wheel (charkha), Bulleh Shah deconstructs the traditional power dynamics between the Creator and the created, as well as the individual and the state. He uses everyday domestic discourse to mask a radical call for spiritual autonomy and resistance against institutionalized religious orthodoxy. By addressing the soul as a "young girl," he challenges the masculine ego and suggests that true liberation is found not through the performative rituals sanctioned by the elite, but through the humble, continuous labor of self-purification. Ultimately, the poem functions as a counter-discourse that empowers the marginalized the commoners and the seekers by democratizing the path to divine union and critiquing the material distractions of a volatile, feudal society.

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