

**TALES OF MULLA NASRUDDIN IN C.I.S. COUNTRIES OF THE SILK ROAD  
REGION AND INDIA: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY**

**(Рассказы Моллы Насреддина в Странах С.Н.Г. в Районе Шёлкового Пути и в  
Индии: Социолингвистическое Исследование)**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Submitted by

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**DECLARATION**

I, Mona Agnihotri, hereby declare that this research work titled – “**Tales of Mulla Nasruddin in C.I.S. Countries of the Silk Road Region and India: A Sociolinguistic Study**” submitted to the Centre of Russian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University is my original work under the guidance of Prof. Manu Mittal. I also declare that this research work has not been submitted before this or any other University in part or full for acquiring any Award, Degree, Diploma or Fellowship.

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We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Dedicated to*

*Satya Kumar Pandey,*

*who has been the wind beneath my wings*

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**Prof. Meeta Narain**

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**Mona Agnihotri**

# ABSTRACT

This study has tried to attempt a sociolinguistic analysis of folktales, namely Mulla Nasruddin tales, from a socio-cultural perspective in countries of India, Russia and Central Asia with India as the base for these folktales.

This study has also tried to carry out a comparative and contrastive study of Mulla Nasruddin tales with relation to the Silk Road and the countries that are connected via the Silk Road since ancient times, focusing on India, Russia and the Central Asian countries of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The purpose is to find the role played by the legendary Silk Road in spreading Mulla Nasruddin tales from its country of origin Turkey to other Silk Road countries directly or indirectly connected to each-other via the Silk Road, concentrating on India, Russia and Central Asia.

The main reason for concentrating on these selected countries is due to the fact that studying these tales in all the Silk Road countries would have made this topic vast. Hence, emphasis has been placed on India, since this research topic belongs to India, Russia, since this research topic is approved by the Centre of Russian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Central Asian countries. And, these countries were also chosen because Mulla Nasruddin tales are found to be more popular in these countries after Turkey. The tales of Mulla Nasruddin which belong to Turkey has been taken as a reference point.

The Hypothesis that Silk Road played a role in spreading the tales of Mulla Nasruddin has been tested and proven. The other objective which was to find the possibility of implementation of Mulla Nasruddin tales in foreign language teaching especially in Russian language teaching has also been established. These tales may enrich the learning experience in courses of Russian language for the beginners in form of understanding Russian grammar better in an easy way, especially Russian verbs of motion, and teaching of *Izlozheniye* (Comprehension) which teaches a beginner to speak in Russian by means of listening to a short story a few times and then narrating it in his/her own words and these tales also help in improving the reading skills of the beginners as these tales employ simple language which are mostly in form of dialogues and are short in content.

## **Key words:**

Silk Road, Mulla Nasruddin tales, India, Russia, Central Asian countries.

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# INTRODUCTION

*“This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;  
And to do that well craves a kind of wit:  
He must observe their mood, on whom he jests,  
The quality of persons, and the time,  
And, like the haggard, check at every feather  
That comes before his eye. This is a practice  
As full of labour as a wise man’s art  
For folly that he wisely shows is fit;  
But wise men, folly – fall’n, quite taint their wit.”<sup>1</sup>*

Viola: in *“Twelfth Night or What You Will.”*  
Act III, Scene I  
- William Shakespeare

From time immemorial, folklore has been a way of life for people all over the world; long before the time of written texts. Folklore as a subject is vast. It includes folktales, legends, music, oral history, even traditions and customs and people's belief systems and much more. Defining the realm of folklore is like trying to fathom the inner depth of an ocean – it is fascinating but near impossible.

In today's tech-savvy world, one might think that folklore is a long-lost field. But, it is not so. Folklore still has a special place in society. Folklore keeps growing and developing like a living organism. To quote Ajeet Cour and Noor Zaheer - *“...folklore can never be static. It has to be a flowing river, ever changing and ever growing. It has to be continuously moving, and that is why events of today turn into the folklore of tomorrow.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, Act III, Scene I, 7 May 2015, <[http://shakespeare.mit.edu/twelfth\\_night/full.html](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/twelfth_night/full.html)>.

<sup>2</sup> Ajeet Cour, and Noor Zaheer, ed. *Folklore: Stagnant Ponds Flowing Rivers*, (New Delhi: Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature, 2011) 13.



One of the popular branches of folklore is folktales which are different types of traditional stories. Every country, every culture of the world has its folktales, and they are still popular and taught to children by their grandparents, parents or teachers or in any other form. Hence, one way or another each one of us grows up listening to these tales and in turn teaches and passes them on to our children and in this way the folktales are kept alive. It will not be inappropriate to assume that folktales in the broad sense may be termed as 'a way of life'; as Professor Varyam Singh once very aptly pointed out that – "*Folktale is Life and Life is a Folktale.*"<sup>3</sup>

The word '*folk*' means people, and so folktale in its broadest sense will mean '*tales about people.*' But, defining the word '*folktale*' is not as simple. There are a lot of viewpoints and many definitions of folktale, which this research topic does not discuss. In general, it may be said that folktale is mostly an oral tradition. It spreads through human contact. Folktales were written down much later. As populations travel and migrate from one place to another, so does their folktale.

When mention is made about traveling and migration, it may be said that the most important travel route of the ancient world was the Silk Road. It was an imaginary road connecting almost three continents – Asia, Europe and Africa (the Northern part). The Silk Road was earlier considered to be a trade route, but after much research and debates, now it is generally agreed upon that it was not only a trade route, but a road via which major religions travelled and spread from one place to another, a road via which cultural, literary, architectural, and many more kinds of exchanges took place. It was a road that carried people of one country to another – some of whom settled in other countries and created their blend of social and cultural life; some of whom visited other countries and wrote extensively about their experiences. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveler's travelogues are a good example of this kind. It is said that when people read his book about the wonders of the exotic lands and people that he visited, they did not believe him. Till his last breath, Marco Polo kept insisting that whatever he wrote was true. What he failed to do in his lifetime, his death did it for him, for people curious to test his version of the truth started to explore these exotic new places.

As for the brief history of the Silk Road, the following may be mentioned. In ancient times one of the biggest medium of migration of people was the 'Silk Road.' The 'Silk Road' is an imaginary trade route of immense historical value. It came into prominence somewhere in the

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<sup>3</sup> Prof. Varyam Singh's lecture on Folklore, delivered at International Conference – Folklore: Reinventing Past through Folk Traditions, organized by Centre of Russian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 23, 24 & 25 October 2013.

second to first century B.C. during the time of Han Dynasty that ruled over China from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D. This trade route is known as ‘*Silk*’ Road because of the lucrative silk trade that was carried out via this road from China to other countries. Eventually, not only trade flourished along this route, exchanges of culture, religion, literature, art and architecture also took place. Almost all major forms of religion spread through this route namely, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and others.

The Silk Road is one of the reasons that culturally and geographically diverse countries to this date have similar architecture, literary, art and craft forms, and cuisine. These exchanges took place as a result of travel of population along the Silk Road from one country to another. Travelers like Fa-Hien, Huen-Tsang, Zhang-Qian, I-Tsing from China; Ibn-Battuta from Morocco in Africa; Alberuni from Arab; Bairam Khan (who was the father of the great poet-saint Rahim) from Tajikistan (Badakhshan) to Mughal court in India; Mirza Ghalib whose family was from a line of Aibak Turks and later settled in Uzbekistan (Samarkand) to Mughal court in India and many more brought with them their culture and took away some of the other cultures to their lands. This created a "common Silk Road culture" in these countries, as described by Dr. Konuralp Ercilasun in his paper called – ‘**Silk Road as a Sub-Global Region: A Sphere Emerging from the Interaction of Cultural and Economic Fields**’ – “*The economic and cultural interactions as well as the great migrations and the dominations of great political powers caused an emergence of a **common Silk Road culture**. This culture covers a vast area from East Turkistan to today's Turkey in the West and India in the South. It could be easily traced in ancient and medieval times.*”<sup>4</sup>

Hence, Silk Road might have played a major role in spreading of the literature of countries of Silk Road region among each other as well, especially folktales, as folktales mostly spread through word of mouth. The Central Asian region which today includes the five former republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, was a strategically placed region as this was the region that connected China with the rest of the ancient world. India was connected to this Silk Road via its subsidiary route which was also known as the Spice Route as India was the exporter of spices in ancient and medieval times. Russia, on the other hand, came in contact with the Silk Road via the Central Asian countries somewhere during the sixteenth century. All the countries mentioned above are different from each other in almost all aspects of their existence, and yet there is so much commonality in them, in terms of culture, religion, food, clothing, and many more things. From a literary point of view, it is intriguing to find that such diverse countries with such ethnically

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Konuralp Ercilasun, [Silk Road as a Sub-Global Region: A Sphere Emerging from the Interaction of Cultural and Economic Fields](#) (2003), 25 July 2014, <[www.centralasia-southcaucasus.com/docs/.../Paper\\_Kenuralp\\_Ercilasun](http://www.centralasia-southcaucasus.com/docs/.../Paper_Kenuralp_Ercilasun)>.

diverse population have same or similar plots and figures in their folktales. Mulla Nasruddin is one such figure.

Mulla Nasruddin tales are considered to be folktales that belong to the Trickster Tale category and are known for their satire. Though superficially these tales might seem like jokes, they have a deep moral value hidden in them. These tales are used as '*teaching tales*' not only in Sufism but in recent times such Indian *gurus* as Osho (Rajneesh), and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar have been using Mulla Nasruddin tales for spreading awareness among people about the importance and significance of good moral conduct.

Mulla Nasruddin tales are so popular in many countries of the modern world that '*equivalent folk figures*' of Mulla Nasruddin are found in them, even beyond the Silk Road, like in Germany there is a trickster known as Till Eulenspiegel; in Italy, there is a trickster named Bertoldo. In the Central Asian countries, there are many such '*equivalent folk figures*', like Aldar Kose in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Kemine in Turkmenistan, Mushfiqi in Tajikistan, but most importantly, in India such '*equivalent folk figures*' are comparatively more – there are Birbal and Sheikh Chilli whose tales are popular mostly in Northern India; there is Gopal Bhar in the Eastern India (Bengal); there is Tenaliraman in South India. Many of the tales of these tricksters and court jesters are very similar to those of Mulla Nasruddin.

Prof. Manu Mittal of Centre of Russian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University says the following in her article titled - "**Silk Road Region: Turkmenistan and India,**" regarding the omnipresence of Mulla Nasruddin in the folktales of many countries - "*Hoja Nasruddin the semi-mythical 'wise-fool' astride a donkey appears in folktales and Sufi teachings in Central Asia, India and other parts of the world.*"<sup>5</sup>

The fact that Mulla Nasruddin is well-known in many countries of this world accounts for the many versions of his name and title. The following is a list that shows the versions of Mulla Nasruddin's name and his many titles in twenty-eight countries in alphabetical order (see Table 1). The original Table did not mention India though. It is added keeping in mind the title of this research topic.

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<sup>5</sup> Manu Mittal and Mona Agnihotri, ed., India and Turkmenistan: Cooperation for Peace and Development in the Silk Road Region (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2017) 7.

**Table 1**

**Versions of names & titles of Mulla Nasruddin in twenty-eight countries in alphabetical order**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Name of the Country</b>	<b>Versions of Nasruddin's Name and Title</b>
1.	Afghanistan	Mullah Nasruddin
2.	Albania	Nasredin Hoxha
3.	Arab Countries	Mulla Nasrudin
4.	Azerbaijan	Molla Nasreddin
5.	Bosnia	Nasruddin Khoja
6.	Bulgaria	Nastradin Hoca
7.	China	Afandi/Afangti
8.	England	Nasreddin Hodja
9.	France	Nasr Eddin Hodja
10.	Germany	Nasreddin Hodscha
11.	Greece	Nastradhin Chotzas
<b>12.</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Mulla Nasruddin</b>
13.	Italy	Nasreddin Hogia
14.	Kazakhstan	Nasreddin Hoja
15.	Kyrgyzstan	Nasreddin Afandi
16.	Macedonia	Stradin Hoca
17.	Malaysia	Maulana Nasruddin
18.	Pakistan	Molla Nesiruddin
19.	Persia/Iran	Mulla Nasruddin
20.	Poland	Hodza Nasredin
21.	Portugal	Mulla Nasrudin
22.	Romania	Nastratin Hogeia
23.	Russia	Hodja Nasreddine
24.	Serbia	Nasruddin Hodza
25.	Spain	Nasreddin Hodja
26.	Turkey	Nasreddin Hoca
27.	Turkmenistan	Nasreddin Ependi
28.	Uzbekistan	Khodja Nasreddin

Source: G. I. Gurdjieff, "*Mullah Nasr Eddin – Nasreddin Hoca/Mulla Nasrudin*," Gurdjieff

Dominican Group, (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic), 17 July 2014 (New Delhi)

[http://gurdjieffdominican.com/mulla\\_nassr\\_eddin.htm](http://gurdjieffdominican.com/mulla_nassr_eddin.htm)

As far as the sociolinguistic angle is concerned, as a subject Sociolinguistics in general deals with the affect of society on language. It is comparatively a new discipline. For a long time now, people have been studying the affect of language on society, and Sociology is a well-established subject in its field. During the mid of the last century, some scholars started to think the other way round that if language affects society, society must also have some affect on a language. Many studies were carried out mostly in America by such eminent scholars as Dell Hymes and William Labov. These studies and books relevant to Sociolinguistics are discussed at length in the Literature Review. As the new subject gained grounds, such scholars came to be known as Sociolinguists.

Folklore is an ancient well-established field of study. This research topic tries to find a connection between Folklore and Sociolinguistics. How may one connect the two disciplines – one which is comparatively older than the other? In this quest, a research paper written by Dr. Maniruzzaman titled – **‘The Study of the Language Embodying and Transmitting Folklore - An Endeavour to Reveal its Relevance to Sociolinguistics’**<sup>6</sup> helped immensely.

In this paper he writes – *“This paper tries to examine and determine the relevance of the study of the language of folklore to sociolinguistics since folklore being constituted by all the facets of the traditions, customs and culture of the speech community is embodied and composed in and manifested and transmitted by means of language, particularly speech, and sociolinguistics discovers and ascertains the relations of language to society.”* This paper highlights the connection of Folklore with Sociolinguistics and explains this research topic's endeavor to study Mulla Nasruddin tales from the Sociolinguistic Perspective.

The present study is an inter-disciplinary study which includes historical and cultural perspectives along with literary perspective that discusses some of the aspects that were mentioned above through tales of Mulla Nasruddin and tries to answer the following questions –

- Did Silk Road have any role to play in spreading of Mulla Nasruddin Tales from Turkey to other countries of Silk Road region including India, Russia and Central Asia?

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<sup>6</sup> M. Maniruzzaman, “The Study of the Language Embodying and Transmitting Folklore – An Endeavour to Reveal its Relevance to Sociolinguistics,” 2008, Grin.com, 19 October 2014  
<<http://www.grin.com/en/e-book/93337/the-study-of-the-language-embodying-and-transmitting-folklore-an-endeavour>>.

- What is the reason that similar stories exist in such culturally and geographically diverse countries, i.e., the sociolinguistic analysis of Mulla Nasruddin Tales from the socio-cultural perspective.
- May these folktales be incorporated in the teaching of Russian language as a foreign language?

## Hypothesis

**Silk Road played a major role in spreading the tales of Mulla Nasruddin from Turkey to other countries of Silk Road region including India, Russia and Central Asia.**

For fulfillment of this aim the following objectives were carried out:

- The Tales of Mulla Nasruddin which are prevalent in the countries mentioned above were collected.
- Out of these collected tales, a few common tales of Mulla Nasruddin were selected.
- The similarities and dissimilarities of these selected tales were brought out as a part of the sociolinguistic analysis from the socio-cultural perspective.
- A historical background study of the Silk Road with relation to the spread of religion and culture was carried out in brief.
- The hypothesis that the Silk Road played an important role in spreading of these tales from Turkey to India, Russia and the Central Asian countries was tested.

This study is of an inter-disciplinary nature which includes folktales, which is a part of literary studies, along with historical elements that shaped and spread these folktales. The purpose of this study is to concentrate on the folktales that are prevalent in such countries as India, the CIS<sup>7</sup> countries like Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. It is a descriptive study of folktales of Mulla Nasruddin that even today run through the veins of these countries and play an important role as '*teaching stories*' and shape tomorrow's adults and also are used as '*teaching stories*' to teach people through humour and stupidity, the important lessons of life. As Mulla Nasruddin himself said in one of his tales that if you tell a person directly that he is doing something foolish he will get defensive and will never agree to it; but if you show it to him by acting in the same foolish manner, he will first laugh at you but then realize his mistake!

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<sup>7</sup> C.I.S. – Commonwealth of Independent States that after the fall of Soviet Union included 12 out of 15 former Soviet Republics. Georgia, the 12<sup>th</sup> country left this alliance in 2008.

Idries Shah writes in his article titled ‘**The Subtleties of Mulla Nasrudin**’ about Mulla Nasruddin in his book ‘**The Sufis**’ – “*Superficially, most of the Nasrudin stories may be used as jokes...But it is inherent in the Nasrudin story that it may be understood at any one of many depths. There is the joke, the moral – and the little extra which brings the consciousness of the potential mystic a little further on the way to realization.*”<sup>8</sup>

## **Novelty**

So far as known, the present study is the first of its kind that is using the contrastive method in the sociolinguistic analysis of Mulla Nasruddin tales prevalent in the countries of Silk Road region. The focus on Silk Road region as a treasure chest of Mulla Nasruddin tales is in itself a unique perspective of research on folktales. Also, it is trying to prove the great potential that these tales have in being used as teaching material for foreign language teaching in general and Russian language teaching in particular.

## **Chapterisation**

This research work has four chapters.

### 1. Chapter one is titled – ‘**The Selected Tales of Mulla Nasruddin.**’

This chapter provides the background for the folktales of Mulla Nasruddin which means, it talks about folktales in general and tales of Mulla Nasruddin in particular. It also mentions and discusses the common tales of Mulla Nasruddin that are selected for further study. Titles of the selected tales are also mentioned in this chapter. Countries of the Silk Road region that are selected for this study are also given and the reasons why these countries are selected are specified. This topic would have become vast if all the countries of the Silk Road region that have tales of Mulla Nasruddin were included in it.

### 2. Chapter two is titled – ‘**The Silk Road Factor.**’

This chapter discusses role of the Silk Road in spreading these tales from Turkey to other countries of the Silk Road region like India, the Central Asian countries – Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and eventually to Russia. This section will concentrate on the actual achievements of the Silk Road in spreading the tales of Mulla Nasruddin.

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<sup>8</sup> Idries Shah, The Sufis, (New York: Anchor Books, 1971) 63.

3. Chapter three is titled – **‘Sociolinguistic Study of Mulla Nasruddin Tales.’**

This chapter carries out a sociolinguistic analysis of tales of Mulla Nasruddin and elaborates upon the socio-cultural aspects of the tales. The similarities and differences in these common tales as per their cultural and social background are also described. The reason behind choosing a ‘sociolinguistic’ perspective and ‘socio-cultural’ aspect and how they apply to Folktales, in general and tales of Mulla Nasruddin, in particular, is also discussed.

4. Chapter Four is titled – **‘Perceptions about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales along the Silk Road: A Survey.’**

This chapter discusses elaborately about a survey conducted with the help of a questionnaire in ten of the Silk Road countries of the Asian region. This survey was conducted to get a perspective about the place of Mulla Nasruddin and his tales in these countries and relevance of these tales today. This survey was also conducted to find out about awareness of the people of these ten selected countries about Mulla Nasruddin, his tales, and the Silk Road. Some of the interesting and relevant responses to this questionnaire which was sent for feedback to ten countries that are connected to each other since ancient times via the Silk Road are also disclosed in this final chapter of the study.

Outcome of this study and result of the survey carried out are given and discussed in the Conclusion section. The use of these tales for teaching a foreign language, in general and Russian language, in particular, is also being mentioned. Limitations faced during the research are also given in brief.



# LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is a theme-centric review that has been divided into four major themes that this research topic covers, which are – Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, Folklore (specifically, folktales), the Silk Road, and lastly, Sociolinguistics.

## 1. Mulla Nasruddin Tales

This part of literature review is being discussed first as the Mulla Nasruddin tales are the main part of this study. As far as Mulla Nasruddin tales are concerned the most has been written about the ‘*Wise Fool*’ by Idries Shah who is considered to be the ‘*Grand Sheikh of the Sufis*’.<sup>9</sup> He was a writer of Afghan origin born in India. He has at least five books dedicated to Mulla Nasruddin tales from a Sufi point of view. Shah discusses the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin stories as ‘*Teaching Stories*’ and incorporates the Sufi teachings with these tales.

Idries Shah notes that – “...these tales have been used for centuries by the Sufis as teaching exercises.” He also states the following about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales – “*Nasrudin is the mirror in which one sees oneself.*”<sup>10</sup>

A book review of Idries Shah’s books on Mulla Nasruddin and his tales states the following – “*Each one of the Idries Shah’s three delightful Nasrudin books – **The Pleasantries of the Incredible Mulla Nasruddin**, **The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin** and **The Subtleties of the Inimitable Mulla Nasrudin** – is not only the perfect gift for any thinking person with a sense of humour, but a fitting antidote to stress, pressure and confusion of modern life. For beyond the laughter lie deeper levels of meaning that reveal themselves at their own pace and can help broaden our perception and increase our understanding.*”<sup>11</sup>

This review shows the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin tales in today's life where there are a lot of tension and stress and calls them as ‘*antidote*’ of stress and pressures of modern lifestyle. The same review also states that – “*The bite-sized jokes center around Mulla Nasrudin, an age-*

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<sup>9</sup> Idries Shah, *The Sufis* (New York: Anchor Books, 1971) (Back page).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>11</sup> Top Customer Reviews – Much more than entertainment, 21 August 1999, Amazon.com, 15 July 2016 <<https://www.amazon.com/Exploits-Incomparable-Mulla-Nasrudin-Subtleties/dp/0863040403>>.

*old Middle Eastern teaching figure whose antics mirror those of the human mind as he juggles the roles of wise man, fool and our own self.”<sup>12</sup>*

“*The appeal of Nasrudin is as universal and timeless as the truths he illustrates...*”<sup>13</sup>  
Idries Shah managed to collect many of the old and new Mulla Nasruddin tales that are popular in so many countries of the modern world. Some of such tales have been selected for this research topic as well.

*“Nasrudin is an international folk hero of medieval origin but timeless appeal. His role changes, sometimes he is the sage, sometimes the fool: he is courtier, beggar, physician, judge and teacher. Whether his anecdotes are studied for their hidden wisdom, or enjoyed for their pungent humour, they are an enduring part of the world’s cultural heritage.”<sup>14</sup>*

From this collection of Mulla Nasruddin tales – old and new by Idries Shah, some have been taken for this research topic, like the tale of a *Pregnant Pot*, which is titled in this book as – **‘If a Pot can Multiply’**<sup>15</sup> and also tales like **‘Cooking by Candle’**<sup>16</sup> which resembles a Birbal story which is popular in India titled – **‘Birbal ki Khichdi’** (Birbal’s Porridge), and **‘The Sermon of Nasrudin’**<sup>17</sup> and others.

Idries Shah states that – *“Many countries claim Mulla Nasrudin as a native, though few have gone so far as Turkey in exhibiting his grave and holding an annual Nasrudin Festival, ...In more recent times, the Mulla became a Peoples’ Hero of the Soviet Union, when a film depicted him as scoring again and again off the wicked capitalist rulers of the country.”<sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> Top Customer Reviews – Much more than entertainment, 21 August 1999, Amazon.com, 15 July 2016 <<https://www.amazon.com/Exploits-Incomparable-Mulla-Nasrudin-Subtleties/dp/0863040403>>.

<sup>13</sup> Idries Shah, The Pleasantries of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin (London: The Octagon Press, 1983) Back cover.

<sup>14</sup> Idries Shah, The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasruddin (London: The Octagon Press, 1983) Back page.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, xi.

Idries Shah not only collected but modified some Mulla Nasruddin tales. He used these Mulla Nasruddin tales in a modernized context with relation to today's world, like, a tale titled – ‘**Radio**’<sup>19</sup> which is about Mulla Nasruddin arriving at London Immigration Office and speaking in broken English! And, also like the story titled – ‘**Satisfied**’<sup>20</sup> in which a postman visits Mulla Nasruddin's house!

Robert Graves, an English poet who was considered a rebel socially as well as artistically states the following about Mulla Nasruddin tales – “*Many of the main Sufic paradoxes are current in the form of comic stories, especially those centered around the Khoja (schoolmaster) Nasrudin...*”<sup>21</sup>

According to Idries Shah - “*Mulla (Master) Nasrudin is the classical figure devised by the dervishes partly for the purpose of halting for a moment situations in which certain states of mind are made clear...Superficially, most of the Nasrudin stories may be used as jokes...But it is inherent in the Nasrudin story that it may be understood at any one of many depths. There is the joke, the moral - and the little extra which brings the consciousness of the potential mystic a little further...*”<sup>22</sup>

Apart from the Sufi angle, there are many books on Mulla Nasruddin tales. Such story books are available in almost all the major languages of the world, though Mulla Nasruddin is known by different names and his name has many versions. However, one thing is common to all these countries – that most of the countries have story books about Mulla Nasruddin tales, especially countries of the Silk Road region right from Turkey to China.

A Turkish writer and poet, Mustafa Ozcelik has discussed the life of Mulla Nasruddin in detail along with his tales. Ozcelik has written the biography of a man who many scholars doubt had actually existed. There are lot many debates and point of views as to whether Nasruddin was an actual human being or just a folk hero, but Ozcelik describes real facets of his life - his childhood, his education, his family, his life and death. Mustafa Ozcelik says that – “*Even*

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<sup>19</sup> Idries Shah, The Subtleties of the Inimitable Mulla Nasrudin (London: The Octagon Press, 1983) 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Idries Shah, The Sufis (London: The Octagon Press, 1964, 1977), xxi.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 56.

*though eight centuries have passed, Nasreddin Hodja's jokes still survive, for they were not only relevant to the thirteenth century.*"<sup>23</sup>

Mustafa Ozcelik also mentions the famous works in Turkey in which the name of Mulla Nasruddin first appear in the written form, and which talk about his tales, like the '**Saltukname**' by Ebu'l Hayr-1 Rumi in 1480 (this book is considered to be the oldest book which mentions the name Nasreddin in written form), the '**Letaif**' by Lamii, the '**Seyahatname**' written by Evliya Celebi in the seventeenth century, and many more.<sup>24</sup>

Mustafa Ozcelik quotes Dr. Mehmet Onder – "*...Nasreddin Hodja has been internationally recognized since the 15<sup>th</sup> century in countries in Central Asia, including but not limited to Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. His fame also traveled to the land of Uighurs, China, India, and during Ottoman rule, to the Balkans and Europe. Arabs attributed many jokes of Nasreddin Hodja to Juha and translated them to Arabic. Meanwhile, Nasreddin Hodja became shared cultural icon of the world's people and is known by various names.*"<sup>25</sup> This is a relevant quote for this research topic as it, in very limited words, sums up the whole idea of the popularity of Mulla Nasruddin around the world.

Mustafa Ozcelik also discusses the nature of these jokes and how to interpret them. He quotes M. Halistin Kukul – "*Historians, literary critics, sociologists and even theologians should study Nasreddin Hodja. His jokes are not mere tools for fun; they are documents fraught with wisdom, virtue, propriety and exemplars. It leads one to contemplate and learn.*" (M. Halistin Kukul)<sup>26</sup> This quote gives the reason for this kind of a research topic which is striving to study Mulla Nasruddin tales in depth and from a new perspective which is the Silk Road perspective.

Mustafa Ozcelik mentions that - "*...the main purpose of Nasreddin's humorous stories was not entertainment. He knew how to use humor to make people think.*"<sup>27</sup> He also has devised a few ways to '*determining the authenticity*' of Mulla Nasruddin Tales.

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<sup>23</sup> Mustafa Ozcelik, Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2011)

Preface.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 25-33.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 61.

Even in China, which is the other end or rather the starting point of the Silk Road, Mulla Nasruddin is a popular folk hero albeit he is popular by another name – *Effendi* or *Afanti*. China even has a cartoon series on Mulla Nasruddin!

Primerose Gigliesi and Robert C. Friend translated the Uighur folktales of China about *Afanti* by visiting the remote corners of China and listening and collecting these Chinese Nasruddin tales and they say that – “*In China the number of editions and copies that have been published of Afanti, the Uygur minority’s tales of the Effendi Nasreddin, is astonishing. Even more surprising is that Nasreddin – a Muslim folk hero known throughout Northern Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia – should be taken so warmly and totally into the hearts of the Chinese people, the majority of whom are non-Muslim. The answer...lies in that quality that makes folklore survive the centuries – first that its hero must be a universal type who belongs to the common people; and second, that he must be an individual who speaks their true feelings...*”<sup>28</sup> Mulla Nasruddin fulfills both these criteria – he is a universal-type hero who is a common man, and he *does* speak about the common man’s vows.

Primerose Gigliesi states that – “*The tales are also a part of the oral folklore of the entire Muslim world. They are the result of that strange and wonderful capacity of stories to pass from person to person, travel from one country to another and, over the centuries, to spread to entire continents.*”<sup>29</sup> Gigliesi also expresses his surprise to find how popular Nasruddin actually was in China – “*We began mentioning Afanti, the Effendi Nasreddin, to Chinese people, only to discover that everyone we talked with, including children, knew the figure and the tales.*”<sup>30</sup> This clearly shows the fame of Mulla Nasruddin and his tales in China.

Primrose Gigliesi mentions the difficulties he faced in translating such tales. It is a genuine problem which was faced by this research topic as well. This problem is that due to translation more often than not the essence of a tale gets lost! Gigliesi says – “*Although we have translated these stories from the Chinese, a pure and simple translation was not sufficient... We rewrote the text where linguistic differences obscured the humor and retouched expressions and dialogue when the two worlds and cultures ran the risk of not understanding each other... We*

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<sup>28</sup> Primerose Gigliesi and Robert C. Friend, trans., *The Effendi and the Pregnant Pot – Uygur Folktales from China* (Beijing, China: New World Press, 1982) Inside front cover flap.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, i.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, ii.

have also worked to preserve the originality, that **difference** which is born of the very fact that the stories belong to another tradition.”<sup>31</sup>

An online review by L. Frazier states - “*The tales are unmistakably folk wit from centuries past and yet amusing for today as well. You will find several that apply to people and situations you run into daily...*”<sup>32</sup>

As far as literature on Mulla Nasruddin and his tales in the countries selected by this research topic, which are India, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is concerned - in India Mulla Nasruddin is well known. India considers Mulla Nasruddin to be its own and his tales are very popular in India. His tales are found in India in almost all the Indian languages. This research topic selected some tales of Mulla Nasruddin in Hindi, English and Bengali languages. The Mulla Nasruddin tales which are selected for this study from India are in three languages - in Hindi – ‘*Mulla Nasruddin*’<sup>33</sup>, in English – ‘*Story of Mulla Nasruddin*’<sup>34</sup> and in Bengali - ‘*Shera Satyajit*’ in which there is a section dedicated to twenty-four anecdotes about Mulla Nasruddin called ‘**Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo**’<sup>35</sup>.

The next country mentioned above in this research topic is Russia. In Russia, Mulla Nasruddin became famous due to a novel written by Leonid Solovyov titled ‘**Повесть о Ходже Насреддине - Возмутитель Спокойствия и Очарованный Принц** [*Povest’ o Khodzhe Nasreddine – Vozmoochitchel’ Spokoistviya ii Ocharovanniy Prince*] which translated into English means – *The Tale about Hodja Nasreddin – Disturber of Peace and the Enchanted Prince*, which was then translated into English with the title – ‘**The Beggar in the Harem: Impudent Adventures in Old Bukhara**’ in 1956 and ‘**The Tale of Hodja Nasreddin: Disturber of the Peace**’ in 2009. It was further made into movies in Russian as well as other Slavic languages. Then there are such authors like N. Osmanov who translated these stories from Persian tales. Some of these translated tales which are in Russian that are found to be common have been selected for this research topic.

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<sup>31</sup> Primerose Gigliesi and Robert C. Friend, trans., *The Effendi and the Pregnant Pot – Uygur Folktales from China* (Beijing, China: New World Press, 1982) vi.

<sup>32</sup> L. Frazier, Review of the book ‘The Effendi and the Pregnant Pot,’ *Amazon.com*, 23 October 2002, Web, 18 July 2016

< <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Effendi-Pregnant-Pot-Uygur-Folktales/dp/0835110273>>.

<sup>33</sup> *Mulla Nasruddin* (New Delhi: PM Publications, n.d.).

<sup>34</sup> *Story of Mulla Nasruddin* (Mumbai: Alka Publications, n.d.).

<sup>35</sup> Satyajit Ray, *Shera Satyajit* 1<sup>st</sup> ed., (Calcutta, India: Ananda Publishers, 1991) 389-404.

Mulla Nasruddin is so popular in Russia that other than storybooks and movies about Mulla Nasruddin, there are some other references made of him in poems and symphonies. One such poem is written by a popular Soviet – Russian poet, Yevgeny Yevtushenko. It is titled – ‘*Humour*’ (*Юмор*). This poem shows the power of humour and its indestructibility.

There is another poem of Yevgeny Yevtushenko titled – ‘*Babiy Yaar*’ (*Бабий Яр*), a part of which is again about the power of humour and its indestructibility, and in 1962 Dmitry Dmitrievich Shostakovich, a Russian Soviet composer dedicated one of his compositions titled – ‘*Symphony No. 13*’ to Yevtushenko and to Mulla Nasruddin.

In Tajikistan also Mulla Nasruddin is well-known. However, the stories that are taken for this research topic are not from any book, but from a website that has hundred tales of Mulla Nasruddin (*100 историй о Ходже Насреддине*).<sup>36</sup> From these hundred tales, a few common tales have been selected for this sociolinguistic study. Another thing which is also worth mentioning here is that - there is a sixteenth century famous poet of Tajikistan named Mushfiqi, also known as Mullo Mushfiqi (*Мулло Мушфики*) who lived for a long time in Bukhara. He is sometimes compared to Mulla Nasruddin in Tajikistan, as he is known as a protagonist of folk anecdotes because his satirical poems were, like the tales of Mulla Nasruddin, about the sufferings of the common man and the unfair rules and greed of the rich.

In Turkmenistan, Mulla Nasruddin is known as *Ependi*. The book from which the Mulla Nasruddin tales that are popular in Turkmenistan have been selected is titled – ‘**Ependi**’.<sup>37</sup> It is compiled by Amangul Durdyyewa. It has more than 400 tales of Mulla Nasruddin. These tales are in the Turkmen language. In order to select tales from this book, they had to be translated into English and Russian.

In Uzbekistan, Mulla Nasruddin is called *Nasriddin Afandi*, and Uzbekistan has at least two collections of Nasriddin Afandi stories, which are ‘Afandining Qirq Bir Passhasi’<sup>38</sup> (Forty One Flees of Afandi) by Zohir A’lam (Tashkent, 1987) and ‘Afandining Besh Xotini’<sup>39</sup> (Five

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<sup>36</sup> 100 историй о Ходже Насреддине, Comunicom Tajikistan, 2010-2015, 4 February 2015  
<<http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html>>.

<sup>37</sup> Amangul Durdyyewa, *Ependi* (Ashgabat: Ylym Publications, 2012).

<sup>38</sup> Dmitriy A. Pitirimov, Khodja Nasritdin, *Narod.ru*, n.d., Web, 17 June 2014  
<[http://pagetour.narod.ru/bukhara/bu/Khodja\\_Nasritdin.htm](http://pagetour.narod.ru/bukhara/bu/Khodja_Nasritdin.htm)>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Wives of Afandi). The Mulla Nasruddin tales in the books mentioned above are in the Uzbek language.

The fame of Mulla Nasruddin in Russian and the Central Asian countries may be judged by the numerous movies that were made on Mulla Nasruddin and his life in these countries, some of which are - '**12 Mogil Khodji Nasreddina**' (*Twelve Graves of Khodja Nasreddin*), '**Khodja Nasreddin ii Azroil**' (*Khodja Nasreddin and Azroil*), '**Nasreddin v Bukhara**' (*Nasreddin in Bukhara*), '**Vkus Halwi**' (The Taste of Halwa), '**Vozvrashheniye Khodji Nasreddina**' (*The Return of Khodja Nasreddin*), '**Pokhozdeniye Khodji Nasreddina**' (*The Adventure of Khodja Nasreddin*), '**Nasreddin v Khodzhenite ili Ocharovanniy Prince**' (*Nasreddin in Khodjent or The Charming Prince*), and so on. All these movies are there on YouTube.<sup>40</sup>

As for the contemporary literature about Mulla Nasruddin and the relevance of his tales in today's context is concerned, Prof. Peter Hawkins from UK gave rise to an amazingly new concept of Mulla Nasruddin as a Management Consultant! He has portrayed the age-old Mulla Nasruddin tales in new light in the background of a Company that hires Nasruddin as a Management Consultant. Prof. Mike Pedler states – "*Peter Hawkins has cunningly chosen the most appropriate modern context for Nasrudin by making him a management consultant. As such, much of his fooling is to do with teaching managers the difference between cleverness and wisdom...The wise fool Nasrudin has many aspects to his clowning, of which I like the childlike wonder and openness to the world most, which allows him both to play the fool and to take himself seriously.*"<sup>41</sup>

Peter Hawkins states the following about the superiority of Mulla Nasruddin – "*From our limited perspectives we create solutions to yesterday's problems, which become the symptoms of tomorrow's troubles...Nasrudin can stop us in our tracks, turn us upside down, and make us refresh our perspective...*"<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> YouTube Links to movies mentioned above are in the 'Feature Film' section of 'Bibliography' at the end.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Hawkins, The Wise Fool's Guide to Leadership, (London, UK: O Books, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, xix.



Peter Hawkins uses the age old Nasruddin tales in modern context. This is what one of the reviewers had to say to Prof. Peter Hawkins – “*Thank you very much for inviting our beloved Hodja in the modern boardroom.*”<sup>43</sup>

Mulla Nasruddin is so famous, and his tales so popular that apart from books and articles, old and new, about Nasruddin, numerous books and articles were published about such characters or folk heroes throughout the world that resemble Nasruddin in some way or the other. They can be called as his ‘*equivalents*’, such as Sly Peter in Macedonia and Bulgaria (in Bulgaria his name is Hitar Petar), Till Eulenspiegel of the Germans, the Jewish prankster Hershele Ostropoler, Gabra Hanna of Ethiopia, the Baldakiev figure of the Russians, the Arab Joha or Juha, Bertoldo of the Italians<sup>44</sup>, and well-known pranksters or jesters of India like Birbal,<sup>45</sup> Sheikh Chilli,<sup>46</sup> Tenaliraman,<sup>47</sup> Gopal Bhar.<sup>48</sup>

All such literature mentioned above talk about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales. Writers have tried to portray Nasruddin as a religious figure, as a Sufi saint, as a cleric, as an educator, as just a ‘*wise fool*’ and as a modern day *management consultant* even, to make people, especially, children laugh, and many countries tried to depict Nasruddin as their own folk hero, and yet there is no comprehensive comparative or contrastive study of Nasruddin tales that are common to many countries, especially in the CIS countries and countries of the Silk Road region.

There is this debate among scholars as to whether Nasruddin was an actual person living in Turkey in the thirteenth century or a fictitious folk hero. Some scholars believe that Nasruddin is just a concept for poor people to fight against the evils of society in their respective countries. Some scholars state that many tales that are attributed to Nasruddin are actually not his. Through

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<sup>43</sup> Marcel van der Pol, The Fool’s Wisdom, *Keridwen.com*, May 2008, Web, 31 July 2014 <<http://www.keridwen.com/KVMe/0805E%20WiseFool.pdf>>.

<sup>44</sup> Idries Shah, *The Sufis*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1971) 71.

<sup>45</sup> Birbal was a Hindu adviser who served at the court of the Great Mughal Sultan of Medieval India, Akbar. See *History of Birbal*, *Indya Unlimited*, n.d., Web, 22 July 2014 <<http://www.india-intro.com/history/akbar-birbal/45-india-parichay-akbar-birbal-history-maheshdas.html>>.

<sup>46</sup> Sheikh Chilli was a Sufi Master at the court of Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh. See *Philosophia: Sheikh Chilli: A Person who Does not Understand the Law of Gravity*, *Rawat’s Blog*, 19 April 2011, Web, 22 July 2014 <[http://rawat.blogspot.in/2011/04/sheikh-chilli-person-who-does-not\\_19.html](http://rawat.blogspot.in/2011/04/sheikh-chilli-person-who-does-not_19.html)>.

<sup>47</sup> Tenali Raman was a legendary figure in 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. at the court of Vijayanagara King, Raja Krishnadevaraya. See *Tenali Raman Stories*, *Mocomag*, Issue 21, n.d., Web, 22 July 2014 <<http://mocomi.com/fun/stories/tenali-raman/>>.

<sup>48</sup> Gopal Bhar/Bhand was a legendary court jester of a Medieval King of Bengal, Raja Krishnachandra of Nadia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century A.D. See *Bengali Jokes of Gopal Bhar*, *BengaliNet*, n.d., Web, 22 July 2014 <[http://www.bangalinet.com/bengali\\_jokes\\_gopalbhar.htm](http://www.bangalinet.com/bengali_jokes_gopalbhar.htm)>.

centuries, new tales have been added to the list of original Nasruddin tales to give them importance and relevance.

Folktales like those of Mulla Nasruddin just do not arise in vacuum; there always is some shred of truth behind such tales. As Steph Lawler, talking about stories quotes Sommers and Gibson – “*Stories guide action; ...people construct identities by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories; ...‘experience’ is constituted through narratives; ...people make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives...*” (Lawler).<sup>49</sup>

## 2. Folklore

The next section of this literature review discusses about Folkloristics. Folkloristics is a matured discipline. The literature on folklore is as huge as the folklore itself. Folklore includes many areas of human society and culture, and one such area is folktales, and under folktales come the Mulla Nasruddin tales which are the focal point of this research topic.

Russian folklore goes back a long way and folkloristics is a well-developed discipline in Russia. The literature on folklore is vast in Russia as well. One of the most significant and ancient folkloristic work in Russia is titled – ‘**The Tale of Igor’s Campaign**’ («Слово о полку Игореве» - *Slove o Polku Igoreve*). This tale was written somewhere at the end of the twelfth century, and it is about an unsuccessful campaign of Russian Lords against the Mongol army when Mongols were trying to establish their supremacy over the then heavily-divided Rus’.

Another such significant work is by a trader named Afanasy Nikitin, which is titled – ‘**Journey Beyond Three Seas**’ («Хождение за Три Моря» - *Khozhdeniye za Tri Morya*), which was written somewhere in the fifteenth century. This tale is mostly about a trader Nikitin's visit to India, to the shores of Malabar. In this tale, India is called the ‘*Land of Wonders*’ («Страна Чудес» - *Strana Chudyas*)! This tale is popular not only in Russia but also in India. There was a film made in 1957 on this tale which was titled – ‘**Pardesi**’ (which means **foreigner** in English).

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<sup>49</sup> Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological and the Social World*, Section 1, Chapter 2, Research Methods for Cultural Studies, ed. Michael Pickering, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) 32-49.

But the study of folkloristics as a serious discipline began in Russia somewhere at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Three names which are considered to be pillars of Russian folkloristics are that of Alexander Nikolaevich Veselovsky, Viktor Maksimovich Zhirmunsky, and Vladimir Propp.

Alexander Veselovsky is one of the most famous Russian literary critic and folklorist of the nineteenth century, who did extensive work and formulated many theories and concepts of comparative literature and he worked on the comparative-historical method for the study of folklore. One of his well-known works is – ‘**Historical Poetics**’ (*«Историческая Поэтика» - Istoreecheskaya Poetika*) which was published somewhere in 1897/1898 and again republished by V. M. Zhirmunsky in 1940.

Veselovsky worked on searching for repetitive elements in the epithets that are used in poetics, like how ‘sea’ is always ‘blue’ (*море синее – morey sinyeye*) and so on. Veselovsky believed that there are some ‘*poetical formulae*’ on the basis of which stories are written. According to him – “Под мотивом я разумею формулу, отвечающую на первых порах общественности на вопросы, которые природа всюду ставила человеку, либо закреплявшие особенно яркие, казавшиеся важными или повторяющиеся впечатления действительности...”<sup>50</sup> (Veselovsky)

**(Translation –** *By motive I mean the formula which first of all generally answers to the questions which were presented by Nature to mankind, that strengthened the usually vivid, seemingly important and repetitive impressions of the reality...).*

In a nutshell, it means that there are certain formulae on the basis of which tales are usually written. In this way, Veselovsky managed to divide the simplest narrative unit, which he called the *motive* (*мотив - motchiv*). This is important to this study as it is analyzing Mulla Nasruddin tales which are also written on the basis of some formula or content.

Though most of his works were unfinished or unpublished, his influence over eminent Russian folklorists like Zhirmunsky, Propp, et al. led to further development in this field. “Another testimony to Veselovsky’s influence is the concluding paragraph of Vladimir Propp’s path breaking ‘*Morphology of the Folktale*’, where Propp humbly asserts that – **his**

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<sup>50</sup> А. Н. Веселовский, *Собрание сочинений*: Том второй. Вып.1. Поэтика сюжетов (1897–1906) 3, 15 June 2016, <[http://lib100.com/book/other/russian\\_semiotics/html/?page=6](http://lib100.com/book/other/russian_semiotics/html/?page=6)>.

*propositions, although they appear to be new, were intuitively foreseen by none other than Veselovsky' and ends his study with an extensive quote from Veselovsky's 'Poetics of Plot' (Propp 115-116)".<sup>51</sup>*

Vladimir Propp is also a renowned Russian literary critic and folklorist whose work '*Morphology of the Folktale*' («Морфология Сказки»- *Morphologiya Skazki*), which was published in 1928 in Russia, in the then Leningrad created quite a big wave in the field of folkloristics, because of Propp's sub-division of the tales (especially Russian fairytales) into thirty-one parts. It is still believed by some that with the help of these thirty-one parts, any tale, any story, any movie plot even may be successfully written. It does not mean that each and every tale will have all the thirty-one parts, but any tale would have some parts out of these thirty-one. Propp's work remained hidden from the western world till it was translated and published in English in 1958 and here also it created a revolution in the field of the narrative structure.

Another renowned Russian literary critic and folklorist is Viktor Maksimovich Zhirmunsky. He also worked extensively on the theory of literature, poetics, and folklore. Some of his major works are – '**Theory of Literature. Poetics. Stylistics.**' («Теория Литературы. Поэтика. Стилистика.» - *Tchioriya Litcheratoori. Poetika. Stilistika*), which was published in 1977; '**Comparative-Historical Study of Folklore//Problems of Contemporary Folkloristics**' («Сравнительно-историческое Изучение Фольклора//Проблемы Современной Фольклористики» - *Sravnitelno-istoricheskoye Izucheniye Folkora/Problemi Sovrimennoi Folkloristiki*) which was published in 1958.

According to Zhirmunsky – “...в фольклоре самых разных народов наличествует ряд тем, мотивов, сюжетов, ситуаций и т.п., сходство которых связано с определенными социальными и культурными условиями развития”.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Boris Maslov, trans. A. N. Veselovsky. “On the method and tasks of literary history as a field of scholarship” (1870), Web, 15 June 2016, <[https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/historicalpoetics/files/2010/08/Veselovsky\\_1870.PMLA\\_Formatted.pdf](https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/historicalpoetics/files/2010/08/Veselovsky_1870.PMLA_Formatted.pdf)>.

<sup>52</sup> Лера Антямовна Камалоба, *Изучение русский народный сказок в контексте "Диалога культур" в школах с родным (нерусским) языком обучения Республики Татарстан*, MS Thesis, Казанский Государственный Педагогический Университет, 2005, Российская Государственная Библиотека, 21 June 2017, <<http://diss.rsl.ru/diss/05/0443/050443048.pdf>>.

**(Translation - ...in the folklore of the most diverse populations a series of themes, motives, plots, situations and so on are present, the similarities of which are connected with certain social and cultural conditions of development.)**

In short, it means that even though people of different regions are diverse in culture from each other, in their folklore they have some common themes, motives, plots, situations, and so on. This is what this study is also trying to establish with the help of Mulla Nasruddin tales which are present in different countries of the Silk Road region.

Apart from these three Russian folklorists and their groundbreaking works, there are some other works in Russian on folklore that are worth mentioning. One of them is titled – ‘**Russian Folklore**’ («Русский Фольклор») by Professor Y. M. Sokolov. Sokolov not only discusses about ‘*the Nature of Folklore and Problems of Folkloristics*’ («Природа Фольклора и Проблемы Фольклористики» - *Priroda Folkora ii Problemi Folkloristiki*), but also ‘*Historiography of Folkloristics*’ («Историография Фольклористики» - *Istoriyagrafiya Folkloristiki*), where he mentions prominent figures of Russia in the field of folkloristics including A. N. Veselovsky. Sokolov states that – “Фольклор – это отзвук прошлого, но в то же время и громкий голос настоящего.”<sup>53</sup>

**(Translation - ‘Folklore is the echo of the past, but at the same time is the loud voice of the present.’)**

Sokolov also mentions A. N. Veselovsky’s contribution to this field. He says about Veselovsky that – “Научное наследство, оставлённое Веселовским, огромно...колоссальная продуктивность научно-творческой деятельности Веселовского сопровождается и безграничным разнообразием тематики его историко-литературных работ...Во всех этих работах А. Н. Веселовский следовал, в основном, сравнительно-историческому или культурно-историческому методу...”<sup>54</sup>

**(Translation – The scientific legacy left by Veselovsky is huge...the colossal productivity of the scientific and creative activity of Veselovsky is also followed by the unlimited variety of thematics of his historical and literary works...In all these works A. N. Veselovsky followed mainly the comparative-historical or the cultural-historical method...)**

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<sup>53</sup> Ю. М. Соколов, Русский Фольклор (Москва: Учпедгиз, 1938) 14.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 80 – 81.

It means that A. N. Veselovsky made a colossal contribution to the study of folkloristics, and in this, he used the comparative-historical method.

Another fact is that Russia conducted large-scale ethnographical exploration from 1858 – 1878. Numerous Russian scientific societies carried out a detailed study of Russia's ethnography and folklore. According to A. N. Pypin – “...not less than 4000 large works and bulky review articles were published during the twenty years 1858 – 1878...and research still continues on the same scale.”<sup>55</sup>

This ethnographic research in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century might be considered as the predecessor of the extensive research carried out by sociolinguists on ethnography, especially by Dell Hymes through his model of ‘*Ethnography of Speaking*’, where the word SPEAKING is actually a mnemonic and is an acronym in the following manner:

**S** – ‘*Setting and Scene*’ of speech

**P** – ‘*Participants*’ of speech

**E** – ‘*Ends*’ – the purpose of speech

**A** – ‘*Act Sequence*’ – the order of performance of speech

**K** – ‘*Key*’ – the manner of speech

**I** – ‘*Instrumentalities*’- the medium of speech (singing, etc.)

**N** – ‘*Norms of Interaction*’ – the rules of speech acts

**G** – ‘*Genres*’ – the type of speech event (interviews, gossips, etc.)<sup>56</sup>

Boris Petrovich Kirdan, a Ukrainian origin Russian folklorist states that – “*Важный разграничительный признак фольклорных жанров состоит в том, каким образом они «стыкуются» с действительностью, т.е. в каком качестве они воспринимаются и бытуют.*”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> A. N. Pypin, History of Russian Ethnography vol. 1-4 (Saint Petersburg: M. M. Stasyulevich, 1891).

<sup>56</sup> Dell Hymes, “The Ethnography of Communication,” *Carnegie Mellon University*, Department of English, Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences, 7-8, January 2010, Web, 12 June 2016 <<http://repository.cmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=english>>.

<sup>57</sup> Б. П. Кирдан, под ред. Специфика Фольклорных Жанров (Москва: Наука, 1973) 34.

**(Translation –** *The important distinguishing feature of folklore genres is in the fact that how they “fit in” with the reality, i.e. in what capacity they are perceived and retained.*)

This means that the main feature of folklore genre is that how it ‘merges’ with the reality and daily life.

He also states the following about the term ‘tale’ – “Здесь термин «tale» понимается широко, как вообще рассказ, повествование. Автор ввёл в книгу и сказки о животных, и волшебные сказки, и легенды; он выделил группу романтических сказок, рассказов, шуток, анекдотов...”<sup>58</sup>

**(Translation –** *Here the term “tale” is broadly understood as a story, a narrative. The author included in the book fairy tales about animals, tales and legends about magic; he distinguished a group of romantic/adventure tales, jokes, anecdotes...*)

It means that the term ‘tale’ is a broad term. It may include stories, narratives, fairy tales about animals, magic, and also jokes and anecdotes, like the Mulla Nasruddin tales relevant to this research topic; Nasruddin tales are actually termed as anecdotes due to their short length.

Soviet-Russian folklorist and linguist, L. G. Barag mentions that – “...фольклор все время изменяется, в нём возникают новые явления...”<sup>59</sup>

**(Translation -** *...folklore changes all the time, new phenomena appear in it...*)

It means that folklore is always changing, and new phenomena keep arising in it. This is true in case of Mulla Nasruddin tales as well, as depending upon the new times and new developments in the society, new concepts keeps getting added in his tales; new tales about Mulla Nasruddin keeps appearing.

Barag’s work describes folklore in contemporary time and what changes it went through and is going through to adapt to modern times and how folklore of one region gets influenced or

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<sup>58</sup> Б. П. Кирдан, под ред. Специфика Фольклорных Жанров (Москва: Наука, 1973) 69.

<sup>59</sup> Л. Г. Бараг, и др. Традиции и Современность в Фольклоре (Москва: Наука, 1988) 3.

merged with folklore of other regions, especially neighbouring ones, to give rise to a new type of folklore – a type of mixture of cultures and traditions. It is also relevant to this research topic, as here the tales of Mulla Nasruddin are being studied in the context of different countries and cultures.

Another Russian folklorist Viktor Yevgenyevich Gusev tries to explain the connection between folklore and society, and folklore and culture. He states that to clarify folklore just as ‘folk art’ («народное творчество» - *narodnoye tvorchestvo*) is not enough. It should be clarified further, like what is meant by ‘folk’ because any given society has a number of layers – the upper class, the middle class, the lower class, and the likes. «Фольклор как народное творчество – это абстрактное понятие, приобретающее реальный смысл лишь тогда, когда оно наполняется конкретно-историческим социальным содержанием, когда оно воспринимается как творчество тех классов и групп, которые составляли народ на разных этапах его развития.»<sup>60</sup>

**(Translation** – *Folklore as a folk art is an abstract concept that acquires a true meaning only then when it is filled with concrete historical and social themes, when it is perceived as the creativity of those classes and groups which made up the folk at different stages of its development.*)

This means that the real life situations of the folk depicted through a tale makes the tale real. In Mulla Nasruddin tales such real life situations and social problems are depicted and these tales provide a solution to these problems in their own unique way – especially through humour or stupidity.

Gusev even mentions Mulla Nasruddin when he defines what is meant by an ‘anecdote’. He mentions Mulla Nasruddin as one of the folk heroes along with some other names. He defines an ‘anecdote’ thus – “Анекдотом мы называем эпическое, сатирическое или юмористическое произведение, построенное на одном эпизоде с резко выраженной кульминацией и неожиданной концовкой...Анекдоты могут циклизироваться вокруг имени популярного-исторического или вымышленного – героя (Ходжа Насреддин...)...”<sup>61</sup>  
**(Translation** – *We call such epic, satirical or humorous works as an anecdote which is composed of one episode with a sharp climax and an unexpected ending...anecdotes may revolve around the name of a popular historical or fictional – hero such as Khodja Nasreddin...)*

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<sup>60</sup> В. Е. Гусев, Эстетика Фольклора (Ленинград: Наука, 1967) 21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 127.



This quote mentions the name of Mulla Nasruddin which shows his popularity as a public hero even in Russia.

Gusev also mentions in a footnote about Mulla Nasruddin that – *“Анекдоты о Ходже Насреддине известны не только тюрским народом, но и арабам, берберам, населению Средней Азии, Балкан и др.”*

**(Translation -** *The anecdotes of Khodja Nasreddin are not only popular among Turkic people, but also among the Arabs, the Barbarians, the people of Central Asia, the Balkans and others).*

Gusev connects folklore to reality, i.e. the present scenario of folklore by stating that – *“Эстетика фольклора – это эстетика коллективного творчества, она выражает коллективно выработанные, широко принятые народными массами...представления...В фольклоре непосредственно и активно выражается эстетический идеал масс...Это обстоятельство побуждает специально рассмотреть фольклор как источник показания эстетического сознания и эстетических вкусов народа.”*<sup>62</sup>

**(Translation –** *The aesthetics of folklore is the aesthetics of collective creation, it expresses collectively worked out, widely accepted by the folk masses...ideas...The aesthetic ideals of the folk are directly and actively expressed in the folklore...This situation calls for specifically considering folklore as a source of testimony of the aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic tastes of the people.)*

About the relationship of folklore with reality, Gusev states – *“Говоря об эстетическом отношении к действительности в фольклоре...оно неразрывно связано с практическими, прикладными функциями произведений народного искусства. Живой фольклор несмыслим вне быта, вне обычая...”*<sup>63</sup>

**(Translation –** *Speaking of the aesthetic attitude to reality in the folklore...It is inextricably linked with the practical, applied functions of the works of folk art. Live folklore cannot be imagined outside the day-to-day life, outside the customs...)*

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<sup>62</sup> В. Е. Гусев, Эстетика Фольклора (Ленинград: Наука, 1967) 267-268.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 268.

Gusev's views on folklore and society and their connection is a very useful link between not only folklore and society, folklore and culture, but also between folklore and reality, i.e. the present world.

A quick mention of another Soviet-Russian folklorist-traveller, Boris Nikolaevich Putilov because of a relevant to this research topic quote in his words – *“Фольклористика может по-настоящему принести реальную общественную пользу, если она...обратится к вдумчивому изучению взаимодействий и взаимоотношений фольклора и различных сфер современной народной культуры,...на основании изучения реальных процессов попытается вывести обобщения и выступит с рекомендациями по конкретными проблемам культуры и социологии художественного быта народа.”*<sup>64</sup> (B. N. Putilov)

**(Translation** – *Folkloristics can actually be of real social use if it...pays attention to seriously study the interactions and relationships of folklore and various spheres of modern folk culture,... on the basis of the study of real processes it tries to generalize and give recommendations on concrete problems of culture and sociology of the artistic life of the people.*)

This quote has been included in this study as it comes close to connecting Folklore with Sociolinguistics.

B. N. Putilov's views have been taken into consideration in this literature review for this very fact that he talks about using folkloristics to solve and realize real life problems of human society, and he comes close to connecting folklore with sociolinguistics, one aspect of which is to analyze the role of language in human society and the influence of human society on language.

Reviewing literature on folklore outside of Russia would not be complete without mentioning the renowned American folklorist – Alan Dundes. He is credited with the establishment of folklore studies as a proper discipline in America. He was a strongly opinionated folklorist who evoked a lot of reactions from his contemporaries and peers, but he continued on his path of folkloristic research and in connecting folklore with other fields such as anthropology, et al.

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<sup>64</sup> Н. В. Новыков, под ред. Фольклор и Художественная Самодеятельность (Ленинград: Наука, 1968) 7

Mention needs to be made of a book titled – ‘**Essays in Folkloristics,**’ which is a collection of Alan Dundes’ world famous essays, like ‘**Texture, Text and Context,**’ ‘**Structuralism and Folklore,**’ and others. According to him – “*Folkloristics is the scientific study of folklore just as linguistics is the scientific study of language.*”<sup>65</sup>

Alan Dundes states in his essay ‘**Who are the Folk?**’ how folklore can be useful in studying a phenomenon, which is used in sociolinguistics a lot, which is the ‘*code-switching.*’ He says – “*Folk is not a dependent variable...Many of these folk groups may be considered as part-time folk...One important consequence of the notion of part-time folk is the possibility for the study of code-switching. As individual moves from one of the folk groups to which he belongs to another, he must shift mental gears so to speak. A man normally wouldn't tell jokes exchanged in a military setting at a Church-sponsored meeting.*”<sup>66</sup> This very phenomenon of code-switching is extensively studied in Sociolinguistics.

Alan Dundes also explains the relevance of folklore in today’s world thus - “*The technology of the telephone, radio, television, Xerox machine, etc. has increased the speed of the transmission of folklore. What used to take...months to cross the country can now move around the world in a matter of seconds...technology itself has become the subject of folklore...so technology isn’t stamping out folklore...*”<sup>67</sup> In the items mentioned above, one may now include computers and mobile phones as well, along with telephone, radio, television, et al.

In his world-renowned essay ‘**Texture, Text and Context,**’ Alan Dundes goes on to define these three terms with relation to folklore. He states – “*The text of an item of folklore is essentially a version...of a tale...A text may be subjected to structural analysis just as its texture may be subjected to structural analysis...The context of an item of folklore is the specific social situation in which that particular item is actually employed.*”<sup>68</sup>

Dundes also states that – “*In 1929 Roman Jakobson, in a joint essay with P. Bogatyrev, noted that folklore and language were somewhat analogous in that both are a collective social phenomenon with definite regularities of pattern.*”<sup>69</sup> This shows that folklore and language are

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<sup>65</sup> Alan Dundes, Essays on Folkloristics (Meerut: Folklore Institute, 1978) vii.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 51.

connected, and language is connected to sociolinguistics, and thus, sociolinguistics is connected to folklore as well.

Dundes makes some relevant observations regarding the methodology or method of studying folklore. A remark which is relevant to this research topic is – “...*whether a folklorist employs the comparative method or structuralism, he is concerned with 1. defining similarities, and 2. delineating differences.*”<sup>70</sup> This is exactly one of the objectives this research topic is trying to accomplish with the help of Mulla Nasruddin tales. It is trying to find similarities and dissimilarities in these tales that are popular in different countries and cultures of the Silk Road.

Further, Dundes also remarks that - “...*on the basis of a single local form of only one tale type, one would not really have sufficient evidence...one would need to have historic-geographic studies of other tale types which showed the same or similar local forms of those tales...*”<sup>71</sup>

Then Dundes talks about the *trickster tales*, in which category tales of Mulla Nasruddin are also included. Dundes says – “*Hero-villain, trickster-dupe would be examples of individual characters in opposition...sometimes the opposition is contained in a single character.*”<sup>72</sup> Mulla Nasruddin is such a single character in which both the oppositions exist. Dundes also mentions the concept of ‘*wise-fool*,’ by which name Mulla Nasruddin is often called. “*The wise fool who commonly combines folly and wisdom and who may confuse the literal and the metaphorical...*”<sup>73</sup>

In conclusion to this part of the literature review, the following statement of Dundes will amply reveal the role of folklore – “*The study of folklore should include both the study of lore and the study of folk...Let's put the 'folk' back into folklore.*”<sup>74</sup>

The views of Alan Dundes about folklore are extremely important for this research topic, as they provide the much-needed base for this topic to be built up because they establish a well-

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<sup>70</sup> Alan Dundes, Essays on Folkloristics (Meerut: Folklore Institute, 1978) 187.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 187.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 192.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 192.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 67.

described connection of folklore with language and human society, which are the two factors that Sociolinguistics studies.

### 3. The Silk Road

This research is to analyze Mulla Nasruddin tales taken from such countries that are linked with each other from ancient and medieval times via the Silk Road. China was the main country of the Silk Road because the art of making silk began in China and then the existence of this *magical* fabric became known to other countries of the world, and thus began the silk trade. India was also a major country on the Silk Road, as it was popular for export of its spices to the other countries of the Silk Road; this lesser-known trade route was called the '*Spice Route*.'

This land trade route got its name the '*Silk Road*' much later, and the countries through which it passed were forever intertwined with each other in such a way that a '*common Silk Road culture*' was formed, as quoted by Dr. Konuralp Ercilasun in his paper titled – '**Silk Road as a Sub-Global Region: A Sphere Emerging from the Interaction of Cultural and Economic Fields**'. He also states in his paper that – "*We can find a lot of common melodies between the modern Indian music and the Uygur modern music; or between the Iranian, Turkish and Uzbek modern music. This situation is the same in the movie industry...my emphasis is that the common melodies between the Silk Road countries are more fundamental.*"<sup>75</sup> Ercilasun has mentioned two cultural phenomena – the music and the movie. The current research is trying to carry out a comparative study of such a cultural phenomenon, which is the folktales of the Silk Road countries, especially the common or similar tales of Mulla Nasruddin.

This research topic is trying to connect the commonalities of Mulla Nasruddin tales via the Silk Road which mostly stretches from Turkey (the country of origin of Mulla Nasruddin tales as per the majority opinion of the scholars in this field) to China (where, it is believed that the tales of Mulla Nasruddin became popular due to the Uyghur people of China who are of Turkic origin), and also passes through the Central Asian countries (most of which are part of the C.I.S. now) since ancient times - like Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, as tales of Mulla Nasruddin are prevalent in these countries, albeit with the name of Mulla Nasruddin pronounced and written slightly differently.

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<sup>75</sup> Dr. Konuralp Ercilasun, [Silk Road as a Sub-Global Region: A Sphere Emerging from the Interaction of Cultural and Economic Fields](#) (2003), Web, 25 July 2014, <[www.centralasia-southcaucasus.com/docs/.../Paper\\_Kenuralp\\_Ercilasun](http://www.centralasia-southcaucasus.com/docs/.../Paper_Kenuralp_Ercilasun)>.

Apart from Ercilasun, there are some other scholars who wrote about the Silk Road and whose views have been consulted for this research topic to know more about the cultural exchanges including literature along the Silk Road.

One such scholar is Xinru Liu who is a Chinese-born historian settled in the United States. She talks about the religious exchanges that took place along the Silk Road. She discusses not only about the major religions that spread along the Silk Road, like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, but also about the spread of such minor religions as Manichaeism, Judaism, Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism, and others. She also discusses, how through the spread of each of these religions, their belief systems, culture and literature spread along the Silk Road countries and how all these elements of all these religions and culture blend into one over the years.

Xinru Liu begins one of her books about the Silk Road with these words – *“This is a story of silk...It is an attempt, using silk as a thread, to examine a series of historical events which took place in several cultural regions of Eurasia from the seventh to the twelfth centuries...this book tries to reveal the possible economic and cultural interaction between these events and regions on the one hand, and certain changes caused by interactions within various societies which traded in silk. During the sixth and seventh centuries, a significant cultural pattern emerged across Eurasia. Certain political and cultural events heralded a period of frequent communication and interaction between the few existing cultural regions – East Asia, South Asia, West and Central Asia...”*<sup>76</sup>

She raises a valid question about the region of the Silk Road, as she asks – *“Is it possible to find a rule, a pattern, a common rhythm of historical development among different regions with seemingly totally different cultures? This question is also relevant for scholars...as increasing archaeological discoveries and other historical evidence show links and even causal relationships between events that took place in regions remote from each other, which cannot be explained under the assumption of the model of separated and isolated civilizations.”*<sup>77</sup>

She admits to the gap in research on the Central Asian region of the Silk Road, stating that – *“...more attention be paid to Central Asia...the entire history of Central Asia still evades our knowledge, and even an outline of the history of this region is yet to be reconstructed.”*<sup>78</sup> This is exactly what the current research topic is attempting to provide – an outline – however vague maybe, but nevertheless an outline of the Central Asian region with the help of common

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<sup>76</sup> Xinru Liu, Silk and Religion: An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600 – 1200 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 1.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 6.

or similar Mulla Nasruddin tales. This very similarity is what Xinru Liu also talks about proposing that – “*When a historian examines an ancient culture, a region, or a people, he cannot escape the many, often unexpected, similarities and instances of interactions between peoples stationed geographically far apart. This story of Silk and religion, which encounters the similarities and interactions existing among the peoples of China, Central Asia, India...*”<sup>79</sup> Such kind of similarities may also be encountered through the literature of these regions, and this is exactly the endeavor of this research topic.

Xinru Liu also talks about the caravan culture on the Silk Road. She says that “*...merchants, accompanied by pilgrims and preachers, traveled in caravans along the dangerous Central Asian routes...*”<sup>80</sup> This culture of traveling in caravans and staying at caravanserais is common in all the regions joined by the Silk Road. The archaeological remnants of these caravanserais are still there in the Central Asian region of today's world. The Central Asian region was so famous for textile trade along the Silk Road that Central Asian cities which exist even today, like Merv in Turkmenistan and Samarkand in Uzbekistan became important places on the Silk Road – “*The textile of Merv in Central Asia was so famous that even Africa and Spain imported these textiles. Samarkand in Central Asia was the meeting place of merchants...*”<sup>81</sup>

Xinru Liu and Lynda Norene Shaffer as co-authors explore the “*...cultural importance of the Silk Road.*”<sup>82</sup> That is why their views and thoughts are relevant for this research topic. They talk about the history of Silk Road from second century BC, discussing the Roman Empire and the Han Dynasty, till about the thirteenth century AD when Mongols were consolidating their rule. They also discuss the transportation and communication scenario between Europe and Asia.

Xinru Liu has published many books on the topic of Silk Road. However, a concrete reference to literary exchanges is not mentioned or explored by her. Her books on Silk Road are more on the historical side, dealing with commercial and religious exchanges along this road. Though, her books do give a clear and broad picture of the Eurasian exchanges in trade, religion as well as culture, and it can be deduced that since literature, especially oral, is a part of any people's culture, that is why when she talks about cultural exchanges, it automatically includes literature as well.

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<sup>79</sup> Xinru Liu, *Silk and Religion: An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600 – 1200* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 6.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 165.

<sup>82</sup> Xinru Liu and Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Connections Across Eurasia: Transportation, Communication, and Cultural Exchange on the Silk Roads* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2007).

Another scholar who writes about the Silk Road is M.S. Luke. He is an Australian who is settled in Nainital in India with his family. He has a doctorate on the subject of the Silk Road. He talks about the travelers on the Silk Road in a chronological order and also talks about the spread of religion in a systematic way and finally, from history he comes to the present condition of the Silk Road, discusses the projects that are currently going on for the revival of the Silk Road, and last, but not the least, gives a clear picture of the contribution of Central Asia to the prosperity of the Silk Road. This contribution of the Central Asian countries is what interests this research topic as it is concentrating on the Central Asian region as a hub of Mulla Nasruddin tales.

M.S. Luke also mentions an interesting fact, which is that the Silk Road existed for around two thousand years before anyone gave it its name. He points out that – “...*Ferdinand von Richthofen invented the term ‘Silk Road’ (Seindenstrabe, in his native German)...*In all of history Richthofen appears to have been the first to conceptualize the land routes across Asia in such a singular way – no one else, at least, had come up with such a catchy label.”<sup>83</sup>

M.S. Luke also describes in detail the caravan and caravanserai culture. Regarding caravanserais, he observes that –“*The oases of the Silk Road – Mary, Balkh, Bukhara, Samarquand, Kashgar, Turfan, Khotan, and others – owed their prosperity and often their very existence to the regularity of passing caravans. They offered way stations, or ‘caravansarays,’ where large numbers of travelers could stop and rest for a night or more...*”<sup>84</sup>

The interesting fact that comes to light from the above-mentioned is that most of the names of the towns mentioned here are in the Central Asian region and most of these towns are still flourishing today. The caravanserais were the meeting places of people on the Silk Road where they exchanged their folktales, stories, songs, and other things.

M. S. Luke not only talks about the Silk Road of the past but also shows the present status of the Silk Road. This gives his views the credibility and relevance for today’s scenario of the Silk Road.

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<sup>83</sup> M.S. Luke, The Silk Road: An Ancient Trade Route (Delhi: Sumit Enterprises, 2008) 39.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 48.



Yet another well-known scholar in the field of the Silk Road is Vadime Elisseeff. He is a Russian born historian who is an expert on the history of the Far East region. He calls the Silk Road as '*Highways of Culture*' first, and then '*Highways of Commerce*' which is interesting as most other scholars concentrate on the *commerce/trade* part of the Silk Road first and then come to the *cultural or religious exchange* part.

Since Vadime Elisseeff had also been the Chairman of the UNESCO's committee of the Silk Road, he discusses about the UNESCO Project '*Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue*,' which is going on since 1988 and the aim of this Project is to highlight – "...by adopting a many-sided approach to the physical and intangible heritage through epics, languages and scripts, arts and living traditions – the dialogue and meeting of cultures."<sup>85</sup> He also states that - "...the studies carried out under the Project have shown that identity, seen in the long-term perspective of history, cannot be viewed as a ghetto or an enclosure, but should be seen as the result of a whole process of synthesis and encounter between peoples and cultures."<sup>86</sup>

Elisseeff mentions that – "*In 1874, the Geographical Magazine published yet another article by the explorer on 'land communication between Europe and China.' The article reflected von Richthofen's principal idea that Central Asia was not only a link but, above all, a third partner – virtually a subcontinent – receiving and giving the cultural wealth of all those who cross its bleak steppes and deserts, waging war or bringing peace, encouraging trade, propagating religions, or merely traveling about in quest of knowledge.*"<sup>87</sup>

Another interesting observation made by Vadime Elisseeff is that – "...from the very beginning of the Christian era and for centuries afterwards, an increasing number of travelers, pilgrims and merchants, scholars and explorers - translating Indian texts into their mother tongue or taking notes – drafted accounts of their travels and reports on local customs and festivities. Other records include traveler's itineraries in the steppes and deserts and the logbooks...These describe all there was to be seen...all that was to be heard...all that could be collected...all that provided solace, whether inns or stopping-places, markets or caravanserais..."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Vadime Elisseeff, ed. *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce* (New York: Berghahn Books, UNESCO Publishing, 2000) viii.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, viii.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

The connection of Moscow (Russia) to the Silk Road is also mentioned by Vadime Elisseeff in the following words – *“During the same century, (the sixteenth century) for example, at the request of the English merchants of ‘Muscovy’, Anthony Jenkinson set out to obtain information on the itinerary from Moscow to Bukhara and beyond. He returned in 1558 with a comprehensive report.”*<sup>89</sup>

Elisseeff states that – *“A dialogue between the cultures means exchanges not only of goods but also of ideas.”*<sup>90</sup> And also – *“The intermingling of populations along these roads was constant and contacts were established as much through immediate neighbors as through those who lived far away.”*<sup>91</sup>

So far as the scope of research is concerned with this topic of exchanges on the Silk Road, Elisseeff asserts that – *“If the studies undertaken are further pursued, clarification of the mechanism underlying inter-influences could bring a better understanding of the components of each culture and greater appreciation of the mutual gifts that result from a secular intermingling of resources. Each of us would be able to discover, at long last, how he or she is a child of multiple origins and a crossbreed of the past.”*<sup>92</sup>

Vadime Elisseeff talking about his book about the Silk Road concludes the following – *“Within the unity of the problem dominated by the ‘dialogue between cultures,’ with its notion of mutual influences, and beyond the variety of their methods and regardless of the roads referred to, the texts presented in this volume can be divided into four groups: the first concerns religious movements...The second centers on interregional relations with merchants and haulers...The third group, focusing on the intercontinental trade of merchants...The fourth group...raises questions of art, technology and sociology.”*<sup>93</sup> This research topic mostly concentrates on the fourth group.

The topic of the Silk Road is far from obsolete. All over the world conferences are being organized and projects are being implemented to revive this so called ‘*life-line of cultural interaction*’ because the world has begun to comprehend the value of such a link in today’s volatile times. Even newspapers publish articles from time to time these days on Silk Road. In

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<sup>89</sup> Vadime Elisseeff, ed., *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce* (New York: Berghahn Books, UNESCO Publishing, 2000) 9-10.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 18.

March 2015 there were two such articles published in The Times of India newspaper – one on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015 titled – ‘**China seeks India’s ‘Spice Route’ to link with its ‘Silk Road’**, and the other was published on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2015 titled – ‘**China to accommodate India in Silk Road plan.**’

There was an International Conference ‘*Revisiting the Silk Road*,’ held at Jawaharlal Nehru University in November 2012, which was organized by the Centre of Russian Studies (CRS), School of Languages, Literature and Culture Studies (SLL&CS). This International Conference discussed the many facets of the Silk Road, and its past, present and future. Renowned scholars, especially from India, Russia and the Central Asian countries presented their views on multiple topics revolving around and connected to the Silk Road and its relevance today. Many such Conferences, Seminars and talks have also been organized by the Centre of Russian Studies and the Silk Road Studies Programme, JNU in collaboration with the countries mentioned above which have been part of the Silk Road.

All these Conferences generated a significant amount of literature in forms of papers and articles presented in the field of the Silk Road and its revival. Mention needs to be made of a book of articles edited by Professor Manu Mittal of Centre of Russian Studies, SLL&CS, JNU, titled – ‘**Cultures and Societies in Transition: India, Russia and other C.I.S. Countries.**’ (2008).

It is being mentioned in this literature review because of its relevance to this research topic, as it describes the socio-cultural transitions of such countries, most of which are the focus of this research topic; the countries are – India, Russia and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which are also part of the C.I.S.

A special mention is made here of an article from this book, titled – ‘**Центральная Азия: встреча культурных традиций Востока и Запада**’ [*Tsentralnaya Azia: Vstrecha kultoornikh traditsii Vostoka ii Zapada*] - *Central Asia: a Meeting of Cultural Traditions of the East and the West* in English written by M. L. Ahmedova. She calls Central Asia as a geographical and historical link between the East and the West, and also mentions the existence of Silk Road during ancient times, and then goes on to describe these links, talking about its history and geography – “*Центральная Азия географически и исторически является*

*связующим звеном между странами Востока и Запада. В далёкой древности здесь находился главный отрезок Великого шёлкового пути...*<sup>94</sup>

**(Translation –** *Central Asia geographically and historically is the link between the countries of the East and the West. During ancient times, the main segment of the Great Silk Road was located here.*)

Further, she also shows the connection in ancient times of India, the Central Asia and Iran with the people of Upper Volga, Siberia and the Far East, which are all part of Russia now. “*Через Центральную Азию или также пути с Юга на Север, по которым осуществлялись с древних времён связи Индии и Ирана с народами верховой Волги, Сибири и Дальнего Востока.*”<sup>95</sup>

**(Translation –** *Routes from the South to the North via which the communications between India and Iran with the people of Upper Volga, Siberia and Far East were carried out since ancient times were also passing through Central Asia.*)

#### **4. Sociolinguistics**

As far as the field of sociolinguistics is concerned, a few scholars are worth mentioning. One of them is an American sociolinguist, Peter Trudgill who discusses what the term ‘*Sociolinguistics*’ actually means and what type of relationship a language might have with different elements, like society, social class, ethnic groups, sex, context, social interaction, nation, geography, and humanity. By putting language in a relationship with the elements mentioned above, Peter Trudgill has given a concrete idea of what sociolinguistics is and how it applies in day-to-day life.

However, the aspect of sociolinguistics discussed by him are more technical in nature and do not say much about the creative side of sociolinguistics- how it applies to the literary part of human life, though he does discuss the relationship between language and social interaction, where he describes a phenomenon called ‘*code-switching*’ which is actually simultaneous use of two languages. He also describes some of the experimentations that were carried out with the help of subjects i.e. people from different countries who spoke different languages, and how they often mix their language with the ‘*universal*’ language – English.

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<sup>94</sup> Manu Mittal, ed. Cultures and Societies in Transition: India, Russia and other CIS Countries (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2008) 203.

<sup>95</sup> Manu Mittal, ed. Cultures and Societies in Transition: India, Russia and other CIS Countries (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2008) 203.

A similar kind of phenomenon which is described by Peter Trudgill is also observed among the educated class of India, especially, in Northern India, where the language Hindi that is used as a medium of interaction is studded with English words. There is even a term for this form of language which is 'Hinglish' (a mixture of the words *Hindi* and *English*). This form of language is used in a comfortable manner in day-to-day communication.

The sociolinguistic research going on in India deals with such kind of mixing of codes of two or more different languages, as India is a multi-lingual country and each and every town in India is a place of more than one Indian language and many dialects.

In a paper titled '**A Sociolinguistic Study of Linguistic Variation and Code Matrix in Kanpur**', Dr. Sujata Chaturvedi talks about the city of Kanpur and its *Kanpuriya* Hindi and also about the phenomenon of *Hinglish* – "*The educated and literate class is mostly bilingual i.e. they have good knowledge and extensive usage of Hindi and English and dialectically, they are either uni-dialectal or else do not use any dialects at all. They are comfortable using standard Hindi at almost all occasions intermingled with Standard English...Many a times, there seems some overlapping of codes, and in such a situation code mixing is frequently used, like Hindi is mixed with English to give rise to 'Hinglish'...*"<sup>96</sup> All this is relevant to the present research topic as with the help of Mulla Nasruddin tales it tries to show how people of one culture borrow words from another and use it comfortably in their native language.

Two other scholars in the field of sociolinguistics are Ronald Wardhaugh and Janet M. Fuller. They are trying to provide detailed explanations and information about the realm of sociolinguistics and the areas that it is connected with. They describe how over a period of more than half-a-century, sociolinguistics has evolved as a subject and how it came to be recognized as an important and separate field from linguistics and sociology, and yet is still connected with them in its own way. Wardhaugh and Fuller give a general perspective on sociolinguistics and describe it as follows – "*Sociolinguistics is the study of our everyday lives – how language works in our casual conversations...the presence of societal norms, policies, and laws which address language.*"<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Sujata Chaturvedi, A Sociolinguistic Study of Linguistic Variation and Code Matrix in Kanpur, Journal: Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 192 (2015), 107-115, 9 September 2016, <[www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)>.

<sup>97</sup> Ronald Wardhaugh, and Janet M. Fuller, An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.) 1.

Sociolinguistics has been distinguished from ‘*sociology of language*’ by Wardhaugh and Fuller in the following way – “...*Sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationship between language and society...and of how languages function in communication...*”<sup>98</sup>, whereas, ‘*sociology of language*’ is concerned with – “...*trying to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language.*”<sup>99</sup>

In other words, it means that sociology is primarily concerned with language influencing the society, whereas sociolinguistics is primarily concerned with society influencing the language. These two subjects are like two sides of the same coin, and sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary subject which is inherently connected with such disciplines as sociology, linguistics, psychology and anthropology.

“*Sociolinguistics should encompass everything from considering ‘who speaks what language to whom and when and to what end’* (Fishman, 1972, p. 46)”<sup>100</sup> This research topic is also concerned with the connection between language and society, and tries to decipher how a language functions in a society as a means of communication with the help of Mulla Nasruddin tales.

Ronald Wardhaugh and Janet M. Fuller deal with languages and dialects and how multilingual societies function. And also, “...*what happens when speakers of different languages come into contact with each other.*”<sup>101</sup> They also deal with methodologies of research in the fields of regional dialects and local vernaculars.

According to Wardhaugh and Fuller “...*variation can lead to language change...*”<sup>102</sup> This is an important observation for this study as it is trying to establish with the help of Mulla Nasruddin tales this variation factor that how language of these tales go through some changes when these tales enter from one country to another country, because different countries provide these tales with different atmosphere, which leads to the variations.

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<sup>98</sup> Ronald Wardhaugh, and Janet M. Fuller, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.) 15.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 105

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 219.

Wardhaugh and Fuller also talk about such important and relevant to this study topics like 'Ethnographic Approaches to Sociolinguistics,' 'Pragmatics' and 'Discourse Analysis.' 'Discourse Analysis' describes in detail about what is 'conversation analysis' (CA) and what is 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA) and how they differ. This view about discourse analysis is also relevant for this research topic as it shows a way to connect sociolinguistics with folklore, and as a result, with folktales, which is the focus of this research topic.

Michal Krzyzanowski a professor from Sweden notes that "...bringing ethnographic perspective to CDA research has emphasized the need to examine the relationship between context and text, and broadened the notion of context to include not just physical or linguistic context but also societal context..."<sup>103</sup>

Wardhaugh and Fuller also talk about gender perspective in using a language, and also about the role of sociolinguistics in the field of education and language planning. They provide a unique perspective of "how men and women use language..."<sup>104</sup> According to them men and women speak the same language, but use it differently.

Nevertheless, the topic of literature and folklore in context with sociolinguistics is missing from their views. The question arises that if Sociolinguistics is compatible and connected with so many different disciplines, then why not with literature too? Literature and Folklore are also important facets of human society and are expressed through language.

To understand the field of sociolinguistics and its applications better, perspectives of some other scholars are also taken into consideration. One such scholar is Dell Hymes. He is one of the most renowned American sociolinguists. He remarks – "Language is not everywhere equivalent in communicative role and social value; speaking may carry different functional loads in the communicative economy of different societies...no normal person and no normal community are limited in repertoire to a single variety of code, to an unchanging monotony, which would preclude the possibility of indicating respect, insolence, mock-seriousness, humor, role-distance, etc. by switching from one code variety to another."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ronald Wardhaugh, and Janet M. Fuller, An Introduction to Sociolinguistics (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.) 302.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 332.

<sup>105</sup> Pier Paolo Giglioli, ed. Language and Social Context (United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 1972) 9-10.

Furthermore, there is a comparison between Hymes' '*communicative competence*' and Noam Chomsky's notion of '*linguistic competence*' - "*Hymes has elaborated the concept of 'communicative competence' which refers to the psychological, cultural and social rules which discipline the use of speech in social settings.*"<sup>106</sup>

Pier Paolo Giglioli, an Italian sociologist is of the opinion that "...*a person endowed with mere linguistic competence would be a sort of cultural monster. He would know the grammatical rules of his language, but he would not know when to speak when to be silent, which sociolinguistics options to select from a repertoire on what occasion...*"<sup>107</sup> This quote is specially mentioned because this phenomenon of knowing grammatical rules of a language without understanding its background is also observed during teaching of a foreign language. This happens due to lack of those settings under which a language flourishes in its country of origin.

In Dell Hymes' article titled - '**Towards Ethnographies of Communication: The Analysis of Communicative Events**,' there is a story about a man who talks to stones and seems to understand them! A similar concept is there in many of Mulla Nasruddin tales, where Nasruddin talks to inanimate objects and animals and claims to understand them!

Dell Hymes states that - "...*the question is one not of what language does for and to participants, their personalities, culture, and the like but of what participants, their personalities, and the like, do for and to a language.*"<sup>108</sup> Hence, the main focus of Sociolinguistics is on how society affects and changes a language.

J. Gumperz, an American linguist remarks - "...*speech is not constrained by grammatical rules alone. An individual's choice from among permissible alternates in a particular speech event may reveal his family background and his social intent, may identify him as a Southerner, a Northerner, an urbanite, a rustic, a member of the educated or uneducated classes, and may even indicate whether he wishes to appear friendly or distant, familiar or deferential, superior or inferior.*"<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Pier Paolo Giglioli, ed. Language and Social Context (United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 1972), 15.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 220.



Ivana Markova, a British social psychologist interested in language and its communicative role edited a book of collected articles on sociolinguistics the purpose of which is - in her words – “...to support the growing interest in the social psychology of language and to identify the new spheres of research in this field.” (Markova, p. ix)<sup>110</sup> It mentions theories and ideas of linguists like Noam Chomsky and sociologists like Kant, and even philosophers like Aristotle, trying to give a clear picture of the evolution of Sociolinguistics as a new and separate discipline.

Mentioning renowned sociolinguists like William Labov and Dell Hymes and their contribution to the field of sociolinguistics, Markova says that “...the work of the few sociolinguists, for example Hymes’ exploration of communicative competence and of the interaction of various aspects of language and social setting, as well as Labov’s concern with sociolinguistic structure and the role of social factors in linguistic evolution, can now be seen as indicating the new developments in research into language and communication.”<sup>111</sup>

A psychologist Valerie Walkerdine and a linguist Chris Sinha show a relationship between language and cognitive development with the help of many tests and experiments to prove the role of context. They state that “within the field of recent psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research, there is a growing body of data which can be taken as support for the view that context is central to any understanding of cognitive and linguistic development.”<sup>112</sup>

Guy Fielding and Colin Fraser say the following about Sociolinguistics: “Sociolinguistics is concerned with the relations between systems of communication, especially linguistic systems, and the social situations in which they are used. The social situation is frequently analyzed in terms of the first three components of Hymes’ (1972) mnemonic SPEAKING, i.e. settings, participants, and ends...The ‘setting’ locates the interaction, for instance as in an office or a restaurant,... ‘Participants’ specifies the characteristics of those taking part in the interaction, for instance as male and female,... ‘Ends.’ refers to the intended objectives or actually achieved outcomes.”<sup>113</sup> This is important as this concept of Dell Hymes’ SPEAKING may also be applied to Mulla Nasruddin tales.

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<sup>110</sup> Ivana Markova, ed. *The Social Context of Language*, (United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 1979) ix.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 172.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, 217.

J. B. Pride and Janet Holmes define ‘*Sociolinguistics*’ as the “...*study of the structure and use of language in its social and cultural contexts.*”<sup>114</sup>

Sociolinguistics states that just learning a language is not enough. This is where sociolinguistics differs from linguistics. According to Sociolinguistics, the social function is also a major criterion on how to use a language and in the correct context. This fact reflects on why second language teaching or a foreign language teaching is usually less successful than learning the first language or one's mother tongue because, unlike learning of the first language, where an individual gets the social and linguistic contexts of the language from one's surroundings, in second language or a foreign language learning the social and linguistic contexts are missing or minimal. One of the most difficult things in learning a second or a foreign language is not learning to read or write, but to communicate in that language.

As per William Labov, the most famous American sociolinguist - “...*The fundamental sociolinguistic question is posed by the need to understand why anyone says anything.*”<sup>115</sup>

Another scholar J. A. Fishman states that – “*A government functionary in Brussels...generally speaks standard French in his office, standard Dutch at his club and a distinctly local variant of Flemish at home.*”<sup>116</sup> It means that one chooses the styles and variants of languages one knows as a multilingual individual as per one's perception of social context.

J. A. Fishman in his article presents the sociolinguistic analysis in the form of a diagram (Image 2) which was drawn by Cooper (1968).<sup>117</sup>

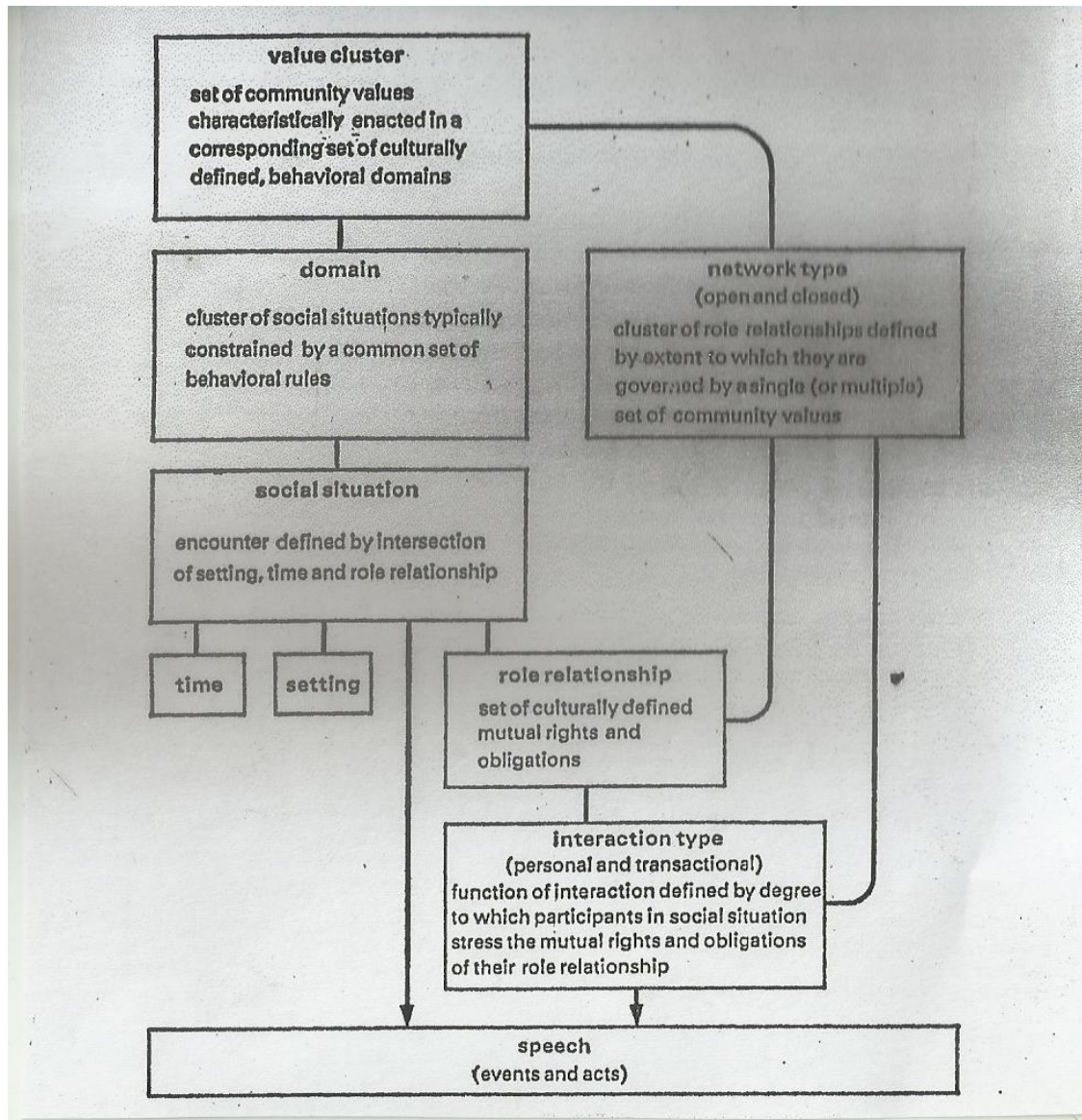
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<sup>114</sup> J. B. Pride, and Janet Holmes, ed. *Sociolinguistics*, (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1972) 7.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 180.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>117</sup> R. L. Cooper, *How can we measure the roles which a bilingual's languages play in his everyday behavior?* Proceedings of the International Seminar on the Measurement and a Description of Bilingualism, Ottawa Canadian Commission for UNESCO. 1968. It is on page 30 of the book mentioned above titled ‘*Sociolinguistics.*’



**Image 1. Relationship among some constructs employed in sociolinguistic analysis**

(Cooper, 1968)

All the views of the scholars in the field of Sociolinguistics mentioned above have some insightful information on Sociolinguistics. But, most of the sociolinguistics scholars wrote about the technical aspect of sociolinguistics and they describe and deal mostly with the experimentation conducted and data collected and analyzed.

Basil Bernstein who is considered a modern sociolinguist states that – “...*language is very important because it serves to transmit culture.*”<sup>118</sup>

William Labov experimented extensively on pronunciation part of the English language in the USA using subjects belonging to different backgrounds – ethnically, as well as financially, especially with the speech of African-American community. “*Labov shows that to explain a matter already regarded as part of linguistics, sound change – one must go outside language, to the social matrix of speech...*”<sup>119</sup>

According to John J. Gumperz – “*The speech event is to the analysis of verbal interaction what sentence is to grammar.*”<sup>120</sup> Thereby giving a concrete comparison between oral and written speech, and showing that oral speech is equally important. This comparison is significant for this study because folktales are mostly based on orality, and Mulla Nasruddin tales are no exception.

Apart from these scholars, there are some papers and articles by some other scholars that have shed more light on this subject and its connection to folklore. One such paper is written by Dr. M. Maniruzzaman, which is titled ‘**The Study of the Language Embodying and Transmitting Folklore - an Endeavour to reveal its Relevance to Sociolinguistics.**’ Dr. Maniruzzaman has done extensive research on sociolinguistics, as well as folklore. Dr. Maniruzzaman actually focuses on two disciplines - folklore and sociolinguistics, which he claims are closely related and sometimes overlapping and may enrich each other.

Maniruzzaman states that: “...*the present paper purports to be an endeavour to investigate and ascertain the relevance of the study of the language of folklore to sociolinguistics since folklore is embodied and composed in, and manifested and transmitted by means of spoken language and sociolinguistics discovers and determines the relations of language to society.*”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> John J. Gumperz, and Dell Hymes, ed. Directions in Sociolinguistics, (NY, USA: Basil Blackwell,1986) 466.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>121</sup> M. Maniruzzaman, “Studying Language through Folklore,” 2008, Web, 10 August 2014

<[http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel\\_guide/106611/languages/studying\\_language\\_through\\_folklore](http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel_guide/106611/languages/studying_language_through_folklore)>.

Maniruzzaman's views are relevant to the current research topic as they strive to prove a connection between sociolinguistics and folklore. This connection may be simply because folklore belongs to the 'folk' and 'folk' use 'language' in a 'social setting', which is the main field of study for sociolinguistics; and hence, the deduction that sociolinguistics is connected to folklore and the study of one through the other will enrich both.

Maniruzzaman quotes Alan Dundes, the American folklorist, "...speech, a primary and productive skill of the language used by a specific community, performs a very significant part in containing, carrying, transmitting and communicating...the spoken word of course used in social contexts functions as the medium of folklore..."<sup>122</sup>

Maniruzzaman firstly discusses the relationship between language and folklore, claiming – "...the speech of a particular community embodies and transmits its folklore, and folklore is naturally an authentic manifestation of the speech."<sup>123</sup> Then he discusses the connection between language and sociolinguistics, stating that simply defining sociolinguistics as '...the study of language in relation to society...' (Hudson 1996: 1) is not enough. "Sociolinguistics has to discover specific points of connection between language and society and formulate theories that throw light on how linguistic and social structures interact. This leads to the investigation into the relevance of the study of the language of folklore to sociolinguistics."<sup>124</sup>

Maniruzzaman states that from "...the choice between 'langue' (language structure) and 'parole' (actual speech) (Sassure, 1916) or 'competence' and 'performance' (Chomsky, 1965), only langue and competence are chosen as proper subject of linguistics".<sup>125</sup> Sociolinguistics, on the other hand, chose the opposite two, which are 'parole' and 'performance.' He also says that "...the language that carries folklore can be studied in sociolinguistics in order to discover its relations to the particular society."<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> M. Maniruzzaman, "Studying Language through Folklore," 2008, Web, 10 August 2014  
<[http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel\\_guide/106611/languages/studying\\_language\\_through\\_folklore](http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel_guide/106611/languages/studying_language_through_folklore)>.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

According to Maniruzzaman – “...*the language of folklore is evidently a subject matter of sociolinguistics...*”<sup>127</sup> He also quotes Dell Hymes – “...*the relevance of the study of the language of folklore to sociolinguistics may provide a special opportunity for the development of folklore itself* (Hymes, 1974).”<sup>128</sup>

Another interesting and relevant paper by Karen Ann Watson titled ‘**A Rhetorical and Sociolinguistic Model for the Analysis of Narrative**’ takes another step further from Maniruzzaman’s paper, as this paper comes down straight to ‘*narratives*.’ Maniruzzaman’s paper endeavors to connect sociolinguistics with folklore, whereas Watson’s paper strives to find a relation between sociolinguistics and narratives.

Narratives are any kind of stories; it may be a tale, like the Mulla Nasruddin tales that are the focus of this research topic; it may be legends, myths or short-stories and so on, which all belong to the field of folklore, as folklore is a vast field that includes not only folktales, legends, music, songs and oral history, but also traditions and customs and even beliefs of a given community. According to Watson – “...*narrative is the account of an event or series of events.*”<sup>129</sup>

Karen Ann Watson “*discusses the importance of narrative to the study of culture...*”<sup>130</sup> She talks about the concept of ‘*myth*’ as a narrative and how scholars, like Levi-Strauss, Propp (Russian Folklorist), Alan Dundes (American Folklorist) et al. have tried to define the minimal unit of a myth. Although it is not clear why instead of Vladimir Propp, she mentions the name as Alexander Propp. The ‘**The Morphology of the Folktale**’ that Watson talks about was created by Vladimir Propp, and it was first published in 1928.

Watson also talks about William Labov’s sociolinguistic perspective for narrative which is more relevant to the current research topic. She quotes – “...*the field of sociolinguistics is*

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<sup>127</sup> M. Maniruzzaman, “Studying Language through Folklore,” 2008, Web, 10 August 2014  
<[http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel\\_guide/106611/languages/studying\\_language\\_through\\_folklore](http://www.streetdirectory.com/travel_guide/106611/languages/studying_language_through_folklore)>.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Karen Ann Watson, “A Rhetorical and Sociolinguistic Model for the Analysis of Narrative,” *Journal of American Anthropologist* 75 (1973): 243.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 243.

*concerned with the ‘details of language in actual use’, and is commensurate with Dell Hymes’ conception of ‘ethnography of speaking’ (Labov, 1970:30; and Hymes, 1962).”<sup>131</sup>*

In the context of contemporary sociolinguistic research in Russia, two sociolinguists can be mentioned – one is Y. D. Polivanov (Yevgeny Dmitrievich Polivanov), and the other is M. V. Panov (Mikhail Viktorovich Panov).

Yevgeny Dmitrievich Polivanov was a Russian and Soviet linguist and literary scholar, who is considered as one of the founding fathers of sociolinguistics in the Soviet Union. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Polivanov put forward the idea that language is influenced by society and that language is a social phenomenon. Polivanov was also a folklorist.

His ideas about sociolinguistics were later developed by Mikhail Viktorovich Panov in the 1960s. Panov was a Russian linguist who later in his life took an interest in sociolinguistics as a result of Polivanov's works and influence. Panov noticed some fundamental discrepancies in the way Russian is spoken and written, and this led him to carry out extensive research on the speech errors (*речевые ошибки – richiviye oshibki*) and other phenomena of variability (*вариантивность – variantivnost’*) of the language system (*языковая система- yazikovaya sistema*). He also became interested in Russian vernacular language (*русское просторечие – Russkoe prostorechiye*). Panov’s contribution to sociolinguistics was in the form of a four-volume consolidated work with him as the editor, titled ‘**Russian Language and Soviet Society**’ (*Русский Язык и Советское Общество- Russkii Yazik ii Sovietskoe Obshhestvo*) which was published in 1968. The work on this project was started by Panov in 1962 itself.

Panov gives the following description (in Russian) about the subject matter of this book – “*В данной книге описываются изменения в системе словообразования русского литературного языка советской эпохи, связанные с влиянием на язык социальных факторов и их взаимодействием с внутренними тенденциями развития языка.*”<sup>132</sup>

**(Translation –** *The changes in the word formation system of the Russian literary language of the Soviet era which are connected to the influence on the language of the social factors and their*

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<sup>131</sup> Karen Ann Watson, “A Rhetorical and Sociolinguistic Model for the Analysis of Narrative,” *Journal of American Anthropologist* 75 (1973): 251.

<sup>132</sup> М. В. Панов, под ред. *Словообразование современного русского литературного языка*, *Русский Язык и Советское Общество: Социолого-лингвистическое исследование*, (Москва: Наука, 1968) 4.

*interactions with the internal tendencies of the development of the language has been described in this book.)*

This is a direct reference to the role a society or social norms play in changing and influencing the development of a language. This is the broad subject matter of sociolinguistics – in what way society influences a language.

Panov describes the technical aspect of the language change by giving concrete examples from Russian language words – first the original word and then the changed version of the word and showing how the changes came about.



# METHODOLOGY

The present research topic is a multi-disciplinary one which includes history, folklore (folktales) and sociolinguistics. In a broad sense, the methodology that was followed here was a non-empirical qualitative study of primary and secondary published materials such as books, articles, internet sources, and so on. This study is non-empirical because it was mostly based on theoretical research. An attempt was made here to carry out sociolinguistic analysis and comparison by the folkloristic methodology of different versions of the tales of Mulla Nasruddin which are prevalent in the countries belonging to the Silk Road Region, especially India, Russia and the three Central Asian countries – Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

However, it was not an easy task. There were many challenges that had to be overcome in the process of this type of a comparison of folktales. The challenges faced can be appropriately summarized in Lauri Honko's words on *'the problem of making comparisons'*: "...there still remains the question of methodology in making comparisons. What theoretical models can we supply for understanding the side-by-side presentation in which poems from fourteen different languages fall into thematic groups as if they represented not only themselves but also the cultures on which they were produced?"<sup>133</sup>

The same can be said about these Mulla Nasruddin tales as well, because here these tales are regarded not only as simple tales, but as representations of the country and the culture they belong to, in the sense that via these tales an attempt was made to understand the culture and life of people of the selected countries, as it is said that the "*folklore is one possible cross-cultural indicator for revealing all manner of things about the inherent nature and trend in a given culture.*"<sup>134</sup>

The age old established method for analyzing, studying and comparing folklore is the 'Finnish' method which is also known as the Historic-geographical method which was formulated by Julius Krohn (1835-1888) who was a Finnish folk poetry researcher, and later on

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<sup>133</sup> Lauri Honko, "Types of Comparison and Forms of Variation," *Journal of Folklore Research* vol. 23, No. 2/3 (1986): 109. JSTOR, 2 December 2016  
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3814443>>.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 112.

promoted by his son Kaarle Krohn who was also a Finnish folklorist, and hence the name the 'Finnish' method.<sup>135</sup>

The 'Finnish' method is still used, especially to display folklore material. As Richard Dorson in his article '*Current Folklore Theories*' says – "... A main theory is of comparative folklore tradition. This is based upon the Finnish historic-geographical method."<sup>136</sup> Until recently, this method was mostly being used for the study, display, and comparison of folklore.

However, since this study is a multi-disciplinary study, and since the primary objective of this study was not to carry out display of folktales *per se*, this method is not the main method which was used here, though a different type of display and comparison was carried out which was that of the plot and language part of these tales country-wise from the socio-cultural aspect. That is why the contrastive method for displaying and analyzing the Mulla Nasruddin tales prevalent in the countries and regions mentioned in the thesis title was used as well. The similarities and dissimilarities of these tales with relation to the food, local terms or metaphors, clothing, names and titles which were used in the language of these tales were observed with the help of this method. The contrastive method is helpful when comparing two such units that have not only similarities but also differences.

The contrastive method as such was first developed in the 1950s to be used to compare two languages of different linguistic families. It was called 'Contrastive Linguistics' by its founder Robert Lado. Robert Lado was a Spanish-origin American scholar on modern linguistics. The present study has utilized this method with relation to comparing tales of Mulla Nasruddin and the changes they go through as they transcend borders due to cultural and societal differences in the countries they enter into. In a broad sense, the present study has attempted to utilize the Contrastive method for analyzing folktales.

For this purpose, similar tales of Mulla Nasruddin were collected and read. Out of these tales twenty were shortlisted which were common in these countries. An analysis of existing (primary and secondary) data, i.e., books collected from different libraries, publications from different countries procured through couriers and International Book Fairs, was carried out. Data was also collected from electronic databases and online sources like journals and articles from

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<sup>135</sup> Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, On the History of Comparison in Folklore Studies, n.d., Web, 12 July 2014 <<http://www.hanko.uio.no/planses/ulrika.html>>.

<sup>136</sup> Richard Dorson, *Current Folklore Theories*, n.d., Web, 12 July 2014 <[faculty.ksu.edu.sa/hujailan/trans/Current%20Folklore%20Theories.doc](http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/hujailan/trans/Current%20Folklore%20Theories.doc)>.

sources like JSTOR which has a rich collection of articles on Folklore Studies as well as Folklore Methodologies, Sociolinguistics and History (specifically articles on Silk Road, which were related to cultural and religious exchanges).

The literature thus collected was categorized into Primary Sources, i.e., literature which directly talks about Mulla Nasruddin, his life, and his tales, and Secondary Sources, i.e., literature that deals with the theoretical part of folktales, folkloristic theories and methods and sources on Silk Road and Sociolinguistics.

Since Sociolinguistics is comparatively a new discipline, and since efforts were made here to connect Sociolinguistics with Literature, specifically folktales, some unconventional methods were used to carry out this study. One of such methods is a method that includes both the linguistic as well as historical perspective in combination to compare the literature of folktales, as Lauri Honko states – *“Recently there has been a growing interest in an areal approach both in linguistic and cultural studies. The areal model emphasizes the part played by neighboring, but not linguistically-related, people in the development of both language and culture...This development is likely to bring linguists, ethnographers, and folklorists closer to each other.”*<sup>137</sup>

This description by Lauri Honko makes it easier to explain the nature of this comparative study, as tales of Mulla Nasruddin belong to many cultures and countries that are geographical neighbors, but linguistically and culturally different from each other. And to carry out the comparison of such tales a mix of different methodologies which suit the multi-disciplinary nature of this study were required.

This study has also included online sources like articles and movies that are about Mulla Nasruddin tales and his life, and articles which are about folklores and folktales in general. This study has been predominantly qualitative and inductive in nature. A few common tales of Mulla Nasruddin were looked at one-by-one, and systematic variations like the differences or similarities in food, clothing, names, titles, and so on were located.

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<sup>137</sup> Lauri Honko, "Types of Comparison and Forms of Variation," *Journal of Folklore Research* vol. 23, No. 2/3 (1986): 110. JSTOR, 2 December 2016  
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3814443>>.

This study is a sociolinguistic study of tales of Mulla Nasruddin from the socio-cultural perspective that gives an insight into past societies and past world with relation to today's world. This may be summarized properly with the following words - *“Demographic factors, the nature, size and proximity of neighboring people, the frequency and duration of contacts, the mobility of the population and communication...are hardly ever the primary objects of the...folkloristic research, yet...the folklorists gladly refer to them in constructing explanations, in the interpretation of similarities and divergences alike.”*<sup>138</sup>

The concept of this topic was fascinating, since Mulla Nasruddin tales are quite well-known in India, and since India was a major player in trade and commerce that was going on via the Silk Road during the medieval period. In fact, India had its version of the Silk Road which was known as the Spice Route, as it was a major exporter of Indian spices. The intention was to find an interesting multi-disciplinary topic related to the Silk Road and Folktales that are famous on the legendary Silk Road.

This concept took shape when while researching on folktales along the Silk Road countries – especially India, Russia and the Central Asian countries – it was noticed that Mulla Nasruddin as a jester is well-known and quite popular in many of the countries along the Silk Road – he is famous in almost all the Central Asian Republics, in India, and even in Russia, albeit by different names and titles like Hodja, Hoca, Khoja, Mulla, Mullah, Ependi, Afangti, and many more.

There is a lot to be done in this kind of contrastive study where there are such folktales that exist in almost all the countries of the world that have similar or the same kind of plots despite their vast cultural differences and variations. Similar folk figures or the same folk figure exists in many of these countries, not only in human form but animal forms as well, and they teach similar life lessons – folk figures such as Sly Peter in Macedonia and Bulgaria - in Bulgaria his name is Hitar Petar (*Хитрий Пётр- Khitryi Pyotr*), Till Eulenspiegel of the Germans, the Jewish prankster Hershele Ostropoler, Gabra Hanna of Ethiopia, the Baldakiev figure of the Russians, the Arab Joha or Juha, Bertoldo of the Italians<sup>139</sup>.

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<sup>138</sup> Lauri Honko, "Types of Comparison and Forms of Variation," *Journal of Folklore Research* vol. 23, No. 2/3 (1986): 110. JSTOR, 2 December 2016  
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3814443>>.

<sup>139</sup> Idries Shah, *The Sufis*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1971) 71.

It is not even necessary to cross the borders of India; many such personalities who resemble Nasruddin, maybe in part, could be found in medieval India itself, for example, Birbal, Gopal Bhar/Bhand, Tenali Raman, and Sheikh Chilli. As per Lauri Honko – “*Tradition-historical comparisons readily speak of culture loans, justifying this by saying that a foreign counterpart can be found for a given phenomenon...But...it is also necessary to study the nature of the loan and the use of the borrowed element in the receiving culture.*”<sup>140</sup> This was one of the objectives of this research – to study the nature and the usage of such tales from the socio-cultural aspect in the receiving cultures or countries.

For this particular study, many tales of Mulla Nasruddin were read and looked into, and in the end, a few of his most popular tales were selected; such tales of Mulla Nasrudin which are popular in the Asian part of the ancient Silk Road and the countries along this road, which are - India, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Russia has been included in this study because of the fact that as the Central Asian Republics were a part of the former Soviet Union till 1991, these tales have spread to Russia most probably via these Central Asian Republics, and have become quite popular there taking on a communist tinge, as described by Idries Shah. He states that – “*In the Middle Ages Nasrudin Tales were widely used to deride odious authority. In more recent times, the Mulla became a People’s Hero of the Soviet Union, when a film depicted him as scoring again and again off the wicked capitalist rulers of the country.*”<sup>141</sup>

To narrow down this vast topic further due to time and space constraints, only a few countries were shortlisted for this study, and such Mulla Nasruddin tales were selected for comparison which are the common ones circulating in the shortlisted countries mentioned above. For example, one tale that is found in almost all of these countries mentioned above is about a piece of utensil giving birth to another smaller piece of utensil, and then eventually dying!

This tale is titled – ‘*The Death of a Pot.*’ This tale is known as ‘*Death of the Pot*’ in India as well; in the Bengali language it is titled – ‘*Haadir Mrityu*’ which translated into English means the same; in Russia it is called ‘*How the Cauldron Calved*’ (*Как Котёл Отелился – Как Kotyol Ochelilsa*); in Turkmenistan it is titled – ‘*One Who Can Give Birth, Can Die*’ (*Guzlap Bilen Olup-de Biler...*); in Tajikistan, this tale is titled – ‘*Your Boiler has died*’ (*Дегхонаи Мърд*), and in Uzbekistan it is titled – ‘*The Pot*’ (*Tova*). It even has an equivalent in China, where it is titled – ‘*The Pregnant Pot.*’

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<sup>140</sup> Lauri Honko, "Types of Comparison and Forms of Variation," *Journal of Folklore Research* vol. 23, No. 2/3 (1986): 120-121. JSTOR, 2 December 2016  
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3814443>>.

<sup>141</sup> Idries Shah, *The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin* (London: The Octagon Press, 1966) Introduction.

To make this study even more interesting, and to give it an empirical meaning, a questionnaire having some basic questions about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, and about the Silk Road was circulated among some university students of Jawaharlal Nehru University as well as Delhi University to find out how much knowledge the youth of India has about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, and also about the legendary Silk Road. The questionnaire was not only filled by students but by people belonging to the age group eighteen to forty, and in some cases, even above forty.

The same questionnaire was also sent via WhatsApp and email abroad to the people of targeted countries, and anonymous opinions of the people of these countries were taken to assess their knowledge about the topics included in the questionnaire, and also their views were taken regarding the present research topic. It was an anonymous survey and the only information requested from the participants of this survey was about their age, gender, and country. The questionnaire was initially circulated in English, but due to lack of good knowledge of English in some of the chosen countries, it was then translated into Russian as well. Hence, the responses received are in two languages – either in English or Russian.

The Microsoft Excel software was used to first quantify and then analyse the data collected from the questionnaire and to make Column Charts and Pie Diagrams from the data collected.

The countries selected for this survey were Turkey, Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia and China which are considered to be important countries along the Silk Road. The aim was to find out the status of Mulla Nasruddin and his tales in these countries and their relevance today. There are other countries like Iran (Persia) and Pakistan which are also an important part of the Asian part of the Silk Road region, and where Mulla Nasruddin tales are also popular, but these countries were not approached because of some reasons like time constraints and language barrier and unapproachability.

It also needs to be mentioned here that before distributing these questionnaires to the students and people of the selected countries, a pilot study was carried out by sending this questionnaire to academicians of different Universities inside as well as outside Delhi. Their suggestions and feedbacks were taken into consideration as far as possible to improve the quality of the questions asked in this questionnaire. These activities have provided this study with the

empirical ground that it otherwise lacked, as it was basically a non-empirical, theoretical study. This questionnaire is included in the Appendix to this thesis. The Microsoft Excel Workbook created thus is also included in the Appendix to this thesis.

So far as the novelty of this study is concerned, no such consolidated study, especially from the point of view of Silk Road Studies, has been carried out on Mulla Nasruddin tales, though a lot of literature does exist in this field. The present study is the first of its kind that used the contrastive method in the sociolinguistic analysis of Mulla Nasruddin tales prevalent in the countries of Silk Road region. The focus on Silk Road region as a treasure chest of Mulla Nasruddin tales is in itself a unique perspective of research on folktales. The survey conducted with the help of the questionnaire provided additional support to validate this research topic.

This research topic is also trying to prove the great potential that these tales have in being used as teaching material for foreign language teaching, in general and Russian language teaching, in particular as they are quite short in nature and may be easily learned and remembered.

However, there were some limitations that were encountered during selection of Mulla Nasruddin tales and their collection from different countries. It was challenging to find these tales in the Central Asian countries because their native language proved to be a barrier, and this language barrier made the detection of these selected tales difficult. As most of the tales could not be detected in their respective native languages, it became even more difficult to find their translations in either English or Russian. The Mulla Nasruddin tales that were found in the three selected Central Asian countries, i.e. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were in their native languages, i.e. Tajik, Turkmen, and Uzbek, respectively. Help of native speakers of these languages had to be taken for translating these tales into either Russian or English which was a daunting task. As a result, some of the selected tales could not be translated, even though they were located in native languages of the three selected Central Asian countries.

The Central Asian country that posed the most challenge during the finding and translation of Mulla Nasruddin tales is Turkmenistan, as it has its native language and uses Roman script to depict it in written form. Also, the use of English and Russian languages is quite limited in Turkmenistan. Although Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also posed some challenges due to having their native languages, the helpful factor was that in Uzbekistan English is used more than in any of these Central Asian countries, hence it was easier to find English versions of

Uzbek Mulla Nasruddin tales; and in case of Tajikistan, the factor that helped is that Tajikistan has not yet changed its script from Cyrillic which is used to depict Russian alphabets. Russian translations of many Mulla Nasruddin tales in Tajikistan were found online.

Lastly, since the MLA format gets updated from time to time, it needs to be mentioned that the Bibliography and the Footnotes are made following the formats used in MLA (Modern Language Association) 7. The websites consulted for this purpose are –

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/>

<http://www.easybib.com/>



# CHAPTER 1

## The Selected Tales of Mulla Nasruddin

*There is an old saying – ‘Old is Gold,’ and in the case of folktales, this saying really applies.*

Folktale is a wide concept. It includes so many different categories of tales that it is not possible to mention them all. It contains animal tales, tales about magic, tales about demons, demigods and gods, adventure tales and tales of travel, and many more types. Since, it is extremely difficult to describe all the forms of folktales that are there, the category of folktales which is relevant to this research topic is discussed here, under which tales of Mulla Nasruddin fall. These tales are known as the ‘*Trickster Tales*.’

Hansen (2001) believed that the term ‘*Trickster*’<sup>142</sup> was first used by Daniel G. Brinton in 1885. A *Trickster* can be a human or a God or Demigod, or can even be in an animal form. There are such tales prevalent all over the world. They usually spread through oral traditions and later on were written down. A *Trickster* is usually a male, but can be a female as well or a male in a feminine disguise. A *Trickster* is an intriguing character for many. He is considered to be a comic-figure, selfish, cruel and harsh; one who loves to play tricks on people. But in spite of all the negative aspects of his personality, a *Trickster* is not generally considered to be malicious.

Some very famous examples of *Tricksters* from the world over are - Davy Crockett, who was the most famous bear hunter of the United States.<sup>143</sup> This is a *Trickster* in human form in the United States. There are animal *Tricksters* as well in United States – one very famous character being *The Bugs Bunny* – who is a rabbit.

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<sup>142</sup> Trickster, n.d., Crystalinks, 17 July 2014  
<http://www.crystalinks.com/trickster.html>

<sup>143</sup> S.E. Schlosser, Davy Crockett, and the Coonskin, A Tennessee Legend, 14 December 2014, American Folklore, 15 January 2017  
[http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2011/06/davy\\_crockett\\_and\\_the\\_coonskin.html](http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2011/06/davy_crockett_and_the_coonskin.html)

In one of his blogs, Ash Silverlock put up an entire article about *Tricksters* of this world from the past. In this article he mentions *Tricksters* like Robin Goodfellow in English literature; Coyote in North America; the female *Tricksters* – *Kitsune* who are fox maidens from Korea and Japan; *Loki* – the *Trickster* Norse God; *Prometheus* of the Greco-Roman myth; *Legba* the *Trickster* of the West African people; the Monkey King of China; and even *Lord Hanuman* of India is considered to be a *Trickster* figure by him. This article finds a small mention of Mulla Nasruddin, though not by his name. It says that – “*The Trickster is a ...shape-shifter...Sometimes he’s a god, an animal, a mischievous fairy...Sometimes he’s a human simpleton, a Zen master, a Muslim mullah, or the Devil waiting at the crossroads.*”<sup>144</sup> According to me, the phrase ‘*a Muslim Mullah*’ is for Mulla Nasruddin.

As for Russia, its folktales and fairy tales are famous the world over. There is a famous ‘*Trickster Tale*’ of Russia – ‘*Masha and the Bear.*’ This tale is very similar to the American tale of *Goldilocks*. In this tale, Masha gets trapped in a bear house, and she tricks the bear to escape in such a way that the bear himself drops her at her grandparents' house without knowing.

American Folklore website describes a *Trickster* as one who – “...*is a mischievous and roughish figure in myth or folklore who typically makes up for physical weakness with cunning and subversive humor. The Trickster alternates between cleverness and stupidity, kindness and cruelty, deceiver and deceived, breaker of taboos and creator of culture.*”<sup>145</sup> This is a perfect description for Mulla Nasruddin, as he was physically not a very strong person, but had a sharp mind and wit. One of his tales that shows that he was physically feeble but witty goes something like this –

*One day Nasruddin and his friends were remembering their good old days when they were young and healthy and could do a lot of things that they cannot do anymore. Nasruddin listened to their tales and then suddenly remarked that his strength is the same today as it was when he was young! His friends were amused; they did not believe him. So, Nasruddin said that he had tested his strength and hence can prove what he said. When his friend’s asked him to prove it, Nasruddin pointed to a big rock lying in the middle of his house’s courtyard and said that he could not budge that rock from its place when he was younger, and he cannot budge it now!!!*

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<sup>144</sup> Ash Silverlock, *The Trickster*, *Fabulous Realms, Worlds of Fantasy, Folklore, Myth and Legend*, 15 June 2012, Web, 15 January 2017

<https://ashsilverlock.com/2012/06/15/the-trickster/>.

<sup>145</sup> S. E. Schlosser, *Tricksters*, 28 November 2016, *American Folklore*, 15 January 2017

<http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/tricksters/>.

The *Trickster* tales were probably created to escape the rigours and struggles of daily life. The common man lived vicariously through the doings and revolts of the *Trickster* and how the *Trickster* punished the rich and ruling classes. The *Trickster* was the embodiment of everything that the common man wanted to be but was not in a position to be, openly.

The *Trickster* tales are often humorous, and through laughter these tales bring realization of the stupidity of human actions, and whosoever hears these tales first laughs at the stupidity of the *Trickster* and then realizes the graveness of the situation he/she is in because eventually, the common man starts to relate his/her situation with the situations that the *Trickster* faced. The beauty of such *Trickster* tales is that their affect on people and society never fades.

Kimberly Blaeser, a Professor from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee remarks about the relevance of the *Trickster* tales in today's world thus –

*As we speak of Trickster today, you must try to blow life into the image, to imagine Trickster as life energy, ...Because trickster stories still have power: the power to bring us to laughter, the power to baffle us, the power to make us wonder and think and, like Trickster, just keep going on. (1993)<sup>146</sup>*

And even though a *Trickster* might appear ridiculous and his actions stupid or unwise, he/she "...represents the introduction of good things to society. He/she might bring to the culture important knowledge..."<sup>147</sup> (Magoulick). *Trickster* tales of any given country or culture tell a lot about that country or culture. A *Trickster* is not always ridiculed or considered a negative character in folktales; sometimes he is a culture hero like Mulla Nasruddin.

Mulla Nasruddin is considered by many to be a real person who lived and died in Turkey somewhere in the thirteenth century A.D. In an article written by Hasan Javadi in the Encyclopedia Iranica, where he quotes Koprulu, Javadi says that Turkey claims Nasruddin to be its own and that Nasruddin was born in 1208 in Hortu village which was located near Anatolian town of Sivrihisar and later on Nasruddin relocated to Aksehir in 1237. Nasruddin died in 1284

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<sup>146</sup> "Trickster," *Georgia College and State University website*, n.d., Web, 11 January 2017  
<<https://faculty.gcsu.edu/custom-website/mary-magoulick/trickster.htm>>.

<sup>147</sup> Mary Magoulick, "The *Trickster*," *Folklore Connections*, n.d., Web, 17 July 2014  
<<http://www.faculty.de.gcsu.edu/~mmagouli/index.shtml>>.

in Turkey, and there is a grave site to prove it at Aksehir.<sup>148</sup> Turkey even celebrates an ‘International Nasrudin Hodja Festival’ every year at Aksehir from July 5<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>. The same article also mentions that people of many other countries claim Nasruddin to be one of their own like Azerbaijanis, Persians/Iranians, Uzbeks and others. The article mentions that “...*the Azerbaijani folklorist Vilayet Guliyev has collected and translated the stories...of Molla Nasreddin that are popular among twenty-three nations.*”<sup>149</sup>

The fact that Mulla Nasruddin and his tales are popular and known in so many countries of the world says volumes about them. These tales are not only seen as part of children's literature but also as serious literature. In fact, they are used as ‘*Teaching Tales*’ in Sufism as well. The term ‘*teaching tales*’ was first widely used by Idries Shah who is a well-known Sufi writer of the modern era. He used these tales as a backdrop to Sufi teachings. He has many books on Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, discussing them in connection with the teachings of Sufism. In an even more modern context, Mulla Nasruddin tales were used by the famous Indian-origin *guru*, Rajneesh who is popularly known as Osho. He mostly used the family-related tales of Mulla Nasruddin to make people aware of the family ties and their importance in one’s life.

Mulla Nasruddin’s tales are so eternal that they can fit into any era, any culture, any context, and as a result, many tales which were originally not of Mulla Nasruddin’s also tended to tag along with him to gain popularity and fame. Mulla Nasruddin is no longer an obscure Middle-eastern folk hero; he is very much a living breathing modern person. Peter Hawkins has portrayed Mulla Nasruddin as a Management Consultant for a firm! There is a famous Nasruddin tale in his book moulded into management scenario by the title – ‘**The Keynote Speech.**’ This tale is adapted to the management scenario from an age old Mulla Nasruddin tale titled – ‘**Nasruddin’s Sermon**’ where Mulla Nasruddin is asked to deliver a sermon at the mosque on a Friday, but he had no idea what to say. Hence, he asks the people whether they know what he is going to say. People said ‘*No*’. So Nasruddin pretends to be angry and walks off saying – ‘*If you people are so ignorant, I will not preach among you.*’ People felt ashamed and invited Nasruddin again for a sermon next Friday, and when asked by Nasruddin whether they know what he is going to say, they replied – ‘*Yes*’; so Nasruddin says – ‘*Since all of you know what I am going to say, no point in repeating it*’ and walks off! This enrages people, and they invite him again for a sermon and this time they decide that half of the people would say ‘*Yes*’ and half of them ‘*No*’ to his question to outsmart Nasruddin. On the day of the sermon, Mulla Nasruddin again asks – ‘*Do you know what I am going to talk about?*’ To this, half of the audience says ‘*Yes,*’ and half of them say ‘*No*’ as decided. So, Nasruddin says – ‘*Those who know what I am going to say tell*

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<sup>148</sup> Hasan Javadi, “Molla Nasreddin i. The Person”, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 15 July 2009, Web, 01 June 2014  
<<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/molla-nasreddin-i-the-person>>.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

*those who don't know what I am going to say,' and walks off! The modern tale is the same except for the fact that in this tale Nasruddin is - "...an intriguing figure in the field of Organizational Learning and so the committee of the professional association decided to invite him to speak at the next conference."*<sup>150</sup>

It is said about Mulla Nasruddin tales that – *"...there are as many interpretations as stars in the sky."*<sup>151</sup> Every person that reads his tales may interpret his tales differently and may find himself/herself in Mulla Nasruddin's place sometimes or the other in his/her life. The situations that his tales depict are ever-present in any society, and that is why his tales are considered to be immortal. It is clear from this description about his tales – *"The tales of Nasrudin are sometimes adapted and used as teaching stories not just by the Sufis but also by such diverse and alien organizations as the British Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and the Soviet Government."*<sup>152</sup>

In some countries and cultures Mulla Nasruddin is considered to be *'the helper of religion'*<sup>153</sup>. In different countries, Mulla Nasruddin has some 'special characteristics' along with his general image which is famous the world over. *"Tales originating in China will show a Nasreddin which has as an extra element that he is campaigning for the oppressed, bullying rulers and those who abuse their authority. See "The Effendi And The Pregnant Pot - Uygur Tales from China"; New World Press; Beijing, China." "The Enchanted Prince" by Leonid Solovyov is a novel about Nasreddin wherein he is a flagrant subverter, a thorn in the side of the powers that be, a disturber of the peace. Ulrich Marzolph in his Nasreddin Hodscha presents no less than 666 true Nasreddin tales (although Nasreddin claims never to have spoken the truth) and does so in chronological order..."*<sup>154</sup>

The book of Chinese Effendi tales titled – **'The Effendi and the Pregnant Pot'** contains the translated English version of popular Chinese Effendi tales. The title itself is based on a Mulla Nasruddin tale that has been selected for sociolinguistic analysis for this research topic. The title of this selected Mulla Nasruddin tale is – **'The Death of a Pot'**. The translators of this

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<sup>150</sup> Peter Hawkins, *The Wise Fool's Guide to Leadership* (Winchester, UK & New York, USA: O Books, 2005) 46.

<sup>151</sup> "Fishy Morality", *Islamic City Articles*, 3 May 2013, Web, 18 March 2017, <<http://www.islamicity.com/articles/printarticles.asp?ref=ic0502-2625&p=1>>.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> L. Nicholas, "1001 Night Stories", *Materi Pembelajaran Untuk SMP dan SMA*, 29 September 2015, Web, 18 March 2017

<<http://www.handout.ga/2015/09/1001-night-stories.html>>.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

book, Primrose Gigliosi and Robert C. Friend, claim that they personally collected these Chinese Effendi tales from people of China and translated them and got them published.

Since, it is more or less accepted that Mulla Nasruddin originally belonged to Turkey, a brief mention is made here of him in Turkish literature. The Turkish writer Mustafa Ozcelik uses a quote by one Dr. Mustafa Duman, which says – “*Nasreddin Hodja’s name has been mentioned in various written documents since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The oldest of those books is **Saltukname**, written by Ebu’l Hayr-I Rumi in 1480 upon the order of Cem Sultan.*”<sup>155</sup> The writer also lists the ways to decipher which of the Mulla Nasruddin tales are original and which ones are not. (Since these are the personal views of this author and the list is very long, it has not been mentioned here.)

Coming back to the countries that have been shortlisted for this research topic - Mulla Nasruddin’s tales became so popular in Russia and in the Central Asian countries during the mid-twentieth century that numerous films were made with Nasruddin as a protagonist, as savior of the poor and oppressed, as disturber of the ruling class’ peace and as a master conman who acts in the interest of the good, common folk. These films are a combination of a few Mulla Nasruddin tales which are weaved together into the plot of a film. These films were produced under the then Soviet banners like Tajikfilm, Uzbek Kino, and so on.

Apart from films, Nasruddin keeps appearing in newspapers as well. Articles about him and his tales get printed in popular daily newspapers; there was an article about a few of Mulla Nasruddin’s tales under the title – **Mullah Nasruddin**<sup>156</sup> in the Times of India supplementary newspaper - The Speaking Tree. Quotes and sayings inspired by Mulla Nasruddin’s wisdom are sometimes heard in TV programmes as well. On 2 December 2016, during an ABP channel news programme titled – ‘**Khabar Din Bhar**’ (News throughout the Day), which was about the standup comedians in India, and was telecast from 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm, the Anchor of the show said in Hindi – “*Agar aap kisi ko directly samjhaanaa chaho ki unme kya khaamiyaan hai, toh koi sunega nahi...Par jab aap vyang ke zariye wohi baat bataatey hai toh aadmi toh pehle hanstaa hai, phir ghar jaakar sochtaa hai ki – ha, yaar, baat mey dum toh thha!!!*” (**Translation** - If you try to make somebody understand in a straight-forward manner what are his drawbacks, then no one will listen, but when you say the same thing with the help of satire, then at first, the person will laugh, then after going home, he will ponder over it and realize that – yes, it had a point!)

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<sup>155</sup> Mustafa Ozcelik, Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2011) 25.

<sup>156</sup> Mullah Nasruddin, The Speaking Tree, 21 August 2016, The Times of India Publication, Page 3.

This is what Mulla Nasruddin always tried to convey through his tales – that people should realize on their own what mistakes they are making in their day-to-day lives. And what best way to make them realize their mistakes than making those mistakes himself in front of the people to see! That is why, sometimes, Mulla Nasruddin tales seem unbelievable and amusing and his actions strange.

The tales of Mulla Nasruddin are about wisdom, about human nature, about fighting against the evil in society. These tales teach people life lessons through humour. After reading them and going through the initial stage of laughter at his stupid behavior, people realize what to do and what not to do in life and how to conduct oneself in life. Looking at Mulla Nasruddin's foolish behavior, people say – 'Oh, I would *never* do anything so stupid!' The lightness and playfulness of Mulla Nasruddin tales teach people the seriousness of the foolish behavior which people often do in public and in private. His tales enter one's psyche and linger in the subconscious. They are unforgettable. That is why, probably, these tales are still going so strong in today's modern world.

There is a huge collection of Mulla Nasruddin tales, which show him in different roles that he played during his existence – that of a son, a husband, a father, a teacher, a preacher, a neighbour, a friend, a master...and much more. Also, there are separate collections of tales of Mulla Nasruddin's wife, his son, his daughter! Nasruddin's whole life from his childhood till his death is documented in these tales. But, due to time and space constraints, the tales which portray him as a public figure and such tales that are high in moral value lessons have been selected, and tales that are about his personal life – especially him as a family man have not been used. The intention was to highlight Mulla Nasruddin as a people's hero and his contribution to the society and the lives of the common man as this research topic discusses the affect of society on language and lifestyle of people in a broader social context. Also, discussion about a person's private and family life was intentionally avoided, reason being, any man is capable of being a family person and doing well for his family; in fact, most men do it during their lifetime, but to do good for an entire society or nation is not '*everybody's cup of tea*', as they say in English. It takes courage and determination to influence or change an entire society. The moral messages that Mulla Nasruddin left behind via his tales are priceless, and these tales are teaching societies the world over the moral conduct and acceptable behaviour. And that is why their relevance is intact even today!

One of the objectives of this study was to find the common tales of Mulla Nasruddin that are popular in India, Russia and the Central Asian countries of the Silk Road region. After much

searching and consultations with people of the concerned countries, and sifting through many Mulla Nasruddin tales, twenty tales are shortlisted.

This chapter provides the titles and gist of the selected tales in the following paragraphs. It is to be noted that all the selected tales are not present in all the shortlisted countries. Some selected tales of Mulla Nasruddin are more popular and widespread than the others in these countries.

The following are the titles of the twenty selected common tales of Mulla Nasruddin in the shortlisted countries (the titles are first provided as they exist in India in English, Hindi and/or Bengali, followed by titles by which these tales exist in Russia and the Central Asian countries) and the gist of the tale is also given after each list of tales. The interpretation of the moral values conveyed through these tales, are also mentioned for each tale. The references and titles of the books are also provided from where these tales are taken.

#### **Tale No. 1 – Whom Do You Believe? (Mulla Nasruddin’s Donkey)**

<b>1. Bengali</b>	<b>Gadhaar Rin (Donkey’s Debt)</b> , (Page no. 154), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
<b>2. Hindi</b>	<b>Mulla aur Padosi (Mulla and the Neighbour)</b> <a href="http://www.achhikhabar.com/2013/03/04/mulla-nasruddin-stories-in-hindi/">http://www.achhikhabar.com/2013/03/04/mulla-nasruddin-stories-in-hindi/</a> (accessed on 12 December 2016).
<b>3. Russian</b>	<b>Ослиный Рев (Donkey’s Bray)</b> , (Page 20), Book Title – <b>Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов</b> (translator)
<b>4. Tajik</b>	<b>Нобовари Хоркунанда (Insulting Mistrust)</b> , <b>Таджикские – Бесплатные</b> , <a href="http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie">http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie</a> (accessed on 13 March 2017).
<b>5. Turkmen</b>	<b>Esege Ynanyarmyn (So You Believe the Donkey?)</b> , (Page 24-25), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
<b>6. Uzbek</b>	<b>Kimni Ishonch Yo'q (Whom Do You Trust?)</b> , <b>Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin.</b> <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin’s neighbour comes to borrow his donkey for a day. Nasruddin says that the donkey is not at home. Just then the neighbor hears the donkey’s bray



and says that he heard the donkey. The donkey is at home. To which Nasruddin asks – Whom do you believe, the donkey or me?

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Do not believe everything you hear!

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### Tale No. 2 – The Death of a Pot

1. Bengali	Haadir Mrityu (Death of a Pot), (Page no.102), Book Title: Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa
2. Hindi	Bartan ka Maatam (Mourning for the Utensil), (Page no. 119), Book Title: Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya.
3. Russian	Как Котёл Отелился (How the Boiler Calved), (Page 16), Book Title – Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов (translator)
4. Tajik	Дегхонаи Мурд («Ваш котел умер») (Your Boiler is Dead). <a href="http://www.hobobo.ru/catalog/skazka/vash-kotel-umer">http://www.hobobo.ru/catalog/skazka/vash-kotel-umer</a> (accessed on 7 July 2016).
5. Turkmen	Guzlap Bilen Olup-de Biler... (One who can give birth can die), (Page 26-27), Book Title: Ependi (in pdf).
6. Uzbek	Tova (The Pot), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin. <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin borrows a pot from his neighbour, and returns the pot after a few days along with a small pot. When the neighbor asks why, Nasruddin replies that while his pot was at Nasruddin's house, it gave birth, and since it is not nice to separate mother and child, he is returning them both. The neighbour is happy and keeps the small pot. After a few days, Nasruddin borrows an even bigger pot from his neighbour and the neighbour gladly hands it over thinking he will get an extra pot with it. But Nasruddin does not return the pot. Finally, the neighbour comes to ask for his pot, but Nasruddin says it died. Neighbour gets irritated and asks – how can a pot die? To which Nasruddin replies – the same way that a pot can give birth!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – If you accept the good things in life happily, be ready to accept the bad things as well.

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### Tale No. 3 – Payment for Smell

1. Bengali	Baaburchi aar Bhikiri (The Cook and the Beggar) - (Page no. 17), Book Title: Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa
2. Hindi	Mulla Nasruddin: Khushboo ki Keemat (The Price of the Aroma) <a href="https://hindizen.com/2009/06/11/">https://hindizen.com/2009/06/11/</a> (accessed on 12 December 2016).
3. Russian	Пар От Еды (The Aroma of food), (Page 100), Book Title – Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов (translator)
4. Tajik	Пардохт Барои Бӯй (Payment for Smell) <a href="http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html">http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html</a> (accessed on 4 February 2015).
5. Turkmen	Кто Продаёт Запах Обеда, Тот Получает Звон Монет (The One Who Sells Smell of Food, will receive as Payment Sound of Money), (Page no. 159), Туркменский Юмор (pdf).
6. Uzbek	Sho'rva Hidi va Pul Ovozli (The Smell of Soup and Sound of Money), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin. <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - A hungry beggar stands near a sweet shop and smells the food to satisfy his craving for food. The shop owner catches him and asks for money. Mulla Nasruddin was passing by when he sees the whole thing. He takes out some change from his pocket, comes near the shop owner and jingles the change in front of his ears and says the payment for ‘smell’ of food is the ‘sound’ of money.

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Unreasonable demands should be met with equally unreasonable actions!

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### Tale No. 4 – In Search of Happiness

1. Bengali	Story no. 7, (Page no. 392), Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo – Shera Satyajit (Book).
2. Hindi	Khushi ki Talaash (In Search of Happiness) <a href="http://www.guide2india.org/search-for-happiness-in-life-mulla-nasiruddeen/">http://www.guide2india.org/search-for-happiness-in-life-mulla-nasiruddeen/</a> (accessed on 12 December 2016).
3. Russian	Счастье не там, где ты его ищешь (Happiness is Not Where You Look for it) - <a href="http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-94.html">http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-94.html</a> (accessed on 10 March 2017).
4. Uzbek	Bir Kishi Quvonch Izla (A Man Searches for Joy), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin. <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - A rich man packs all his money in a sack and goes out in search of happiness. On the way, he meets Mulla Nasruddin. Nasruddin asks the rich man why he is so sad? The rich man says that he is not happy, so he took all his money and is going in search of happiness. Hearing this Nasruddin grabs the rich man's money bag and runs off with it. The rich man gets a panic attack, looks for his money bag frantically and ultimately finds it under a tree. He hugs the money bag and looks happy. Nasruddin comes out from behind the tree and asks - Did you find your happiness? The rich man says – Yes, and thanks, Nasruddin.

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – People realize the value of something that they have when they lose it. Hence, appreciate what you have.

### Tale No. 5 – Tit for Tat

1. Bengali	<b>Molla aar Bhikiri (Molla and the Beggar)</b> – (Page no. 166), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
2. Hindi	a. <b>Chhat Par (On the Roof)</b> , (Page no. 10), Book Title: <b>Mulla Nasruddin.</b>
	b. <b>Iss Tarha Hua Hisaab Baraabar (And Now We are Even)</b> , (Page no. 30), Book Title: <b>Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya.</b>
3. Russian	<b>Насреддин и Нищий (Nasreddin and the Beggar)</b> , (Page No. 37), Book Title – <b>Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов</b> (translator)
4. Tajik	<b>Пардохт (Repayment), Таджикские – Бесплатные</b> , <a href="http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie">http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie</a> (accessed on 13 March 2017).
5. Turkmen	<b>Ependi we Derwus (Ependi and the Dervish)</b> , (Page no. 55-56), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
6. Uzbek	<b>Bu Notanish Odamning Talab (The Stranger's Request), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin.</b> <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin was relaxing on the first floor of his house when a man knocks on the door and asks Nasruddin to come down. When Nasruddin comes down thinking that it is something important, the man who was a beggar asks for some money. Nasruddin asks the man to follow him all the way to the first floor of his house and then turns towards the man and replies – No! When the beggar says that why Nasruddin made him come up all the way just to refuse any money, he could have said – ‘No’ without making him come up, Nasruddin replies that he could also have asked for money without making him come down!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Do not treat others the way you don't want to be treated!

## Tale No. 6 – Using Correct Words

1. English (India)	Using correct Words (Page 21) – Story of Mulla Nasruddin (Alka Publications)
2. Russian	Спасение Ростовщика (Saving the Usurer) – <a href="http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-272.html">http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-272.html</a> (accessed on 10 March 2017).
3. Tajik	Истифодаи Суханони Дуруст (Use of Words) <a href="http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html">http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html</a> (accessed on 4 February 2015).
4. Uzbek	O'ng Tili (The Right Language) <a href="http://waking-up.org/religii-mira/mula-hodzha-nasreddin-mudrost-naiznanku/">http://waking-up.org/religii-mira/mula-hodzha-nasreddin-mudrost-naiznanku/</a> (accessed on 4 February 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - A moneylender was drowning. The people around him were stretching their arms and saying – GIVE YOUR HANDS to save him, but he was not giving his hand! Mulla Nasruddin sees this and comes running and stretches his arms and says – TAKE MY HAND! The moneylender immediately takes his hands and is saved by Nasruddin. Everyone is very surprised. Mulla Nasruddin explains that a moneylender never gives anything for free, but can take anything and everything, if possible!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Be careful of people who only know how to take and not give! And, miscommunications might be dangerous!

## Tale No. 7 – Trick of the Trade

1. English (India)	Trick of the Trade (Page 28) - Story of Mulla Nasruddin (Alka Publications)
2. Russian	Контрабандист (Smuggler), Притчи или Философские Рассказы, <a href="http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-31.html">http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-31.html</a> (accessed on 5 May 2017).
3. Tajik	Ҳиллаест Дар Тичорат (Business Trick), (Page no. 10), <a href="http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html">http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html</a> (accessed on 4 February 2015).
4. Uzbek	Dunyoda Nima Kontrabandaga Edi? (What in the World were You Smuggling?), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin. <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - A toll officer could never catch Mulla Nasruddin for smuggling, but he was sure that Nasruddin was smuggling something on the back of his donkey and getting richer by the day. He searched Nasruddin and his donkey upside down but could never find what he was smuggling, and this bothered him a lot. After a long time when the officer retires, he approaches Nasruddin and asks off the record what he was smuggling all these years? Nasruddin replies – DONKEYS!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Sometimes, the truth is right under our noses, but we fail to see it.

### Tale No. 8 – Waste of Life

1. English (India)	Waste of Life (Page 35) - Story of Mulla Nasruddin (Alka Publications)
2. Russian	Жизнь Прошла Зря (Life Passed in Vain) - <a href="http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-318.html">http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-318.html</a> (accessed on 10 March 2017).
3. Tajik	Партовҳои Хаёр (Waste of Life), Page 2, <a href="http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html">http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html</a> (accessed on 4 February 2015).
4. Uzbek	Grammatika (Grammar), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin. <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - A man mocks Mulla Nasruddin sitting in a boat in the middle of the river for not being educated because he said something grammatically wrong. He says that Nasruddin has wasted half of his life as he did not learn to speak properly while alive. After some time, Nasruddin calmly asks the man – does he know how to swim. The man says – No. Then Nasruddin says that now the whole life of that man will go to waste as he did not learn how to swim because they are in the middle of the river in a small boat and looks like a storm is coming. At least, says Nasruddin, he knows how to swim!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – No one is perfect! Hence, don't judge people on their imperfections, for the same thing might happen to you!

## Tale No. 9 – Walnuts and Pumpkins

1. Bengali	Allah ke Nirbodh Bhaba (Thinking that Allah is Clueless) - (Page no. 9), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
2. Hindi	a. Tarbooj aur Akhrot (Watermelon and Walnut), (Page no. 7), Book Title: <b>Mulla Nasruddin.</b>
	b. Mulla aur Akhrot ka Ped (Mulla and the Walnut Tree) <a href="http://www.guide2india.org/wisdom-story-in-hindi-">http://www.guide2india.org/wisdom-story-in-hindi-</a> (accessed on 12 December 2016).
3. Russian	Мудрость Аллаха (Wisdom of Allah), (Page 109), Book Title – <b>Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов</b> (translator)
4. Turkmen	<b>Men Yalnysydyryn (I was wrong)</b> , (Page 10 – 11), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
5. Uzbek	<b>Yong'oq va Tarvuz (Walnut and Watermelon), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin.</b> <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin was resting in the shade of a huge tree, and he looks up to see that it was a walnut tree. Then he sees that in a nearby field huge pumpkins are growing on the ground. Nasruddin starts to question the wisdom of God – How foolish is God. He lets a small nut like walnut grow on a huge tree and a huge pumpkin to grow on a feeble plant! Just then a walnut falls on Nasruddin's head; Nasruddin immediately realizes God's wisdom. He apologizes to God thinking – if God had made pumpkin grow on a tree and had a pumpkin fallen on his head instead of a walnut, he would have been dead by now!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** - Sometimes people fail to see the logic behind some things, but that does not mean that the logic is not there.

## Tale No. 10 – Bad Handwriting

1. Bengali	a. <b>Story No. 9</b> , (Page No. 393), <b>Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo – Shera Satyajit</b> (Book).
	b. <b>Shanketic Lipir Pathhoddhaar (Reading of an Imaginary Handwriting)</b> – (Page no. 67), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa.</b>
2. Hindi	<b>Mulla ki Likhawat (Mulla's Handwriting)</b> , (Page no. 152), Book Title: <b>Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya.</b>
3. Russian	<b>Почерк Насреддина (Nasruddin's Handwriting)</b> , (Page 47), Book Title – <b>Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов</b> (translator)
4. Turkmen	<b>Ependinin Bagdada Hat Yazysy (Ependi doesn't want to write to Baghdad)</b> , (Page no. 160), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (pdf).

**The tale in brief:** - An illiterate person comes to Mulla Nasruddin and requests him to write a letter for him which he wants to send to his relative out of town. Nasruddin refuses, saying his foot hurts. The illiterate person is amused. He asks Nasruddin – What is the connection between writing a letter with his hands and his foot hurting? To this Nasruddin replies that his handwriting is so bad that if he writes a letter, no one would be able to read it and ultimately he would have to go and read it for them; and since his foot hurts, he will not be able to go anywhere!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – One may give many improper reasons not to do something.

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### Tale No. 11 – Guest of Honour

1. Hindi	<b>Kapdo ki Prathhishta (Respect of the Dress)</b> , (Page no. 41), Book Title: <b>Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya.</b>
2. Russian	Еда для Одежды - <a href="http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-57.html">http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-57.html</a> (accessed on 10 March 2017).
3. Tajik	Куртан оббози, муносибат пилаф ( <b>Robe Treated with Pulao</b> ), Таджикские – Бесплатные, <a href="http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie">http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie</a> (accessed on 13 March 2017).
4. Turkmen	<b>Iy, Donum, Iy! (Eat, Robe, Eat!)</b> , (Page 16-17), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
5. Uzbek	<b>Englar, Mening Palto, englar (Eat, My Coat, Eat)</b> , <b>Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin.</b> <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin was invited as a guest of honour for a feast at the royal mansion. Since Nasruddin was not a rich man, he goes for the feast wearing ordinary clothes. At the mansion gate, the guard thinks that he is a beggar and does not let him in. So, Nasruddin borrows a beautiful dress from one of his rich neighbours and goes to the mansion again. This time the same guard salutes him and lets him in. When the food comes, Nasruddin picks up a spoonful and puts it on the dress instead of eating the food. When the offended host asks him why he is feeding his dress? Nasruddin humbly replies – that it is the dress that was allowed to enter the mansion and not him, hence the dress is the guest of honour!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – People are judged not by their internal character, but by their external appearance.

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## Tale No. 12 – Whatever We Do

1. English (India)	Whatever we do (Page 76) - Story of Mulla Nasruddin (Alka Publications)
2. Bengali	Lokmat (Public Opinion) – (Page no. 167), Book Title: Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa
3. Russian	Пересуды Людей (Public Judgement), (Page 62), Book Title – Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов (translator)
4. Uzbek	Tandiq Qochish (Avoiding Criticism) <a href="https://elims.org.ua/pritchi/pritcha-otec-syn-i-ose/">https://elims.org.ua/pritchi/pritcha-otec-syn-i-ose/</a> - Uzbekskaaya Pritcha – Otyets, syn ii osyol (accessed on 3 July 2017).

**The tale in brief:** - One day Mulla Nasruddin put his son on his donkey and was walking beside the donkey when some people spot them and start criticizing Nasruddin's son for letting an old man walk and himself being young and healthy, ride on a donkey. The son feels ashamed and gets down from the donkey and asks Nasruddin to sit on it. After a few minutes another group of people spot them and start criticizing – saying that the old man is so cruel, he is letting his young son walk in the sun, and he himself is sitting on a donkey! This time Nasruddin feels ashamed, and he asks his son also to get up on the donkey. After some time, a group of people spot them and start criticizing that these two men are so insensitive to their donkey's suffering...they are both sitting on a donkey! Both of them feel ashamed and get down from the donkey and start walking beside the donkey. After a few minutes again a group of people see them and start mocking them saying – what idiots! They have a donkey but are still walking in this sun! So, Nasruddin looks at his son and says – You see, Son, no matter what we do, some people will always criticize!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – One cannot make everyone happy all the time. There will always be someone to criticize you for your actions!

## Tale No. 13 – How to give ‘nothing.’

1. Bengali	‘Kichhu-na’ Kothhae Paai (Where to find ‘nothing’), (Page no. 54), Book Title: Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa
2. Hindi	‘Kuchh Nahi’ ki Adaayagi (Payment of ‘Nothing’), (Page no. 46), Book Title: Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya.
3. English	How to Give Nothing (Story no. 36), (Page no. 90), Book Title: Story of Mulla Nasruddin
4. Russian	Ничто за Ничто (Page no. 69), Book Title – Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов (translator)



**The tale in brief:** - Two people approach Mulla Nasruddin to solve their disagreement. One person says that the other person is a woodcutter and he asked for help to lift his cut woods. In return, he agreed to pay ‘nothing.’ After the job is done, he is refusing to pay ‘nothing.’ Mulla Nasruddin thinks for a bit and then points to a pot lying in his verandah and asks the complainant to lift the pot and see what is inside. The pot was empty, so the Complainant says – ‘Nothing is inside.’ Nasruddin says – So take your ‘nothing’ as your payment out of the pot and leave the pot where it was!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Do not ask or make unreasonable demands, for it may get you into soup!

### **Tale No. 14 – Mulla Nasruddin’s Feast**

<b>1. Bengali</b>	<b>Haadi Garam (Heating of the Pot)</b> , (Page no. 109), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
<b>2. Russian</b>	<b>Кто Выграл? (Who Won?)</b> , (Page 92), Book Title – <b>Молла Насреддин</b> – Н. Османов (translator)
<b>3. Uzbek</b>	<b>Апанди и Падишах (Apandi and Padishah)</b> , <a href="http://skazkibasni.com/archives/6665">http://skazkibasni.com/archives/6665</a> (accessed on 5 April 2017).

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin’s friends challenge him to spend a night standing in a cold field. If he loses, then he would have to treat them all. Nasruddin agrees, and he stands in the field the entire night. In the morning when his friends come to see him, they say that Nasruddin cheated as a lamp was burning on his window sill which gave him warmth all night. Hence, he loses and has to give treat to all his friends. Nasruddin quietly agrees. Next day his friends come to his house and wait for the treat. But after waiting for a long time, they do not get any food. Then they go to the backyard of Nasruddin's house and ask him about the food. Nasruddin points up and says that the food is getting ready. The friends see that on the topmost branch of a tall tree a wok is hanging by a thread and at the bottom of the tree a fire is burning. They get angry and ask Nasruddin that how will the food be ready; it is too far from the heat source. To which Nasruddin replies – The same way I was kept warm by a lamp glowing far away at the window of my house!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Be careful about the way you act, for you will get the same thing back!

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**Tale No. 15 – Mulla Nasruddin’s Goat**

<b>1. Bengali</b>	<b>a. Story no. 1, (Page no. 389), Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo – Shera Satyajit (Book).</b>
	<b>b. Keyamater Prastuti (The Onset of Doomsday) – (Page no. 122), Book Title: Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
<b>2. Hindi</b>	<b>Pralay Aaney se Peheley (Before the Apocalypse Arrives), (Page no. 106), Book Title: Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya.</b>
<b>3. Russian</b>	<b>Преблежение Светопреставления (Approach of Apocalypse), (Page no. 15), Book Title – Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов (translator)</b>
<b>4. Tajik</b>	<b>Шашлык дар бораи Апокалипсис (Barbeque for Apocalypse), <a href="http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie">http://hk-money.net/category/tadzhikskie</a> (accessed on 13 March 2017).</b>
<b>5. Turkmen</b>	<b>Erte Kyumat Gopyan Bolsa... (If Tomorrow is The Apocalypse), (Page 12), Book Title: Ependi (in pdf).</b>
<b>6. Uzbek</b>	<b>Siz Yangiliklari Eshitdingizmi? (Did You Hear the News?) <a href="http://www.rodneyohebsion.com/mulla-nasrudin.htm">http://www.rodneyohebsion.com/mulla-nasrudin.htm</a> (accessed on 3 July 2017).</b>

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin had a plump goat. His friends always wanted to eat it. So they convince Nasruddin that it is the last day of Earth and one must live to one’s fullest. Nasruddin agrees to kill and cook his goat. After they all ate to their heart’s content, all his friends decide to take a dip in the river. When his friends take off their clothes and enter the river to take a bath, Nasruddin takes their clothes and burns them saying to his friends that since it is the last day and all are going to die soon, clothes would not matter anymore.

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** - Be careful about the way you act, for you will get the same thing back!

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## Tale No. 16 – Mulla Nasruddin’s Sermon

1. Bengali	a. <b>Story no. 5</b> , (Page no. 391), <b>Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo – Shera Satyajit</b> (Book).
	b. <b>Taaleem (The Preaching)</b> – (Page no. 158), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
2. Hindi	a. <b>Mulla ka Pravachan (Mullah’s Sermon)</b> <a href="http://www.achhikhabar.com/2013/03/04/mulla-nasruddin-stories-in-hindi/">http://www.achhikhabar.com/2013/03/04/mulla-nasruddin-stories-in-hindi/</a> (accessed on 11 December 2016).
	b. <b>...Aur Uss Din Mantranaa Nahi Hui (And No Speech was given that Day)</b> , (Page no. 34), Book Title: <b>Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya</b> .
3. Russian	<b>Проповедь Насреддина (Nasreddin’s Sermon)</b> , (Page no. 8), Book Title – <b>Молла Насреддин – Н. Османов</b> (translator)
4. Tajik	<b>Мавъиза Афанды (The Preaching of Afandi)</b> , (Page no. 3), <a href="http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html">http://www.comunicom.ru/tajikistan/66-photo-razdel.html</a> (accessed on 4 February 2015).
5. Turkmen	<b>Bilyanleriniz Bilmeyanlere Dusundirin (Those Who Know, Explain to Those Who Don’t Know)</b> , (Page 43-44), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
6. Uzbek	<b>Bir Xutba Etkazib (Delivering a Khutba), Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin.</b> <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - Mulla Nasruddin was asked to deliver a sermon at the local mosque. Nasruddin had nothing to say; hence he goes up on the stage and asks the eager audience – Do you know what I am going to speak about? No one knew so they say – No. Nasruddin pretends to be angry and leaves the mosque saying – I do not want to preach to people who are clueless.

After a few days, Nasruddin was again convinced to give a sermon. This time when he asks the audience whether they know what he is going to talk about, they all say- Yes. Nasruddin again leaves the mosque saying – Since all of you know already what I am going to say, no need to repeat it.

Once again, Nasruddin was asked to deliver a sermon. This time the audience was prepared for an apt reply beforehand. So, when Nasruddin asks whether the audience knows what he is going to preach about, audience says that half of them know what he is going to preach and half of them don't. To this Nasruddin says – Ok. Those of you who know will tell those of you who don't know...and leaves the mosque!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – There are a thousand ways to avoid an unpleasant situation. If one does not want to do something, one will find a thousand reasons not to do it!

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### Tale No. 17 – Duck Soup

<b>1. Bengali</b>	<b>a. Story no. 13</b> , (Page no. 397), <b>Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo – Shera Satyajit</b> (Book).
	<b>b. Khargosher Shorua (Rabbit Soup)</b> – (Page no. 180), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
<b>2. Russian</b>	Суп из Утки ( <b>Duck Soup</b> ), <a href="http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-40.html">http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-40.html</a> (accessed on 10 March 2017).
<b>3. Tajik</b>	Шурбо Харгуш («Заячий суп»), (Page 53), <a href="http://www.hobobo.ru/catalog/skazka/vash-kotel-umer">http://www.hobobo.ru/catalog/skazka/vash-kotel-umer</a> (accessed on 7 July 2016).
<b>4. Turkmen</b>	<b>Ordek Corbasy (Duck Soup)</b> , (Page 105), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).

**The tale in brief:** - Once a friend gifts Mulla Nasruddin, a duck. Nasruddin feels happy, and he cooks the duck and feeds his friend well with duck gravy and rice. Next day a person comes and asks for duck gravy saying he is a friend of Nasruddin's friend. Nasruddin feeds him too with the remaining duck gravy. Soon every day someone comes to Nasruddin and asks for the duck gravy saying that he is a friend of friend of friend who gifted Nasruddin, the duck. Nasruddin starts feeding them with more and more diluted gravy till the time there is no gravy left but plain water. When asked where the duck gravy is, he replies that it has vanished just like the friend who gifted him the duck!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Do not overstretch your welcome!

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### Tale No. 18 – Mulla Nasruddin in Public Bath

1. Bengali	a. <b>Story no. 23</b> , (Page no. 403), <b>Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo – Shera Satyajit</b> (Book).
	b. <b>Tel Bhuje Kodi (A Befitting Tip)</b> – (Page no. 178), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
2. Russian	<b>Назидание (Edification)</b> , (Page no. 46), Book Title – <b>Молла Насреддин</b> – Н. Османов (translator)
3. Turkmen	<b>Ependi we Hammamcylyr (Ependi and the Bath Guard)</b> , (Page no. 162), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf.)
4. Uzbek	<b>Hammomida Ishi (An Incident at a Public Bath)</b> , <b>Афанди Латифалари – узбекистан Tales of Nasruddin</b> <a href="http://dasturxon.uz/forum/tema-23">http://dasturxon.uz/forum/tema-23</a> (accessed on 11 July 2014).

**The tale in brief:** - Once Mulla Nasruddin goes to a public bath. Since he looked poor the guard there does not take care of him well. Still, while leaving the bath, he tips the guard lavishly. The next time Nasruddin goes to the public bath, the same guard treats him like royalty. But while leaving, he tips the guard scantily. When the guard asks – Why? Nasruddin says that – this lousy tip is for the previous time and the generous tip he gave the previous time is for this time!

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – Do not judge people by the way they look! Looks are deceptive.

### Tale No. 19 – The Lost Key

1. Bengali	<b>Story no. 2</b> , (Page no. 389), <b>Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo – Shera Satyajit</b> (Book).
2. Hindi	<b>Chaabee ki Khoj (Searching for the Key)</b> , (Page no. 55), Book Title: <b>Mulla Nasruddin ki Anokhi Duniya</b> .
3. Russian	<b>Ключ (The Key)</b> , <b>Притчи про Ходжу Насреддина</b> , <a href="https://wisdomlib.ru/story/4419">https://wisdomlib.ru/story/4419</a> (accessed on 5 May 2017).
4. Turkmen	<b>Koceden Gozlaymesem... (I Think, I Will Look for It Outside)</b> , (Page no. 36-37), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
5. Uzbek	<b>Yo'qolgan Uzuk (The Lost Ring)</b> , <b>Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin</b> . <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

**The tale in brief:** - One day Mulla Nasruddin lost his key inside his house. But he starts searching for it on the road. A passerby asks – What happened? Nasruddin replies – I lost my key in the house. The passerby asks - then why are you looking for it outside? Nasruddin replies – because it is dark inside the house, but it is bright outside, so the key will be easier to find here.

**Moral of this tale as I interpret** – More often than not, people look for something that they want in the wrong place and so they fail to find it!

### Tale No. 20 – Why Backwards on His Donkey?

1. Bengali	a. <b>Mollar Ghoda Douraae Baapaae (Mulla’s Horse is Backwards)</b> – 1 <sup>st</sup> tale, (Page no. 123), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
	b. <b>Hatekaulome Samyavaader Shikkha (Teaching of Basic Etiquette on the Spot)</b> – 2 <sup>nd</sup> tale, (Page no. 70), Book Title: <b>Mollakkel - Nasiruddiner Kissa</b>
2. Hindi	<b>Mulla Nasiruddin aur Gadha (Mulla Nasruddin and Donkey)</b> , <a href="http://www.guide2india.org/backwards-story-in-hindi/">http://www.guide2india.org/backwards-story-in-hindi/</a> (accessed on 12 December 2016).
3. Russian	<b>Задом Наперёд (Backwards)</b> , <a href="http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-76.html">http://pritchi.castle.by/ras-04-76.html</a> (accessed on 10 March 2017).
4. Turkmen	a. <b>Atyn Ozi Tersine Durandyr (The Horse is Facing the Wrong Way)</b> - 1 <sup>st</sup> tale, (Page no. 52-53), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
	b. <b>Hic Kim Yensede Galmasyn (No One Should be Behind)</b> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> tale, (Page no. 62), Book Title: <b>Ependi</b> (in pdf).
5. Uzbek	<b>Arqa Tarafga (Backwards)</b> , <b>Hodja Nasreddin in Uzbekistan - Anecdotes from Hodja Nasreddin.</b> <a href="http://tourism.uz/info/113/">http://tourism.uz/info/113/</a> (accessed on 28 March 2015).

There are two similar stories regarding why Mulla Nasruddin sits backward on his donkey, which are as follows –

1. **The first tale in brief:** - People ask Mulla Nasruddin – Why do you sit backward on your donkey?

Nasruddin replies – It is not I that is facing the wrong way; it is my donkey who is facing the wrong way!

2. **The second tale in brief:** - Nasruddin's students ask him – Master, why do you sit backward on your donkey?

Nasruddin replies – So that I can face my followers like you who follow me walking behind my donkey!

**Moral of these tales as I interpret** – One may give many strange explanations to prove one's point!

The list of these tales shows that all the tales are not available or maybe available, but not very popular in all the countries. Some tales of Mulla Nasruddin which are popular in India may not be popular in the Central Asian countries and Russia. One reason might be that things that are culturally accepted in India may not be accepted in these countries.

India has been taken as the base for these selected tales, and on the basis of the Mulla Nasruddin tales which are popular in India, the tales were searched for in the shortlisted countries. There is a Mulla Nasruddin tale in this selected list which is titled in India as '**Haadi Garam**' (*Heating of the Pot* in English) which is in the Bengali language. This tale is included in this list as it is similar to a popular story in India by the title – '**Birbal ki Khichdi**' (*Birbal's Porridge* in English). The tale of Mulla Nasruddin is titled – "**Who Won**" (in Russian - **Кто Выграл – Khto Vygral**)<sup>157</sup>. But, unlike the story "**Birbal ki Khichdi**" (*Birbal's Porridge*) which is known, at least in India, to most of the people, the Mulla Nasruddin tale that it matches might not be known to them.

Although the plot and the message at the end of both these tales are similar, there are minor differences in presentation of the situation of these two tales. Mulla Nasruddin's tale starts with a bet – Nasruddin's friends challenge him to stand one whole night in a cold field near his house without any warmth. If he is unable to, he would have to treat his friends. Nasruddin accepts the challenge; stands in the cold field whole night. Next morning when Nasruddin asks for his victory treat, his friends refuse, saying that while he was standing in the cold field at night, a candle that was burning on his window that gave him warmth, and so Nasruddin has cheated, and hence he lost the bet and now he has to treat them. Realizing that he has been had,

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<sup>157</sup> Н. Османов, Молла Насреддин (Москва: Наука, 1970), 92.

Nasruddin hatches a plan to punish his friends, and invites them to his house for dinner. That night friends go to his house thinking they will have a lavish dinner, but instead, they find Nasruddin sitting in his backyard under a tall tree lighting a small fire. When his friends ask how far along is the dinner preparation, Nasruddin points his finger upwards to the topmost branch of the tall tree. When his friends look up, they see a small pot hanging from it. When the friends object to Nasruddin saying - how is it possible to cook what is inside the pot under such a small fire from such a distance, Nasruddin replies – the same way he could stay warm in a candle’s light from such a distance! The moral of both the tales is *tit for tat!* (The Birbal tale goes like this – Akbar, the King in whose court Birbal was a jester, announces that whosoever spends an entire night in the cold water in front of the palace will get amply rewarded. A poor old man who was in need of money, stood in the cold water the entire night, but in the morning when he went to King Akbar, he refused to reward him saying that the old man cheated – he stayed warm due to the candle light burning on the windowsill of the palace. Birbal saw the whole commotion and decided to teach Akbar a lesson. After a hunting session, Akbar was extremely hungry. Birbal started preparing porridge. Akbar waited for a long time but eventually became impatient and came out to see how far along the preparation for food is and was shocked to see Birbal sitting under a huge tree lighting a small fire. When Akbar asked – where is the food, Birbal pointed his finger upward and Akbar saw a small pot hanging from the highest branch of the tree. He was enraged, and he shouted at Birbal saying – how can such a small fire cook food inside a pot so far away? Birbal replied – the same way a small candle can keep a man warm from such a distance! Akbar realizes his mistake, and rewards the old man amply).

During this research, the tale of Mulla Nasruddin titled - “**Who Won**” was found only in Bengali and Russian languages; later on another new version of this tale was found during research on Uzbek Mulla Nasruddin tales by the title (in Russian translated version) – ‘**Апанди и Падишах**’<sup>158</sup> [*Apandi ii Padishah*] which means *Apandi and Padishah* in which Mulla Nasruddin agrees to spend a cold night on Padishah's rooftop because the Padishah (King) made a royal declaration that whosoever does so and survives will be given his daughter's hand in marriage and half his kingdom. But, when Mulla Nasruddin survives the night, Padishah refuses to uphold his end of the deal saying that Mulla Nasruddin got warmth from the moonlight! Nasruddin becomes disheartened and leaves the Padishah's kingdom and starts living near a well in the outskirts of his kingdom. One day, Padishah goes for hunting and feels extremely thirsty and finds Nasruddin’s well. He orders Nasruddin to draw water from the well so that Padishah could quench his thirst. Nasruddin instead asks Padishah to look down the well and quench his thirst. Padishah gets enraged and shouts at Nasruddin – How can I quench my thirst just looking

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<sup>158</sup> “Апанди и Падишах”, *Узбекская Народная Сказка*, Сказки. Басни. Рассказы, 18 December 2012, Web, 5 April 2017  
<<http://skazkibasni.com/archives/6665>>.



at the water at the bottom of the well? Nasruddin replies calmly – The same way I got warmth from the moonlight even though moon was so far in the sky!

Like Birbal, India has other ‘equivalent folk figures’ resembling Mulla Nasruddin maybe partly, such as Sheikh Chilli in the north, Gopal Bhad in the east and Tenaliraman in the south, and through these figures, such tales with a moral message in the end are passed from one generation to another. The interesting thing is that there are many tales of these ‘equivalent folk figures’ that match with or are similar to Mulla Nasruddin tales. An example of Birbal’s tale has been given in the previous paragraph.

The countries that are shortlisted for this particular research topic are – India, Russia and the Central Asian countries that were once a part of the erstwhile Soviet Union; there are five such Central Asian countries which are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Out of these five Central Asian countries, the last three countries mentioned above are selected that are – Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The reason behind this is that in these three Central Asian countries more tales and mentions about Mulla Nasruddin are found albeit by slightly different titles, like in Uzbekistan he is called *Khoja*, in Turkmenistan – *Ependi*, and so on. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan contributed to the world of cinema many feature films on Mulla Nasruddin as well, which were produced while these countries were part of the erstwhile Soviet Union under such film banners as Tajikfilm, Uzbekkino, and others.

Russia is chosen because of its long association with these Central Asian countries and because of the cultural and other exchanges that took place due to this long association. Another reason is that Russian language also connects these countries. India, of course, is chosen because this research took place from India and that is why Indian Mulla Nasruddin tales are taken as the base for this research. Overall, other than Russia, all the other four countries which are in Asian continent are connected with each other from ancient times via the legendary and historical route – the Silk Road.

An amazing observation made during this research is that these tales are prevalent in Russia, and all the selected tales are found in the Russian language, though it was not directly connected to the Silk Road and is in European continent. One valid reason as to why all the selected tales could be traced in Russia is the knowledge of Russian language. This knowledge did away with the need to find translations of the Russian tales of Mulla Nasruddin and made it

easier to find similar tales of Mulla Nasruddin in Russia. But such was not the case with the Central Asian countries due to the language barrier.

The selected tales that were found in all of the selected countries are as follows –

1. Tale No. 1 – Whom Do You Believe?
2. Tale No. 2 – The Death of a Pot
3. Tale No. 3 – Payment for Smell
4. Tale No. 5 – Tit for Tat
5. Tale No. 11 – Guest of Honour
6. Tale No. 15 – Mulla Nasruddin's Goat
7. Tale No. 16 – Mulla Nasruddin's Sermon

Mulla Nasruddin is more popular in these three Central Asian countries than in Russia or India. This conclusion is being made with the help of the analysis of the survey questionnaire which has been specially prepared for this research, according to which most of the participants from the Central Asian countries have heard about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, but lesser number of participants from India and Russia said that they have heard about Mulla Nasruddin.

Even though two remaining Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were not included in this study due to time and space constraints and also because it was found that Mulla Nasruddin is not as popular in these two Central Asian countries as the other three countries, a brief mention about the status of Mulla Nasruddin and his tales in these countries is being made here.

In Kazakhstan there are some tales of Mulla Nasruddin which are popular, like *Donkey is not at home* (**Осла Нет Дома – Osla Nyet Doma**)<sup>159</sup>, which is in the list of selected tales for this study by the title – *Whom Do You Believe?* But, there is an 'equivalent folk figure' of Mulla

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<sup>159</sup> "Осла Нет Дома", *Сказки о Ходже Насыре*, Казахские Народные Сказки, n.d., Web, 5 April 2017 <<http://www.ertegi.ru/index.php?id=13>>.

Nasruddin in Kazakhstan by the name of Aldar Kose (*Алдар Косе*) whose tales are more popular in Kazakhstan. An interesting fact found during research on Mulla Nasruddin and Aldar Kose tales in Kazakhstan is that this country has coins which are called *tenge* in the name of both these tricksters. The denominations of these coins are 50 *tenges* and 500 *tenges*. These coins were recently getting auctioned on eBay!<sup>160</sup> On the coins the name of Mulla Nasruddin is written both in English and Russian as *Nasreddin Afandi* and *Кожанасыр* (*Kozhanasir*), respectively. Shown below is one of such images of the issued coins (Please see Image 2).



IMAGE 2

SOURCE: “Nasreddin Hodja - Tales of the People of Kazakhstan.” *Colnect – Coin Catalog*, Face Value: 500 ₸ (Kazakhstani Tenge), RSE, the Kazakhstan Mint of NB RK, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan, 2015, [www.colnect.com/en/coins/coin/59172-500 Tenge Nasreddin Hodja-Tales of the People of Kazakhstan-Numismatic Product-Kazakhstan](http://www.colnect.com/en/coins/coin/59172-500-Tenge-Nasreddin-Hodja-Tales-of-the-People-of-Kazakhstan-Numismatic-Product-Kazakhstan). Accessed on 5 April 2017.

As far as Kyrgyzstan is concerned, Mulla Nasruddin is known as *Apendi* [*Апенди*], and not many tales of him were found during this research. In Kyrgyzstan as well tales of Aldar Kose are more popular. To quote a blog by Nyura – “*Aldar Kose is the trickster of Central Asian*

<sup>160</sup> "KAZAKHSTAN: Silver 500 Tenge NASRIDDIR AFANDI Oriental Tale 2015 PROOF." *EBay*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 July 2017. <http://www.ebay.com/itm/KAZAKHSTAN-silver-500-Tenge-NASRIDDIR-AFANDI-Oriental-tale-2015-PROOF-/172550228062?hash=item282ccb885e:g:wa0AAOSwZG9WjdIy>.

*folklore, similar to Anansi the spider of West Africa, or Br'er Rabbit and Coyote in American tales. Often he uses his wit and cleverness to aid the common man or to turn the tables on the greedy or selfish. He appears in Uzbek, Tatar, Kyrgyz, and Karakalpak folktales as well as in numerous Kazakh variants.*"<sup>161</sup>

The important thing is that whatever the name of the 'Trickster,' the tales are almost always about a common man taking on the wicked and the greedy rich people and winning against them. It is interesting to observe the power of a simple man's ordinary tales. Many kings came and went, kingdoms rose and fell, but the fame of Mulla Nasruddin and his tales grew with time – a humble man from a humble origin is still going strong! That is the greatness and power of humility, which Mulla Nasruddin always tried to inculcate in his people.

Before moving on to the next chapter, a couple of facts about Mulla Nasruddin are being mentioned here that are relevant to the present times. The first one is that every year from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> July people of Akshehir in Turkey, which is supposed to be the birthplace of Mulla Nasruddin, celebrate an 'International Nasrudin Hodja Festival.' And the second is that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared 1996-1997 as the 'International Nasrudin Year.'

The next chapter will discuss the role played by the Silk Road in spreading and propagating the Mulla Nasruddin tales along its stretch primarily to the countries mentioned above which are selected for this research topic as they are all connected via the Silk Road since ancient times. There are numerous Mulla Nasruddin tales that hint at this Silk Road concept through either the title of the tales or the content of the tales like there are Mulla Nasruddin tales about the silk trade and caravanserais and so on. One example of a Mulla Nasruddin tale (in Bengali) having a title related to the Silk Road and the silk trade is titled – '**Resham Baebshaar Kaedaa**'<sup>162</sup> which translated into English means – *the Trick of Silk Trade*. Another of his tales that mentions a caravanserai is titled – '**Jaabaaz Mulla Nasiruddin**'<sup>163</sup> (in Hindi) which translated means – *The Fearless Mulla Nasiruddin*. This tale in its opening sentences mentions the word '*serai*' which means a resting place for travelers, especially on the Silk Road. Even tales of Mulla Nasruddin that are popular in Russia has the word 'caravanserai,' like a tale titled in Russian – '**Зубодробительный Ответ**' [*Zubodrobeetelnyy Otvyet*] which translated means –

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<sup>161</sup> Nyura, "Aldar Kose Tricks the Bai", Web Blog Post, *News from the Caravan*, Blogger.com, 11 June 2006, Web, 5 April 2017

<<http://silkroadcaravan.blogspot.in/2006/06/aldar-kose-tricks-bai.html>>.

<sup>162</sup> Arindam Dasgupta, *Mollakkel: Nasiruddiner Kissa* (Kolkata: Charchapada Publications, 2014) 33.

<sup>163</sup> Ashok Maheshwari, *Mulla Nasiruddin ki Anokhi Duniya* (Delhi: Ankur Prakashan, 2012) 67.

*Teeth-shattering Response.* This tale starts with the following sentence – “Один купец ехал по своим делам, остановился на ночь в караван-серае и заказал ужин.”<sup>164</sup> (**Translation** – *One trader was on a business trip, and he stopped at a caravanserai for the night and ordered dinner.*) Hence, the connection of Mulla Nasruddin tales with the Silk Road may be found in such tales.

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<sup>164</sup> Н. Османов, перев., Молла Насреддин (Москва: Наука, 1970), 73

## CHAPTER 2

# The Silk Road Factor

*Good ideas travel easily and far along trade routes,  
And the Silk Road was no exception to that rule.*

- John Major<sup>165</sup>

Russian-born French historian, Vadime Elisseeff's book is titled – '**The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce**' with the word 'culture' coming first in the title. This shows that the Silk Road has been a lot more than just a trade route in the past. It has been a medium for religious, cultural and literary exchanges from ancient times. Whenever people get involved in any kind of commercial activity and interact with people of other lands, they knowingly or unknowingly transmit their culture and ideas too by sharing stories about their country and people.

One of the main features of the Silk Road is perhaps the caravanserais. According to an online article at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) webpage – "*...perhaps the most important legacy of the caravanserai was its role as a crucible for the exchange and interaction of cultures along the length of the Silk Roads. Not only did they facilitate the movement of people and goods along these long and arduous routes, they also provided opportunities for these travelers to come together, to share stories and experiences, and ultimately, cultures, ideas, and beliefs too.*"<sup>166</sup>

Since, during the ancient time, the means of travel were slow and mostly animals, the travelers needed to take rest at regular intervals to rejuvenate themselves and their animals. For this purpose, it is said that places for lodging and boarding were set up all along the Silk Road at

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<sup>165</sup> John Major, "Silk Road: Spreading Ideas and Innovations," *Asia Society*. Centre for Global Education, n.d. Web. 03 July 2017.

< <http://asiasociety.org/education/silk-road> >

<sup>166</sup> Caravanserais: Cross-roads of Commerce and Culture along the Silk Roads, n.d., Silk Road: Dialogue, Diversity, and Development, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 22 March 2017 <<http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/caravanserais-cross-roads-commerce-and-culture-along-silk-roads>>

a day's journey from Turkey to China so that travelers could travel during the day and take shelter for the night. These places were called 'caravanserais.' The equivalent word for caravanserais in English would be inns. Archaeological ruins of some caravanserais are still visible in the countries that were connected with each other via the Silk Road, especially in the Central Asian countries. Some of the ancient caravanserais are still standing, albeit in ruins, to name a few in Central Asia itself – the caravanserai *Tash-Rabat* in Kyrgyzstan, *Dayahatyn* caravanserai in Turkmenistan, *Khishtin* caravanserai in Tajikistan, *Rabati Malik* and *Kanka* caravanserais in Uzbekistan. In India too the ruins of such caravanserais as *Nampally Sarai* and *Sarai Kale Khan* are visible. The capital city of India itself still has many areas which have the word *sarai* in their names, like *Ber sarai*, *Katwaria Sarai*, *Lado Sarai*, *Yusuf Sarai*, *Neb Sarai*, *Sarai Rohilla*, and many more.

These caravanserais along the Silk Road played a major role in spreading the culture and literature of the countries connected via the Silk Road trade as merchants and traders of these countries took shelter in these caravanserais at night and traveled during the daytime only when it was considered to be safer. They interacted over dinner at night and exchanged their stories and tales about their people and country and culture. And thus spread the tales of one region to another and in time these tales were incorporated into the societies of these countries in such a way that it became more and more difficult to trace their origin. This is what happened with Mulla Nasruddin tales as well.

Mulla Nasruddin is considered to be originally from Turkey; though it is still a topic of debate whether he was a real person or just a folk hero. Notwithstanding, his tales spread from Turkey, where he is still a culture hero, to other countries. And, since Turkey was strategically located on the Silk Road and was connected with the Central Asian countries and India since ancient times via the Silk Road, Mulla Nasruddin tales traveled in the words of traders and merchants from Turkey to these countries. These tales were more often than not spread orally. And, since Mulla Nasruddin tales were about the common people and their day-to-day lives, people of almost all the countries could empathize with these tales, as problems and struggles faced by the common man in almost all of these countries were more or less the same – mostly, the struggle for survival and a comfortable life for themselves and their children.

There are many Mulla Nasruddin tales on the topic of caravanserais – either about Mulla Nasruddin staying in a caravanserai or some other character in his tale staying there; the culture of caravanserais and the people associated with them were carried forward in these tales.

Since, China is the originator of the silk trade, a tale of Mulla Nasruddin who is known as *Effendi* in China is being presented here before any other of his tales which is about the concept of caravan. This tale is titled in English as – ‘**A Strange Caravan**’. It is from a book of Mulla Nasruddin stories which is popular in China; this book is titled – ‘**The Effendi and the Pregnant Pot**’. The tales are translated versions, but mention of caravan is significant from the point of view of the Silk Road connection. This tale is about the prevalent corruption in China during Mulla Nasruddin’s times. This tale is as follows – Mulla Nasruddin was passing through a village when four people stopped him asking his business. These four people were – the magistrate of the village, the local judge (referred to in this tale as *cadi*), the wealthiest landlord of the village, and the village head. Pretending not to know them, Nasruddin says that he is in a hurry to inform the village head, the magistrate, the *cadi* and the landlord that there is a caravan of four camels loaded with goods for each one of them headed their way. This made the four curious and they asked Nasruddin, what goods are the camels loaded with? Nasruddin replies – “*The first camel is loaded with craftiness and...it was for the village head. The second camel was loaded with greed and...it was for the landlord. The third was loaded with corruption and...it was for the cadi. The fourth was loaded with tyranny and...it was for the county magistrate...*”<sup>167</sup>

Then there is a Russian version of Mulla Nasruddin tale, where the word ‘*caravanserai*’ has been mentioned and this tale is titled in Russian ‘**Зубодробительный Ответ**’ [*Zubodrobeetelnyy Otvyyet*] which in English means – *Teeth-shattering Reply*. This tale starts in Russian like this – “*Один купец ехал по своим делам, остановился на ночь в караван-сараяе и заказал ужин.*”<sup>168</sup>

(**Translation** – *One trader was on a business trip, and he stopped at a caravanserai for the night and ordered dinner*).

This tale is about a trader who was traveling on business and stayed at a caravanserai for the night and ordered a chicken for dinner. The next day he left in a hurry without paying for the dinner. After three months, he stayed in the same caravanserai and ordered the same dinner and in the morning asked the owner of the caravanserai to bill him for two dinners. The shrewd owner asked for a thousand dinars. The trader was shocked and refused to pay such a high price for two chickens. To which the owner of the caravanserai said that had the chicken that the trader ate three months ago stayed alive for three more months, it would have produced ninety eggs, and out of those ninety eggs, ninety chickens would have hatched! This enraged the trader, and the matter went to the Qazi (local judge) of that area. The Qazi sided with the owner of the

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<sup>167</sup> Primerose Gigliesi and Robert C. Friend, trans., *The Effendi and the Pregnant Pot* (Beijing, China: New World Press, 1982) 42.

<sup>168</sup> Н. Османов, *Молла Насреддин* (Москва: Наука, 1970) 73.



caravanserai. Some people advised the trader to take the matter to Mulla Nasruddin. After listening to the trader, Mulla Nasruddin talked to the Qazi and convinced him to review the matter. Qazi agreed and called everyone on a particular day. Everyone appeared at the court on the appointed day except for Mulla Nasruddin. The Qazi was enraged. Mulla Nasruddin came after several hours saying that he had to take care of some important work. Some farmers came to him for seeds, as it is very important to sow the wheat seeds on time for a good harvest. And so, the seeds were baked and given to the farmers to be sown. And this took several hours, and that is why he arrived late to the court. The Qazi said angrily that everyone knows that baked seeds if sown will not produce any harvest. To this Mulla Nasruddin replied that the same way a fried chicken cannot produce eggs and give birth to other chickens! The Qazi realized his mistake and gave a fair judgment, this time in favour of the trader. This tale indirectly portrays the corruption prevalent in the administration of the caravanserais as well as the justice system existing in the societies of those days.

Then there is another Mulla Nasruddin tale which is titled in Bengali – ‘**Resham Baebshaar Kaedaa**’ which means – *How to Trade in Silk*. This story is about Mulla Nasruddin wanting to sell some silk threads to the merchants. All the merchants try to cheat Nasruddin by paying him less for the silk. Then Mulla Nasruddin decides to teach them a lesson. On his way back home, he finds a dried skull of a camel. He weaves the silk thread onto that skull and brings it to the silk merchants. One of the merchants agrees to buy the silk thread by its weight. Nasruddin gladly agrees, to which the merchant gets suspicious and asks Nasruddin – I hope there is nothing else inside this silk thread. Nasruddin angrily replies – Of course, there is! A camel’s skull! The merchant thinks that Nasruddin said that out of anger and so he buys the silk thread. When the merchant unwinds the entire length of the silk thread, he finds the camel’s skull inside and immediately blames Nasruddin for cheating him of his money. To which Mulla Nasruddin replies that the merchant also tried to cheat him and pay him less for the silk. And as to the camel’s skull, Nasruddin says that – I had already told you about it, but you did not believe me! This tale portrays the corruption prevalent in the economic system of the societies in those days. But, Mulla Nasruddin's wit and wisdom mixed with his unusual actions always get the better of the corrupt people.

The point is that such tales of Mulla Nasruddin clearly show the connection of Mulla Nasruddin tales with the Silk Road. There are many more of such Mulla Nasruddin tales that are based on the themes of the Silk Road. These themes are about the product for which the Silk Road gets its name, i.e. the silk; about the countries that the Silk Road connected since the ancient times, and also about the caravanserais that were the salient features of the Silk Road.

About these caravanserais, the above-mentioned online article at the UNESCO website states that - “*The inland routes of the Silk Roads were dotted with caravanserais, large guest houses or hostels designed to welcome traveling merchants and their caravans as they made their way along these trade routes. Found across Silk Roads countries from Turkey to China, they provided not only a regular opportunity for merchants to eat well, rest and prepare themselves in safety for their onward journey, and also to exchange goods, trade with to local markets, and to meet other merchant travelers, and in doing so, to exchange cultures, languages and ideas.*”<sup>169</sup>

Mulla Nasruddin tales are found right from Turkey to China and are popular in such countries that were connected via the Silk Road since ancient times. The role played by the Silk Road in spreading these tales must have been significant. Mulla Nasruddin tales were mostly spread through word of mouth and were written down later. It is said that the first written mention of Mulla Nasruddin was in a book titled ‘**Saltukname**’ as ‘*Nasreddin Hodja*’ which was written by one Ebu’l Hayr-I Rumi in 1480.<sup>170</sup>

There are such Mulla Nasruddin tales that show Mulla Nasruddin himself traveling to such countries that are connected via the Silk Road, and observing their cultures and people; like there are tales about Nasruddin traveling to India, to Bukhara (in Uzbekistan), and other countries. This portrays that not only the tales of Mulla Nasruddin travelled and spread via the Silk Road, but that Mulla Nasruddin himself was a traveler on the Silk Road, which is quite possible because according to the popular belief, Nasruddin was born at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the Silk Road was a popular road for travel during the thirteenth century, after which the discovery of sea-routes started.

Hence, it is possible that Mulla Nasruddin knew about the existence of the Silk Road, as according to majority opinion, Mulla Nasruddin was born and died in Turkey, and Turkey was a major country of the Silk Road region; in fact, Turkey was the cross-over country for the travelers and caravans on this trade route that were travelling from Asia to Europe and vice-versa. Therefore, Turkey held a strategic place on this historical trade route.

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<sup>169</sup> “Caravanserais: Cross-roads of Commerce and Culture along the Silk Roads”, *Silk Road: Dialogue, Diversity, and Development*, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d., Web, 22 March 2017

<<http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/caravanserais-cross-roads-commerce-and-culture-along-silk-roads>>.

<sup>170</sup> Mustafa Ozcelik, Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2011) 25.

Apart from the mention of many cities and countries in Mulla Nasruddin tales that lay on the legendary Silk Road, there is a tale which is titled – ‘**Bad Handwriting**’ in which mention of Baghdad has been made. It is a well-known historical fact that Baghdad was a major city on the Silk Road and connected the East which is Asian continent and the West which is the European continent. The United Nation’s Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization website has the following to say about the city of Baghdad in medieval times – “*During the Middle Ages, Baghdad acted as an important crossroads for trade routes (by land, river, and sea). It served as a lively hub for trade within the region, and especially with neighbouring Islamic states. Internationally Baghdad served trade routes that extended out into East- and South-East Asia, the Mediterranean, and Western Europe, even as far as Eastern Africa...Items were often traded in Baghdad and then re-exported, along with locally manufactured goods... As well as trade, the silk routes also facilitated the movement of caravans, human migrants, armies, mail and pilgrims at this time.*”<sup>171</sup>

The Central Asian region also held a strategic place on the Silk Road as in ancient times it was the region between China and the rest of the ancient world. This region, though it is now believed that is poorly researched, played the role of a ‘middleman’ during the Silk Road trade era. As a result, this Central Asian region absorbed many cultural and literary traits into its society. This Central Asian region at that time was known as Turkistan and sometimes even Uighuristan, and it was studded with caravanserais. Caravans traveled through major Central Asian cities of those times, to name a few - Merv (in Turkmenistan), Bukhara and Samarkand (in Uzbekistan). This Central Asian region saw a lot of activity during the Silk Road era. Peter Frankopan states the following about the Central Asian region – “*Large-scale irrigation projects in the valleys of what are now Tajikistan and Uzbekistan built around the turn of the eras show that this period saw rising affluence and prosperity as well as increasingly vibrant cultural and commercial exchange.*”<sup>172</sup>

These Central Asian countries were so influenced by the Mulla Nasruddin tales that apart from written literature about him, many movies were made on Mulla Nasruddin, where he plays the protagonist and the savior of the poor. He fights for the rights of the poor and gives open challenges to the oppressors. In all these movies, in the end, Mulla Nasruddin always manages to come out as the winner. There are many full-length movies made about Mulla Nasruddin in the Central Asian countries, especially Tajikistan and Uzbekistan during the Soviet era.

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<sup>171</sup> Sabah Mohammad, Dr., "Baghdad and the Silk Route: A Study on the Commercial Function of the City of Baghdad in the Middle Ages," *Silk Road: Dialogue, Diversity, and Development*, UNESCO, n.d., Web, 4 May 2017, <<http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/knowledge-bank/history/baghdad-and-silk-route-study-commercial-function-city-baghdad-middle-ages>>.

<sup>172</sup> Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2015) 30.

One such film is titled – *Nasreddin in Bukhara* (**Насреддин в Бухаре** – *Nasreddin v Bukhare*)<sup>173</sup> in which Mulla Nasruddin comes to Bukhara on some business and notices the widespread corruption in the entire government system beginning right at the entry gates of Bukhara. This movie is a combination of a few of Mulla Nasruddin tales set up in the backdrop of the city of Bukhara. The very first tale with which this movie starts is a tale which is titled in a book as ‘**The Donkey’s Relatives**’<sup>174</sup> This movie starts with a scene where Mulla Nasruddin is entering the gates of Bukhara. The toll officer asks for his purpose of visit to Bukhara. Mulla Nasruddin says that he is coming from Damascus (Iran) and he has many relatives in Bukhara. So, the toll officer asks for him to pay a guest fee. Mulla Nasruddin objects saying that he is coming on some business to Bukhara; so the toll officer asks him to pay the business fee as well to enter Bukhara. When Nasruddin pays both the fees, the toll officer asks him to pay something in the name of Allah, who has kept Nasruddin safe from dacoits on his way from Iran to Bukhara (which can be taken as an indirect reference to the Silk Road and an indication that Mulla Nasruddin reached Bukhara by traveling on the Silk Road from Iran, and it is a known fact that during the Middle Ages dacoits used to loot the caravans and the merchants traveling via the Silk Road as a result of which people and countries were forced to look for other means of travel, like the sea-routes). After this, the toll officer asks Nasruddin to pay a fee for the entry of his donkey to Bukhara to see his relatives. This enrages Nasruddin because he sees the height of corruption right at the gates of Bukhara and replies – “*Yes, I can see that my donkey has a lot of relatives in Bukhara!*”

This tale shows how Nasruddin traveled from such faraway place as Damascus to Bukhara safely on his donkey. This is another indication of Mulla Nasruddin traveling via the Silk Road, as in those days, the Silk Road was the only road kept safe for merchants and travelers by the governments of the countries that were a part of the Silk Road. One of the reasons that the caravanserais were built and maintained by the governments is to keep the travelers safe from getting looted, especially during the night time.

Regarding the movies on Silk Road region, Dr. Konuralp Ercilasun says – “*When we consider the main themes of the movies, we can notice the common themes. It is seen that the class conflict or the stratum conflict is one of the main themes in the movies of this region. Another main theme that can be noticed is the urban-rural conflict. These data show the emergence of a "modern Silk Road sub-global region" depending not only on the traditional*

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<sup>173</sup> *Nasreddin v Bukhare*, Dir. Yakov Protazanov, Perf. Lev Sverdlin, Uzbekfilm, Tashkent Studios, 1943, Web, 25 March 2017

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruJxv-M79t4>>.

<sup>174</sup> Shyam Dua, ed., Best of Mulla Naseeruddin (Noida, U.P.: Tiny Tot Publications, 2015) 7.

*culture but also on the popular culture.*"<sup>175</sup> These very themes were highlighted in almost all the Mulla Nasruddin movies made during the Soviet era. But one fact to be noted here is that even though these movies were produced during the Soviet period, the production banners under which these movies were produced belonged to the Central Asian countries, especially Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, like such production banners as – Uzbek Kino (*Kino* is the Russian word for cinema) and Tajik Film.

The Central Asian region was not only in between the West and the East on the Silk Road, but also between China and India, and hence, the similarities one sees in food, clothing, architecture, and even languages of the Central Asian countries and India. Many dynasties of India were established by people from Central Asia. The most influential dynasty that flourished and forever changed Indian society was that of the Mughals, the founder of which was Babur (full name – Zahir-ud-din-Muhammad Babur) who was from Uzbekistan. The Mughal rulers were all very fond of either paintings or architecture or music, and they enriched India with their cultural and architectural contributions. It is believed that the origin of the word *Mughal* is from the word Mongol.

In literary field also such examples exist, the main being Rahim (full name – Khanzada Mirza Khan Abdur-Rahim Khan-e-Khana) whose couplets (*Dohe*) is used in India in schools to teach children life lessons. He was the son of Bairam Khan, a capable commander in the army of Humayun and later Akbar. They were originally believed to be from Badakhshan region a part of which now lies in Tajikistan/Turkmenistan. Mirza Asadullah Beg Khan, better known as Mirza Ghalib who is considered to be one of the finest Urdu and Persian poets came from a family of Aibak Turks settled in Samarkand (in Uzbekistan) and whose ancestors moved from Uzbekistan to India. Such connections of the Central Asian countries with India are many and in many fields. In the field of architecture, this link between India and Central Asian countries are strongly visible. Some fine examples are the Golconda fort in the city of Hyderabad, Turkmen Gate in Delhi, and many more.

Along with the Central Asian countries, India was also an important country on the Silk Road as it was famous for its spices and indigo as well; there is, in fact, a subsidiary route of the Silk Road which is known as the Spice Route which starts from India and spreads upwards and

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<sup>175</sup> Konuralp Ercilasun, Dr., "Silk Road as a Sub-global Region: A Sphere Emerging from the Interaction of Cultural and Economic Fields," *Central Asia-South Caucasus.com*, 2003, Web, 25 July 2014  
<[www.centralasia-southcaucasus.com/.../Silk%20Route/Paper\\_Konulrap\\_Ercilasun.doc](http://www.centralasia-southcaucasus.com/.../Silk%20Route/Paper_Konulrap_Ercilasun.doc)>.

joins the main Silk Road. The tales of Mulla Nasruddin are widespread in India. His tales are so completely absorbed by the Indian society that he is not considered as a foreign figure in India.

There are also many tales about Mulla Nasruddin traveling to India. One such tale was published in a newspaper article about Mulla Nasruddin titled – ‘**Mullah Nasruddin.**’<sup>176</sup> In this newspaper article, there are a couple of Mulla Nasruddin tales. One of the tales is titled – ‘**Eating Money.**’ This tale starts thus – “*Nasruddin traveled to India...*” In this tale, Nasruddin comes to India, and he is hungry. So, he buys some ‘red’ coloured fruits. But when he starts eating them, he starts sweating, and his tongue is on fire! He asks a fellow Iranian what this strange fruit is. The Iranian is shocked and says that those are not fruits but Indian red chilies, and advises Nasruddin to throw them away. But Nasruddin continues to eat them and says – that since he spent his hard-earned money on them, he is not eating the chilies anymore, he is eating his money! This tale shows that the knowledge of a country, its foodstuffs and its peoples’ customs and traditions and habits and also its language is very important when one is traveling to that country. Otherwise, one could land in trouble.

That Mulla Nasruddin traveled to many places and met with people of many cultures is clear from the names of cities and countries mentioned and the vivid descriptions given about such places and people in his tales. That he, himself traveled through the Silk Road may also be a possibility. In which case, it will not be too far-fetched to say that Mulla Nasruddin himself might have carried his tales via the Silk Road to the countries mentioned in this study. And, in turn, he absorbed the traditions and customs of the countries he visited. The interaction was both ways. This interaction, in turn, influenced Mulla Nasruddin tales as well and might have given rise to many new Mulla Nasruddin tales. The following quote may clarify this claim further – “*Many years ago, the Mulla was traveling on the Silk Road to China when he met George, a traveler from the land of the Franks. They soon became friends and decided to travel together, each pledging to help the other on the long and difficult journey ahead.*”<sup>177</sup> In this quote, it is said that Mulla Nasruddin traveled up to China via the Silk Road. In China, he is better known as Afangti. “*Mulla Nasruddin is a popular character in folklore in many Muslim countries like Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, etc. What is less known in these countries is that Mulla Nasruddin is also somewhat known figure in China. He is known by his Uyghur name 阿凡提 (Afanti) or 阿方提 (Afangti).*”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup>, "Mullah Nasruddin." *Times of India - The Speaking Tree* [Delhi] 21 Aug. 2016, Discuss sec.: 3. Print.

<sup>177</sup> M. Shahid Alam, "The Lessons of Mulla Nasruddin," *Counter Punch*, 25 September 2003, Web, 30 March 2017

<<http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/09/25/the-lessons-of-mulla-nasruddin/>>.

<sup>178</sup> Wang Daiyu, "Mulla Nasruddin in China," *Islam in China*, 1 October 2010, Web, 30 March 2017

<<https://islaminchina.wordpress.com/2010/10/01/mulla-nasruddin-in-china/>>.

That Mulla Nasruddin traveled to other places on the Silk Road in addition to India can also be proven by the large number of tales about Mulla Nasruddin in Bukhara, which is now in Uzbekistan. A movie about Mulla Nasruddin in Bukhara has already been mentioned earlier. The following is a tale of Mulla Nasruddin in Bukhara. The tale is in Hindi and is titled – ‘**Bukhara ki Shaan**’ (*The Pride of Bukhara*). In this tale, Mulla Nasruddin is shown as a citizen of Bukhara (Uzbekistan). The tale starts with these lines in Hindi – “*Baat un dino ki hai jab Mulla Nasruddin Bukhara mey rehta thha.*”<sup>179</sup> (**English translation** – *This incident is of those days when Mulla Nasruddin used to live in Bukhara*).

This tale is about three scholars from abroad who come to visit Bukhara and ask the ruler of Bukhara to bring some scholar of Bukhara who can answer their questions. Many scholars from the ruler's court try, but fail. Then people suggest to the ruler to invite Mulla Nasruddin to save the prestige of Bukhara. Nasruddin comes on his donkey and replies to all of their questions very cleverly. In this tale, Mulla Nasruddin has been called the wise man of Bukhara.

The same book has another tale about Mulla Nasruddin living in Bukhara and being known as a wise man there. This tale is titled – ‘**Rahi Baat Kapdo ki.**’<sup>180</sup> In English the title would translate as – *As Far As Clothes Are Concerned*. Considering Mulla Nasruddin as a citizen of Bukhara shows that Mulla Nasruddin is thought to be from Uzbekistan. There are some people, especially Uzbek people, who claim that Mulla Nasruddin belongs to Uzbekistan. His wit and wisdom influenced the people of Central Asia so. The reason that Mulla Nasruddin is considered to be one of their own might be a few – either his tales are so liked by people there that the tales are completely absorbed in the society, or Mulla Nasruddin actually visited and stayed among the people of Bukhara and in time, was considered to be an Uzbek.

Then there are many tales of Mulla Nasruddin on the topic of Sufism. It is well known that like many other major religions of the world, Sufism traveled along the Silk Road and established itself firmly in the Central Asian countries. Sufism is considered to be a mystical form of Islam which emphasizes on tolerance. Many Mulla Nasruddin tales are used as ‘*teaching tales*’ in Sufism. Idries Shah was a major proponent of this kind of Sufi teaching in recent times. But going back in time, a Turkish scholar Burhaneddin Celebi interpreted Mulla Nasruddin tales from a Sufi perspective.

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<sup>179</sup> Ashok Maheshwari, Mulla Nasiruddin ki Anokhi Duniya (Delhi: Ankur Prakashan, 2012) 141.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 171.

In a book titled – ‘**Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom**’ there is a sub-topic in a chapter which is titled – ‘**From a Sufi Perspective**’ where the author quotes Rumi saying – “*Our Bayit (couplet) is not a Bayt (house) but a Country; Our Mockery is not a Mockery but a Lesson.*”<sup>181</sup> This is followed by a few Mulla Nasruddin tales that are popular in Sufi teachings.

There is a Mulla Nasruddin tale in Russian, related to Sufism, titled – ‘**Истинный Суфий**’ [*Ischinniy Sufi*] which in English means – *A True Sufi*. It is interesting to note that the word ‘*Sufi*’ is used as it is in Russian and in this tale. The description of this word given in Russian as a footnote in this book is as follows – “*Суфий – последователь мистического учения в исламе. Суфии делились на различные ордена (секты), были и бродячие суфии.*”<sup>182</sup> (**English translation:** *Sufi – a follower of mystical order in Islam. Sufis were divided into various sects, and there were wandering Sufis as well*).

The Tale – *A True Sufi* is about a person who considers himself a Sufi and asks Mulla Nasruddin – why isn’t he ashamed of his image as a fool in public. Mulla Nasruddin asks him – who he is. The person replies that he is a Sufi and has many special powers. That every night he flies off to the sky and sees the wonders of the world! To this Mulla Nasruddin asks him – Does something soft touch his face during his flights. The person replies – *Yes*. Mulla Nasruddin says to him – that soft thing is my donkey’s tail! This tale teaches a person to be humble and not boast about his achievements for there are people who are far more learned than him in this world, but who remain unnoticed! This tale teaches that humility is a great virtue in humans.

Though it is generally believed that Mulla Nasruddin lived during the thirteenth century, there are many Mulla Nasruddin tales associated with the famous conqueror Timur, also known in the West as Tamerlane. If the consensus is to be believed, Mulla Nasruddin is at least a century before the time of Timur, if not more. However, Timur’s fame or infamy on the Silk Road and his advance up to the city of Anatolia, which is where Mulla Nasruddin was supposed to have been born, and because of the tremendous pain and grief that he caused to the common man during his plundering and conquests and the hatred and fear of the common man towards Timur, there emerged tales of Mulla Nasruddin and Timur, in which Mulla Nasruddin as a commoner always manages to belittle and befool Timur. This might be taken as a classic example of how folk heroes and their tales emerge and develop through the people and their inability to fight for their rights. People give rise to such folk heroes through whom they live

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<sup>181</sup> Mustafa Ozcelik, Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2011) 112

<sup>182</sup> Н. Османов, перев., Молла Насреддин (Москва: Наука, 1970) 45.



vicariously. As history shows, Timur was a tyrant, and people were scared to deal with him directly, and so they made tales of Mulla Nasruddin to deal with Timur's oppression.

There is a book of Mulla Nasruddin tales titled – '**Anecdotes of Molla Nasreddin Hodja**' where there is a sub-section, by the title – '**Stories of Timur and Hodja**'. One of the tales in this section is titled – '**Ten Akce for Pestamal**'<sup>183</sup> (*Ten coins for the Towel*), where Timur and Nasruddin go to a Turkish bath, and Timur asks Nasruddin what according to Nasruddin is Timur's worth. Nasruddin replies – *Ten akce* (Turkish coin). This enrages Timur, and he shouts at Nasruddin saying – Ten akce is the worth of my pestamal (bath towel). Nasruddin agrees and says – "*Yes, I know.*" This tale indirectly indicates that Timur as a person has no worth in the eyes of the common man!

In spite of his tyranny, Timur was an influential figure in Uzbekistan, and he helped rebuilt many famous cities of Uzbekistan, and hence, Uzbekistan has many legends and stories related to Timur. And, since Mulla Nasruddin was a part of Uzbek literature, the two getting interlinked is not such an unthinkable idea. Uzbekistan has since ancient times been an important part of the Silk Road culture and its cities like Bukhara, Samarkand and many others were important hubs of trade. This resulted in these cities becoming rich in mixed culture, cuisine, architecture and literature. Uzbek literature is full of legends and tales about its folk heroes, and one such folk hero is Mulla Nasruddin, known in Uzbekistan by the name Nasreddin Afandi. His tales are known in Uzbekistan as *latifas* – "*Another genius of people's art is a cycle of latifas – tales and legends about Effendi – Hodja Nasreddin, a deft, witty dodger, who gives lesson to the greedy rich and the powers...*"<sup>184</sup>

Connected with Uzbekistan by the North and East borders is Turkmenistan. It is also strategically located on the Silk Road since ancient times and has a rich culture, architecture, and literature. Turkmenistan's famous cities like Merv, Ashgabat and others are known for their historical significance and their art and architecture since ancient times. In fact, according to a website Advantour – "*The ancient city of Merv used to be the so-called Gate to Central Asia.*"<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Dr. Habib Siddiqui, comp., *Anecdotes of Molla Nasreddin Hodja for Children of All Ages* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2010) 134.

<sup>184</sup> "Uzbek Literature", *Uzbekistan 2017*, Advantour, n.d., Web, 26 March 2017  
<<http://www.advantour.com/uzbekistan/culture/literature.htm>>.

<sup>185</sup> "Turkmenistan on the Silk Road", *Advantour*, n.d., Web, 26 March 2017  
<<http://www.advantour.com/silkroad/turkmenistan.htm>>.

However, a major difference between Uzbek people and Turkmen people was that Uzbeks were sedentary people with a settled life and Turkmen people were nomadic in nature. Otherwise, both these Central Asian countries played a significant role as a hub not only for trade but also for intermingling and interchanging of cultures, literature, and religions on the Silk Road since ancient times. Mulla Nasruddin is a well-known folk hero in Turkmenistan as well, and his tales are popular there too. Mulla Nasruddin is better known as *Ependi* in Turkmenistan. In fact, being tribal in nature, Turkmen people also must have played a significant role in carrying and spreading Mulla Nasruddin tales from place to place; maybe that is how these tales were spread to Russia.

A Turkmen satirical poet of the eighteenth century - Kemine is mostly associated with Mulla Nasruddin, as there are many Kemine tales which are similar in plot and content to Mulla Nasruddin tales. One such tale is titled in Russian translated version – ‘Только и Досталось’<sup>186</sup> [*Tolko i Dostalos*] which means - *Could only Manage to Get*. In this story, Kemine's ears were swollen, and a *Pir* (a Sufi master) mocks him, asking – “Did you borrow ears from a donkey?” To which Kemine replies that since donkey's brains were already taken by the *Pir*, he had no choice but to take his ears!

Though Kemine was a satirical poet, stories about him were in the form of anecdotes. “Помимо поэзии, Кемине творил и в таком жанре, как анекдот. Анекдоты Кемине очень популярны у туркмен и в наши дни. Благодаря своим анекдотам, Кемине — как поэтический образ — сам вошел в устное народное творчество, став героем устных народных новелл — подобно Ходже Насреддину или Алдару-Косе.”<sup>187</sup>

**(English translation as understood** – *Apart from poetry, Kemine also wrote in such genre as anecdote. Anecdotes of Kemine are very popular among Turkmen even today. Thanks to his anecdotes, Kemine as a poetic image – himself entered into oral folk works, becoming a hero of oral folk novellas – much like Khodja Nasreddin or Aldar Kose*).

Here, the last line mentions that Turkmenistan's Kemine became a folk hero like Mulla Nasruddin or Aldar Kose. Aldar Kose, as mentioned in Chapter one of this study, is considered a folk hero like Mulla Nasruddin in Kazakhstan as well as Kyrgyzstan. Interestingly, the Central Asian countries have many other ‘equivalent figures’ of Mulla Nasruddin; a couple has been

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<sup>186</sup> Б. Каррыев, trans., Туркменский юмор – Кемине – Кемине и Пир (Ashgabat: Turkmenistan, 1967) 26. PDF.

<sup>187</sup> “Kemine”, *Cultin*, n.d., Web, 26 March 2017  
<<http://www.cultin.ru/writers-kemine>>.

mentioned above, which are Kemine and Aldar Kose. Then there are other folk heroes of the Central Asian countries, namely Mirali, Esenpolat, Karry-Ata, and others. All these figures are mentioned in a book titled in Russian – ‘Туркменский Юмор’ [*Tukmenskii Yumor*] which translated in English means – *Turkmen Humor*.<sup>188</sup>

As far as Tajikistan is concerned, it was also a significant region on the Silk Road, mainly because Tajikistan’s territory was between India and China on the Silk Road. Hence, it played an important role not only in trade but also in exchange of culture, literature and other things. Famous Tajik cities on the Silk Road were Penjikent which is considered to be the oldest city in Tajikistan and Khujand, also known formerly as Khodzhent, is now the second largest city of Tajikistan after its capital city of Dushanbe. “*From ancient times standing on the crossroads of well-known trade routes between the East and the West made Khujand one of the major economic and cultural centres of Central Asia, the major center on the Silk Road.*”<sup>189</sup>

There is a movie about Mulla Nasruddin in Khujand which was made during the Soviet Era. It is titled in Russian as – ‘*Nasreddin v Khodzhente ili Ocharovanniy Prince*’ (*Насреддин в Ходженге, или Очарованный Принц*)<sup>190</sup> (**English translation** – *Nasreddin in Khudjant or the Enchanted Prince*) which was produced in 1959. This movie starts with a written quote about Mulla Nasruddin in Russian. It says that this film is ‘*about the glorious, jolly and wise Khodja Nasreddin who dreamt of a world that does not know of evil, guilt and greed, who was always on the side of the weak and fought with the powerful of the world...*’ (“*о славном, весёлом и мудром Ходже Насреддине, который мечтал о мире, не знающем злобы, коварства и алчности, всегда был на стороне слабых и боролся с сильными мира...*”).<sup>191</sup> This film was dubbed in Russian.

Unlike other Central Asian countries, Tajik people were Iranian in origin, and Tajik language belongs to the Indo-European language family and is known as a West-Iranian language. Tajik people were also sedentary people like Uzbeks. Mulla Nasruddin tales are well-known in Tajikistan. A Tajik poet of the sixteenth century by the name of Mushfiqi became an ‘equivalent figure’ as a Tajik folk hero and is often compared with Mulla Nasruddin in

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<sup>188</sup> O. Dovlyetova, trans., *Turkmenskii Yumor* (Ashgabat: ‘Turkmenistan’ Neshiryati, 1967).

<sup>189</sup> “Tajikistan on the Silk Road”, Advantour, n.d., Web, 26 March 2017

<<http://www.advantour.com/silkroad/tajikistan.htm>>.

<sup>190</sup> *Nasreddin v Khodzhente ili Ocharovanniy Prince*, Dir. A. Rahimov, Perf. G. Tonunts, Tajik film, 1959, Web, 26 March 2017

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJi2ADetxvc&t=86s>>.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

Tajikistan. “*Mushfiqi was at once a satirist, a court panegyrist, and a devotee of romantic love. His immensely popular satirical poems...were personal rather than social. He directs them at individuals from his own social surroundings: artists, other poets, and artisans...Because they portrayed living human beings and real-life situations and because the characters spoke the language of the people, the poet himself became a figure of folklore, “Molla Mushfiqi,” not unlike the Nasreddin Hoja or Nasreddin Afandi of traditional anecdotes.*”<sup>192</sup> Many Mushfiqi tales and Mulla Nasruddin tales are similar in content and plot.

As far as the connection of Russia with the Silk Road is concerned, the historical records say that Russia’s association with the Silk Road started somewhere in the sixteenth century when Russian traders were allowed to come to Bukhara and Samarkand, and traders from Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva went to Moscow, India and other places on the Silk Road. Silk was exported to Russia by the Central Asian countries during the sixteenth century. And as mentioned earlier, wherever there is an interaction between people of two different regions or countries, their culture, their habits, their traditions intermingle and give rise to a unique blend of culture. The same is true with Russia as well. Trading with the Central Asian countries since the sixteenth century, and later on absorbing the Central Asian region within the erstwhile Soviet Union has given rise to this unique culture – it includes borrowing legends and tales from each other and incorporating them and adopting them into their societies. Hence, it is quite possible that the famous Mulla Nasruddin and his tales traveled to Russia from Central Asia, as the initial link between Russia and Central Asia was also the Silk Road.

This may be further corroborated by some of the Russian versions of Mulla Nasruddin tales where there are borrowed words from these Central Asian countries, as the Central Asian languages belong to the Turkic language family, other than the Tajik language. For example, there is a Russian version of Mulla Nasruddin tale which is titled – ‘Джубба Кадия’ [*Jubba Kadiya*] which in English means Qazi’s Jubba, where the title itself has two borrowed words from the Turkish language – *Qazi* and *Jubba*. *Qazi* is a Muslim judge; whereas *Jubba* (which matches a Russian word for coat – *Shubo*) is an ankle-length robe. This tale also has borrowed words like (*Нукер*) *Nuker* (which resembles the Hindi word - *Naukar*) which in English means a servant. Interestingly, this tale has the Russian word for the servant as well which is *Sluga* (*Слуга*). This tale is about a corrupt Qazi who behaves inappropriately.

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<sup>192</sup> Keith Hitchens, “Mushfiqi”, *Abdurahmon*, Encyclopaedia Iranica, 20 July 2004, Web, 26 March 2017 <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/mushfiqi-abdurahmon>>.

The tale goes like this - one day Mulla Nasruddin with his servant were taking a stroll in a park, and they see the town's Qazi drunk and lying on the ground. Nasruddin sees his robe and walks off with it. When the Qazi comes to his senses, he sees that his robe is gone! He orders his servant to find the thief and bring him to his court. The next day, the Qazi's servant sees Mulla Nasruddin in the market wearing Qazi's robe and orders him to come to Qazi's court. Mulla Nasruddin immediately gets the graveness of the situation and comes to the Qazi's court and says aloud in front of everyone – Yesterday I was taking a stroll in the park with my servant, and I see this drunk person who was lying on the ground unconscious, and so I took his robe for safe-keeping. My servant is my witness. So, if you see that imbecile, kindly inform me so that I may return his robe to him. Qazi had no choice but to agree with Mulla Nasruddin that such kind of drunken behavior is unacceptable and says to Nasruddin – You may go now. If I find that idiot, I will let you know.

Another thing is, there was a flourishing slave trade market in Central Asia during the medieval period, and slaves were brought for selling from all over the known world of that time. This included slaves from India and Russia as well. Also, artisans from one place were taken to another via the Silk Road for introducing their art and crafts to other countries on the Silk Road. The same goes for architects, builders, and artisans of that period. The most prominent example of such builders and artisans in India are the builders and artisans brought from such faraway places like Central Asia, Iran, Turkey and other places by Shah Jahan (a Mughal ruler) to build *Taj Mahal*, the beauty of which is so revered by the world even today that it is considered as one of the Wonders of the World! Also, the merchants, as well as religious missionaries who traveled to other countries via the Silk Road had to learn the language and culture of the lands they traveled to so that they could interact with the local populations and spread their culture and way of life. All this also led to intermingling and interchange of culture, literature, languages, and many more things.

All this indicates that the intermingling and interchange of ideas, culture, literature were there all along the Silk Road, not only among those countries that were directly in contact with each other via the Silk Road, but also with those countries that were indirectly connected with the Silk Road, like Russia. Such was the influence of the Silk Road.

If one carefully looks at the map of the Silk Road, it looks like an artery; such an artery that carried not only goods and people for centuries, but culture, religion, languages, literature, and much more from one place to another. In today's global scenario, where the world has shrunk due to the fast means of transportation and due to Internet, even the outer space is not beyond reach, it is near impossible to even imagine the world of the Silk Road times, where to

travel to another country was a daunting task. Such times when the sea-routes were also not explored, the Silk Road played the role of an artery which carries life-blood to every part of the body. Some even believe that the main purpose of the Silk Road was not trade, but the cultural interaction.

*“Valerie Hansen...points, out that trade was not the primary purpose of the network. ‘Instead, the Silk Road changed history, largely because the people who managed to travel along part or all of the Silk Road planted their cultures like seeds of exotic species carried to distant lands,’ ... The cultural exchanges were rich and in many cases lasting, as suggested by excavated materials and documents, prepared by people of all social levels centuries ago and preserved in the arid climates. Silk Road traffic may not have been heavy, but the cultural exchange was extensive and rich during an era of tolerance.” – YaleGlobal<sup>193</sup>*

According to a UNESCO report - *“...the long-standing and ongoing legacy of this remarkable network is reflected in the many distinct but interconnected cultures, languages, customs and religions that have developed over millennia along these routes. The passage of merchants and travelers of many different nationalities resulted not only in commercial exchange but a continuous and widespread process of cultural interaction.”<sup>194</sup>* This legacy is undeniable. Maybe that is why its revival is still sought after in the modern world.

In recent years the efforts to revive the Silk Road has started, and the whole world now wants to be a part of it, including the United States. The concept of ‘**New Silk Road**’ has already been developed by America. There was a newspaper article in September 2016 that highlighted the proposal of building an underwater tunnel to connect Siberia in Russia with Alaska in the United States under the New Silk Road Project. It states – *“...the World Land-Bridge is the natural sequel to the Eurasian Land Bridge, the mega-connectivity initiative to revive the ancient Silk Road in all its dimensions, including its lost cultural and civilisational attributes.”<sup>195</sup>* This newspaper article also stresses the need to revive the cultural exchange aspect of the Silk Road.

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<sup>193</sup> Valerie Hansen, "The Legacy of the Silk Road," *Yale Global Online*, Yale University, 25 January 2013, Web, 30 March 2017

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/legacy-silk-road>.

<sup>194</sup> "About the Silk Road", *Silk Road: Dialogue, Diversity, and Development*, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d., Web, 23 December 2014

<https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/about-silk-road>.

<sup>195</sup> Atul Aneja, "After Silk Road, World Land Bridge?" *The Hindu*, 03 September 2016, World sec.: 14. Print.

On the other hand, efforts are going on from China to re-establish the ancient Silk Road and to include India in this project. There were a couple of newspaper article regarding China seeking India's cooperation for the same. One was titled – **China seeks India's 'Spice Route' link with its 'Silk Road'**<sup>196</sup> and another – **China to accommodate India in Silk Road Plan.**<sup>197</sup> The second article mentions that – *"The Silk Road focuses on bringing together China, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe; linking China...with South Asia and the Indian Ocean."*<sup>198</sup>

This highlights the importance and relevance of the Silk Road in today's world. The Silk Road has always been more than just a trade route. *"Richard Foltz, Xinru Liu and others have described how trading activities along the Silk Road over many centuries facilitated the transmission not just of goods but also ideas and culture..."*<sup>199</sup>

The Silk Road had its phases of popularity, and one of the phases was during the Middle Ages. *"The 13th and 14th centuries were characterized by considerable political, commercial, and religious competition between kingdoms, markets, and religious groups across Eurasia. Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus vied for adherents and institutional support."*<sup>200</sup>

The thirteenth century was the time when Mulla Nasruddin lived in Sivrihisar, Turkey. Like the Silk Road, Mulla Nasruddin and his tales have also not lost their relevance in today's world. It can be said that Mulla Nasruddin is an eternal traveler. He travels on his donkey to faraway places. He spreads his wisdom through his tales to many countries, and especially to those countries that are connected with each other since ancient times via the Silk Road. There has to be a connection between Mulla Nasruddin and the Silk Road, as his tales are more concentrated in the Central Asian countries and South Asian countries, including India. Mulla Nasruddin tales spread from Turkey which was a major country on the Silk Road up to China which was the main country of the Silk Road, as China started the expeditions to other countries via this Silk Road, initially for exploring the regions beyond its borders, and then for trade purposes. It is no coincidence that Mulla Nasruddin tales are popular even in China, especially

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<sup>196</sup> Times News Network, "China seeks India's 'Spice Route' link with its 'Silk Road'" *The Times of India* 6 March 2015. Print.

<sup>197</sup> Saibal Dasgupta, "China to accommodate India in Silk Road plan" *The Times of India* 29 March 2015, Times Global sec.: 26. Print.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Alfiya Dauletkereeva, "The Silk Way," *Prezi.com*, 21 October 2016, Web, 28 March 2017 <<https://prezi.com/hayepank7f6d/the-silk-way/>>.

<sup>200</sup> Richard Kurin, "The Silk Road: Connecting People and Cultures," *Smithsonian Folklife Festival*, Smithsonian Institute, 2002, Web, 31 March 2017 <<http://www.festival.si.edu/2002/the-silk-road/the-silk-road-connecting-peoples-and-cultures/smithsonian>>.

among the Uighur population of China in the Xinjiang Province. Incidentally, this province borders with the Central Asian region. The Uighur people are said to be Turkic in origin. It is believed that they are closer to the Central Asian people in origin than to Chinese.

This shows that when people travel far and beyond their homeland, they tend to create a homeland of their own in the new place if they stay for long and/or settle down because then they feel comfortable and at home. This nature of human beings gave rise to the intermingling and interchange of culture, traditions and many other things along the Silk Road, in which somewhere the Mulla Nasruddin tales also find their place.

The next chapter will discuss these very Mulla Nasruddin tales from a sociolinguistic perspective, which broadly means the study of the changes that these tales go through when they cross borders from one country to another from a socio-cultural point. Every country is unique, and every country has its own peculiarities, be it the food, the clothing, the language, and even the utensils that are used. When a tale is absorbed in a society or a country, and when it is adapted to the local traditions and customs, some sociolinguistic changes take place in them. These changes are very interesting to study. This research topic is attempting to highlight these changes in Mulla Nasruddin tales when these tales transcend borders. A small example has been discussed in this very chapter earlier, where the Russian version of a Mulla Nasruddin tale titled in Russian ‘Джубба Кадия’ (Qazi’s Jubba) is mentioned. How in this tale the word ‘*нукер*’ (*Nuker*) and its Russian equivalent word ‘*слуга*’ (*Sluga*) which means a servant coexist.

Although this tale is not one of the Mulla Nasruddin tales selected for this research topic, it gives a preview of the content of the next chapter, the title of which is – ‘**Sociolinguistic Study of Mulla Nasruddin Tales.**’



## CHAPTER 3

### Sociolinguistic Study of Mulla Nasruddin Tales

*In sociolinguistics converge all the earlier efforts in anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and linguistics to relate language systematically to society and culture.*<sup>201</sup>

- H. H. Stern (1983:218)

This chapter studies the relationship between Sociolinguistics and Folklore with the help of Mulla Nasruddin tales. The idea behind this is that whenever a tale transcends borders and enters into a different country and comes in contact with a different culture, it undergoes some changes as per the social norms and as per the accepted customs of that particular society. Since every country and every culture is unique in itself, there are some norms that are acceptable to its society, and there might be some which are not. What is acceptable to one culture may not be acceptable to the other.

The rituals, traditions, and sometimes even behavior and body language of people of one country and culture might not be correctly understood by the people of other countries and culture. A very basic example may be found in the way a person agrees or disagrees with what a person is saying. Generally, it is accepted that when one person agrees to another person, he/she will nod, i.e. will move his/her head up and down; and if a person disagrees with another person, he/she will move his/her head sideways. But there are some people in India itself, who when agreeing to someone move their heads sideways, which may sometimes create a misunderstanding for people from other countries and culture. The same might be said about the way a person speaks; the tone of his/her voice, and many other things. All such things and behavior are depicted in some or the other tale of Mulla Nasruddin.

The way a person uses his/her linguistic skills in different contexts and situations is also a part of Sociolinguistics. It may be noted that a person uses a different variant of language at home with his/her family members; the same person when goes to work uses a different variant

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<sup>201</sup> H. H. Stern, Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 218.

of his/her language; with friends, he/she uses his/her language skills differently, and so on. Hence, one aspect of Sociolinguistics is to determine the relationship between language use and social behaviour.

Since language is not used in vacuum, it is a form of communication, and social interactions take place between people, it is imperative that they understand each other well. Society and social norms some way or the other affect and change the language. Language is intimately connected with the society, and therefore, there must be a give and take between them. This idea and field of research developed into Sociolinguistics.

Sociolinguistics divide people into speech communities, and there was extensive research done on these speech communities and their specific way of using a language. Extensive research in this field of ‘speech community’ has been carried out by the American sociolinguist, William Labov. He proved that even though people may speak the same language, when they belong to different speech communities, their way of using that language may be different.

Another well-known American sociolinguist, Dell Hymes also worked with speech communities and devised a term called ‘communicative competence’ in response to Noam Chomsky’s ‘competence’ and ‘performance’ criteria of a language, where ‘competence’ meant the knowledge of correct grammatical rules of a particular language and ‘performance’ meant the actual use of that particular language. The society and its norms were not considered by Chomsky. Dell Hymes objected to this classification and used the term ‘communicative competence’ which according to him means –“...*knowledge necessary to use language in social context.*”<sup>202</sup> Thereby, he included the social context in the use of a language.

When this social context of language use is applied in Indian context, it is observed for example, that the language Hindi is spoken in almost all parts of India, but the way it is spoken in the northern part of India is different from the way it is spoken in southern part or eastern part of India. Since India is a multi-lingual country, the situation here is a lot more complex regarding the study of sociolinguistics. Dr. Rajeev K. Doley in his research paper titled – ‘**Languages in India and their Mixed Use: A Sociolinguistic Study**’ states that – “*Language...is being viewed and studied from different perspectives and the frontiers of the subject...are continuously and*

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<sup>202</sup> L. B. Pullum, "Dell Hymes – Breakthrough into Performance," Standard Blog, *Wordpress.com*, 29 January 2017, Web, 28 April 2017, < <https://lindseypullum.wordpress.com/2017/01/29/dell-hymes-breakthrough-into-performance/>>.

*steadily moving forward. One of such 'frontiers' is 'sociolinguistics,' the study of language with relation to its users who live in society...Sociolinguistics deals with the social function of a language...The use of language symbolically represents fundamental dimensions of social behavior and human interactions.*”<sup>203</sup>

Since, India is a multi-religious, multi-class and multi-caste society as well, the linguistic variations of the same language may be observed in Indian society distinctly. An Indian sociolinguist, Dr. Sujata Chaturvedi, writes on the sociolinguistics of linguistic variation that – *"The diversity of languages and social structures in India has created a complex yet sustainable relation between linguistic variations and social classifications."*<sup>204</sup>

This form of social classification is depicted in the Mulla Nasruddin tales as well, where usually Mulla Nasruddin is shown belonging to the poor community. He is shown in many of his tales fighting for his and his fellow poor men's rights and fighting against the rich and ruling class of the community. This fight is depicted in his tale which has been selected for this research topic, titled – **'Payment for Smell'** where a hungry beggar was being harassed by the rich shop owner for payment for smelling his food! Mulla Nasruddin comes to the rescue of this beggar and jingles some coins in the ears of the shop owner, thereby paying him with the 'sound' for the 'smell'! From the sociolinguistic point of view, this story depicts the lack of communication between the poor and the rich; from a moral point of view, it shows how the rich try to take advantage of the poor or exploit them.

This distinction in social status is also depicted in another of his selected tales which is titled – **"In Search of Happiness"** where a rich man dissatisfied with his life, takes all his money and leaves the comforts of his home to look for happiness. This tale indirectly depicts that even after being rich, people are not happy, and they look for happiness in the outside world, instead of looking within. Here also, Mulla Nasruddin makes the rich man realize that happiness is not outside in the world, but in one's own heart and one's own satisfaction, and that most people look for it in the wrong place which creates dissatisfaction and grief in them.

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<sup>203</sup> Rajeev K. Doley, Dr., "Languages in India and their Mixed Use: A Sociolinguistic Study," Research Paper, *GRA - Global Research Analysis International (Sociology) 2, Issue 6 (June 2013): 216-219, Worldwide Journals.com*, 24 September 2016,

< [https://www.worldwidejournals.com/global-journal-for-research-analysis-GJRA/file.php?val=June\\_2013\\_1371300860\\_6252f\\_81.pdf](https://www.worldwidejournals.com/global-journal-for-research-analysis-GJRA/file.php?val=June_2013_1371300860_6252f_81.pdf) >.

<sup>204</sup> Sujata Chaturvedi, Dr., "A Sociolinguistic Study of Linguistic Variation and Code Matrix in Kanpur," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences 192 (2015): 107- 115, Science Direct*, 11 September 2016, < <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815034886> >.

This social discrimination on the basis of money is shown vividly in another of his selected tales, titled – “**Guest of Honour**” where it is shown that external looks of a person are valued more than his character and integrity. When a person looks shabby, it is automatically perceived by most that he is not rich and therefore, not worthy of respect. But when the same person cleans up and puts on good clothes, he suddenly becomes worthy of respect!

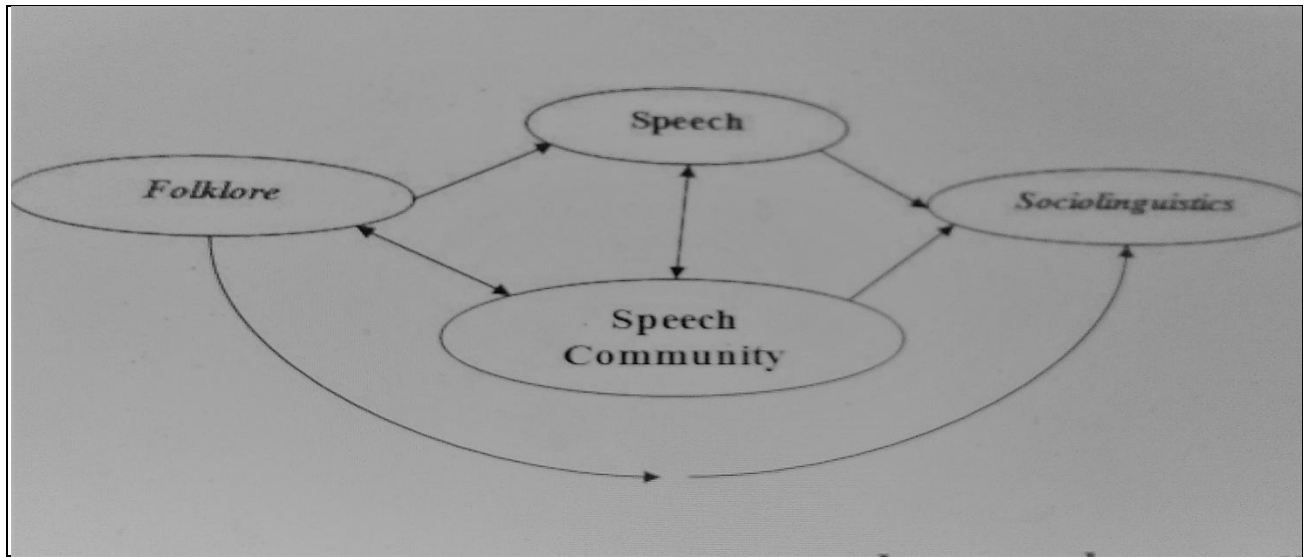
Another such similar Mulla Nasruddin tale which has been selected shows that the external appearances are revered more than a person's internal good qualities, and this tale is titled – “**Mulla Nasruddin in Public Bath.**” In this tale also the guard at the gates of the public bath treats Mulla Nasruddin poorly, as he was shabbily dressed because the guard thinks looking at Mulla Nasruddin that he is poor and hence will not tip him well. But, when Mulla Nasruddin tips the guard well before leaving the public bath, the guard's perception of him changes, and the next time the same guard treats Mulla Nasruddin like royalty! This tale also shows how money is the main motivator in the cordial behaviour of one person towards another, which is not a virtue, but a vice. As per Mulla Nasruddin tales, money should not be a factor in human relations and behaviour.

These Mulla Nasruddin tales also depict the social perceptions of people; that how fast people judge a person based on his external looks. The interesting thing about these tales of Mulla Nasruddin is that these perceptions about people and the money factor in human behavior are still true in today's societies as they were in Mulla Nasruddin's times. This might be one of the many reasons, why his tales are eternal and popular even today.

Since all communities have their own folktales, and since folktales of any community use the medium of language – whether oral or written, it was assumed that folktale must have some relation with sociolinguistics. In this field, Dr. Maniruzzaman made quite a contribution with his paper on the connection between folklore and sociolinguistics. In this paper, he explains this relationship with the help of a diagram shown below (Image 3), and he says – “...as both language and folklore are directly related to a speech community and considered as an index to culture, sociolinguistics should find the language of folklore relevant to its study. The relations between speech, the speech community, folklore, and sociolinguistics can be shown in the figure below.”<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Maniruzzaman, M (2008-06-11), The study of the language embodying and transmitting folklore - an endeavour to reveal its relevance to sociolinguistics (Kindle Locations 113-115). GRIN Verlag GmbH. Kindle Edition.



**Image 3. Relations between speech, speech community, folklore, and sociolinguistics.**

This figure may be explained in the context of this research topic thus – since speech is studied by sociolinguistics, and speech is the medium for expression and transmission of folktales, and every speech community has its own folktales and speech variants and is also a subject of sociolinguistics, hence there is a relationship between folktale and sociolinguistics because of the commonalities between them.

When this relationship is applied in context of the Mulla Nasruddin tales, it is seen that in these tales the speech i.e. the dialogues are shaping the tales and in each country that these tales are there, they belong to some or the other speech community, like in China these tales are considered to be belonging to Uighur people of China, and hence, these tales will have some or the other sociolinguistic differences and/or specificities either region-wise or culture-wise or language-wise.

*“Fischer (1963:263) claims that folktales seem to be most realistic when the characters represent roles within the nuclear family, so distinctly aberrant figures (e.g., tricksters, monsters, or supernatural beings) are most likely to violate the speech norms.”*<sup>206</sup> This quotation uses as an example the word ‘trickster,’ which in this research topic relates to Mulla Nasruddin. Folktales,

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<sup>206</sup> Richard Applegate, “Chumash Narrative Folklore as Sociolinguistic Data,” *The Journal of California Anthropology* 2 (1975): 189, eScholarship University of California, 14 April 2017 <<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/59k478rv#page-2>>.

including the Mulla Nasruddin tales, are usually short and full of dialogues. These dialogues carry forward the plot of the tales. Hence, the speech violation that Fischer is talking about gives the tales a comic appearance.

In Mulla Nasruddin tales also such violations of speech norms and violations of social norms are plenty, which makes Mulla Nasruddin's behaviour confusing to other people. For example, there is a Mulla Nasruddin tale prevalent in many of the Silk Road countries titled – **'Flour on the Clothesline'** where his neighbour comes and asks for his clothesline, but Mulla Nasruddin refuses to give it saying that flour is drying on the clothesline! Mulla Nasruddin's logic seems twisted to many, but his tales always have a punch line. In the case of the tale mentioned above, the punch line is that if someone does not want to lend something, he/she will find any reason howsoever stupid it may be, not to lend it.

Today, Mulla Nasruddin tales are present in many countries, not only in Asia but other continents of the world. But it is generally believed and accepted now that these tales and Mulla Nasruddin belong to Turkey. Turkey is a strategically located country between Asia and Europe and is also geographically close to some North African countries. When these tales originated in Turkey, they had some peculiarities and specificities which were according to the norms of the Turkish culture and society and even the Turkish language. These specificities might be related to the religion of Turkey; the food and clothing of Turkish people, and many more factors. And when these tales crossed borders, the same specificities were not found in other countries and cultures, and hence these tales adapted to the country and culture they were absorbed into. This aspect is the socio-cultural aspect which is also being researched in this topic.

When a tale is absorbed in a different country than its country of origin, it adapts to the social and cultural scenario prevalent in that country. This is what happened with the Mulla Nasruddin tales as well. Following the path on the Silk Road, as these tales entered into a new country, they gathered along with them the peculiarities and specificities of that new country. Hence, even though the plot and characters of these tales more or less remained the same, some elements underwent changes depending upon the socio-cultural milieu of the new country.

This chapter tries to sort out and analyze these socio-cultural changes in the twenty selected tales of Mulla Nasruddin systematically. These tales of Mulla Nasruddin have been selected out of a huge collection, as it is impossible to include them all in one research study.

One by one the differences are brought out in the selected tales of Mulla Nasruddin, wherever they are spotted. This is the contrastive study method of Mulla Nasruddin tales.

The contrastive method is generally used in the field of linguistics, but in this research topic, this method has been applied to the folktales via the tales of Mulla Nasruddin. In general, the contrastive method studies not only the similarities but also the differences in any two given elements. For this study, such tales of Mulla Nasruddin have been selected which are more or less popular in India, Russia and the Central Asian countries. Some of these tales are present in all of the countries mentioned above and some are not. These tales transcended borders and traveled far via the Silk Road, and got absorbed.

The very first common element that is changing in these Mulla Nasruddin tales is the name and title by which he is being addressed in these tales. The table of his names and titles has been given in the Introduction to this thesis already, but concrete examples with the help of his tales are given here. In Turkey, Mulla Nasruddin is known as Nasreddin Hoca. The word *Hoca* is his title. *Hoca* in Turkish means a teacher or a master, and it has originated from the Persian title *Khwaja*. *Mulla* or *Mullah* or even *Molla* is an Urdu word which is used in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and some other countries, and it has originated from the Arabic word *Mawla* or *Maula*. The meaning of both these titles is the same.

In the Central Asian countries, Mulla Nasruddin has a title called – *Hodja* or *Khoja* which is also a form of the Arabic title – *Khwaja*. Also, the title of Mulla Nasruddin in some Central Asian countries like Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan is *Ependi* or *Afandi*. There are other versions of this word too, like *Effendi*, *Afangti* and so on. According to the Collins Dictionary online, this word means – “...a title of respect used to address men of learning or social standing.”<sup>207</sup> It is noteworthy that in China also Mulla Nasruddin is known as *Afandi* or *Afangti*. The variations of the names and titles of Mulla Nasruddin is a prelude to the fact that changes take place in tales when they transcend borders. The countries that accepted tales of Mulla Nasruddin tried to adopt Mulla Nasruddin as well by giving him names that suit the country or the culture. As an example, all the selected tales of Mulla Nasruddin from Turkmenistan addresses him as *Ependi*, like the tale titled in Turkmen – ‘**Ependi we Derwus**’<sup>208</sup> (*Ependi and the Dervish*), and other such tales.

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<sup>207</sup> Definition of ‘Effendi,’ Collins English Dictionary, n.d., Web, 2 May 2017, <<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/effendi>>.

<sup>208</sup> O. Dovlyetova, trans., *Turkmenskii Yumor* (Ashgabat: ‘Turkmenistan’ Neshiryati, 1967) 55-56.

Tale-wise changes that occurred due to the new social atmosphere in different countries and culture i.e. from a socio-cultural perspective and sociolinguistic view are discussed in this chapter. For this study, twenty common Mulla Nasruddin tales which are similar in plot have been selected from India, Russia and three of the Central Asian countries, which are – Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The first selected Mulla Nasruddin tale for this study is titled – ‘**Whom Do You Believe?**’ This tale of Mulla Nasruddin is more or less unchanged plot-wise and character-wise, and also the dialogues are almost identical in all the countries that this tale is there. It is one of the selected Mulla Nasruddin tales that is popular in all the countries which have been shortlisted for this study. This tale is about Mulla Nasruddin's donkey. This donkey of his is his eternal partner, traveling with him via the Silk Road to countries far and wide. Generally, the animal that is called a donkey is found in all the selected countries of this study. The changes to this tale are either non-existent or minimal.

From a socio-cultural perspective, this tale shows the neighbourly relations of Mulla Nasruddin. In India, a neighbour is almost considered as an extended family; hence, maintaining cordial relations with the neighbours is advisable. But, what happens when a neighbour is too demanding or interfering? This problem of a demanding neighbour is a common recurring theme in Mulla Nasruddin tales and is a common phenomenon in most of the countries, and that is why, when Mulla Nasruddin lies to the neighbour about his donkey, the average man understands his position. This Mulla Nasruddin tale talks about trust issue as well between two neighbours.

The title of this common Mulla Nasruddin tale might be slightly different in the selected countries, but the matter is the same. It is interesting to note though, that the word for donkey in most of the Central Asian countries resembles the Turkish word for donkey which is *eseg*; in Turkmenistan, it is *esek* or *eseg*; in Uzbekistan, it is *eshak*. This influence of Turkish on Turkmen and Uzbek languages is still explicable, as these languages belong to the Turkic family; but in the Russian language, though the word for donkey is *осёл* (*osyol*), in case of Mulla Nasruddin tales which are popular in Russia, in many places the word used for donkey is *ishak*! In fact, even in the movies on Mulla Nasruddin, most of which were made during the Soviet era, Mulla Nasruddin calls his donkey *ishak*. It is a borrowed word which now has been included in the Russian vocabulary.



The second selected Mulla Nasruddin tale for this study is titled – ‘**The Death of a Pot.**’ This tale is also present in all the shortlisted countries. The interesting thing about this tale is that there is a whole collection of Mulla Nasruddin tales from China the title of which is similar to the title of this tale. This collection of Uighur Mulla Nasruddin tales is titled – ‘**The Effendi and the Pregnant Pot.**’ This tale is one of the popular tales of Mulla Nasruddin. From a socio-cultural point of view, this tale is significant, in the fact that here the cultural influence of different countries is visible in terms of the utensils that are used in these countries. Daily used utensils tell a lot about the social and cultural conditions of any country. First of all, the utensils of one country are made up of the material that is readily available in the country. In India, for example, common people still use utensils made out of mud and clay. The utensils are shaped on a potter's wheel and then baked in a kiln so as to harden them for use.

There are two Indian versions of this Mulla Nasruddin tale that was considered during this study – one in Hindi and one in the Bengali language. In the Bengali version, this equivalent of the utensil which is called a pot is a *haadi*. Haadi is a utensil made out of mud in the same way as discussed above. Every family, however poor it may be, has this utensil at its disposal because it is comparatively cheaper than other utensils and is handy. It is used for cooking as well as for storing food and grains. It is also used for storing water. In the Russian version of this tale, the utensil which is used is a *комёл* (*kochyol*), which if translated into English means a boiler. The boiler is a popular utensil used in Russia, as the weather in Russia mostly remains cold, and hence, a boiler is a handy utensil there. Mud utensils are not popular in Russia maybe because of the fact that most of the months in a year, the earth in Russia is covered with snow, and technically, mud would not be readily available to make utensils!

Similarly, in Tajik version of this Mulla Nasruddin tale, the utensil used is a boiler (Tajik word for it is *Дегхонаи* - *Degkhonai*). This might be because Tajikistan still uses the Cyrillic script for written texts and it was under the Soviet rule for long. It also maybe has to do something with the weather of Tajikistan which has a cold winter. In Uzbekistan, however, the equivalent word used for the pot is *tova*. There is a similar word in the Hindi language which is *tawa*. In India, a *tawa* is a flat-bottomed plate-shaped shallow utensil with a handle which is mostly used for preparing the Indian bread – *roti*. In Uzbekistan, *tova* is equivalent of a frying pan in English. Since Uzbekistan has comparatively a warmer climate, many of its delicacies are fried items, and hence, the utensil used in this Mulla Nasruddin tale is a *tova* which is generally used to fry food items. In the Turkmen version of this tale, the utensil used is *gazan* which is a round metallic pot. It is equivalent to a wok or a cauldron. There is another word for this utensil in Turkmenistan, which is *gazandjyk* which also looks like a wok or a cauldron, but smaller in size. In English, this word for a small cauldron may be termed as a *cauldron-ette*.

This tale of Mulla Nasruddin shows indirectly the socio-cultural influence of the countries it entered and was adapted into, with the help of the utensils that are used in these countries on a day to day basis. The plot and the characters are the same, but their utensils change in this tale as per the availability of the local utensils which are used in day to day life. Hence, this tale here has a materialistic angle, where the similarity is that all the names mentioned above belong to some or the other utensil; but the contrastive angle is that these utensils vary in shape and size, and in terms of the materials used to make them. In India, mud utensils are used and preferred by common people, but in Russia and the Central Asian countries, the metallic utensils are used and preferred.

The third selected tale is titled – '**Payment for Smell.**' This Mulla Nasruddin tale is also available in all the shortlisted countries. This is a tale that shows how the rich take advantage of the poor. In this tale, the food of the country that it entered into comes into prominence, since this tale is about the aroma of the food. In the Indian version of these tales, the aroma comes from either *pakodas*, which are deep fried pieces of vegetables in batter, or from sweets, since in India these food items are popular. In Russia and other Central Asian countries where meat and bread items are more popular, this Mulla Nasruddin tales has the mention of aroma of a brewing pot of soup and a piece of bread. In Uzbek version of the tale, the word used for this soup-like dish is *Sho'rva*, which is very similar to an Urdu word – *Shorba*, which translated into English means either soup or gravy. It is generally a mixture of meat and vegetables in a broth. In Tajik version, however, the dish that the beggar smells is the *Plov*, which is again a popular dish in almost the entire Central Asian region, sometimes also written as *plof*, *pilaf*, *pilau*, and so on. There is an equivalent term for this word in Urdu which is *Pulao*. It is a rice dish cooked in a meat broth; but in India, the dish *Pulao* or *Pulav* is generally vegetarian, since a large number of Indian population is vegetarian. These types of distinctions in food habits and food preferences are depicted through Mulla Nasruddin tales, which is also a part of socio-cultural arena.

The fourth selected Mulla Nasruddin tale is titled – '**In Search of Happiness.**' This tale is more or less the same in all the countries mentioned above, maybe because the tastes, food, utensils, clothing, basically materialistic things might be different in different countries, but human emotions are more or less the same. This tale is about the search for happiness, which is a spiritual thing and happiness means happiness to the whole humankind, no matter which region of the planet Earth the people belong to. The human quest for happiness and content in life is an eternal and universal thing. This tale emphasizes that even rich people are clueless about where and how to find happiness, though they materialistically have all the comforts.

The fifth selected Mulla Nasruddin tale is titled – ‘**Tit for Tat.**’ This tale is popular in all the countries selected for this research study, i.e. India, Russia and three of the Central Asian countries – Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In India, Russia, and Tajikistan, this tale is an incident that takes place between Mulla Nasruddin and a beggar; in Uzbekistan, it is between Mulla Nasruddin and a stranger, but it is interesting to note that in Turkmenistan, this tale uses the word *Derwus* to denote the stranger that comes to the house of Mulla Nasruddin to beg for alms. The Turkmen word or term *Derwus* is very similar to the Persian and Turkish word *Dervish* or *Darvesh*, who is a follower of the Sufi order. This is interesting because Sufism as a religious way spread to Central Asia via the Silk Road. In time, the Sufi order in the Central Asian countries became well established and strong. The hold of Sufism is considered to be so strong in the Central Asian countries, that today it is believed that the form of Islam that is present in the Central Asian countries is that of Sufism. It is said that the Orthodox form of Islam is not that strong in these Central Asian countries. Sufism is generally believed to be more open and tolerant of other religions.

The sixth selected tale of Mulla Nasruddin is titled – ‘**Using Correct Words.**’ This title in itself is a lesson to people because it states that in life in different types of situations, different kinds of words or expressions are required to understand each other. Due to the use of wrong/incorrect words or expressions, sometimes miscommunications happen which might even be life-threatening! In this story, the person who was drowning is represented in each country that this tale is there, by some or the other rich and corrupt government official. In India, it was the tax collector, in Russia it was the moneylender, and in Tajikistan, it was the rich *Qazi* who is a government appointed judge. It is shown in all the versions of this tale that such people never give anything; they only know how to take from the common man! Hence, when people were asking the drowning man to ‘give’ his hands, he was not getting the idea; but when Mulla Nasruddin, who noticed that the drowning man was a government official of some kind, asked the drowning man to ‘take’ his hand, the drowning man immediately stretched his hands and ‘took’ Mulla Nasruddin’s hands! This tale accentuates the assumption that language is never used in vacuum; it requires a social context to function properly. And that the same person uses the same language slightly differently in different situations to communicate effectively. This is the influence of society on language that Sociolinguistics studies.

The seventh selected tale is titled – ‘**Trick of the Trade.**’ This tale is about fooling the government officials. This tale tries to empower the common man by showing that the government officials may also be fooled. This tale is more or less the same in all the countries mentioned above that it exists, and is about Mulla Nasruddin smuggling donkeys every day from right under the nose of the toll collector!

The eighth tale is titled- '**Waste of Life.**' This tale shows how people judge any person easily without knowing much about him/her. This tale is also more or less the same in each country that it has been found. The interesting thing to note in this tale is that here the use of correct grammar is shown to be a virtue and people who are poor in grammar and use incorrect language – whether written or spoken are looked down upon. It is present in almost every country and culture even today. Whereas the knowledge of a life-saving skill like swimming is not given much of thought in many countries. Many people do not know how to swim, but they are not judged for not knowing swimming. But people are judged for the way they speak and pronounce words. Hence, the social conditioning of people is such that mind matter is preferred over physical labour.

The ninth tale is titled – '**Walnuts and Pumpkins.**' This is again a very interesting tale from the socio-cultural point of view because though the plot is the same in each of these tales that are found in the above-mentioned countries, the difference occurs in the names of the nuts, fruits, and vegetables, which again depends on the availability of the nut, fruit or vegetable in the country that this tale migrated to. In India, there are two versions of this tale found – one in Hindi and the other in the Bengali language. In Hindi, the word '*tarbooj*' which means watermelon in English and the word '*akhrot*' which means walnut in English have been used, but in Bengali version of this tale, instead of walnut, the word '*teitool*' is used which is a fruit and which in English means tamarind. Tamarind is a popular fruit in Bengal and is used for cooking many Bengali dishes as well as for making pickles and as a fruit as well. Walnuts, on the other hand, are not very popular in Bengal. The other word used in the Bengali version of this tale is '*koomdo*' which in English means pumpkin. Hence, instead of watermelon, Bengali version of this tale uses pumpkin. Pumpkin as a vegetable is also very popular in Bengal. It is used in dishes in every festival and is considered an auspicious vegetable. Moreover, the way that this word sounds in Bengali is funnier than the way watermelon sounds in Bengali; this may be another reason why pumpkin is used in this version of the Mulla Nasruddin tales. This differentiation in the names and types of fruits and vegetable is there in Indian versions of the tale itself! This shows the cultural variations that India has, being a country of cultural diversity.

In comparison with the versions of this tale with the other selected countries for this study, the Russian version has the word '*opex*' (*oryekh*) which means nut in English. It is a general term used in Russian for all types of nuts. The exact term for walnut in Russian is '*грецкий орех*' (*gryetskii oryekh*). This is also interesting. This may be due to the fact that walnuts are less popular in Russia than other nuts like the hazelnut. Watermelons and melons are, on the other hand, extremely popular fruits in Russia. Hence, in this tale both the words are

used – watermelons (*arbooz*) and melons (*dynya*). It is also interesting to note that in Russia as well as in Central Asian countries like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan the word for watermelon resembles the Hindi word *tarbooj*. In Russian, it is *arbooz*; in Uzbekistan, the word for watermelon is *tarvuz* and in Turkmenistan *garpyz*; the word for melon in Turkmenistan is *gawun-garpyz*, which has been used in Turkmen version of Mulla Nasruddin tale. All these similar sounding words are a result of mutual borrowing from each other's languages and culture as well.

The tenth tale of Mulla Nasruddin selected for this study is titled – ‘**Bad Handwriting.**’ This tale shows the irrational logic of Mulla Nasruddin which was beyond comprehension for any normal person. This is the beauty of *Trickster tales* that with irrationality and abnormal behaviour and dialogues, a strong social message is delivered to the people. In this tale, Mulla Nasruddin refuses to write a letter for an illiterate person saying that he has no time to go to the place the letter is meant to be sent. This puzzles the illiterate man, and he says that he is not asking Mulla Nasruddin to go anywhere, but just to write a letter. To this Mulla Nasruddin says clarifying that he has a bad handwriting and if he writes a letter, no one will be able to read it, and ultimately he would have to go to the place where the letter was sent and read it out himself! In the Russian and Turkmen version of this tale, the place where the letter was supposed to be sent was Baghdad, which shows the connection that these countries had with such cities even in medieval times, which may be seen as another proof of the Silk Road connection, as the sea-route was not yet developed and fully explored during those times.

The eleventh tale is titled – ‘**Guest of Honour.**’ This tale brings the popular form of dress and dress material of a country to the forefront. In India, in the Hindi version, the title of this tale has the word *kapda*. *Kapda* in Hindi means clothes. But in the tale, the dress that Mulla Nasruddin wears to the feast has been described as a silk *sherwani* and *pajama*. *Sherwani* is a type of frock coat which is up to knee-length, and *pajama* is the lower part which is worn with the *sherwani*. It is mostly a North Indian traditional dress for men. The noteworthy thing here is that the dress of Mulla Nasruddin was made up of silk. Silk is considered to be a symbol of richness and beauty even today in India.

In the Russian version of this tale, the word *одежда* (*odyezhdá*) is used for clothing. *Odyezhdá* is a general term which means clothes in English. In Turkmen version of this tale, the word used for clothes is *donum*, which roughly translated means a robe. In Uzbek version, the word used for clothing is *palto* which is there in Russian vocabulary as well, and it means a coat in Russian. All these words show the differences in the clothing of people of these countries. Clothing of any country speaks a lot about not only the socio-cultural condition of that country

but also about the climate of that country. In warmer countries, the clothing will be light, and in colder countries, it will be heavy, like a coat or an overcoat.

The twelfth tale is titled – ‘**Whatever We Do.**’ This tale shows that in a society whatever a person does generally others are quick to judge him. This tale is relevant even in today’s socio-cultural scenario. This tale is based on an old proverb that – ‘...*one cannot please all the people all the time!*’ This tale, in every country that it has been found, gives the same message that when you do what other people want, you end up pleasing nobody! The pattern of the actions may be different, but the message is the same – that no matter what one does, there is no pleasing everyone.

In the Indian and Russian versions of this tale – Mulla Nasruddin and his son were going somewhere along with their donkey and Nasruddin put his son on donkey and was walking alongside. Some people saw them and started cursing the son by saying that he has no respect for his father; his poor old father is on foot, and he is riding on the donkey. The son felt ashamed and made Mulla Nasruddin sit on the donkey. After some time, another group of people saw them and started commenting that the old man is shameless - he is making his son walk! This time Mulla Nasruddin felt bad and lifted his son onto the donkey, and both were riding the donkey. After some time, another group of people saw them and remarked that they are so cruel; they are both riding a feeble donkey. This made both of them ashamed, and they both got down and started walking beside the donkey. After some time, another group of people spotted them and started laughing at them saying – look at these stupid people; they have a donkey, but still, they are walking on foot!

The Uzbek version of this tale is slightly different. In this version, the father was riding the donkey first, and the son was walking alongside. There is another version, where Mulla Nasruddin and his son get down from the donkey and carry the donkey upside down on a stick, and people laugh at them! Whatever, the version of this tale, the message is the same.

The thirteenth tale is titled – ‘**How to Give Nothing.**’ In this tale, Mulla Nasruddin is a local judge (*qazi*), and two people come to him to resolve their dispute. This tale is about the way people behave to get their way. During this research, this tale is found only in India and Russia. But in India, this tale is found in Hindi, Bengali as well as English languages, which shows its popularity in India. It talks about unreasonable demands that people make from each other. This tale has been selected for this study because it shows how social norms affect the language and

the way it is spoken and used in day-to-day life. The way a person speaks to another might sometimes lead to confusion and resentment. This is what Sociolinguistics studies in general.

In this tale, one person asks for help from another person, and the other person asks for payment of some kind in return for help. But the person who was asking for help does not want to pay anything, hence when asked – what will you give me in return for my help, he says – ‘*nothing*’ which in normal linguistic context would mean – free of cost; but the man who offers his help, takes the word ‘*nothing*’ as a noun and after the work is done, asks to be paid this ‘*nothing*’! This tale shows how there might occur miscommunication within the members of the same society or community due to the different contexts that might arise as a result of the language used.

The fourteenth tale is titled – ‘**Mulla Nasruddin’s Feast.**’ This tale has been found only in India and Russia during research, but it has been selected for this study because it is an important tale in Indian context. Later on, after much research, this tale was located in Uzbek version as well. In India, there are stories of Birbal who was supposed to be the court jester of Akbar, who is considered by many as the greatest Mughal emperor of India. The storyline of both these tales is very similar and the lesson learned from these tales is also the same! In Mulla Nasruddin tale, he was tricked by his friends to give them a treat by betting that he could not spend a night outside in the cold. The Birbal tale is called – ‘**Birbal ki Khichdi**’ (*Birbal’s Porridge*) and goes on the similar line, except that in this tale Akbar tricks a poor man into staying in a cold pond the whole night, and Birbal cooks his *khichdi* (rice porridge) by hanging the pot high up on a tall tree for a hungry Akbar to teach him a lesson.

The choice of utensils is again as per the social standards prevalent in each country. In the Indian version which is found in the Bengali language, the pot that Mulla Nasruddin puts on a high wooden platform is called a *haadi* which is a round-shaped earthen pot, and in the Russian version the pot that is used is called a *kotyol* (*котёл*) which translated into English means a boiler. The dish that was cooking inside the pots was simply mentioned as a rice dish.

The fifteenth selected tale is titled – ‘**Mulla Nasruddin’s Goat.**’ This tale is again a popular tale which has been found in all the shortlisted countries. This tale is about Mulla Nasruddin's friends tricking him into killing and feasting on his plump goat. This tale, on the one hand, portrays the human vice of betraying a friend for his/her own gain and on the other, the human nature of taking revenge. This type of behaviour is still common in today's society, and

this tale is a reminder of what happens when people behave in an unethical manner. It reinforces the English proverb – *what goes around, comes around!*

From the social condition point of view, the animal mentioned in all the versions of this tale that Mulla Nasruddin's friends were trying to kill and feast upon is either a goat, a goat kid or a lamb. In India, both the versions are present in the Bengali language - the tale with the goat (*pathha*) and the tale with the sheep lamb (*bheda chhana*). In Hindi version, the tale has a sheep (*bhed*). In Russian version of this tale, it is about a sheep (*ovtsa*). It is interesting to note that in the three chosen Central Asian countries – Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the version of this Mulla Nasruddin tale has the animal goat or goat kid, not a sheep or a lamb. It may be because goat meat is preferred in these countries.

Another important thing about the Tajik version of this tale is that instead of Mulla Nasruddin, this tale has the folk hero – Mushfiqi – who in reality was a Tajik poet of sixteenth century and was born in Bukhara, and at one point of time, he even travelled to India to meet with the Mughal ruler Akbar.<sup>209</sup> In fact, many of Mulla Nasruddin tales in Tajikistan are attributed to this Tajik poet. Though, Mushfiqi was a poet and wrote in verse, tales about him are in the prose form. That he met with the Mughal emperor, Akbar may also be significant because of the earlier mentioned tale of Akbar and Birbal titled – '**Birbal ki Khichdi.**' All these tales spread via the interpersonal contact between people of different countries and cultures of the world, and especially of the Silk Road countries.

The sixteenth selected tale is titled – '**Mulla Nasruddin's Sermon.**' This tale is popular in all the countries which have been selected for this study. In fact, in India, there are a couple of versions of this tale in Hindi as well as in the Bengali language. In the Bengali language itself, there are two versions of this tale; the first version is taken from Satyajit Ray's book titled – '**Shera Satyajit.**' This book has a section on Mulla Nasruddin tales, which is titled – '**Molla Nasiruddiner Gaulpo**' which in English means tales of Mulla Nasruddin. The second version has been found in a Bengali book titled – '**Mollakkel – Nasiruddiner Kissa.**' In Hindi also there are a couple of versions of this tale. This tale is about Mulla Nasruddin's preaching. There are a few words used in each language that this tale is found which denote some form of preaching which is present in the host country. In India, the words used are – *tattakautha*, *taleem*, *pravachan*, *mantranaa*. All these words denote some form of teaching and preaching. Other than the word *taleem* which is an Arabic origin word and is used in the Urdu language as well, and

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<sup>209</sup> Keith Hitchins, "Mushfiqi Abdurahmon," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 20 July 2004, Web, 6 May 2017, <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/mushfiqi-abdurahmon>>.



has been adapted in Bengali as well as in Hindi languages in India too, the other three words are Indian in origin. *Tattakautha* literally means doctrine, and the Hindi word *mantranaa* means consultation or counseling. The other Hindi word *pravachan* has a religious connotation. In Hindu religious context this word means sermon. It is interesting to note that even though Mulla Nasruddin is a Muslim person, which is clear by his name and title and belongs to Turkey, in India he is considered as an Indian. Hence, this story shows the religious influence on the language, and since religion is also a part of society, it comes under the socio-cultural dimension.

In the Russian version, the word used for sermon is *propoved'* (*проповедь*). In Tajik version of this tale, the word used for sermon is *mav'iza* (*маъруза*) which actually means preaching. In Uzbek version, an interesting word is used which is *xutba*. Dictionary.com defines the word *khutbah* as – “a sermon preached by an imam in a mosque at the time of the Friday noon prayer.”<sup>210</sup> It is a word of Arabic origin.

The seventeenth story is titled – ‘**Duck Soup**.’ In all the selected countries that this tale of Mulla Nasruddin has been found, it has two versions – either the animal mentioned in this tale is a duck or a rabbit. In India, this tale was found in the Bengali language; but the interesting thing is that in the Bengali language this tale has two versions – one with a duck and another with a rabbit. In Satyajit Ray’s book, the version that this tale has is with the duck which in Bengali is called a *haansh*. In the other book in Bengali titled – ‘**Mollakkel- Nasiruddiner Kissa**,’ this particular tale is titled – ‘**Khargosher Shorua**’ which translated into English means *Rabbit Soup*.

The fact is, though, that the exact translation of the word *shorua* is not soup. The word *shorua* is a variant of the word *shorba* which is originally a Persian word which translated into English means stew. It is a salty curry-like dish in India. In India, there is another similar word which is *korma* which originated from Turkish word *kovurma* and adopted into Urdu as *corma/korma*. The meaning of this word defined in Merriam-Webster online dictionary is as follows – “an Indian dish of usually braised meat or vegetables cooked with spices and often yogurt or cream.”<sup>211</sup> This is interesting for the fact that in India itself, the region to which a person belongs and his mother tongue influences the way a word is pronounced. *Shorba*, *shorua*, are all variants of the same word. Another interesting thing noticed earlier is that in the Uzbek language also a variant of this word exists which is *sho'ruva*. The selected tale number three

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<sup>210</sup> Khutbah, *Dictionary.com*, n.d., Web, 9 May 2017, Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/khutbah>.

<sup>211</sup> Korma, *Merriam-Webster online dictionary*, n.d., Web, 9 May 2017, Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/korma>.

which is titled – ‘**Payment for Smell**’ in Uzbek version is titled – ‘**Sho’rva Hidi va Pul Ovozli**’ which translated means *The Smell of Soup and Sound of Money*. In the Tajik version of the tale ‘**Duck Soup**’ also there is a variant of this word which is *shoorbo*. In Turkmen version also there is a similar word for soup or stew which is written as *corba*. *Corba* or *chorba* is also a variant of the word *shorba*. This shows the similarities that exist in modern languages of ethnically and geographically different countries.

In Russian version, this tale has duck soup. In Russian, this tale is titled – ‘**Soup iz Utki**’ (Суп из Утки) which literally translates into - *Soup of Duck*. In Turkmen version, it is again a duck (‘**Ordek Corbasy**’). *Ordek* in the Turkmen language is a duck. In Tajik version, this tale has rabbit soup and is titled – ‘**Шурбо Харгӯш**’ (*Soup of Rabbit*). The Tajik word for rabbit which is *харгӯш* (*khargoosh*) is also amazingly similar to the word for rabbit used in India in Hindi which is *khargosh* and also in Bengali which is *khaurgosh*. These are also the variants of the same word which is *khargosh*. It can be noticed that the title of the Bengali version of this tale and the title of the Tajik version of this tale are similar - ‘**Khargosher Shorua**’ (Bengali) and ‘**Шурбо Харгӯш**’ (Tajik). The only difference is the word order because in Bengali whenever the preposition *of* is denoted, the word that comes after the preposition *of* in English, takes the ending ‘-er’ denoting belongingness. Hence, the word *khargosh* becomes *khargosher*. These are just the linguistic specifications; otherwise, the titles are very similar.

The eighteenth tale is titled – ‘**Mulla Nasruddin in Public Bath.**’ This tale has been found in India, Russia, and Uzbekistan. This tale is more or less similar in all these countries, and it highlights the same issue that has been discussed in the tale number eleven titled – ‘**Guest of Honour**’ where in a society a person is judged more often by his external appearance like his clothes, than his internal qualities. These two tales have been chosen for this study for the reason that the situation over a period of almost thousand years has not changed much when it comes to judging a person by his appearance. It is prevalent in today’s societies as well. Another issue discussed in this tale is that of giving tips to someone for his good work. This system of tipping a person for his work still exists today and has been incorporated in our socio-cultural system as an acceptable norm.

Another thing noticed in these tales is that words like *hammam* or *hammom* are variants of the same word. Originally, the word *hammam* means a Turkish bath. Dictionary.com defines this word as – “...(in Islamic countries) a communal bathhouse, usually with separate baths for

*men and women.*”<sup>212</sup> But this word has been adapted into Indian language and other languages like Uzbek with minor variations in the way it is written and pronounced. This shows the give and takes between countries, and in this case, it might be stated or argued that the main reason of give and take among such ethnically and geographically diverse countries is the Silk Road.

The nineteenth selected tale is titled – ‘**The Lost Key.**’ This tale is also found in almost all the selected countries mentioned above, except for Tajikistan, but that does not mean that this tale is not there in Tajikistan. The limitation could be simply because of the language barrier and inability to find the translated version of this tale. This tale shows the odd behaviour of Mulla Nasruddin once again which is beyond comprehension of a common man. Mulla Nasruddin loses his keys inside his house, but was looking for it outside, where there is more light! This might seem like an odd behaviour to any normal person, but the message behind this is that people look for something they need more often than not in the wrong place! People do behave like Mulla Nasruddin, but they do not realize it until someone points it out. This is one of the aims of ‘*trickster tales*’ – to point out the wrong kind of behaviour that is going on in society by acting or committing these wrong kinds of behaviour!

Again, like the tale – ‘**Duck Soup,**’ this tale has either of the two things that Mulla Nasruddin is looking for – in some versions it is a key, and in some, it is a ring. In the Indian and Russian versions of this tale found, the item that Mulla Nasruddin was looking for outside his house was a key; in the Turkmen and Uzbek versions of this tale, the item that Mulla Nasruddin lost and was searching for outside his house was a ring. The word for ring in both the Turkmen and Uzbek languages is similar – in the Turkmen language the word for ring used in this tale is *yuzug*, and in Uzbek language, it is *uzuk*. Similarly, in Indian versions, in Hindi and Bengali languages, the word for key is the same, which is *chaabee*! All this also points to linguistic borrowings and influences of languages on each other due to socio-cultural exchanges and contacts.

The twentieth and the last selected tale of Mulla Nasruddin is titled – ‘**Why Backwards on His Donkey?**’ This tale has also been found in almost all the selected countries, other than Tajikistan. The reason might be the same as discussed above in the nineteenth tale which is titled – ‘**The Lost Key.**’ This tale is interesting for the fact that there are two original tales which are also there in Turkey about why Mulla Nasruddin sits backwards on his donkey. This tale is important because whenever his name is mentioned, the image that comes to mind most is Mulla

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<sup>212</sup> Hammam, *Dictionary.com*, n.d., Web, 9 May 2017, Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/hammam>.

Nasruddin sitting backwards on his donkey! It has become an eternal image of Mulla Nasruddin. Everyone is curious to know why he sits on his donkey backwards.

The Turkish poet and writer, Mustafa Ozcelik, in his book titled – ‘**Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom**’ says the following about Mulla Nasruddin’s donkey and why of all the animals a donkey was chosen to be Mulla Nasruddin’s companion –

*Nasreddin Hodja’s donkey held a special place in his jokes;...his donkey played an integral role in his life...owing a donkey categorized a person as being average...Nasreddin’s problematic relationship with his donkey indicates that in the jokes the donkey signifies ignorance and rudeness. The donkey reminds people of vices, such as stubbornness...As one scholar put it, “There was no better symbol that would describe the state of an average person struggling with chaos and immersed in ignorance, ambivalence, and superstitions better than a donkey (Saban Abak).”<sup>213</sup>*

But curiously enough, some of the versions of this tale have Mulla Nasruddin sitting backward on a horse, rather than a donkey! In Bengali version also both the tales are there as to why Mulla Nasruddin sits on his donkey backwards, but in one of these tales titled – ‘**Mollar Ghoda Douraae Baapaae,**’ which roughly translated into English means - *Mulla’s Horse is backwards*, the word used in Bengali is *ghoda* which translated into English means a horse! The other tale which is titled – ‘**Hatekaulome Samyavaader Shikkha**’ (*Teaching of Basic Etiquette on the Spot*) has the word *gaadha* which in English means a donkey. Both these tales are in the same book which is titled – ‘**Mollakkel – Nasiruddiner Kissa.**’

In the Turkmen versions also, in both the versions of this tale, the animal mentioned is a horse which in the Turkmen language is called *at*. Out of the two tales about why Mulla Nasruddin sits backwards on his donkey, one is titled – ‘**Atyn Ozi Tersine Durandyr**’ which means *The Horse is Facing the Wrong way!* For Turkmenistan and Turkmens, horse holds a special place. Turkmen horses are world famous, like the Arabian horses. Maybe that is why this animal has been mentioned in Mulla Nasruddin tales. But what is the reason for Bengali tale to change the animal from a donkey to a horse? It is a point that needs to be pondered upon.

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<sup>213</sup> Mustafa Ozcelik, Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2011) 69.

Apart from the sociolinguistic analysis from socio-cultural perspective of the selected Mulla Nasruddin tales in the five shortlisted countries which are – India, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, a questionnaire has also been devised to find out the knowledge and awareness of especially the younger generation about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales in their respective countries. The objective for choosing the younger people is for the relevance factor, to find out how much importance and hold Mulla Nasruddin tales have today. The age group that was targeted was from 18 to 40. Apart from the age group, the gender was also targeted to find which of the genders knows Mulla Nasruddin tales better and if there is such a distinction at all. The questionnaire was an anonymous one; it did not ask for the names of the participants. The only information asked from the participants was their age, their gender, and their country. Further information regarding this survey and questionnaire has been discussed in the next chapter which is Chapter four, titled – **‘Perceptions about Mulla Nasruddin and His Tales along the Silk Road: A Survey’**.

# CHAPTER 4

## Perceptions about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales along the Silk Road: A Survey

*Research is creating new knowledge.*<sup>214</sup>

- Neil Armstrong

To validate this otherwise theoretical research on the basis of mostly secondary sources and data, a survey was conducted with the help of a questionnaire specifically devised to provide empirical support.

While formulating this questionnaire, the main points of this research topic were kept in mind, which are – the Silk Road, Folktales and Mulla Nasruddin tales. It was perceived that people would be more or less familiar with these subjects, and the more they will be able to reply to, the more interesting they will find this questionnaire. The subject of Sociolinguistics which is an important part of this research topic was deliberately left out of this questionnaire as it is relatively a new field, and people might not be very familiar with it, though the last question of this questionnaire does ask people about their opinion about this research topic. In reply to this subjective-type question about the research topic, most of the respondents did choose to ignore the Sociolinguistic part, and did not comment on it.

For this survey, ten countries were chosen from the Asian part of the Silk Road. These ten countries are – Turkey, Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Russia and China. Turkey was chosen because most of the scholars and people agree that Mulla Nasruddin and his tales originally belong to Turkey. Afghanistan was chosen as it has a special place on the Silk Road and also it is seen as a transitional country

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<sup>214</sup> Sam Lloyd, “Research Quotes: 12 Research Quotes that Will Inspire You,” Web Blog Post, 25 January 2015, *Qualtrics*, Web, 3 June 2017, <<https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/research-quotes/>>.

between Turkey and India as it lies geographically between these two countries on the Silk Road. India was chosen for the obvious reason that this particular study and research was carried out in India. The five Central Asian countries i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were chosen because of a few reasons: first of all, their strategic locations on the ancient Silk Road; secondly, their close ethnic relation to Turkey and Persia (Iran) as four out of these five countries have people of Turkic origin and languages belonging to the Turkic family, and one Central Asian country which is Tajikistan has close linguistic and ethnic ties with Persia (Iran); thirdly, Mulla Nasruddin tales are more or less popular in all these five Central Asian countries; fourthly, these five Central Asian countries were not long ago a part of the erstwhile Soviet Union, and hence there were cultural, linguistic, literary and many more types of give and take between these five Central Asian countries and Russia. Russia was chosen because it was directly connected with these five Central Asian countries mentioned above since a long time, and through these five Central Asian countries, Russia was connected indirectly to the Silk Road. China was chosen because it is historically the originator of the Silk Road, though the name of the Silk Road was not given by China. And also, because Mulla Nasruddin tales are quite popular in China, which helps to prove the hypothesis of this research that the Silk Road helped spread these tales to the extremities of the world.

From each country, other than India, Russia, and China, a few respondents filled it ranging from two to ten people. China and Russia had more number of respondents. Russia had the maximum number of respondents. Most of the respondents were women, though some countries like India and Turkey had more male respondents. Similarly, though the age group of this survey was limited to people between eighteen and forty, from Afghanistan, the respondents were older.

Hundred filled questionnaires in all were received from the ten countries mentioned above, and these responses were further made into a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet, and then analyzed by giving each question a code and each response a digit. From this data, Column Charts and Pie Diagrams were made, where the Column Charts depict the number of responses, and the Pie Diagrams represent the percentage of responses. These Column Charts and Pie Diagrams show the overall results without categorizing them into countries, gender and age group. The discrepancies found country-wise, gender-wise and age-wise are discussed later in this chapter.

The technique to digitize the data that was used is as follows -

The filled questionnaires which were received were arranged alphabetically by the name of the countries they belong to. For example, alphabetically Afghanistan comes first among the countries where the questionnaire was sent, followed by China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and finally, Uzbekistan.

For the two filled questionnaires received from Afghanistan, the codes given were - ID# 1 (AF) M and ID# 2 (AF) F, where 1 and 2 are the serial numbers of the questionnaire which continue up to 100, AF is the short form for Afghanistan, and M is a male respondent, and F is a female respondent. Similarly, for China the ID# codes were from 3 (CH) to 23 (CH), where 3, 4, 5...23 are the serial numbers and CH is taken as the short form for China. For India, the filled questionnaire ID# are 24 (IND) to 37 (IND), where 24 to 37 are the serial numbers of the filled questionnaires and IND is taken as the short form for India. For Kazakhstan, the ID# are 38 (KZ) to 43 (KZ), where 38 to 43 are the serial numbers, and KZ is taken as the short form for Kazakhstan. For Kyrgyzstan, the questionnaire codes are 44 (KG) and 45 (KG), where 44 and 45 are the serial numbers of the filled questionnaires, and KG is taken as the short form for Kyrgyzstan. Russia sent the maximum number of responses, and the codes given to these responses are from 46 (RUS) to 76 (RUS), where 46 to 76 are the serial numbers of the filled questionnaires, and RUS is taken as the short form for Russia. After Russia, alphabetically, comes Tajikistan in this survey. Tajikistan was given the ID# from 77 (TJ) to 81 (TJ), where 77 to 81 are the serial numbers, and TJ is taken as a short form for Tajikistan. The next country is Turkey which was given the ID# from 82 (TUR) to 88 (TUR), where 82 to 88 are the serial numbers, and TUR is taken as a short form for Turkey. Turkmenistan was given ID# from 89 (TM) to 93 (TM), where 89 to 93 are the serial numbers, and TM is taken as a short form for Turkmenistan. Lastly, Uzbekistan was given ID# from 94 (UZ) to 100 (UZ), where 94 to 100 are the serial numbers, and UZ is taken as a short form for Uzbekistan. Apart from the serial number and country code, every filled questionnaire has an M or an F at the end of the code, where M stands for a male respondent, and F stands for a female respondent. This way, each filled questionnaire was given a unique code.

Next, each question asked in the questionnaire was also codified into digits. This questionnaire is divided into two parts- Part A and Part B. Part A of the questionnaire contains 19 YES/NO questions, and Part B contains seven subjective type questions. In order to analyze the data in these questionnaires, the 19 questions of Part A were codified in the following manner – Q1 A, Q2 A, Q3 A, Q4 A, Q5 A, Q6 A, Q7 A, Q8 A, Q9 A, Q10 A, Q11 A, Q12 A, Q13 A, Q14 A, Q15 A, Q16 A, Q17 A, Q18 A and Q19 A. The response YES was given the digit 1, and NO was given the digit 2. Some respondents left some fields in these YES/NO questions blank; they were given the digit 0. This way, the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was



converted into a data of digits 1, 2, and 0. With the help of these digitized data, Column Charts and Pie Diagrams were created for each of the YES/NO question.

The seven subjective-type questions of the questionnaire which were classified as Part B were codified thus – Q1 B, Q2 B, Q3 B, Q4 B, Q5 B, Q6 B, and Q7 B. Since these questions were subjective type; the respondents have given a variety of responses according to their perception about the questions asked. That is why, the responses were studied carefully one by one question-wise, and then some common factors were located for each subjective-type question, and then these factors were each given a digit from 1 to 9. For example, the first subjective-type question of Part B which was – ‘*What according to you are folktales*’, in the broad sense, provided 9 common factors like – *Folktales are oral stories; folktales are passable from generation to generation; folktales are made by the folk or fiction; folktales are for children; folktales teach us morals and conduct, which means that they are teaching stories; folktales are short stories; folktales are connected to ‘folk’; folktales depict culture and tradition;* and the last category is of those responses that did not classify folktales, but gave some other type of responses. This category was given the title – *other*. To plot these responses onto a Column Chart, they had to be kept short, and hence, the short version of the factors for the first question of Part B was devised. These are as follows: Folktales are – *oral stories*, which was given the digit 1; *passable*, which was given the digit 2; *fiction*, which was given the digit 3; *for children*, which was given the digit 4; *teaching stories*, which was given the digit 5; *short stories*, which was given the digit 6; *connected to folk*, which was given the digit 7; *culture & tradition*, which was given the digit 8; and lastly, *other*, which was given the digit 9. The first question of Part B has the maximum number of factors; there are nine categories of this question, and hence, it has the maximum number of digits from 1 to 9.

Similarly, the second question of Part B has six categories; the third, fourth, and fifth questions of Part B have four categories each; the sixth question has three categories, and finally, the seventh question has five categories. All the categories for all the questions have been assigned a single digit. With these digitized data, Column Charts and Pie Diagrams were created for each subjective-type question.

The following are the overall results represented in the form of Column Charts and Pie Diagrams question-wise in the same order as put in the questionnaire. The Column Charts show the number of respondents which is out of hundred, and the Pie Diagrams show the percentage of people knowing and not knowing about a particular question in Part A of the questionnaire which has only YES/NO questions. For Part B of this questionnaire also Column Charts and Pie

Diagrams were made. Since these questions are subjective-type, they had to be studied and carefully classified into a few categories which have some common factors.

### 1. Part A of the Questionnaire and its Graphic Representations.

Part A of this questionnaire contains nineteen objective-type questions with YES/NO responses, but some respondents left some questions unanswered. These unanswered questions are represented in the following Column Charts and Pie Diagrams as BLANK. Some of the questions have this third option represented as BLANK in the Column Charts and Pie Diagrams.

- The first question of Part A which has been codified as Q1 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you know what Folktales are?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –

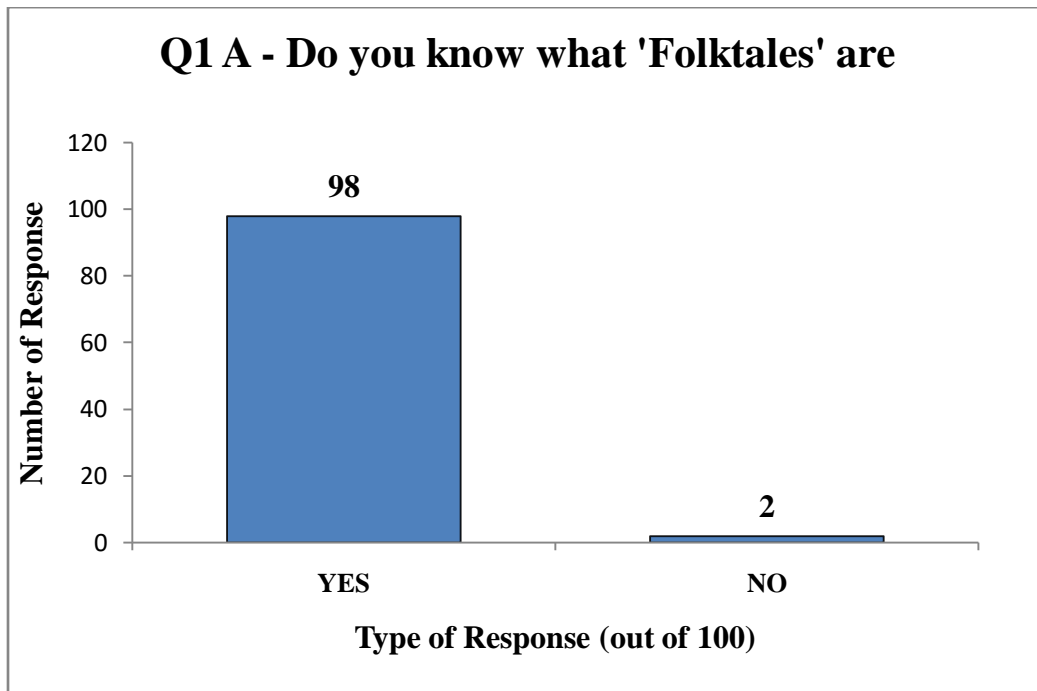
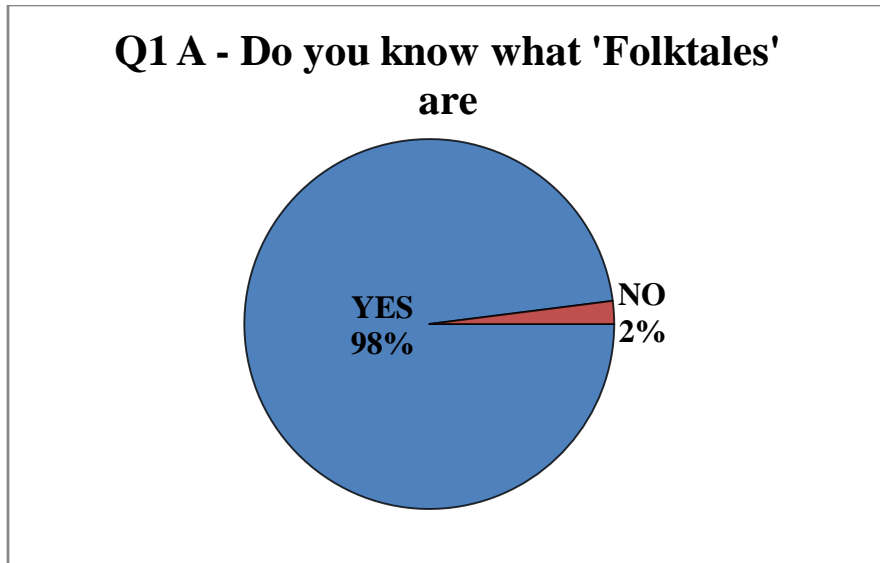


Fig. 1. Column Chart for Question 1 of Part A of the Questionnaire.

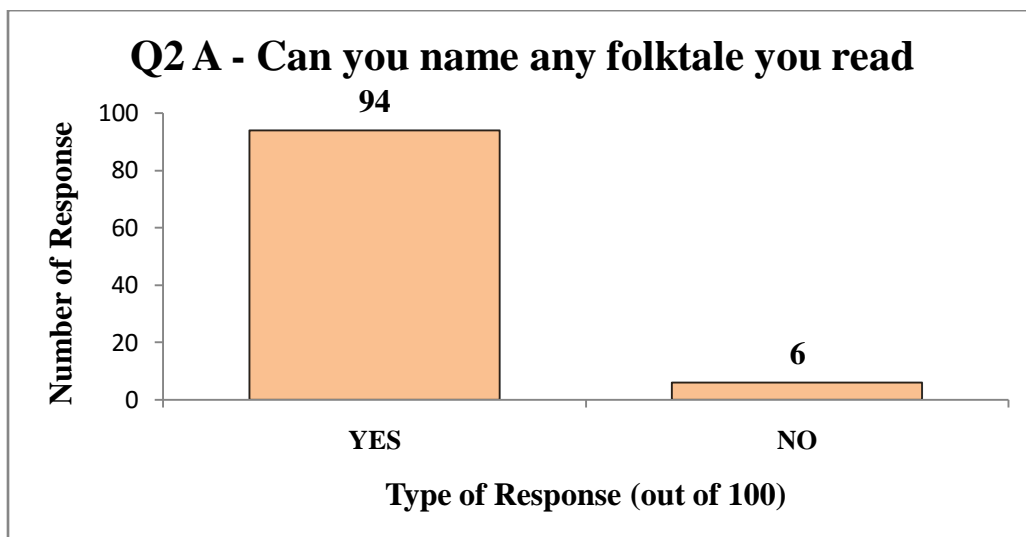


**Fig. 2. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 1 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

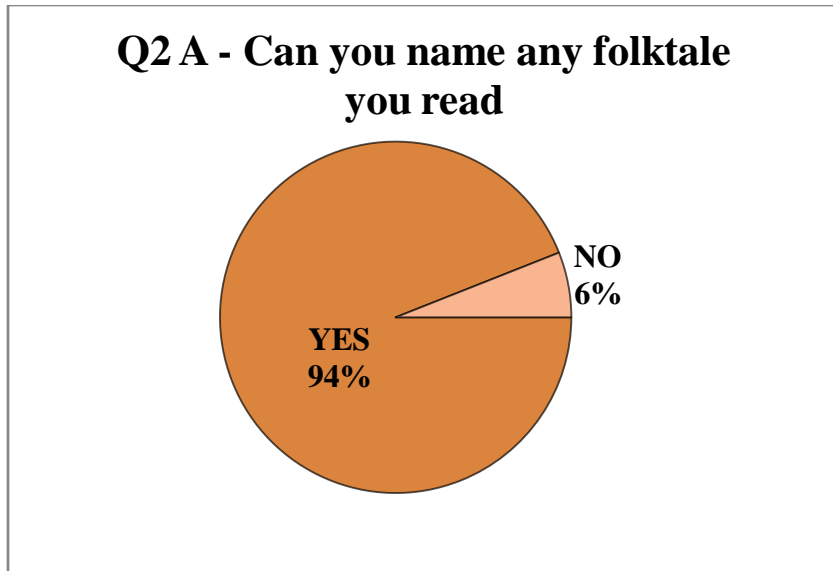
To this question, most of the respondents answered - YES (98 people out of 100), and two respondents answered - NO. Hence, the overall result is that 98% of people know what folktales are.

- The second question of Part A which has been codified as Q2 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Can you name any folktale you read?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 3. Column Chart for Question 2 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

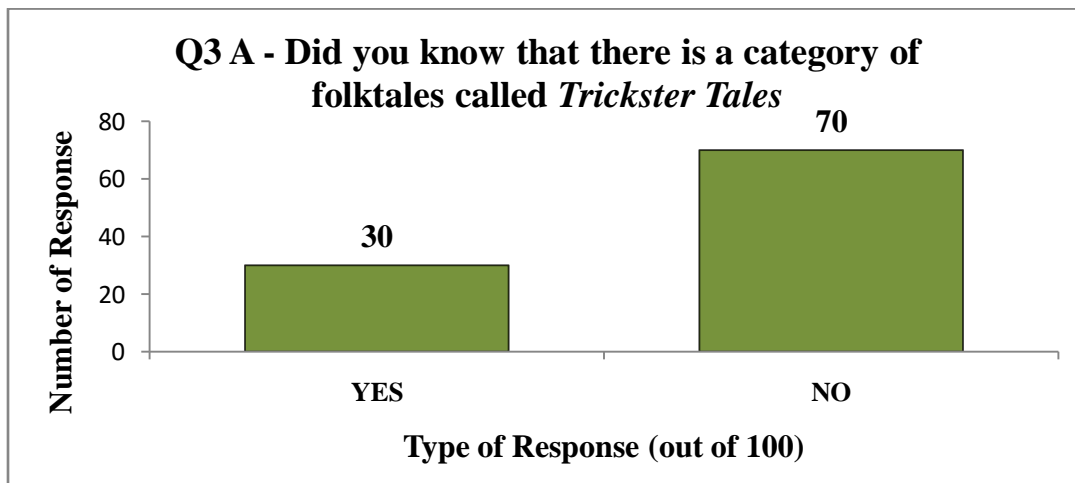


**Fig. 4. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 2 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

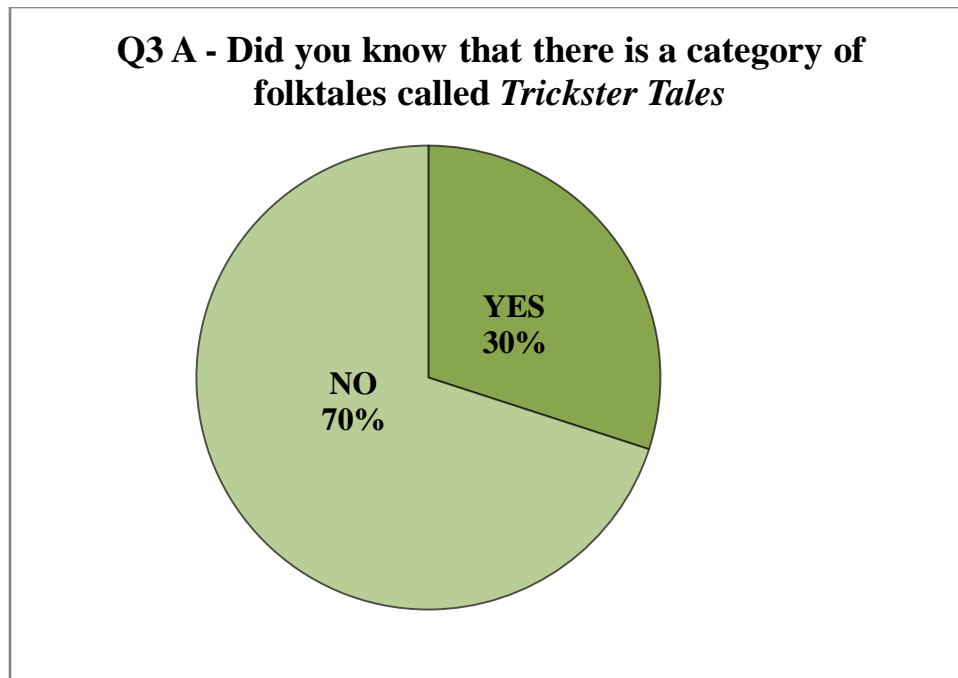
To this question also, most of the respondents answered - YES (94 people out of 100), and six respondents answered - NO. Hence, the overall result is that 94% of the people can name a folktale that they read some time or another in their life, maybe as a child or an adult.

- The third question of Part A which has been codified as Q3 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Did you know that there is a category of folktales called *Trickster Tales*?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 5. Column Chart for Question 3 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

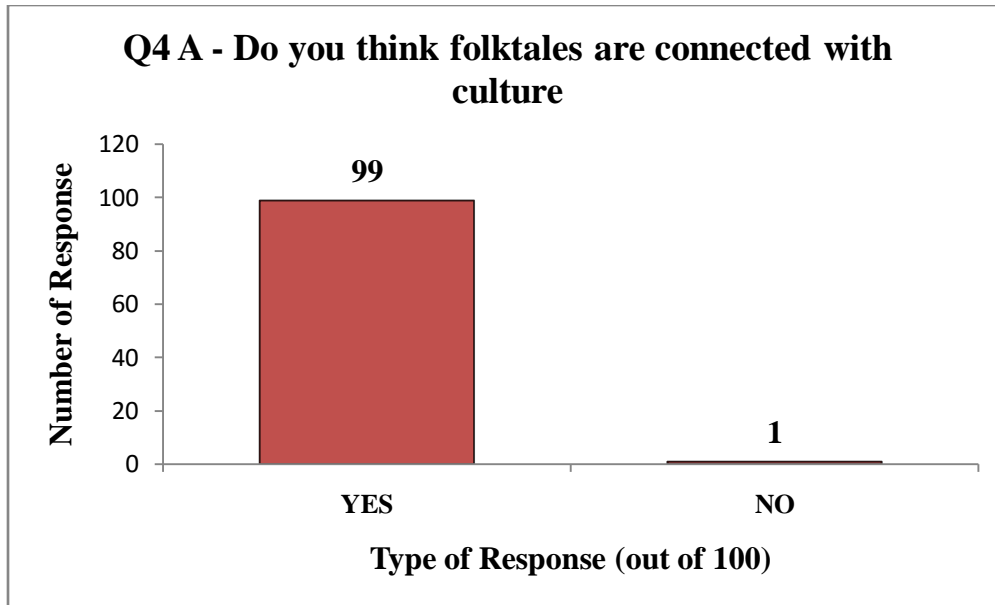


**Fig. 6. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 3 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

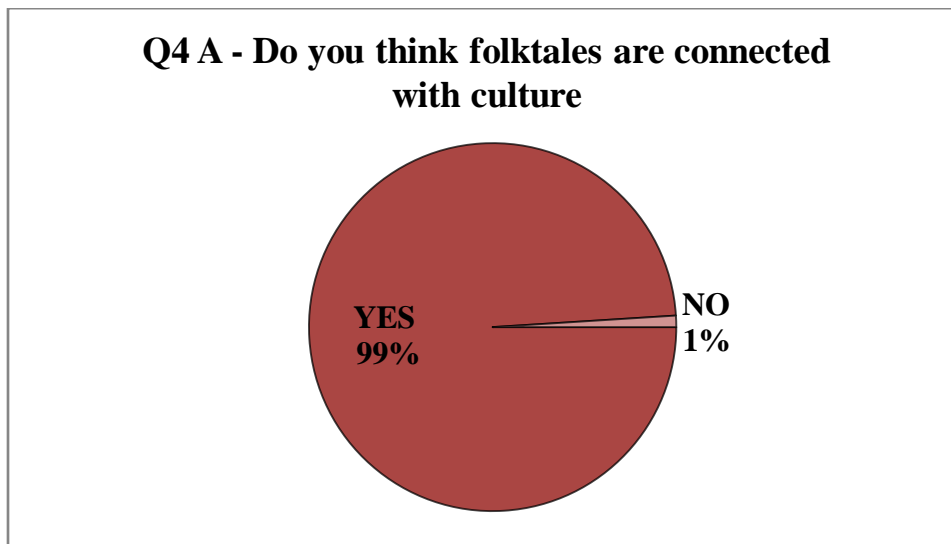
This question gave opposite results as compared to the first two. A large number of respondents (70 out of 100) gave a negative response to this question. This means that this category of folktales is not well-known among the respondents. This category of tales is relevant to this research topic because Mulla Nasruddin tales belong to this category of folktales. Hence, this question was important for this research topic. In India, China, and Russia most of the respondents did not know about this category of folktales. In Central Asia also, almost 50% of the respondents replied in negative to this question. But, out of the two respondents from Afghanistan, both have said YES to this question!

- The fourth question of Part A which has been codified as Q4 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you think that folktales are connected with culture?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 7. Column Chart for Question 4 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

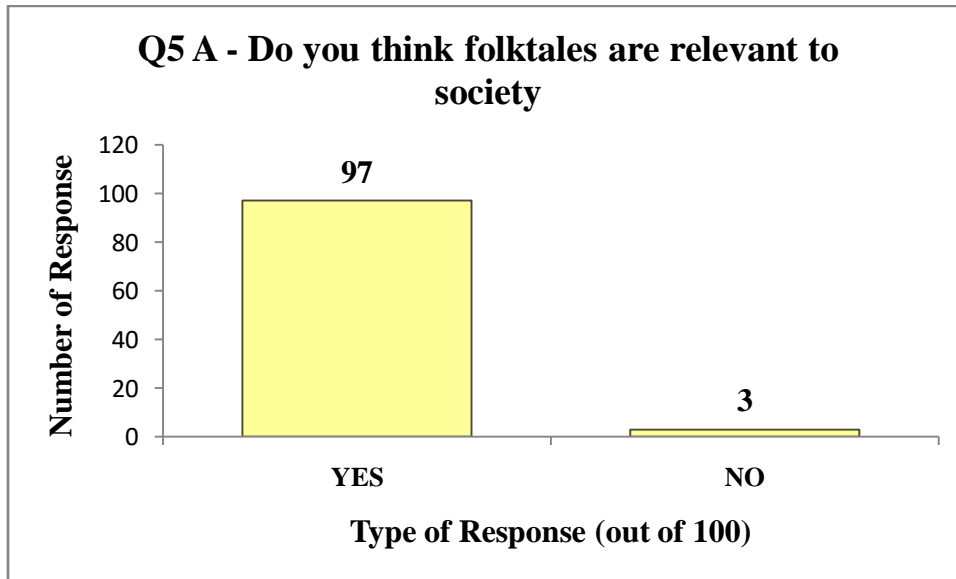


**Fig. 8. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 4 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

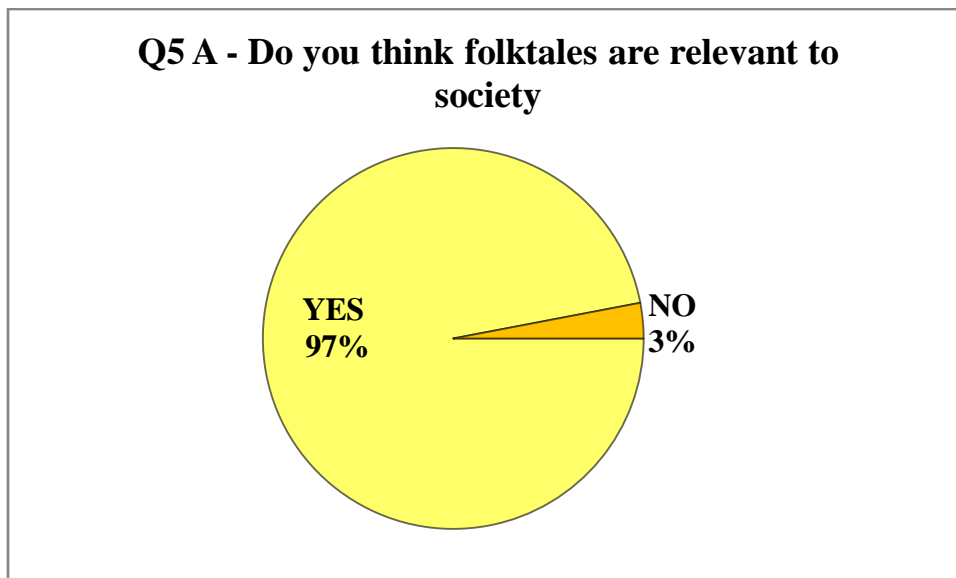
Response-wise Question four has been one of the most decisive questions of this questionnaire. Ninety-nine respondents out of a hundred from all the countries that this questionnaire was sent to said YES to this question, which means 99% of the people agree that folktales and culture of any country are connected with each other. This is also a significant finding for this research topic as it gives relevance to this topic and proves that folktales are not of the past; they are relevant even today.

- The fifth question of Part A which has been codified as Q5 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you think folktales are relevant to society?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 9. Column Chart for Question 5 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**



**Fig. 10. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 5 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

This question is also very important from the point of view of the relevance of folktales to the society. Again, 97% of the respondents agree that folktales are relevant to human society which proves that people across culture believe that folktales should not be taken lightly and it still has a role to play in society today.

- The sixth question of Part A which has been codified as Q6 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Have you ever heard of Mulla Nasruddin?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –

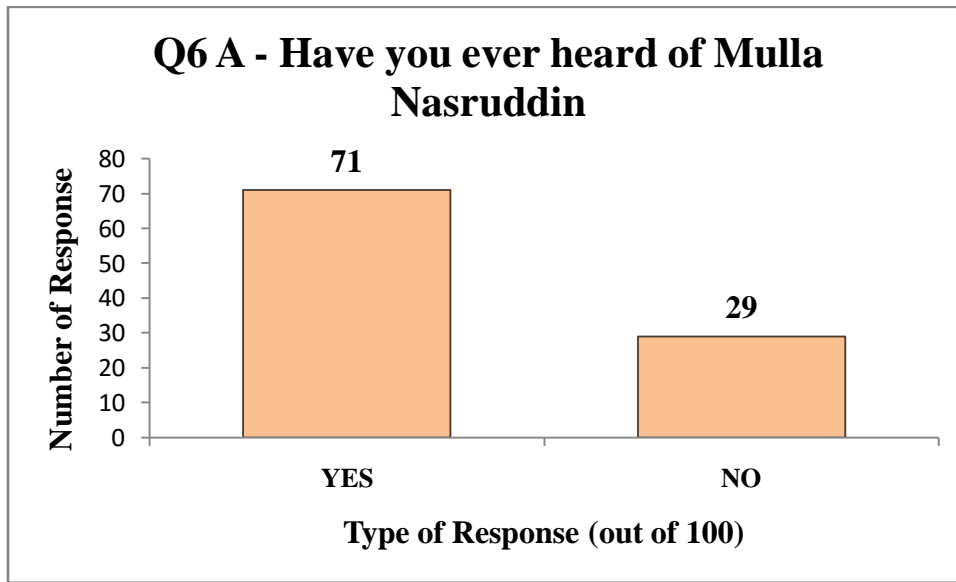


Fig. 11. Column Chart for Question 6 of Part A of the Questionnaire.

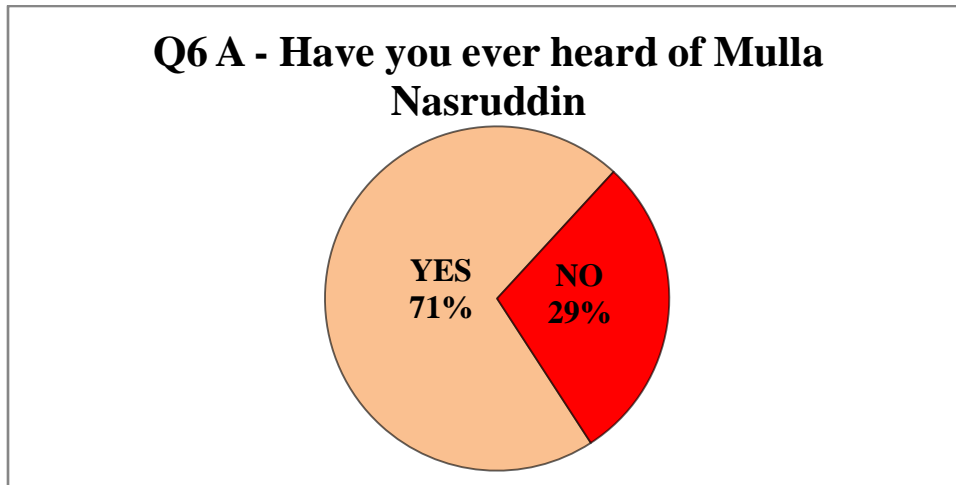


Fig. 12. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 6 of Part A of the Questionnaire.

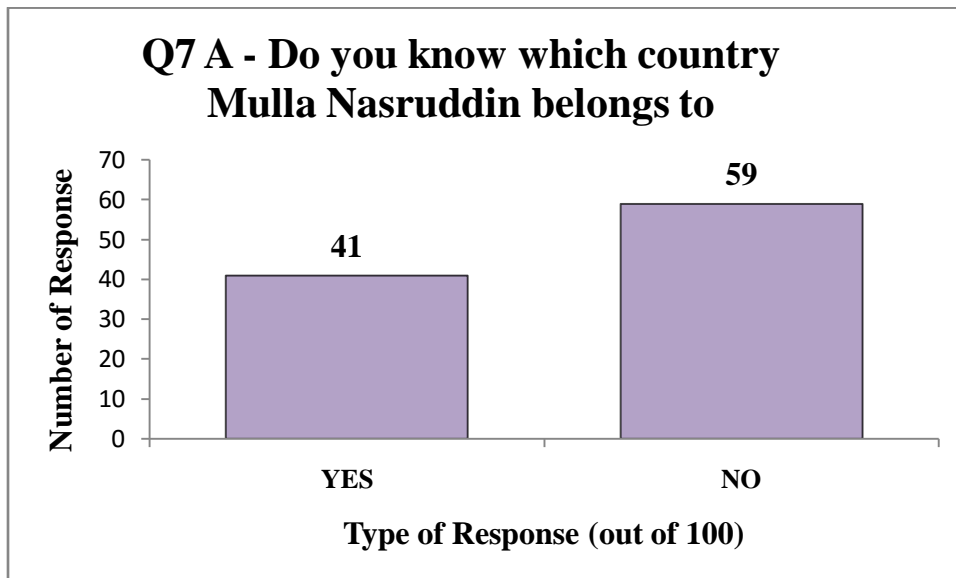


This again was one of the most important questions of this questionnaire as the whole research is based on Mulla Nasruddin and his tales. The response was more on the positive side as shown in these figures. 71% of the respondents replied that they have some time or the other, heard of Mulla Nasruddin which is again a significant finding for this research.

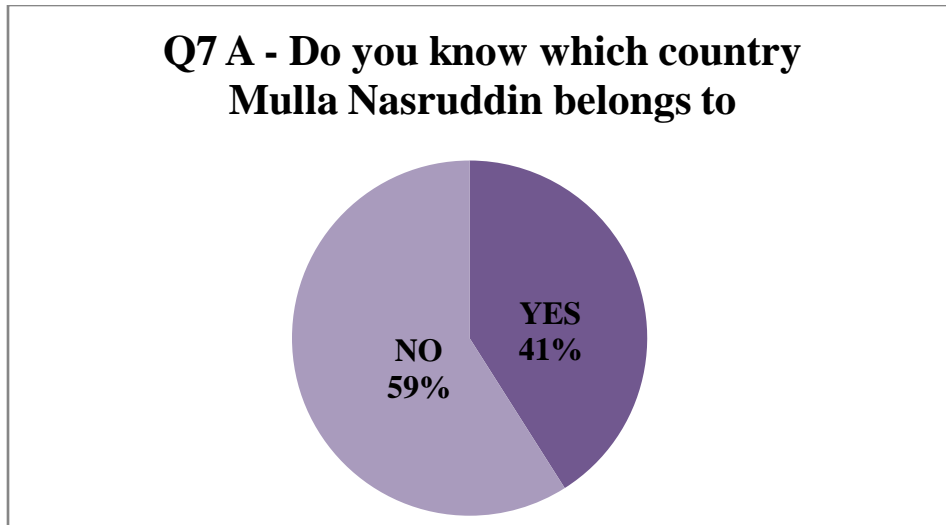
Surprisingly, a big percentage of the 29% of the respondents who said that they have never even heard of Mulla Nasruddin belong to India! Out of the fourteen respondents from India who took part in this survey, eight said NO to hearing about Mulla Nasruddin, which is more than 50%. From China out of twenty-one respondents of the questionnaire, only six said that they never heard of Mulla Nasruddin which is only about 28.5%. In Russia, fourteen respondents out of a total of thirty-one respondents said NO to this question, which is again less than 50% which means that even in Russia people more or less have heard of Mulla Nasruddin. In the five Central Asian countries, other than one respondent out of a total of twenty-five said NO this question, which means Mulla Nasruddin is very popular there. In Turkey also every respondent replied YES to this question!

- The seventh question of Part A which has been codified as Q7A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you know which country Mulla Nasruddin belongs to?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 13. Column Chart for Question 7 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

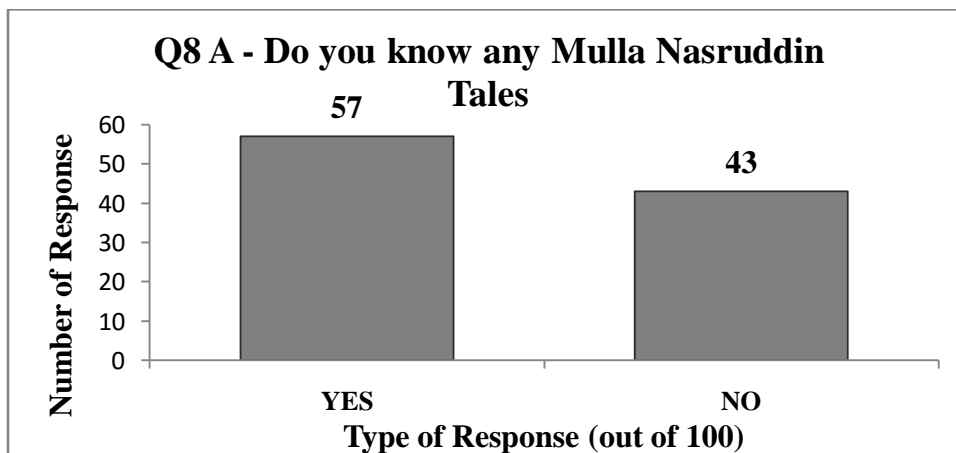


**Fig. 14. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 7 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

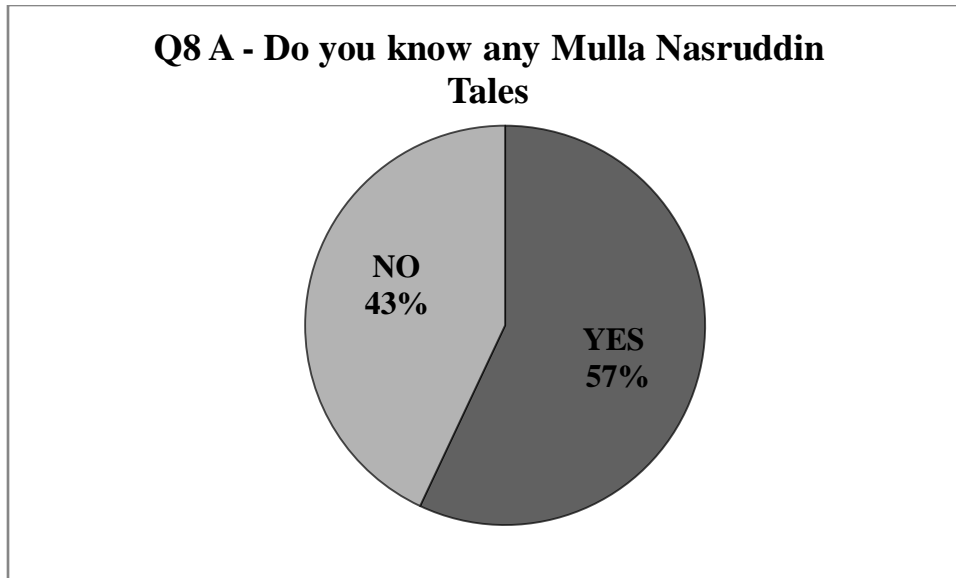
This question response-wise resembles question number 3 (Q3 A) in that the negative answer is more in numbers than positive. The percentage of respondents that replied in negative to this question is more. The reason is that those who never heard of Mulla Nasruddin will not know which country he belongs to; also, even some of those who have heard about Mulla Nasruddin, will probably not know the answer to this question.

- The eighth question of Part A which has been codified as Q8 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you know any Mulla Nasruddin tales?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 15. Column Chart for Question 8 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

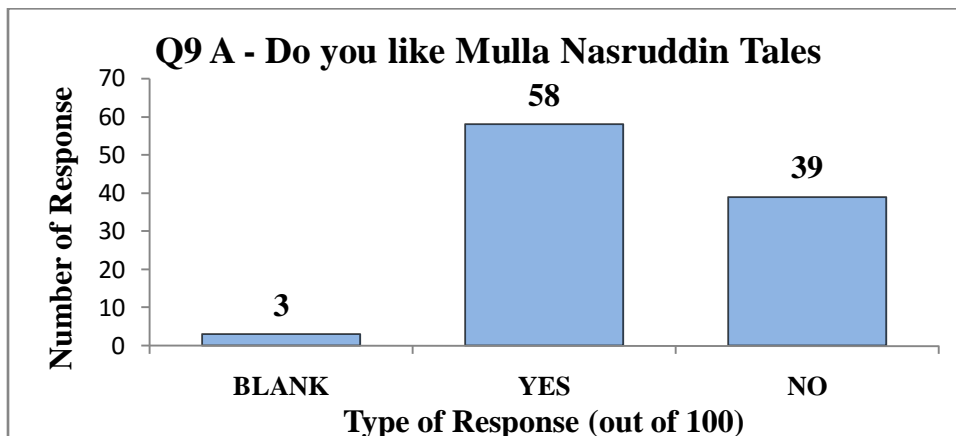


**Fig. 16. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 8 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

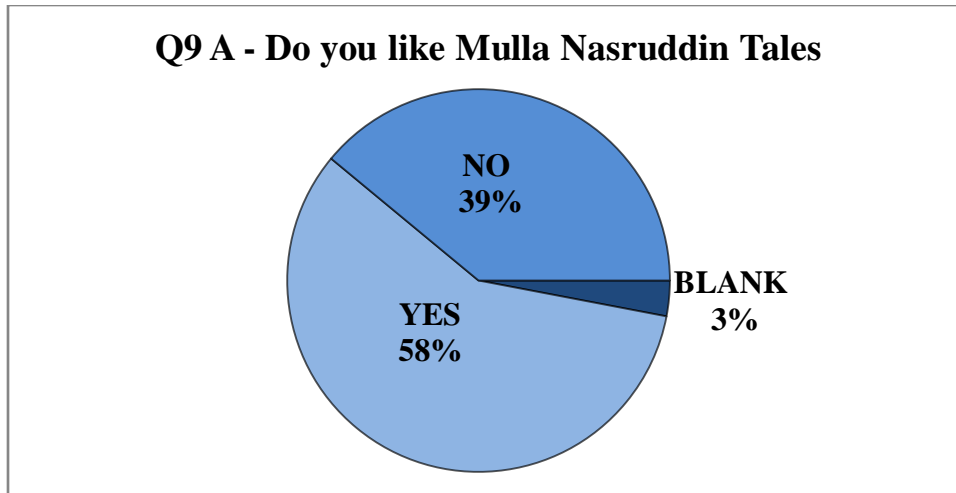
This question shows that 57% of the respondents said YES and 43% said NO, which means a large number of people do not know about any of the Mulla Nasruddin tales, which may be because 29% of the respondents said that they never heard of Mulla Nasruddin. And, even if some people heard of him, they might not have an in-depth knowledge of who he was and of his tales.

- The ninth question of Part A which has been codified as Q9 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you like Mulla Nasruddin tales?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 17. Column Chart for Question 9 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

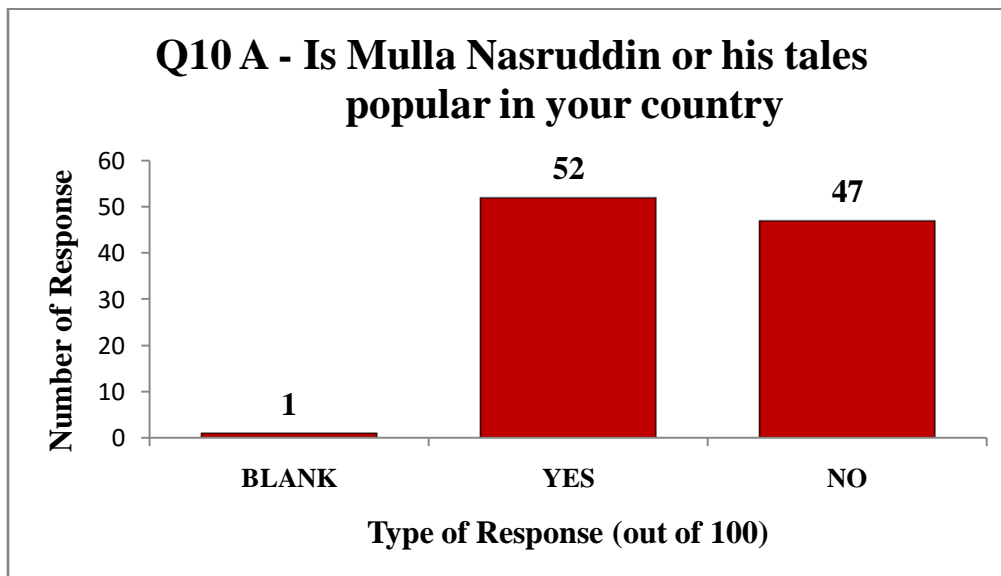


**Fig. 18. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 9 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

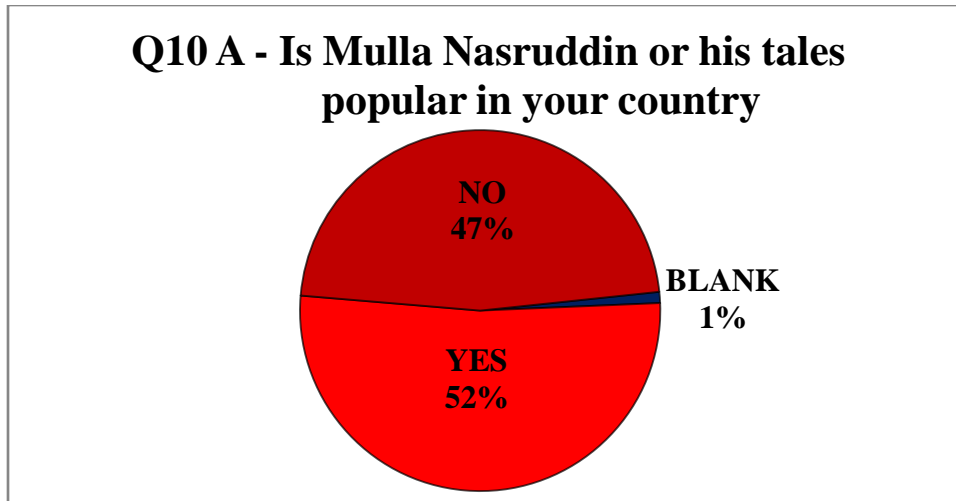
In this question, for the first time, some respondents left the boxes made for YES/NO question blank. 3% of the respondents that took this survey left this question unanswered. But 58% of the respondents said they like Mulla Nasruddin tales.

- The tenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q10 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Is Mulla Nasruddin or his tales popular in your country?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 19. Column Chart for Question 10 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

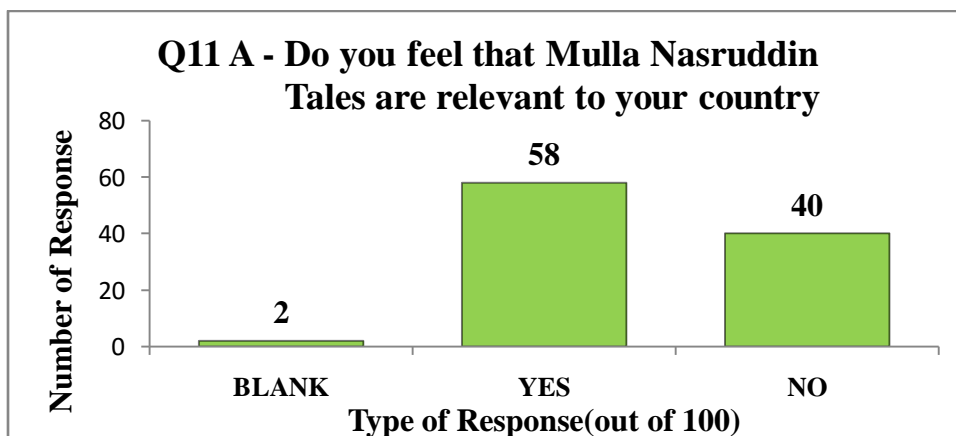


**Fig. 20. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 10 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

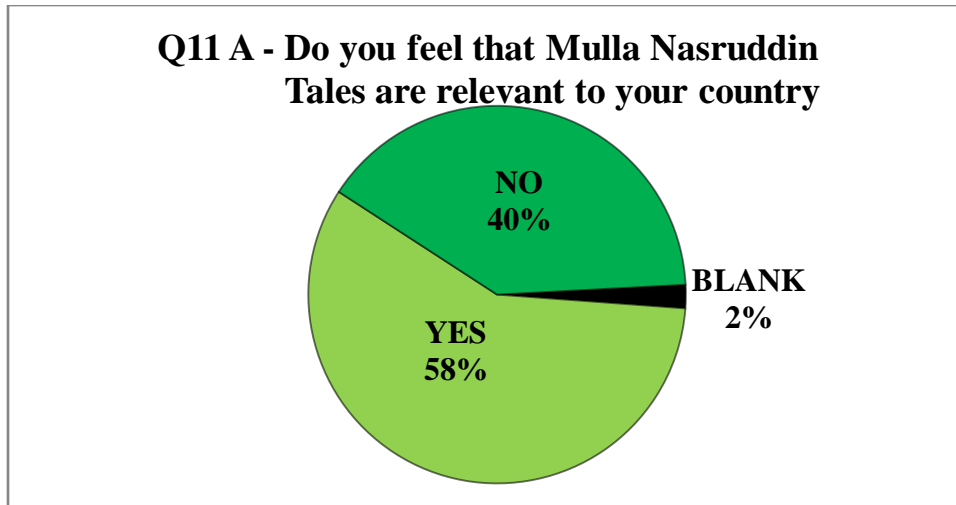
The main thing to be noted in the responses to this question is that there is a small difference between the YES and NO answers – 52% of the respondents said YES and 47% said NO to this question. The countries which mostly replied YES to this question are – Afghanistan (100%), China (67%), Kazakhstan (83%), Tajikistan (100%), Turkey (100%), Turkmenistan (100%), and Uzbekistan (100%). The countries that are left that mostly replied NO to this question are – India, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

- The eleventh question of Part A which has been codified as Q11 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you feel that Mulla Nasruddin tales are relevant to your country?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 21. Column Chart for Question 11 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

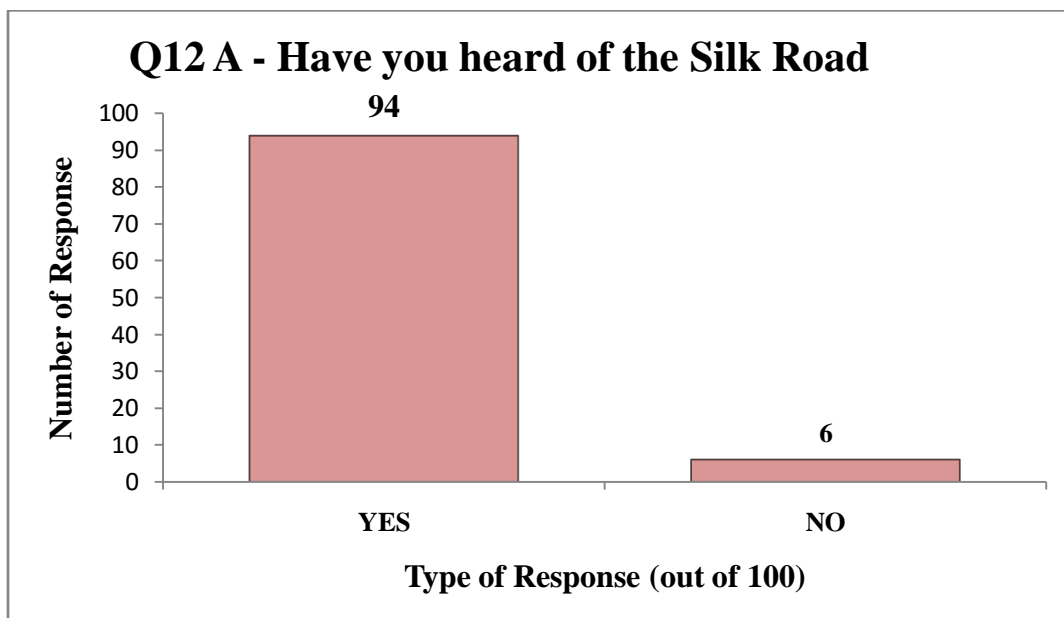


**Fig. 22. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 11 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

58% of the respondents replied YES to this question. The Central Asian countries and Turkey are the countries which mostly replied YES to this question.

- The twelfth question of Part A which has been codified as Q12 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Have you heard of the Silk Road?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 23. Column Chart for Question 12 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

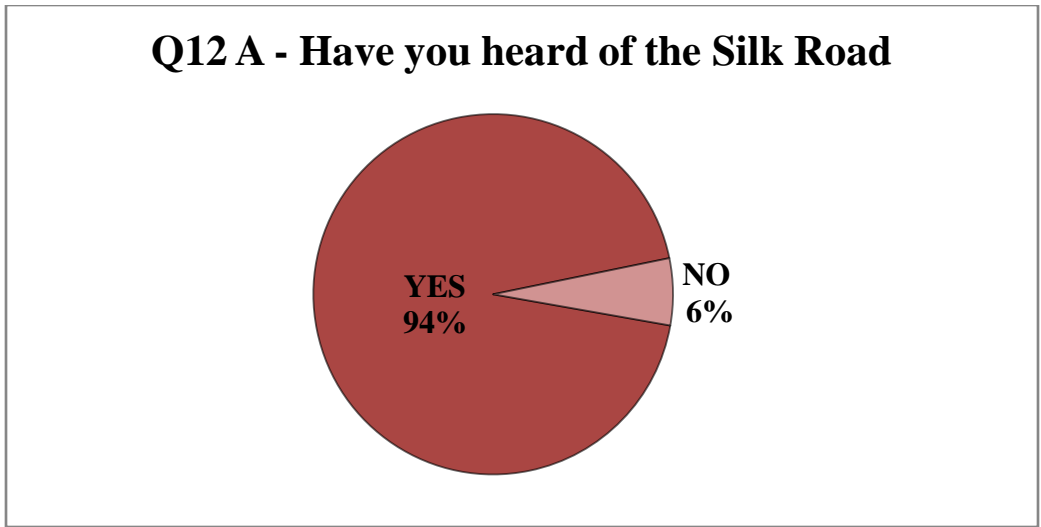


Fig. 24. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 12 of Part A of the Questionnaire.

With the question number twelve ends the folktale questions and begins the questions about the Silk Road. This question again gave a decisive answer because 94% of the respondents from the chosen countries replied YES to this question.

- The thirteenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q13 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Does the Silk Road Start from China?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –

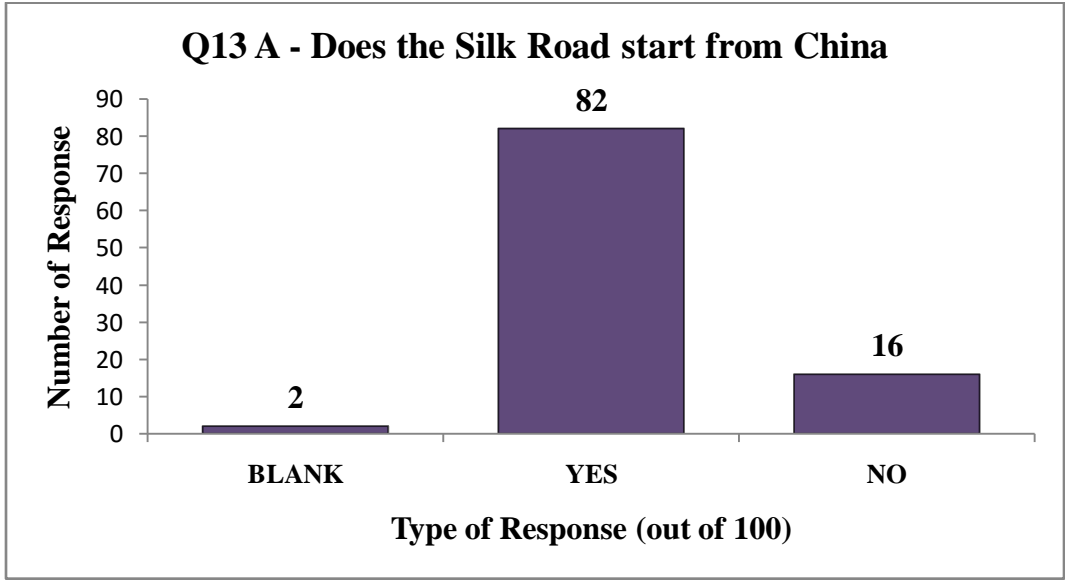
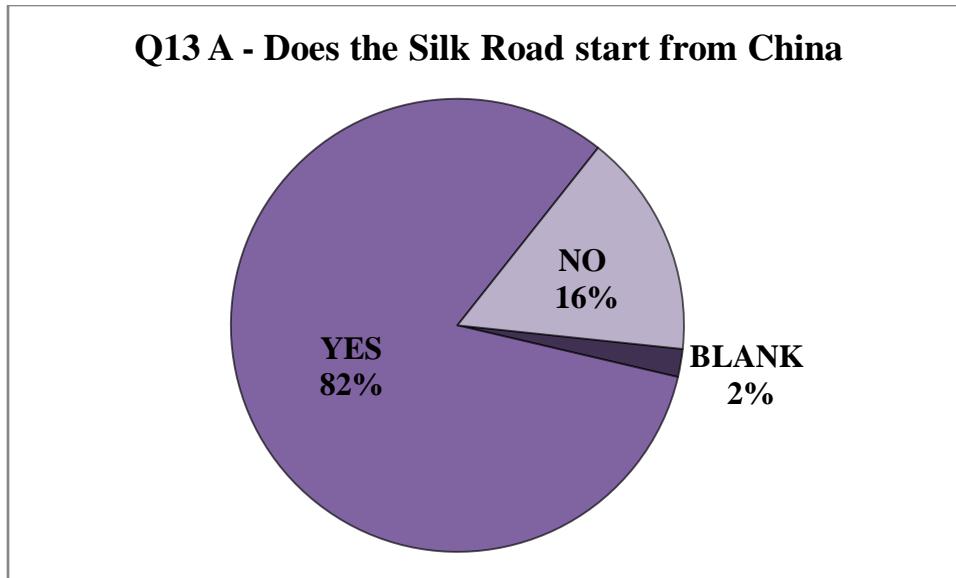


Fig. 25. Column Chart for Question 13 of Part A of the Questionnaire.

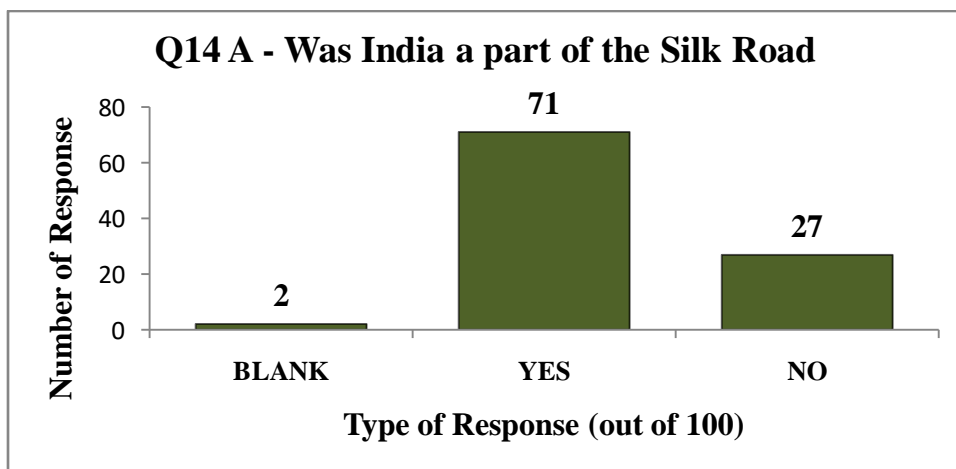


**Fig. 26. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 13 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

At a glance, it seems that this is also a decisive reply with 82% positive answers. But, even though eighty-two out of a hundred respondents replied YES to this question, sixteen of them said NO, among which there were four respondents from China itself! It is surprising as the Silk Road gets its name from the Silk trade which started from China.

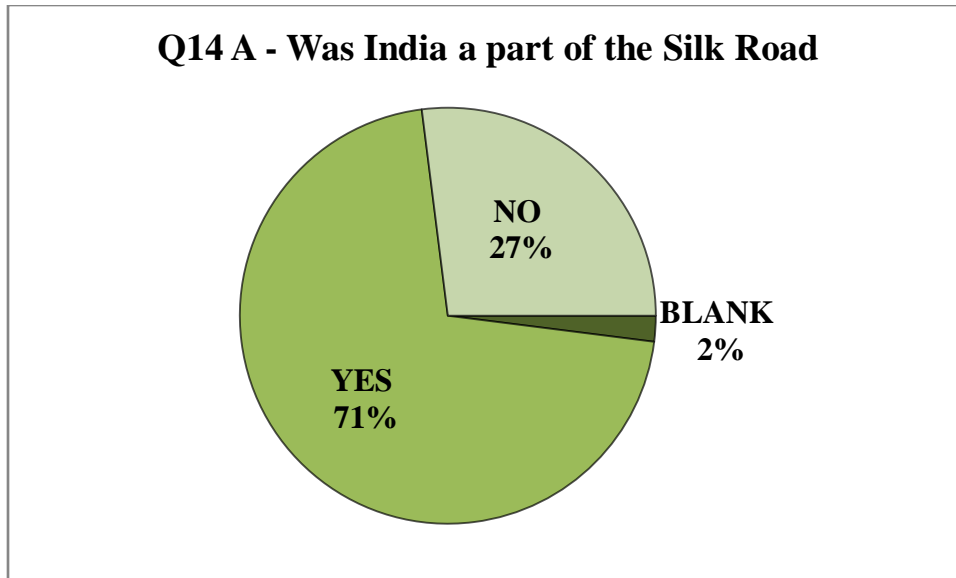
- The fourteenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q14 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Was India a part of the Silk Road?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 27. Column Chart for Question 14 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**



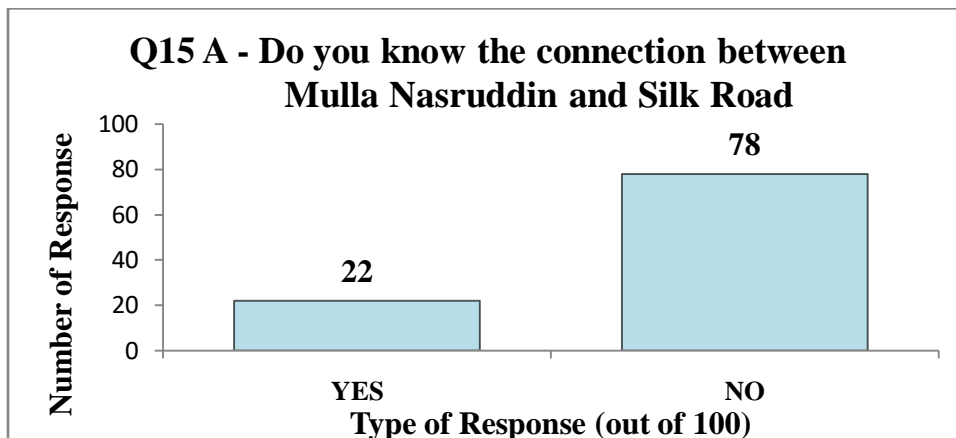


**Fig. 28. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 14 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

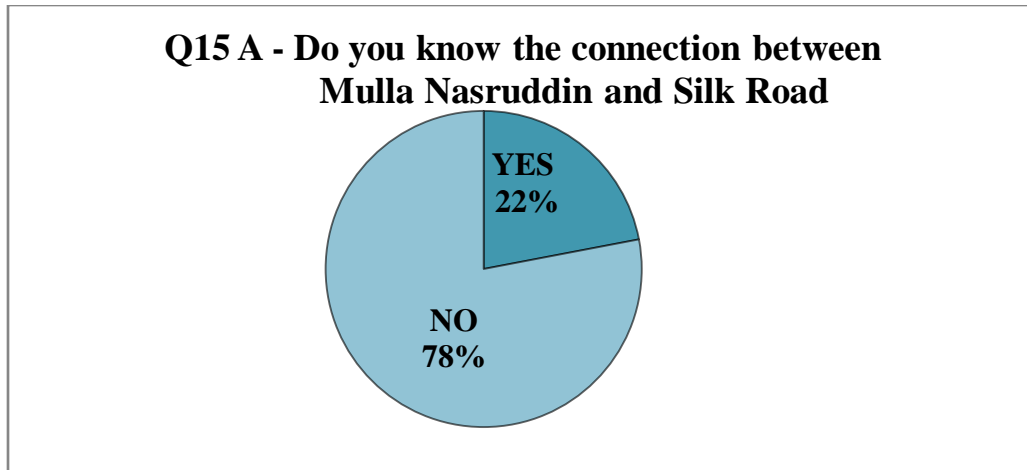
This question also received 71% positive response. The 27% that said NO and the 2% that left it blank may be explained by the fact that India was not directly a part of the Silk Road. India had its own trade route – the Spice Route, which got connected with the Silk Road in the Northern part of India.

- The fifteenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q15 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you know the connection between Mulla Nasruddin and Silk Road?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 29. Column Chart for Question 15 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

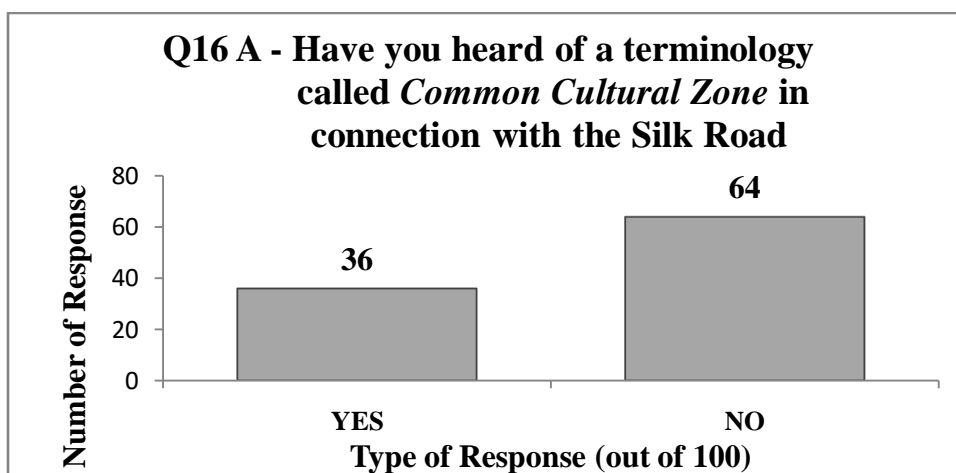


**Fig. 30. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 15 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

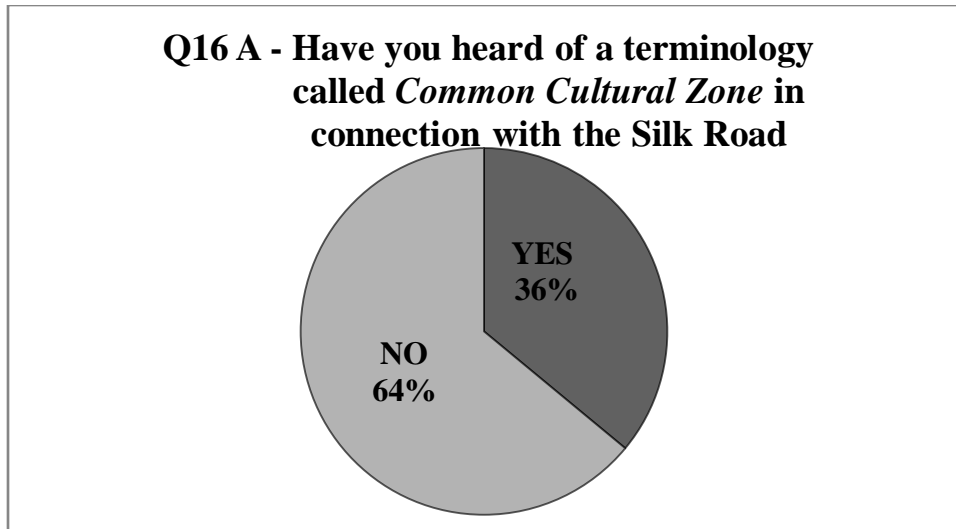
This is the second question in Part A of this questionnaire that got a decisive NO response from seventy-eight out of a hundred respondents, which is a significant find as it validates the endeavor of this research topic to establish such connection and make people aware of it. Respondents who said YES are from Afghanistan (100%) only. The other question of this questionnaire from Part A that had a 70% NO is question number three which was about the *Trickster Tales*.

- The sixteenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q16 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Have you heard of a terminology called *Common Cultural Zone* in connection with the Silk Road?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 31. Column Chart for Question 16 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

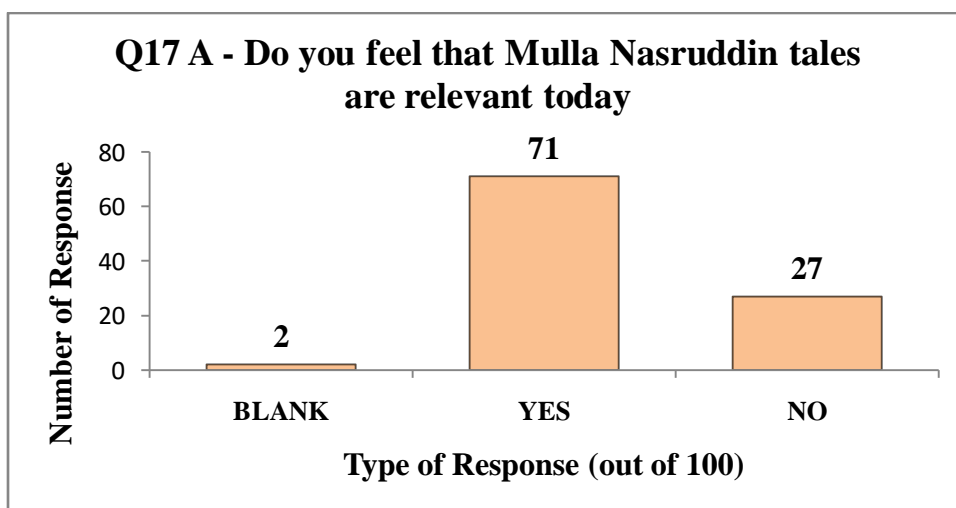


**Fig. 32. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 16 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

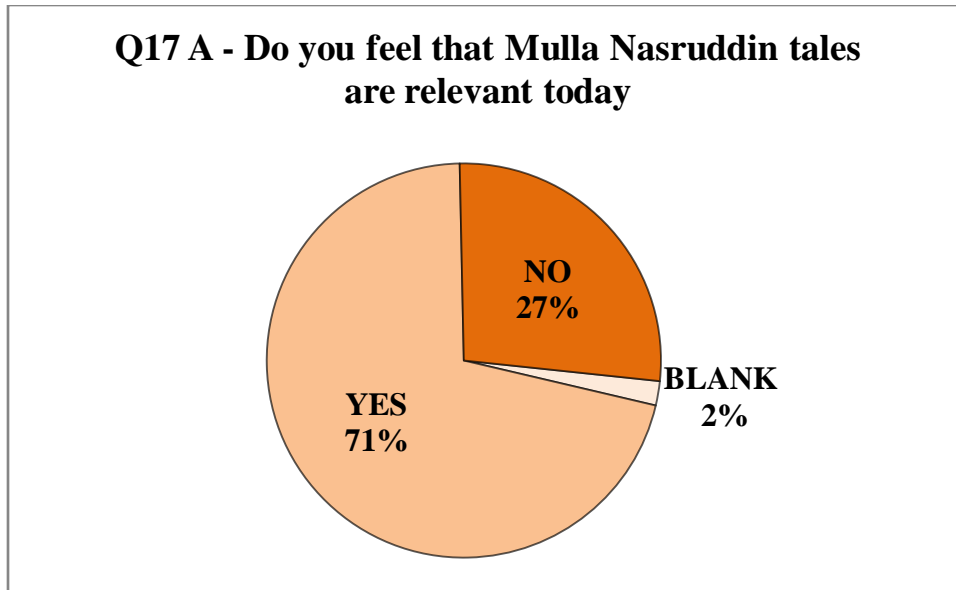
This question also received more NO responses than YES. Most of the YES responses are from Afghanistan (100%), and Tajikistan (60%). This also validates this research topic as it is trying to categorize the Asian part of the Silk Road countries into one such common cultural zone with the help of Mulla Nasruddin tales.

- The seventeenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q17 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you feel that Mulla Nasruddin tales are relevant today?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 33. Column Chart for Question 17 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

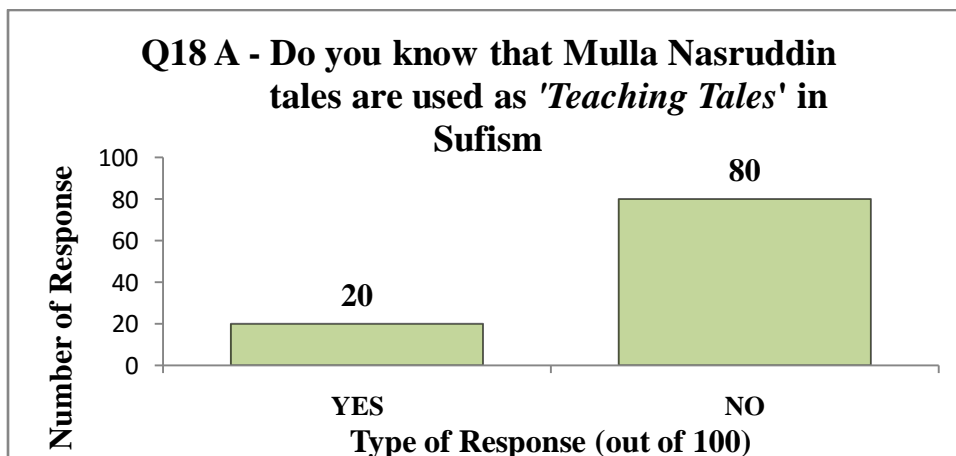


**Fig. 34. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 17 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

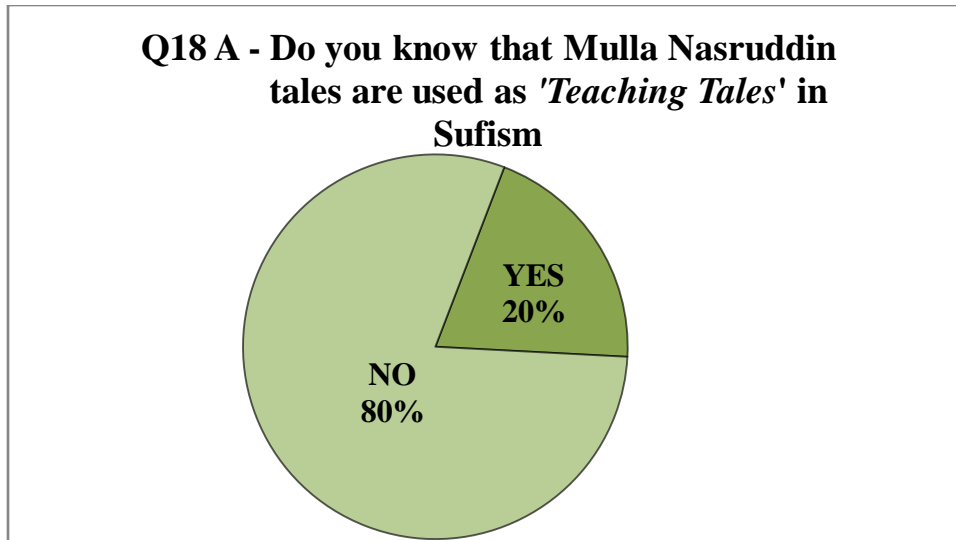
The majority of YES responses in this question are also validating this research topic as it is trying to establish the fact that folktales are relevant even today, and 71% of the respondents also think so.

- The eighteenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q18 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you know that Mulla Nasruddin tales are used as ‘Teaching Tales’ in Sufism?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 35. Column Chart for Question 18 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

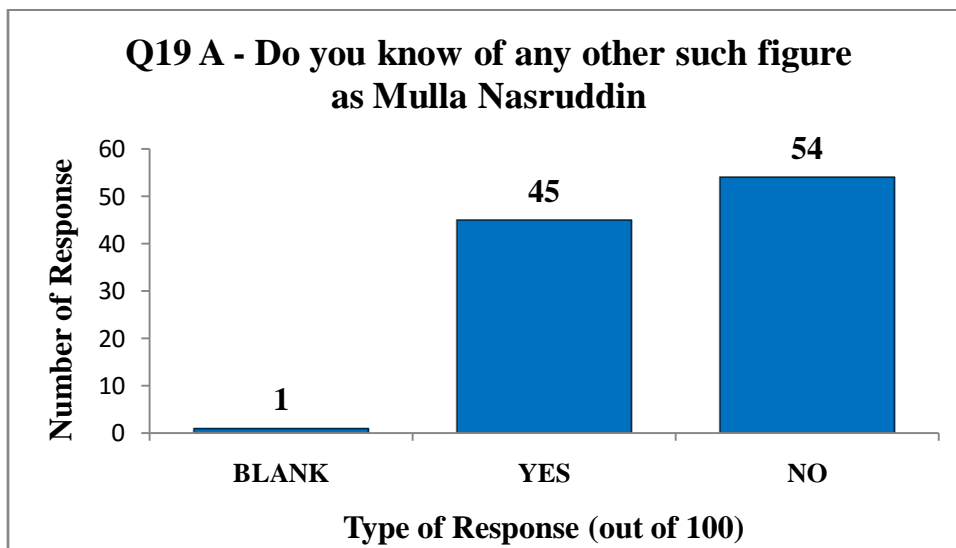


**Fig. 36. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 18 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

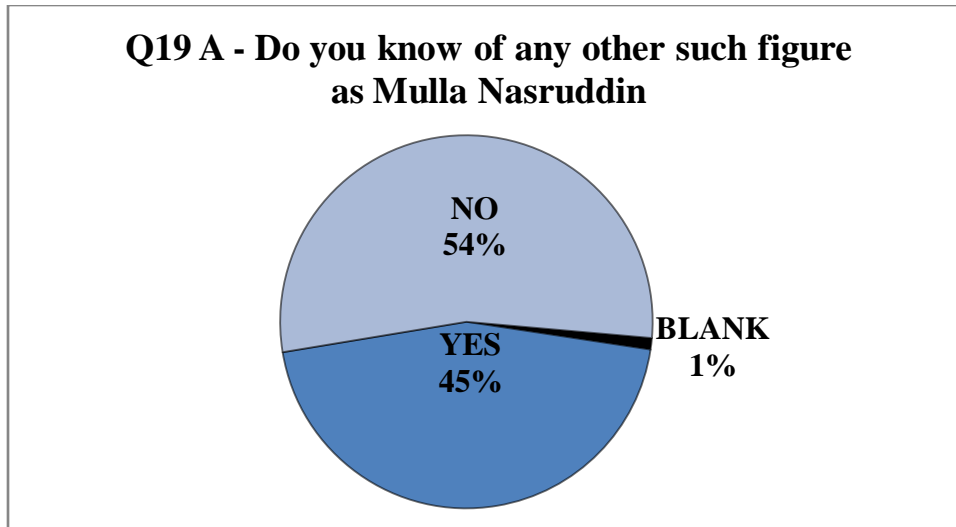
This question was a bit different from the other questions as it was related to religion which is Sufism. It was expected that it would receive more NO responses than YES. And 80% of the respondents did not know that Mulla Nasruddin tales are used in Sufism.

- The nineteenth question of Part A which has been codified as Q19 A in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Do you know of any other such figure as Mulla Nasruddin?**

The overall result of the responses to this question is represented by Column Chart and Pie Diagram as follows –



**Fig. 37. Column Chart for Question 19 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**



**Fig. 38. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 19 of Part A of the Questionnaire.**

The last question of Part A of this questionnaire was asked keeping in mind that there are many ‘equivalent folk figures’ of Mulla Nasruddin present in this world, not only in Asia but Europe and Africa as well. In India itself, there is more than just one of such figures. In Central Asian countries also such figures are present. The interesting fact about all these ‘equivalent folk figures’ is that their tales match the tales of Mulla Nasruddin so much so that sometimes the tales are very similar in plot.

The reply to this question as 45% YES was also interesting as many respondents knew such ‘equivalent folk figures’ from their country whose tales resemble the tales of Mulla Nasruddin. Respondents who replied YES to this question mostly belong to India (57%), Kazakhstan (83%), Kyrgyzstan (100%), Tajikistan (60%), Turkey (86%), Turkmenistan (60%), and Uzbekistan (57%). It is obvious here that in India, Turkey and all the five Central Asian countries people know of such ‘equivalent folk figures’ who resemble Mulla Nasruddin.

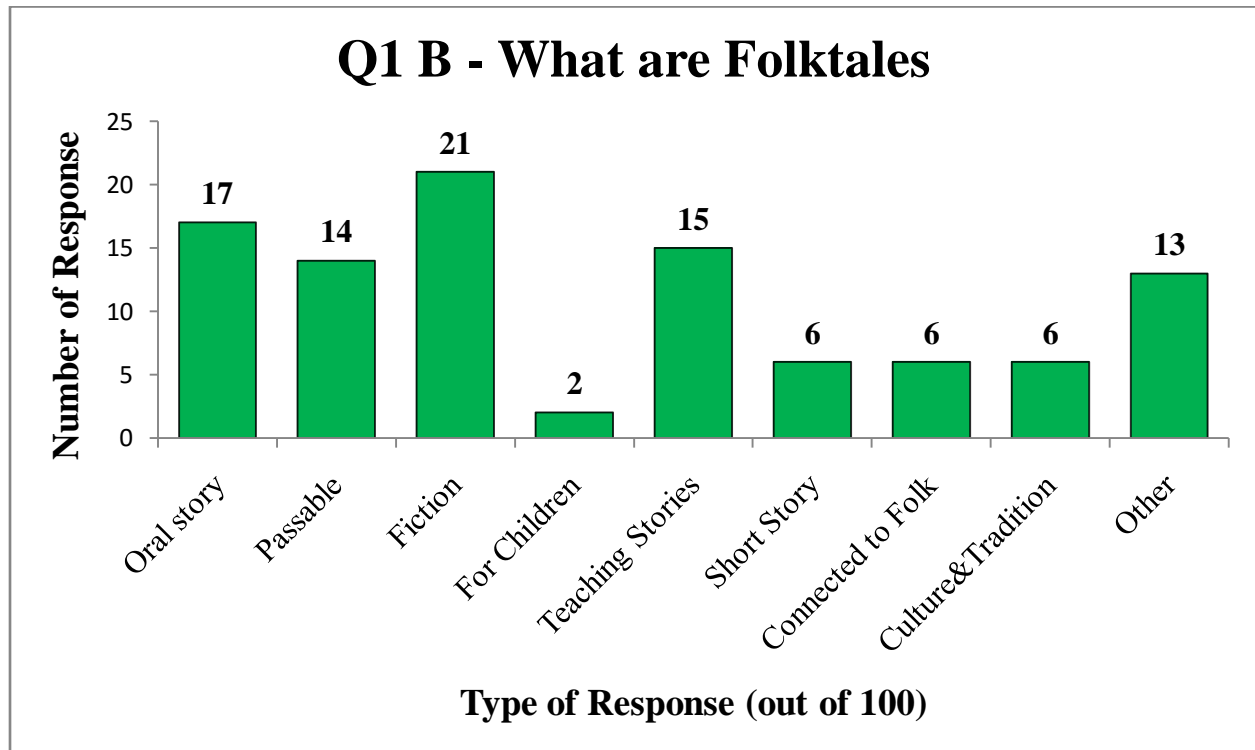
## **2. Part B of the Questionnaire and its Graphic Representations.**

Part B of this questionnaire contains seven subjective type questions. Since they are subjective in nature, the respondents have given their perspectives in their words. After studying all of them many times, some common factors were identified and these factors were then put into a category which was then given a single digit from 1 to 9 to make Column Charts from it. The maximum number of categories is nine, and the minimum is three. The first subjective type question has a maximum number of categories which is nine; the second question has six categories; the third, fourth and fifth questions have four categories each; the sixth question has

three categories, and the seventh question has five categories. On the basis of these digitized categories, the Column Charts were made for each question. The following are the Column Charts question-wise –

- The first subjective-type question of Part B which has been codified as Q1 B in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **What according to you are Folktales?**

On the basis of the responses, the following Column Chart was created -



**Fig. 39. Column Chart for Question 1 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

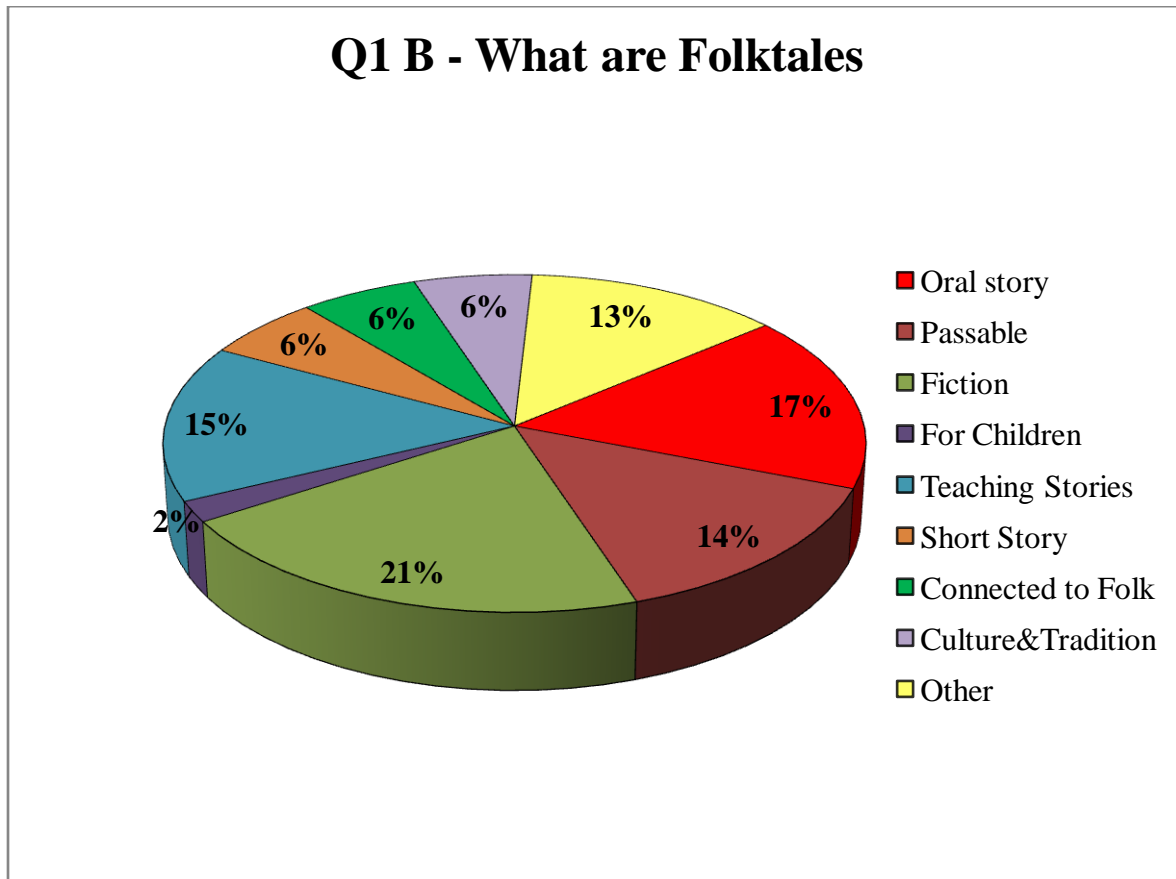
This Column Chart shows the kind of written responses people gave to this particular question. The broad categories that are selected by studying these responses are as follows –

- Folktales are oral stories.
- Folktales are passable from generation to generation and from people to people.
- Folktales are folk-created or fiction.
- Folktales are for children.
- Folktales are teaching stories.
- Folktales are short stories.
- Folktales are connected to folk.
- Folktales depict culture and tradition.
- Other.

This question has the maximum number of categories as there were a lot of different responses to this question. It was more difficult to find clear-cut categories for this question. The highest Column in the above chart is the third one which says that folktales are fiction or such stories which are created by the 'folk.' Twenty-one respondents out of a hundred from ten different countries agree to this.

It is to be noted though that the categorization of this first question of Part B is not very clear cut as some respondents have combined more than one category mentioned above in their responses. However, to make the chart simpler, only the category which was found first in the response was considered and registered.

The following is the Pie Diagram which shows the percentage-wise representation of Q1 B.

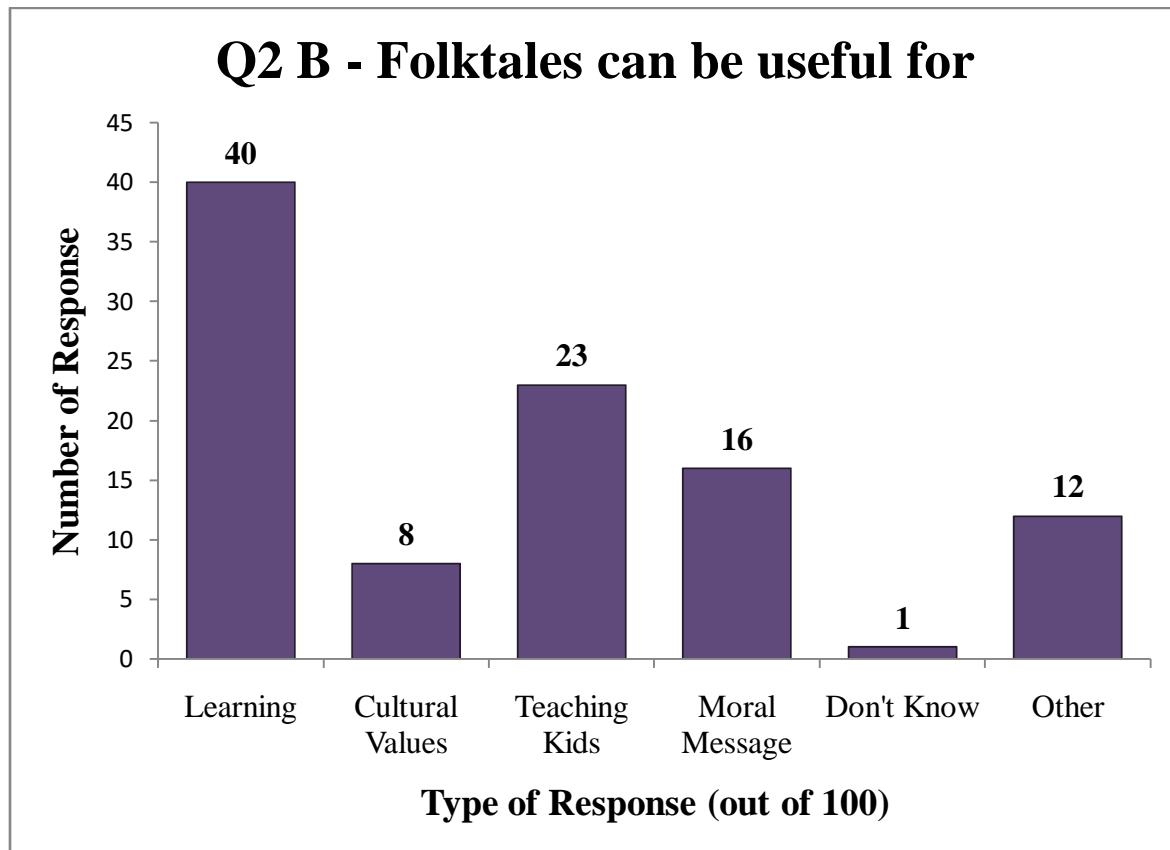


**Fig. 40. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 1 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**



- The second subjective-type question of Part B which has been codified as Q2 B in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **According to you how folktales can be useful in learning?**

On the basis of the responses, the following Column Chart was created -

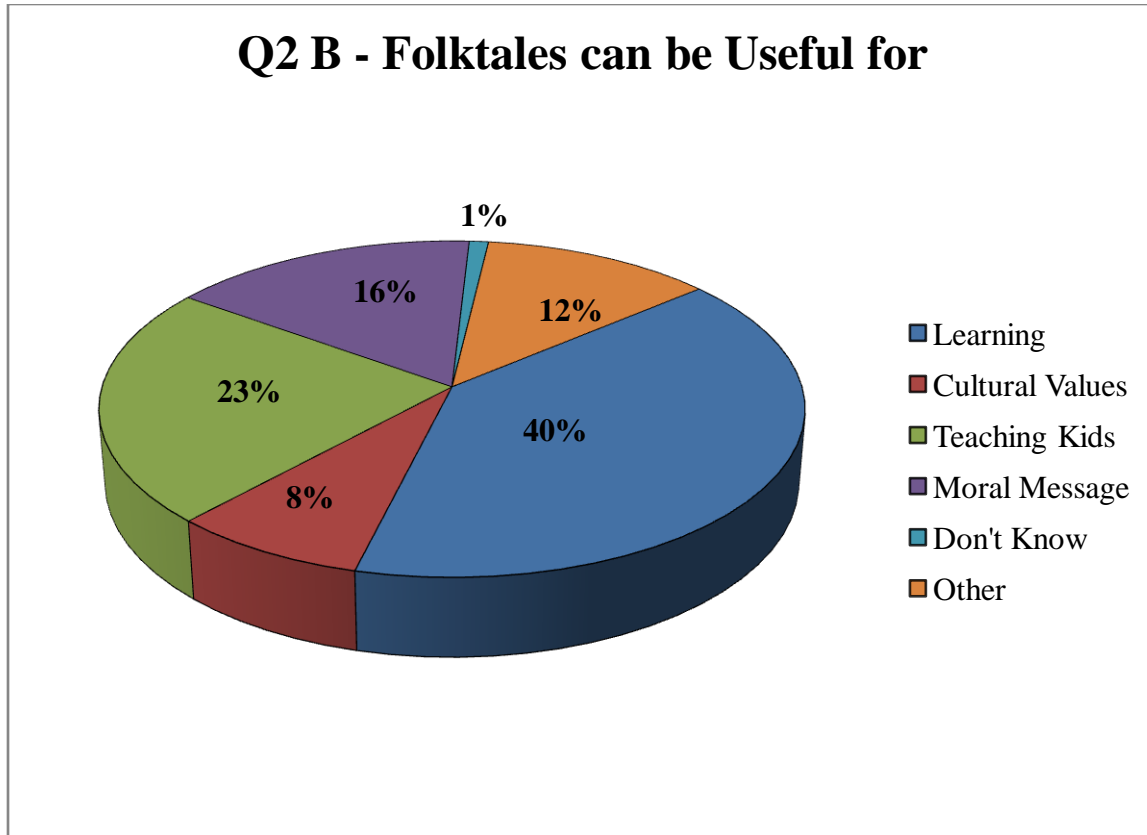


**Fig. 41. Column Chart for Question 2 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

In response to this question, forty out of a hundred respondents said that the main purpose of folktales is to teach life lessons and hence, folktales are useful for learning. This question has the second largest number of categories which are –

- Folktales are useful for learning life lessons.
- Folktales are useful for teaching cultural values.
- Folktales are useful for teaching children about life in general.
- Folktales are useful for giving a moral message.
- Don't know.
- Other.

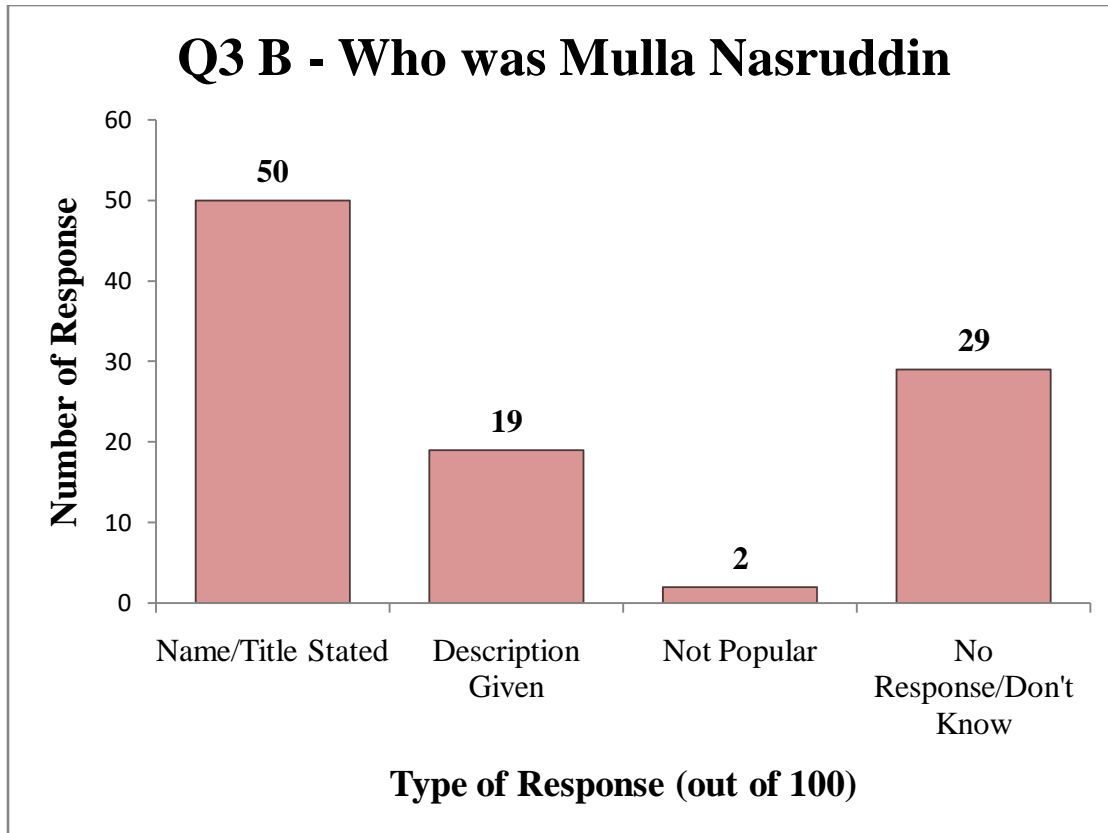
The following is the Pie Diagram which shows the percentage-wise representation of Q2 B.



**Fig. 42. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 2 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

- The third subjective-type question of Part B which has been codified as Q3 B in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Who was Mulla Nasruddin and by what name/title is he known in your country?**

On the basis of the responses, the following Column Chart was created -



**Fig. 43. Column Chart for Question 3 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

This question was simpler than the previous two. Hence, the categories were clearer and lesser in numbers. The categories from the responses received are the following –

- Respondents mentioned the name and/or title of Mulla Nasruddin that are popular in their respective countries.
- Respondents did not mention his name and title, but gave his description, or wrote about him.
- Respondents said that Mulla Nasruddin is not popular in their country.
- Respondents either left the question unanswered or said that they don't know.

Fifty respondents out of a hundred could give the name and/or title by which Mulla Nasruddin is known in their country. Nineteen out of hundred could not name him, but did manage to write who Mulla Nasruddin is, which is also significant. At least, respondents are aware of such a folk hero as Mulla Nasruddin.

The following is the Pie Diagram which shows the percentage-wise representation of Q3 B.

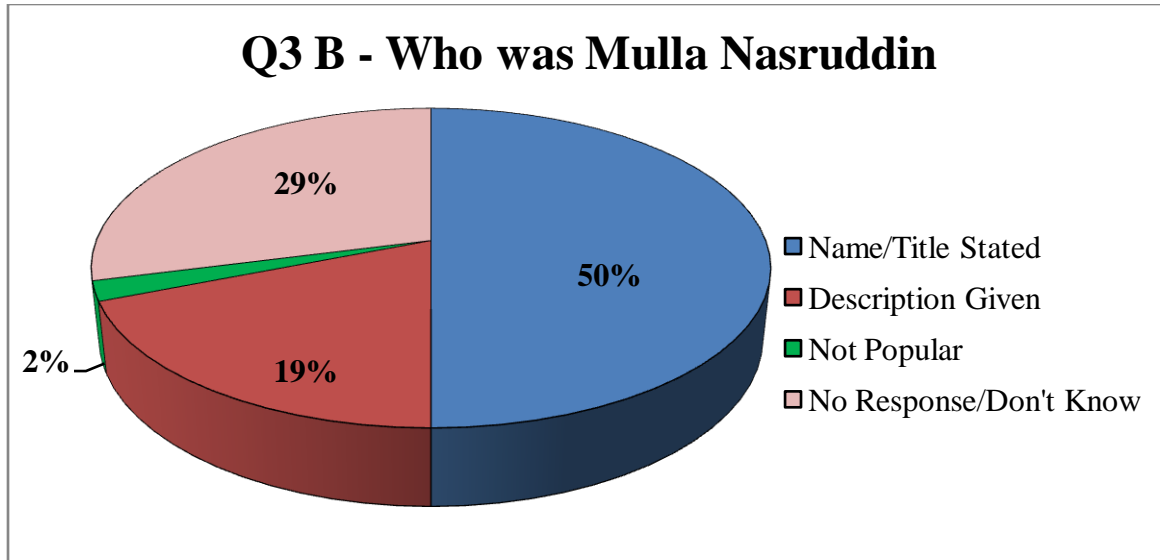


Fig. 44. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 3 of Part B of the Questionnaire.

- The fourth subjective-type question of Part B which has been codified as Q4 B in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Which tale of Mulla Nasruddin is your favorite or which tale do you know?**

On the basis of the responses, the following Column Chart was created –

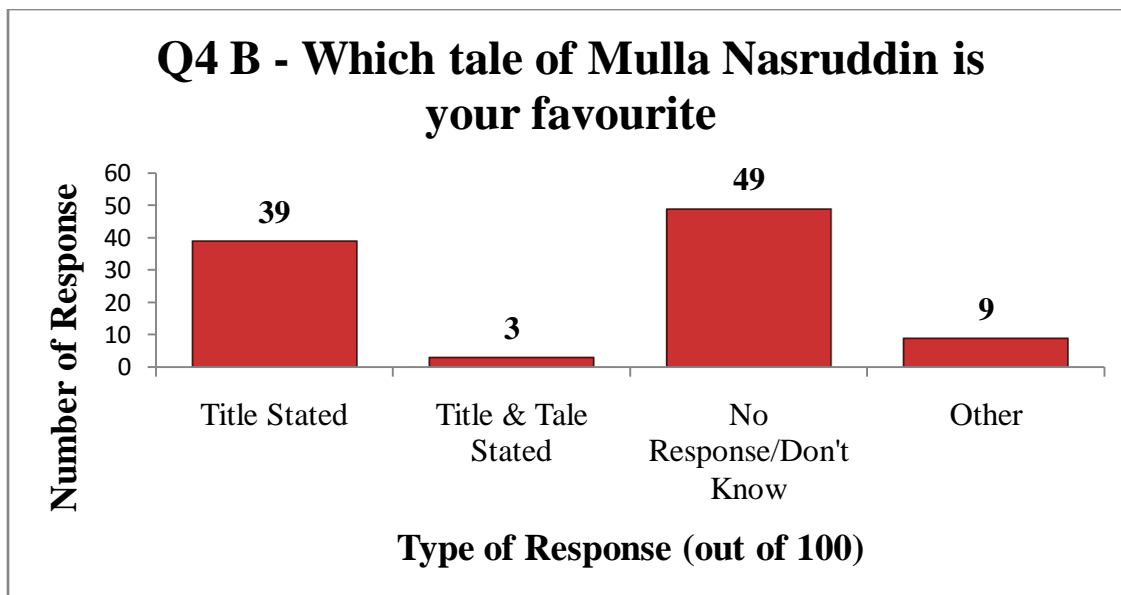


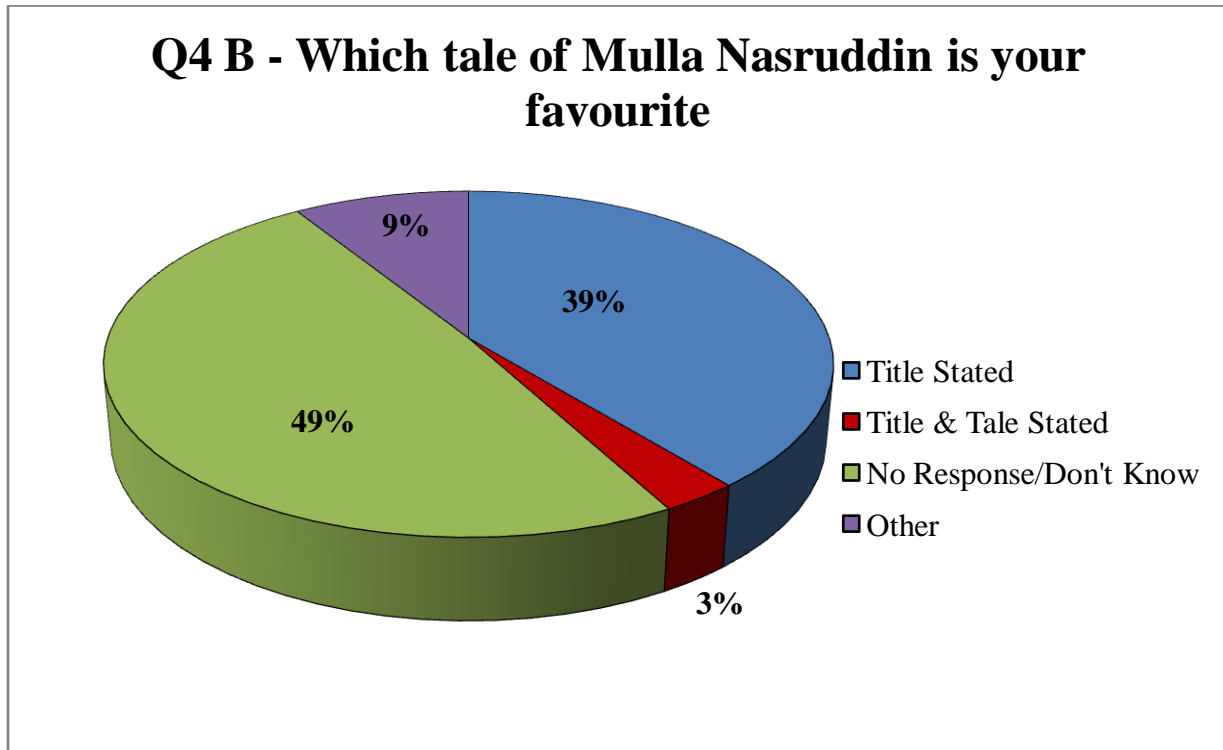
Fig. 45. Column Chart for Question 4 of Part B of the Questionnaire.

This question also received clear cut responses which could be categorized into four categories which are as follows –

- Respondents who stated the title of their favorite Mulla Nasruddin tale.
- Respondents who not only stated the title but also mentioned the tale.
- Respondents who left the question unanswered or said – Don't know.
- Respondents who gave unrelated answers.

The third Column of this chart is the highest which shows that 49 out of 100 respondents do not know any tale of Mulla Nasruddin. It is a significant number which is almost 50%.

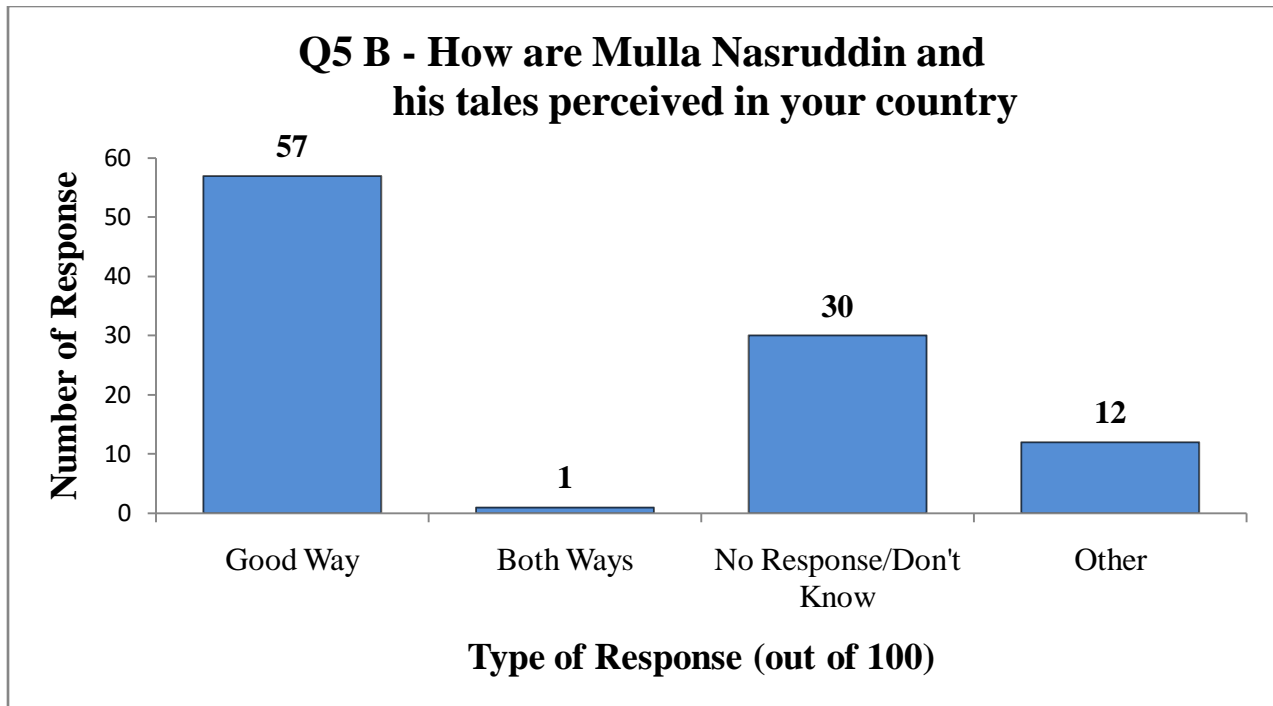
The following is the Pie Diagram which shows the percentage-wise representation of Q4 B.



**Fig. 46. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 4 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

- The fifth subjective-type question of Part B which has been codified as Q5 B in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **How are Mulla Nasruddin and his tales perceived in your country? (Whether in a good or bad way?)**

On the basis of the responses, the following Column Chart was created –



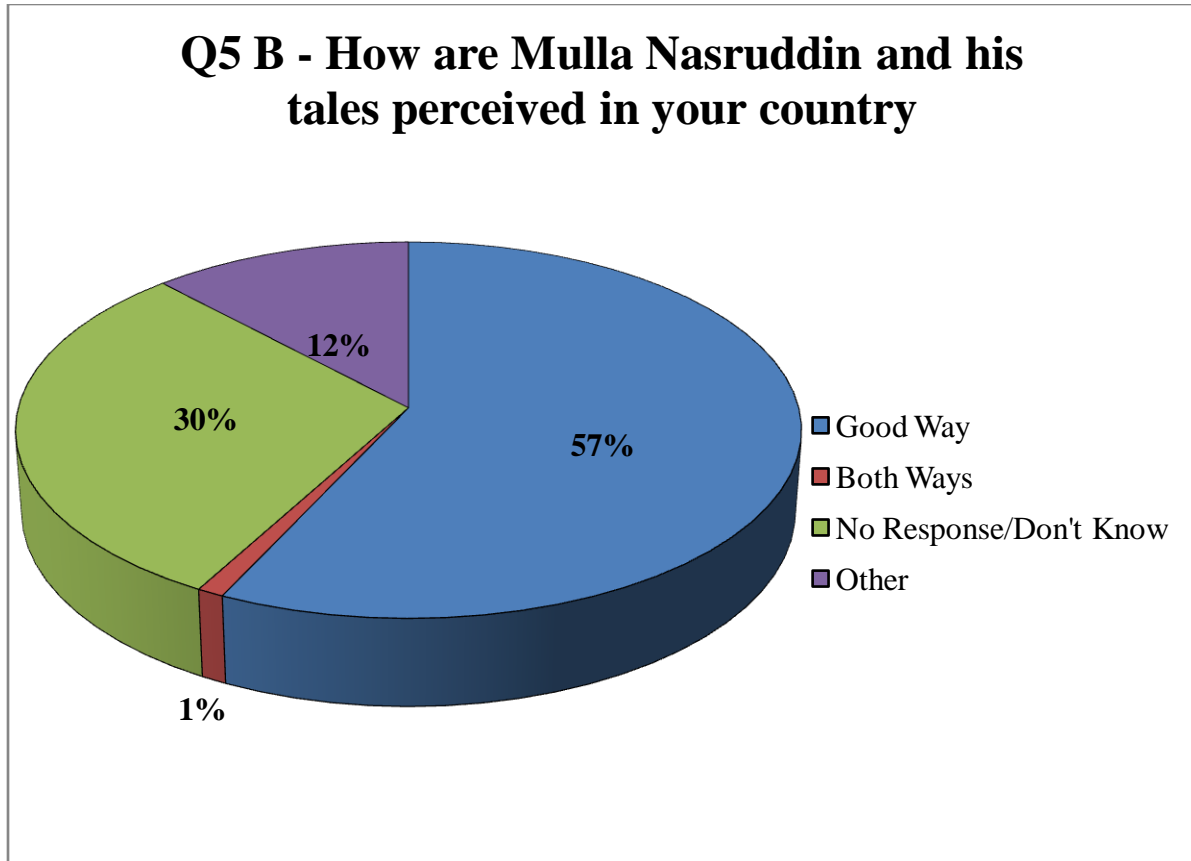
**Fig. 47. Column Chart for Question 5 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

This question also received clear cut responses and could be categorized into the four following categories –

- Respondents who said that Mulla Nasruddin tales are perceived in a good way in their country.
- Respondents who said that Mulla Nasruddin tales are perceived in both good and bad ways in their country.
- Respondents that left this question unanswered or said – Don't know.
- Respondents who gave unrelated answers.

The point here to be seen is that the highest column of this chart is the first one which shows that 57 out of 100 respondents said that Mulla Nasruddin tales are perceived in a good way in their country. Only one respondent said that these tales are perceived both in a good and bad ways. The important thing to note is that none of the respondents said that Mulla Nasruddin tales are perceived in a bad or negative way in their country.

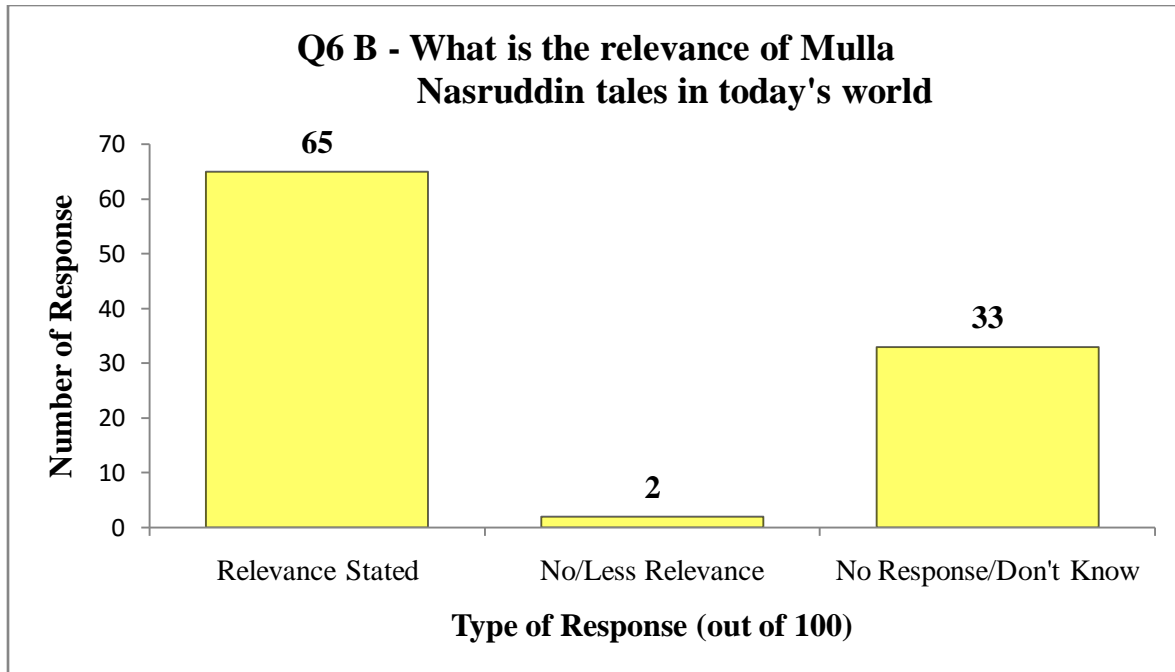
The following is the Pie Diagram which shows the percentage-wise representation of Q5 B.



**Fig. 48. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 5 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

- The sixth subjective-type question of Part B which has been codified as Q6 B in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **According to you what is the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin’s tales in today’s world?**

On the basis of the responses, the following Column Chart was created -



**Fig. 49. Column Chart for Question 6 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

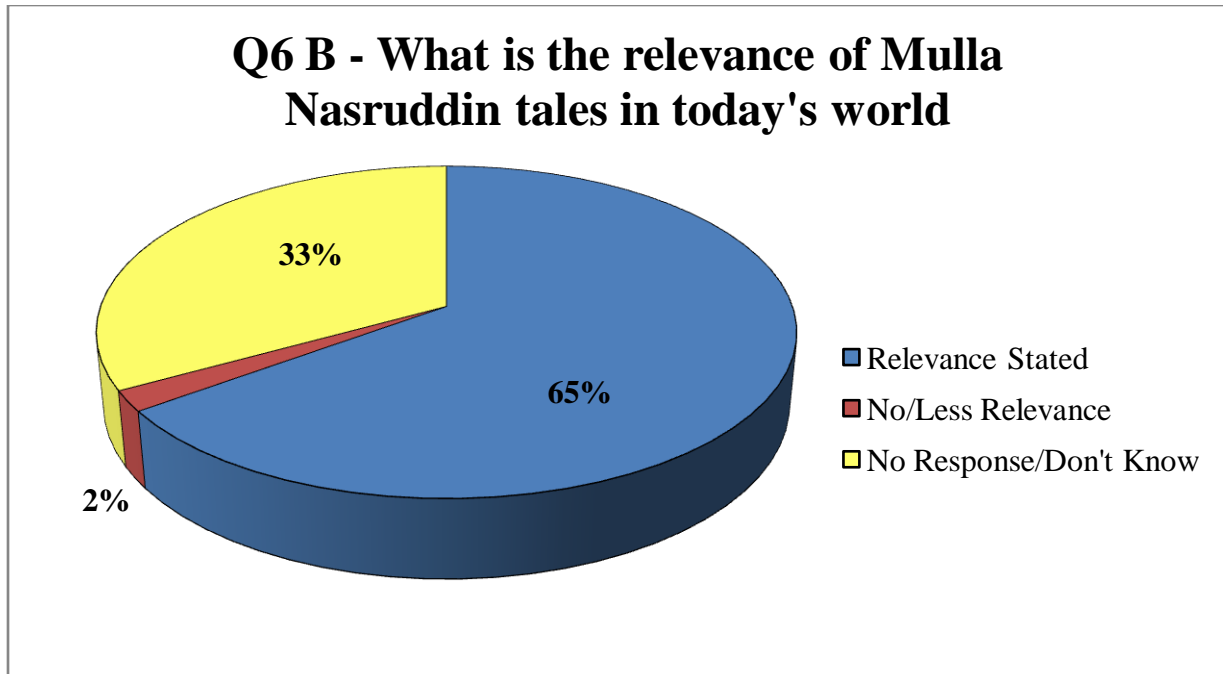
This question has three categories which are –

- Respondents who stated the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin tales in today’s world.
- Respondents who said that these tales are less relevant or have no relevance.
- Respondents who left the question unanswered or said – Don’t know.

The highest column is the first one in this chart which shows that 65 out of 100 respondents stated the relevance of these tales in today’s world which is also significant as 65% of respondents believe that folktales and specifically, Mulla Nasruddin tales have use in today’s modern tech-savvy world.

The following is the Pie Diagram which shows the percentage-wise representation of Q6 B.

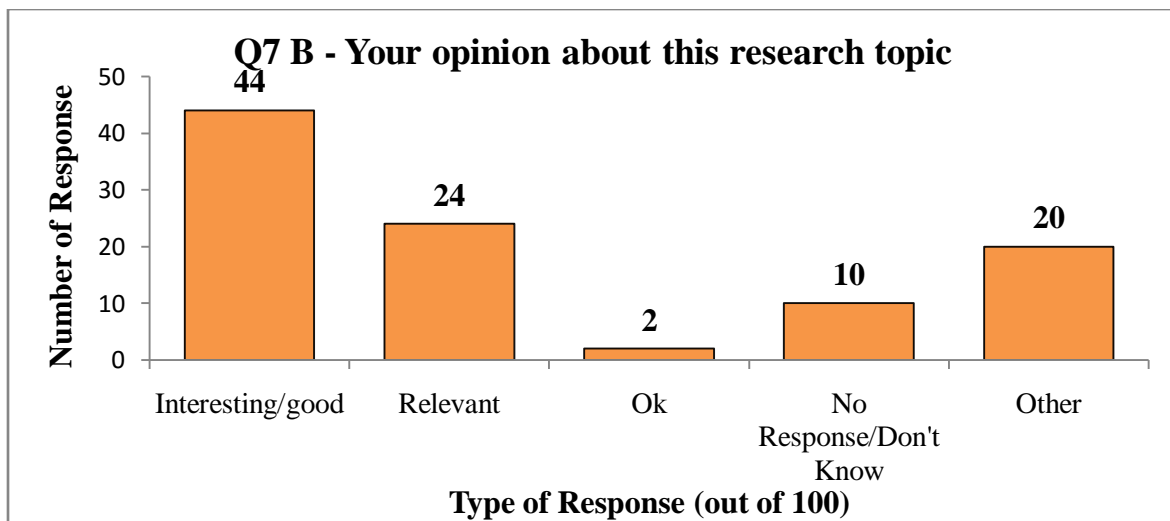




**Fig. 50. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 6 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

- The seventh subjective-type question of Part B which has been codified as Q7 B in the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was – **Kindly, give your opinion about the thesis title/ research topic.**

On the basis of the responses, the following Column Chart was created -



**Fig. 51. Column Chart for Question 7 of Part B of the Questionnaire.**

This was a personal question to find out about the validity of this research topic. Some responses were quite encouraging. The Column Chart shows that forty-four out of a hundred respondents found this topic interesting and/or good. Twenty-four out of a hundred respondents stated the relevance of this research topic in today's time which is encouraging. Ten respondents said that they don't know or they left this question unanswered.

The following is the Pie Diagram which shows the percentage-wise representation of Q7 B.

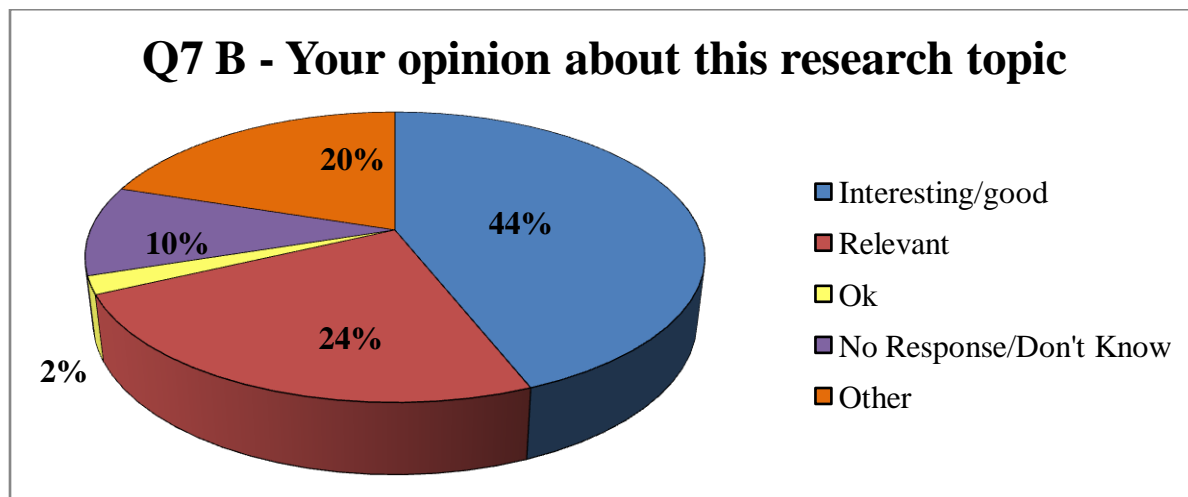


Fig. 52. Pie Diagram (Percentage wise) for Question 7 of Part B of the Questionnaire.

### 3. Showcasing some of the interesting responses to Part B of the questionnaire.

Some of the favorite responses question-wise are as follows –

- Question 1 B - **What according to you are Folktales?**
  - (i) *They are stories made by either traders or soldiers on their way. They would pick a character from real life and then develop other stories around that character. [2 (AF) F]*
  - (ii) *A folktale is a story, which began with oral storytelling passed down through the ages, teaches a lesson explains why things are as they are. [63 (RUS) F].*
  - (iii) *Народные Сказки - это творчество народа и сокровища народной культуры. В них выражаются ненависть к злу и надежда на прекрасное будущее. [12 (CH) F].*

The first response which was received from Afghanistan states that folktales are stories which are made by traders and soldiers and since these people traveled from one place to another, they helped spread these tales. This response may be connected to the Silk Road factor as in ancient and medieval times up to a point when sea-routes were not discovered, traders and soldiers travelled from one country to another via the Silk Road and carried these tales with them on the Silk Road and wherever they settled or halted, they told and retold these tales.

The third response is from China, and it is in Russian. Translated, it means that *Folktales are made by the folk, and they are treasures chests of folk culture. Hatred for evil and hope for a wonderful future are expressed in them.* This response being in Russian itself is surprising as it comes from China.

▪ Question 2 B – **According to you how folktales can be useful in learning?**

- (i) *The thing we learn from folktales is that great decision and great ideas are never forgotten. [31 (IND) M].*
- (ii) *Folktales are just not liked by the people also by children. It is not only a wonderful way to entertain but also an effective way to educate. By the folktales, we not only get to know about the "social lessons," but also we get the opportunity to know about the culture and language. [37 (IND) F].*
- (iii) *Mulla Nasruddin tales can teach moral conduct. [43 (KZ) F].*
- (iv) *В России есть поговорка: «Сказка ложь, да в ней намек, добрым молодцам урок», она трактуется так, что в каждом рассказе есть ситуации, которые, скорее всего, вымышлены, но которые хорошо демонстрируют поведение героев. Сказки учат, как можно поступать, а как не стоит. [68 (RUS) F].*

The last of these responses which is in Russian is the most interesting of them all. Translated into English it means that - *there is a saying in Russia: "A tale is a lie, but it has a hint, it is a lesson for the young"; it is interpreted in such a way that each tale has a situation which is most likely to be fictitious, but which portrays the behaviour of the heroes well. Fairy tales tell us how to behave and how not to behave.*

- Question 3 B – **Who was Mulla Nasruddin and by what name/title is he known in your country?**

In reply to this question, many respondents had something or the other to say about Mulla Nasruddin. A few examples of such responses are mentioned below.

- (i) *I am from Uzbekistan, and this person is very famous in our country. Moreover, most people in our country think that he is from our country, as he is told to live in Bukhara, a city in modern Uzbekistan. He is known as Nasriddin Afandi, or simply as Afandi in our country. [94 (UZ) M].*
- (ii) *In Kazakhstan, he is known as AldarKöse. Aldarköse, (native name Kazakh: Алдар көсе/Aldar köse) is a Kazakh folk fairy tale and name of the main character. He is collective image of the sly but very kind man. In fairy tales it is a swindler, cheating the greedy rich, evil Khans and helping the poor and weak people. The Historical Dictionary of Kazakhstan refers to him as a "creative liar." [39 (KZ) F].*
- (iii) *Ходжа Насреддин - сказочный персонаж, путешествующий по Востоку. Он попадает в различные сложные или смешные ситуации, из которых благодаря мудрости и смекалке выходит победителем. [54 (RUS) F].*

The last of these responses is in Russian; it says – *Khodja Nasreddin is a folk tale personality who travels around in the East. He comes across different complex or funny situations, out of which he comes out as a winner thanks to his wisdom and wit.*

- Question 4 B – **Which tale of Mulla Nasruddin is your favourite or which tale do you know?**

This question did not get many responses as forty-nine respondents out of hundred either left this question unanswered or said – don't know or don't remember.

- Question 5 B - **How are Mulla Nasruddin and his tales perceived in your country? (Whether in a good or bad way?)**

This was again a straight question with not much variety in the responses.

- Question 6 B – **According to you what is the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin tales in today’s world?**

The responses to this question were again quite interesting where 65% of the respondents gave the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin tales in today’s context. Some of the more interesting responses are as follows –

- (i) *From my perspective, although today's world is different compared with the past's world, humanity still has same conflicts, and his tales point out similar and universal elements. [87 (TUR) M].*
- (ii) *His tales alive, because they give us a good example to understand today's World from the point of past experiences. [84 (TUR) M].*
- (iii) *Mulla Nasruddin's short tales describe general idea of life, culture, ethic, and as for my opinion, these general values will never lose its importance. I think it is more relevant now, because, nowadays all over the world we have so many problems to be solved by peaceful means and methods. [92 (TM) F].*
- (iv) *Personally, I consider Kojo Nasirdin as an eternal character, integrated in our life and modified with our views, because of his humor and wisdom. He shows how it is funny to be arrogant, greedy or narrow-minded, so he teaches us to be better. [45 (KG) F].*
- (v) *Рассказы Моллы Насреддина имеют большое значение в современном мире, ведь каждый человек может найти что-то поучительное в похождениях этого, несомненно, великого персонажа. [57 (RUS) F].*
- (vi) *Рассказы Моллы Насреддина имеют огромное значение в фольклоре, литературе, так как в них есть смысл, содержание, заставляющие думать. Такие моральные ценности, как честность, дружба, совесть, преданность сейчас к сожалению потеряли всякий смысл, но почитав притчи выше указанного героя, невольно человек начинает задумываться о жизни в принципе. [38 (KZ) M].*

All these responses reiterate the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin tales in today’s world. The last two examples which are in Russian translate into English thus –

**Translation of the response number (v) of Respondent number 57 (RUS) F is –** *Mulla Nasruddin tales have great significance in today's world as every person can learn something from the adventures of this undoubtedly great personality.*

**Translation of the response number (vi) of Respondent number 38 (KZ) M is –** *Mulla Nasruddin tales have great value for the folklore, literature, as they have in them such meaning and content that makes one to contemplate. Such moral values as honesty, friendship, conscience, devotion which unfortunately today have lost meaning, but after reading the tales of the hero mentioned above, unwittingly a person starts to ponder basically about life.*

- **Question 7 B - Kindly, give your opinion about the research topic.**

In reality, Question number Q7 B was a personal one. More than a question, it was a request. It was asked to get some feedback regarding this research topic. The kind of responses about this research topic that were received from some of the respondents was fantastic as well as humbling. Some very special ones are mentioned below which in the true sense give this research topic the boost it needed.

- (i) *According to me, research on knowing about the importance of folktales and the views of the people on it is a good initiative as folk tales of different countries and its people helps to know a lot about its culture. [32 (IND) M].*
- (ii) *I think this topic is really interesting in the sense that till today I have not seen any scientific work on folktales topic. It would be interesting to see an analysis of Nasruddin's tales. [39 (KZ) F].*
- (iii) *It is great job done by you, unfortunately, very rare cases where research done on Hoja Nasreddin who was really great character of his time and he deserved to be discussed as equal as many poets and writers and etc. [93 (TM) F].*
- (iv) *This research topic was so unfamiliar for me because before this time I never heard about Mulla Nasruddin. But after analyzing this questionnaire, I got a curiosity to knowing more about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales. [37 (IND) F].*
- (v) *Меня заинтересовала эта тема, хотелось бы узнать больше. [68 (RUS) F].*  
(**Translation** - *This topic made me curious; I wish I could know more about it.*)
- (vi) *Поскольку нынешняя подрастающее поколение выросло на фильмах и мультфильмах созданных по сценарию американских комиксов, они видят героизм в физическом его понимании. Для воспитания молодого поколения не хватает моральных ценностей передаваемые нашим региональным*

фольклором. Я думаю проведение таких исследований в углубленных образовательных формах помогло бы в нравственном обучении молодого поколения. [89 (TM) M].

**(Translation –** *As the present young generation has grown up watching movies and cartoons which have been created on the basis of American comics, they understand heroism from a physical perspective. For educating the young generation the moral values given by our regional folklore do not seem to be enough. I think that conducting such type of in-depth research will help in teaching moral values to the young generation.*)

(vii) *Your research topic is very interesting, poetic and touching that can open new perspectives to understand Central Asian folklore as well as its people. I encourage you to continue your research in this passionate way and complete it with great achievements!* [45 (KG) F].

(viii) *Тема исследования является интересной. Рассказы Муллы Насреддин в Китае были очень популярны. И оказывается, этот персонаж тоже известен в других странах шелкового пути и даже в Индии. Об этом раньше мало слышали.* [12 (CH) F].

**(Translation –** *This research topic is interesting. The tales of Mulla Nasruddin were very popular in China. And, now it appears that this personality is also popular in other countries of the Silk Road and even in India. I did not know about this before.*)

(ix) *I appreciate this research and think that it would become one of the ties that connects Uzbekistan with India!* [94 (UZ) M].

(x) *I strongly believe that this topic will bring benefit in cross-cultural interaction.* [98 (UZ) F].

(xi) *I was expecting this research from a Turkish person but you did. Congratulations.* [83 (TUR) M].

(xii) *It's a very interesting topic which can reflect the cultural unity of human society at different regions of world.* [34 (IND) M].

(xiii) *Silk Road is a vast historical topic and its relevance to folktales is a good effort.* [2 (AF) F].

(xiv) *Even though Mulla Nasreddin is well-known figure in my culture, honestly I have never thought before the relevance between his tales and the Silk Road. The research*

- topic has provided a new point of view about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales. [87 (TUR) M].*
- (xv) *This topic is worth to mention to show which roles the Silk Road had in cultural context and to understand the importance of the literal culture on society. [82 (TUR) F].*
- (xvi) *Данная тема затрагивает вопросы, связанные с Шелковым путем, что является на сегодняшний день темой номер один в связи с возрождением и попыткой создать новый шелковый путь в 21 веке. Что касается Ходжи Насреддина и его историй в рамках этого исследования, то, конечно, обращение к нашим истокам и попытка обнаружить их связь с сегодняшним днем будет актуальной всегда. [55 (RUS) F].*  
*(Translation – The current topic addresses the issues related to the Silk Road, which today is the number one topic with relation to the revival and attempt to create a new Silk Road in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As for Khodja Nasreddin and his tales within the framework of this research, of course, paying attention to our origins and attempt to detect their connection to today’s world will always be relevant.)*
- (xvii) *Интересная анкета, в тот момент я уже начинаю думать связь между Шёлковым Путью и Моллой Насреддиной. [16 (CH) F].*  
*(Translation – It is an interesting questionnaire, I have already started thinking about the connection between the Silk Road and Mulla Nasruddin.)*

The first three responses state the importance of carrying out research on folklore and folktales and also mention that Mulla Nasruddin and his tales should be researched more. The next two responses i.e. responses number (iv) & (v) are encouraging because they state that this research topic made them interested to know more about this Mulla Nasruddin character and his tales. Response number (vi) which is in Russian is a great response because here the respondent states the current type of heroes that the young generation admires watching especially Hollywood movies that show that physical strength is everything in a hero. But the young generation should also know that moral strength is equally important. Mulla Nasruddin tales may show and teach that moral strength to the young generation of today. This gives relevance to this research topic. Responses (vii), (viii), (ix), (x) & (xi) are all about the Silk Road countries and their cross-cultural interactions which this topic might highlight more. Responses (xiii), (xiv), (xv), (xvi) & (xvii) are about the Silk Road and its connection with Mulla Nasruddin tales.



## 4. Findings.

All the Column Charts and Pie Diagrams mentioned above show the overall results of this survey where a hundred respondents from ten different Silk Road countries of the Asian Region participated and replied to the questionnaire.

But, some discrepancies were noticed in these responses gender-wise, age-wise, and country-wise as well. These are discussed below one by one.

### 4.1. Gender-wise Findings.

This factor is taken first as it is a minor factor in this survey. Most of the respondents were females. Out of hundred respondents that filled this questionnaire, sixty-four were females and thirty-six were males. But, as per the analysis of these questionnaires, the gender did not influence the responses of the respondents much.

### 4.2. Age-wise Findings.

As far as age is concerned, the questionnaire targeted an age group of people from eighteen to forty which might be considered as the 'young adult population.' But, some responses were received from people older than this age group as well. Here, it has been found that the younger respondents of any of these selected countries know less about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, especially people from the age group of eighteen to twenty-five years. Respondents who are above thirty years of age knew or at least heard about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales. Though, in both the cases, exceptions are there. The familiarity with Mulla Nasruddin and his tales also depend upon the country these respondents belong to.

### 4.3. Country-wise Findings.

Country-wise, the responses and their results were more decisive. Given below is an analysis of these findings country-wise alphabetically –

- **Afghanistan** – Only two respondents participated from Afghanistan – one male and one female, both above forty years of age. Both of them replied YES to most of the questions of Part A of the questionnaire. But the female respondent replied in negative to the last three YES/NO questions and also the question about relevance of Mulla Nasruddin tales which was question number 11 of Part A.

They also replied to all the questions in Part B of the questionnaire. The female respondent did not seem to think that these tales are relevant in today's day and age as electronic media has taken over written one. But they both agreed that Mulla Nasruddin and his tales are popular in their country.

- **China** – The second largest response has been received from China. Out of twenty-one respondents, only one was male. In China, all the respondents who participated were under thirty years of age, and except for six respondents, everyone knew about Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, albeit by a different name of Mulla Nasruddin which was *Afanty*, *Afangti* or *Avanti*. More than 65% of the respondents from China agreed that Mulla Nasruddin tales are popular in their country. Also, everyone except for one knew about the Silk Road. Almost every respondent from China agreed that folktales are connected to culture, and relevant to society.
- **India** – All the respondents from India were males except for one. In India irrespective of gender and age, most of the respondents never heard of Mulla Nasruddin and his tales – eight respondents out of fourteen, replied NO to the sixth question of Part A of the questionnaire. Nine respondents out of fourteen said that Mulla Nasruddin tales are not popular in India. But other than one respondent, everyone does believe that folktales are connected with culture. Also, everyone except for one respondent has heard about the Silk Road, and except for three, everyone responded YES to India being a part of the Silk Road.
- **Kazakhstan** – Kazakhstan had six respondents – three males and three females; three of the respondents were below thirty and three above thirty. Other than just one respondent who was nineteen, everyone else had heard about Mulla Nasruddin, and agreed that his tales are popular in Kazakhstan. Every respondent from Kazakhstan agrees that folktales are connected to culture, and everyone has heard about the Silk Road. Most of the respondents from Kazakhstan equated Mulla Nasruddin with Aldar Kose who might be considered an 'equivalent figure' of Mulla Nasruddin in Kazakhstan which this research topic already mentioned in the earlier chapters.
- **Kyrgyzstan** – There were two respondents from Kyrgyzstan – both females, one below thirty and one above thirty years of age. Both of them had heard of Mulla Nasruddin, but the one above thirty thought that he is popular in their country and the one below thirty said NO. Both agreed that folktales are relevant to society and connected with culture. Both the respondents have heard about the Silk Road. The older respondent has named Aldar Kose as an 'equivalent figure' of Mulla Nasruddin in her country.

- **Russia** – Russia sent the maximum number of responses for this survey with thirty-one respondents, out of which only two were males. Seventeen respondents out of thirty-one said that they have heard of Mulla Nasruddin. Coming from Russia this is an important discovery. Most of the respondents that said YES to hearing about Mulla Nasruddin are in their late twenties and above thirty, and those that said NO are mostly below twenty-three years of age. But to the question – Is he popular in your country, twenty-nine out of thirty-one said NO. Most of them could not name Mulla Nasruddin or any one of his tales. Each of these respondents agreed that folktales are connected with culture. All the respondents had heard of the Silk Road, except for four.
- **Tajikistan** – There were five respondents from Tajikistan – four males and one female, all above thirty years of age. All the respondents had heard about Mulla Nasruddin and said that his tales are popular in Tajikistan. And all of them agreed that folktales are connected with culture and are relevant to society. All of them had also heard about the Silk Road.
- **Turkey** – There were seven respondents from Turkey – six males and one female. All were twenty-five and above in age. All the respondents had heard about Mulla Nasruddin and agreed that Mulla Nasruddin is popular in their country. They all said that they like his tale. Most of them said that Mulla Nasruddin is known as Nasreddin Hoca in Turkey, and could name at least one of his tales. All of them also agreed that folktales are connected with culture and relevant to society. They all had heard about the Silk Road as well.  
It is necessary to say here that most positive responses have been received from Turkey. One of the respondents from Turkey gave an amusing feedback regarding this research topic, which is - *I was expecting this research from a Turkish person but you did. Congratulations.* [83 (TUR) M].
- **Turkmenistan** – There were five respondents from Turkmenistan – three females and two males, all except one were over twenty-six years of age. All the respondents including the nineteen-year-old had heard of Mulla Nasruddin and his tales, and said that he is popular in their country. They all agreed that folktales are connected with culture and relevant to society. All of them also knew about the Silk Road.
- **Uzbekistan** – There were seven respondents – four males and three females, all except for two were above thirty. All of them had heard of Mulla Nasruddin, and most of them could name at least one of his tales. And all agreed that Mulla Nasruddin is popular in their country. Also, all of them knew about the Silk Road.

This survey was exceptionally informative and helpful in establishing the relevance of this research topic. Some of the responses are also very encouraging and reiterate the fact that neither the Silk Road nor Mulla Nasruddin and his tales are obsolete. These tales are still popular along the Silk Road and they are relevant to today's society as well.

# CONCLUSION

Carrying out a sociolinguistic study of Mulla Nasruddin tales with the help of contrastive method to prove the hypothesis that the legendary Silk Road had a role to play in the spread of these tales along the countries that are connected since ancient times by this road was a fruitful one. The fact that these tales are not only present in the Silk Road countries, especially belonging to Asia, but are also popular in most of them was the basis of forming this hypothesis. It has to be more than a coincidence that similar or the same tale is present in almost all of the Asian countries through which the legendary Silk Road passes. Hence, this study was carried out and some interesting conclusions are drawn from it.

In my opinion, this research study is successful in not only proving the hypothesis mentioned above, but also making some interesting discoveries along the way. These discoveries were made with the help of the questionnaire that was sent to ten Asian Silk Road countries starting from Turkey which is considered to be the birth place of Mulla Nasruddin up to China which is the originator of the silk trade. The survey yielded some amusing results country-wise. Ultimately, it was a successful survey with a total of hundred respondents replying to this questionnaire from these ten different countries and giving their opinion about this research topic.

This study was carried out with the help of people from ten countries which are not only very different from each other in their geographical features and historical background, but are also linguistically diverse, in the sense that they each have their unique languages and this was a hindering factor in this research. This is discussed under the 'limitations'.

## **Limitations of this study**

There were some limitations and difficulties that were faced during this study because of the simple fact that the tales of Mulla Nasruddin that were collected and then selected for this study were in different languages because these tales were collected from different countries of the Silk Road which have their own languages like the Central Asian countries, especially Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The translations of these tales could not be found, hence they had to be translated either into Russian or English with the help of a person who is a native of these countries, and these tales were then studied and analyzed in the translated versions, either in

English or in Russian. There was no way of verifying the authenticity of these translations due to lack of knowledge of the many languages that these tales are found in. But, some of the tales are in their original languages like those that are from India (in Hindi and in Bengali) and Russia.

## **Practical Implications of Mulla Nasruddin Tales**

Mulla Nasruddin tales are short, and they are written in simple language for the common people to understand, especially children. They are also funny and hence, easy to remember. All these qualities of Mulla Nasruddin tales make them viable tools in teaching Russian language, especially to the beginners.

The students who are beginners in learning the Russian language are first taught to read the language with the help of short stories which are easy as well as interesting. There are such courses in Russian language for the beginners as *Izlozheniye* (which means text comprehension) where the students have to listen to a text for a few times, and then have to write or recite from their memory as much as they remember it. Also, for enhancing the reading skills of the students short texts are very helpful. Mulla Nasruddin tales are perfect for such courses. Mulla Nasruddin tales which are in Russian are easy to read for their simple language and short length, and they are easy to remember as they are witty. I have used these tales myself for reading skill enhancement of my students of the Russian Certificate course. It is satisfying and encouraging for the beginners also when they are able to read a text in the new language that they are learning.

Recently, at a scholars' meet of Centre of Russian Studies, SLL&CS, I found out that one of the senior professors (retired now), Prof. H.C. Pande, used these Mulla Nasruddin tales to teach his students of Russian language the Russian verbs of motion which are called *Glagoly Dvizheniya*, as these tales are full of them. One example maybe given as a Russian version of Mulla Nasruddin tale which is titled – “**Пар от Еды**” (*Par ot Yedi*) which means *Steam from Food*. This is one of the selected tales for this study as it is a popular tale in all the shortlisted countries. It starts with a sentence that has one of the verbs of motion – *проходить мимо* (*Prokhodeech Meemo*) which means *to pass by*. This tale has many other verbs of motion too. This was encouraging and reinforcing for me because it fortifies my belief that these tales can be used to teach the beginners Russian grammar, reading skill and comprehension.

## Heuristic Value (Future Research)

The similarities in the plots and folk figures found during the course of this contrastive study were overwhelming. These kinds of similarities open up a lot of avenues in the field of comparative as well as contrastive studies in Folktales. There has to be a reason that these tales are so popular and continue to exist and get modified according to the changing times. Mulla Nasruddin tales existed when there was no written literature, and they exist now when there are so many forms of written literature, and yet the popularity of his tales did not decrease with time. Jeremy Schiff says this regarding the very popular, timeless, boundary-less character of Mulla Nasruddin – *"The new Nasreddin Hodja stories that emerge and the old ones that are adapted prove that these stories are immortal...In other words, as light attracts moths, Nasreddin Hodja character attracts new stories."*<sup>215</sup>

In the end, I would like to conclude this research with a Mulla Nasruddin tale that will give some food for thought. Kindly, do not consider this tale a joke. Give this tale a thought; it will show the practical implications of Mulla Nasruddin tales even in today's time. The tale is from Turkey, the birthplace of Mulla Nasruddin, and it is titled – **'Performing Ablutions.'**<sup>216</sup>

*One day a person from Nasreddin Hodja's congregation asked, "Which way is a person supposed to face while he is performing the **ghusl** ablution in the lake? (**Ghusl** is a special ablution performed in Islam that requires washing the entire body.)*

*Hodja replied: "You should face where your clothes are!"*

**Moral of the tale as I interpret:** It is good to be religious, but better to be practical!

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<sup>215</sup> Jeremy Schiff, "Nasreddin Hodja", *Hodja Stories*, n.d., Web, 20 July 2014  
<<http://u.cs.biu.ac.il/~schiff/NET/front.html>>.

<sup>216</sup> Mustafa Ozelik, *Nasreddin Hodja: Eponym for Wit and Wisdom* (NY, USA and Izmir, Turkey: Blue Dome Press, 2011) 85.

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# **LIST OF SELECTED TALES OF MULLA NASRUDDIN**

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1. Tale Number One	<b>Whom Do You Believe?</b>	<b>65</b>
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

**1. C.I.S. – Commonwealth of Independent States** – which as of 2014 includes Russia and the following countries of Former Soviet Republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan. (Georgia left this alliance in 2008). Turkmenistan and Ukraine are unofficial members of this alliance.<sup>217</sup>

**2. U.N.E.S.C.O. - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.**

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<sup>217</sup> “What Countries are in the CIS?” *Reference*, n.d., Web, 10 April 2017  
<<https://www.reference.com/geography/countries-cis-6da54e62f08c380e>>.

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# APPENDIX I

## PHD QUESTIONNAIRE

### Ph.D Topic

Tales of Mulla Nasruddin in C.I.S. Countries of Silk Road Region and India:

### A Sociolinguistic Study

### Тема

«Рассказы Моллы Насреддина в странах СНГ Шелкового Пути и в Индии:

Социолингвистическое Исследование»

### Questionnaire:

### Опросный лист:

### Part A

### Часть А

Please Tick (✓) one of the options:

Отметьте галочкой (✓) один из вариантов:

1. Do you know what 'Folktales' are?

Yes

No

Знаете ли вы что такое 'народные сказки'?

2. Can you name any folktale you read?

Yes

No

Можете ли вы назвать какую-то сказку, которую вы когда-нибудь читали?

3. Did you know that there is a category of Folktales called *Trickster Tales*?

Yes

No

Знали ли вы, что есть такая категория сказок, которая называется *сказками обманщика*?

4. Do you think folktales are connected with culture?  Yes  No  
Как вы думаете, связаны ли народные сказки с культурой?
5. Do you think folktales are relevant to society?  Yes  No  
По вашему мнению, имеют ли народные сказки отношение к обществу?
6. Have you ever heard of Mulla Nasruddin?  Yes  No  
Вы когда-нибудь слышали о Молле Насреддине?
7. Do you know which country he belongs to?  Yes  No  
Знаете ли вы откуда он? (Из какой страны)
8. Do you know any one of his tales?  Yes  No  
Помните ли вы какой-то его рассказ?
9. Do you like his tales?  Yes  No  
Нравятся ли вам его рассказы?
10. Is he or his tales popular in your country?  Yes  No  
Популярен ли он или его рассказы в вашей стране?
11. Do you feel that these tales are relevant to your country?  Yes  No  
Как вы думаете, имеют ли эти рассказы какое-нибудь отношение к вашей стране?
12. Have you heard of the Silk Road?  Yes  No  
Слышали ли вы о Шёлковом Пути?



13. Does the Silk Road start from China?  Yes  No  
Начинается ли этот путь из Китая?
14. Was India a part of the Silk Road?  Yes  No  
Была ли Индия частью Шёлкового Пути?
15. Do you know the connection between Mulla Nasruddin and Silk Road?  Yes  No  
Знаете ли вы, какая связь между рассказами Моллы Насреддина и Шёлковым Путём?
16. Have you heard of a terminology called *Common Cultural Zone* in connection with the Silk Road?  Yes  No  
Слышали ли вы терминологию *Общий Культурный Регион* в связи с Шёлковым Путём?
17. Do you feel that Mulla Nasruddin tales are relevant today?  Yes  No  
Как вы чувствуете, имеют ли рассказы Моллы Насреддина какое-то значение в сегодняшнее время?
18. Do you know that Mulla Nasruddin tales are used as “*Teaching Tales*” in Sufism?  Yes  No  
Знаете ли вы, что рассказы Моллы Насреддина используются как «*Учебные Сказки*» в Суфизме?
19. Do you know of any other such figure as Mulla Nasruddin?  Yes  No  
Знаете ли вы какого-то народного героя, который похож на Моллу Насреддина?

**Part B.**  
**Часть В**

Please give short answers to the following questions.

Дайте, пожалуйста, краткие ответы на следующие вопросы.

1. What according to you are Folktales?

По вашему мнению, что такое «Народные Сказки»?

---

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2. According to you how folktales can be useful in learning?

По вашему мнению, как народные сказки могут быть использованы для обучения?

---

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3. Who was Mulla Nasruddin and by what name/title is he known in your country?

Кто был Молла Насреддин и как его называют в вашей стране? (Его имя и титул)

---

---

4. Which tale of Mulla Nasruddin is your favourite or which tale do you know (Write the title of this tale)?

Какой рассказ Моллы Насреддина является самым любимым для вас или какой его рассказ вы знаете/помните? (Напишите название этого рассказа).

---

---

5. How are Mulla Nasruddin and his tales perceived in your country? (Whether in a good or bad way?)

Как воспринимается Молла Насреддин и его рассказы в вашей стране? (в хорошем смысле или в плохом?)

---

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6. According to you what is the relevance of Mulla Nasruddin's tales in today's world?

По вашему мнению, какое значение имеют рассказы Моллы Насреддина в современном мире?

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7. Kindly, give your opinion about the above-mentioned research topic.

Выскажите, пожалуйста, своё мнение о вышеуказанной теме исследования.

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**Participant's Info (Информация об участнике)**

1. Age - (Возраст)
2. Gender - (Пол)
3. Country - (Страна)

By

**Mona Agnihotri  
Ph.D Scholar  
Centre of Russian Studies  
SLL&CS, JNU**

# **APPENDIX II**

## **Microsoft Excel Workbook**

Ph.D Questionnaire

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1 (AF) M	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
2 (AF) F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
4 (CH) F	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5 (CH) F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6 (CH)F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
7 (CH) F	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
8 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
9 (CH) F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10 (CH)F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
11 (CH) F	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
12 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
13 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
15 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
16 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
17 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18 (CH) F	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
19 (CH) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
20 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
21 (CH) F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
22 (CH) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
23 (CH) F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
24 (IND) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
25 (IND) M	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
26 (IND) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
27 (IND) M	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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29 (IND) M	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
30 (IND) M	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2
31 (IND) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
32 (IND) M	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
33 (IND) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
34 (IND) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
35 (IND) M	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
36 (IND) M	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
37 (IND) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
38 (KZ) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
39 (KZ) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
40 (KZ) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
41 (KZ) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
42 (KZ) M	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

43 (KZ) F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
44 (KG) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
45 (KG) F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
46 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
47 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
48 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
49 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
50 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
51 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
52 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
53 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1
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76 (RUS) F	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
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93 (TM) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
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100 (UZ) F	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1



<u>Q10 A</u>	<u>Q11 A</u>	<u>Q12 A</u>	<u>Q13 A</u>	<u>Q14 A</u>	<u>Q15 A</u>	<u>Q16 A</u>	<u>Q17 A</u>	<u>Q18 A</u>	<u>Q19 A</u>
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2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1
2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1
2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1
2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
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1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1

1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	2	1	2	0	2	2
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1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1
1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1

<u>Q1 B</u>	<u>Q2 B</u>	<u>Q3 B</u>	<u>Q4 B</u>	<u>Q5 B</u>	<u>Q6 B</u>	<u>Q</u>
It is made by people	3 Very much. If we a	1 Mullah was a wi	2 The big and the s	1 Not much in a b	1 It gives the facts an	1
They are stories	3 They play a role in	3 Mullah Nasrudd	2 The Rain and Mu	1 Just for fun or h	4 Not much. In this	2
Древние истори	5 В школах и детстк	3 Прошу прощени	4 Прошу прощени	3 Прошу прощени	3 Прошу прощение.	3
Different people	9 To be a wise man.	1 The name is Afa	1 He is very cute ar	4 We could learn t	1 Don't know	3
Юрий Норштей	9 Любой	6 阿凡提 (A fanxi)	1 Я люблю все	4 В хорошем смы	1 Он умный человек	1
Сказки из наст	5 В-первых много д	3 Герой из сказка	2 Насреддин и Бос	1 В хорошем смы	1 Ученное мнение и	1
Это сказки, кот	5 Через народные с	1 阿凡提 (A fanxi)	1 《阿凡提的故事	1 В хорошем смы	1 Он выражает связ	1
Народные Сказ	7 Сказки, которые и	1 阿凡提 (Авант	1 Сбыт тени дерев	1 В хорошем, он	1 Он очень хороший	1
Это сказки, кот	1 В народных сказк	1 Он уйгурский к	1 О том, как Молл	1 В хорошем смы	1 Мудрость победит	1
Народные Сказ	3 По-моему, от нар	1 阿凡提 (Авант	1 Посадка золота	1 В хорошем. Он	1 Каждому народу н	1
Это одна из фо	1 Используется как	3 Не знаю	4 тоже не знаю	3 Может быть в х	1 Дорогие качесва д	1
Народные Сказ	3 В некоторых наро	1 阿凡提Аванти	1 Индюшка Молл	1 В хорошем смы	1 Рассказы Моллы I	1
«Народные Ска	1 Можно использо	3 По-моему, в Ки	1 Я просто слыша	3 В хорошем смы	1 Доброта, смелость	1
Народные Сказ	7 Сказки, которые и	1 阿凡提 (Авант	1 Сбыт тени дерев	1 В хорошем, он	1 Он очень хороший	1
Древние истори	5 В школах и детстк	3 Прошу прощени	4 Прошу прощени	3 Прошу прощени	3 Не знаю	3
«Народные Ска	1 Можно использо	3 По-моему, в Ки	1 Я просто слыша	3 В хорошем смы	1 Доброта, смелость	1
Это народные и	2 В сказке имеет хо	1 Афанти. Мудр	1 Осёл умеет гово	1 Он нанёс злым	1 Он является симв	1
Don't Know	9 for children educati	3 Dont know	4 Don't know	3 Don't know	3 Don't know	3
Tales especially	4 Through parents; n	6 Never heard	4 Never heard	3 Not sure	3 Not sure	3
short story with	5 i dont know .	5 philosopher and	1 Nasreddin's keys	1 in a good way	1 In many regions, N	1
Народные сказк	1 Родители должн	3 阿凡提 Афанти	1 Не знаю точное	3 Я смотрела его	1 Он показывает на	1
Это фольклор, в	1 Народные сказки	6 纳鲁鲁丁阿凡提	1 Осёл-вор	1 В хорошем смы	1 Его рассказы пом	1
На мой взгляд,	8 Думаю можно пре	3 Я только помн	2 “Сажать золото”	1 Китайская изве	1 Хотя теперь тот м	1
Folktales means	2 Folktales has a mo	4 In Turkey, he is	1 "The man on the	2 His tales is more	1 I think most of peo	1
Folktales are use	2 Folktales can be a	4 I think, he is not	3 None.	3 Don't know	3 No Idea about this.	3
These are Stories	8 Folktales are narrat	3 No idea	4 I did not read any	3 No idea.	3 No Idea.	3
Folktales are like	8 Folktales are very v	4 Mulla Nasruddir	1 Still I didn't read	3 In good way, but	1 Yes, Mulla Nasrud	1
Folktales are stor	4 Most folk stories er	2 No idea.	4 No idea.	3 No idea.	3 No idea.	3
Folktales are the	3 Folktales could be	1 I don't know.	4 I haven't read any	3 I don't know.	3 No Idea about this.	3
Folktales are tho	9 Folktales are useful	2 I don't know.	4 I don't know.	3 I don't know.	3 I don't know.	3
Folktales are son	9 The thing we learn	1 Don't know the s	4 I have not read ar	3 I am not sure bec	3 Don't know about	3
These are short s	6 Folktales are usuall	3 I have not heard	4 I have not heard	3 I do not know ab	3 Can not comment	3
Folktales are shc	5 Yes folktales are ve	4 I don't know abc	4 I never heard his	3 I don't know	3 I don't know	3
Stories heard fro	2 It reveals the socio-	2 He was a wise m	2 Don't remember.	3 Good way, havin	1 The tales were full	1
Story being pass	1 They are short, swe	4 Same name.	2 Don't know.	3 Good way.	1 Based on humour a	1
Folktales are a n	9 Yes, folktales are e	1 He is known as s	2 I know his famou	2 His tales are mos	4 The relevance I per	1
Folktales are shc	6 Folktales are just n	1 Mulla Nasruddir	2 “A Dinner of Sm	1 No idea about th	3 No idea about this.	3
Народные сказк	5 Особенности и усл	3 Молла Насредд	1 Пригча о Ходже	1 Литературный г	4 Рассказы Моллы I	1
The tales are kin	2 May be. The tales c	4 In Kazakhstan h	1 Honestly I do not	3 Kazakhstanis Al	4 The relevance of M	1
Folktales is tales	3 Yes, of course. Foll	4 He is protagonis	2 Are you asleep?	1 I don't know exa	3 Young generation	1
It is a short story	6 It's really importan	3 He is a populist	2 Unfortunately, I	3 I suppose in a gc	1 I think he's giving	1
Устное художес	1 В воспитательных	3 Алдар Косе	1 Пригча о Ходже	1 В шутках	4 Рассказы Моллы I	1

Any belief or sto	2	Mulla Nasruddin ta	4	He is considered	2	back to front	1	Good	1	In these stories the	1
Folktales are one	8	It can be useful in l	1	Mulla Nasrudin	3	I know just one ta	1	Don't Know.	3	It is interesting to c	1
It is popular oral	5	It can be useful to t	2	He is known in t	1	'How Kodjo Nasi	1	Obviously, his ri	4	Personally, I consc	1
Это созданные с	2	Читать их, перека:	1	Не знаю	4	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
Это сказки, рож	3	Они правоучитель	1	Народный сказа	2	Название, к сож:	3	Воспринимаютс	1	Они актуальны во	1
Произведения р	7	Как примеры, отр:	1	Фольклорный п	2	No Response	3	Хорошем.	1	Поучительное.	1
Народная сказк:	3	В сказках даются :	3	Я не знаю его.	4	Не читала его ра	3	Не знаю.	3	Не знаю.	3
Сказки, которы	9	Жадная старуха, с	6	No response	4	No Response	3	No Response	3	No Response	3
Сказки, которы	7	В любых произвед	1	Не знаю	4	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
Истории, сочин	3	Как любой другой	6	В русских сказк	2	Не люблю расск:	4	Разнопланово	4	Такое, как и всегд	1
Это сказки, при	3	Безсомнения. В на	1	Ходжа Насредд	1	Не помню.	3	В детстве я чита	4	Мудрость человек	1
Сказки, которы	3	Они могут многое	1	Ходжа Насредд	1	Не знаю	3	В хорошем	1	Они поучительны,	1
устное народно	1	Народные сказки с	1	Ходжа Насредд	1	в сожалению, не	3	с интересом	4	Продолжают учит	1
Народные сказк	3	С помощью народ	3	Не знаю	4	Я, к сожалению,	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
Это один из жа	3	Сказки дают возм	4	Восточный муд	2	«Приключения в	1	В хорошем смы	1	Рассказы Моллы I	1
Произведения у	3	В качестве демонс	1	Собирательный	1	Не знаю	3	юмористически	4	поучительное	1
Сказки, в котор	9	Как примеры ловк	1	Молла Насредд	1	"Волосок к воло	1	скорее в хорошк	1	урок мудрости для	1
Сказки, переда	2	Народные сказки :	1	Не знаю	4	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
Это уникальное	2	Через сказку деть	3	К сожалению я	4	К сожалению я :	3	К сожалению я	3	К сожалению я не	3
Это история, ко	3	Через сказку ребе	3	Фольклорный п	1	Точка зрения	1	В хорошем	1	Во всех его расска	1
A folktale is a st	1	Folktales fit in not	4	I don't know	4	I don't know	3	I don't know	3	I don't know	3
Это сказки, кот	2	Народные сказки :	4	Не знаю его	4	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
устное народно	1	Не смотря на то, ч	1	я не знаю, кто т	4	No Response	3	Наверное, в хор	1	Не знаю	3
«Продукт» устн	1	Творческое развип	4	Не знаю его	4	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
Это история или	3	Одной из народны	1	Фольклорный п	2	К сожалению, не	3	Я думаю, что в	1	Поучительное зна	1
Народные сказк	5	В России есть пог	1	Я не знаю.	4	No Response	3	No Response	3	No Response	3
Народные сказк	9	Сказки учат прем	1	Джалил Гусейн	2	No Response	3	Думаю, что в хс	1	Думаю, что расск:	1
Народные сказк	1	Народные сказки :	2	Не могу ответи	4	Не могу ответит	3	Не могу ответит	3	Не могу ответить,	3
Выдуманные ис	5	Разогрыватьс по	6	Ходжа Насредд	1	Про соль и шерс	1	В хорошем	1	Я думаю, что они	1
Сказки, рожден	3	Да, могут.	6	Ходжа Насредд	1	Не помню.	3	В хорошем	1	Не могу ответить :	3
Народные сказк	2	В сказках мудрост	1	Не знаю	4	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
Сказка, рассказ,	3	В качестве нравст	4	Ходжа Насредд	1	Молла Насредди	1	В хорошем.	1	Моральное или ре	1
Сказки придум:	3	В качестве чтения	3	No response	4	No Response	3	No Response	3	поучительное	1
Это вымышлен	5	С общеобразовате	2	Не знаю	4	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3	Не знаю	3
Он один из вид	9	Легендарные	6	Его звали как Н	1	No Response	3	И в хорошем см	2	Не знаю	3
Произведение у	1	Для обучения и во	1	Молла Насредд	1	Молла Насредди	3	В хорошем	1	??	3
Часть народной	8	Снять мультфиль	3	Юмористически	1	Мулла Насридди	1	В хорошем смы	1	Пропаганда народ	1
Народные расс:	7	Дополнительные :	6	Герой юморист	1	Афанди и его ос	1	В хорошем смы	1	Выражение мысл	1
Это короткие ра	2	Нужно выбрать ск	1	Герой народны	1	Однажды, желая	4	В основном в хс	1	Театр это зеркало,	1
Folktales are shc	6	In the past, folktale	1	Mulla Nasruddir	1	"Everyone is Rigl	1	Mulla Nasruddir	1	The themes and pu	1
Way of life	9	Imagining from the	6	Nasreddin Hoca	1	Making Dahi in ε	1	Best teacher in tl	4	It is a good exampl	1
They are historic	5	Yes, it may give us	1	I dont know exac	4	Let Me have Ten	1	He is known wel	1	His tales alive, bec	1
Folktales are shc	6	I think, folktales re	4	Mulla Nasreddin	1	I know many of tl	1	Everybody likes	1	I think, Nasreddin	1
Summaries of ev	5	They can be useful	4	He is called Nasi	1	My favourite is of	1	They have been j	1	They are related in	1
Folktales are cul	8	The crucial messag	1	Mulla Nasruddir	1	My favourite tale	1	Mulla Nasreddin	1	From my perspecti	1

I'm interested to **9** I am a teacher in a **3** Nasreddin Hoca **1** Curdling The Lal **2** Nasreddin Hoca **1** These tales are tim **1**  
 Народное творч **2** Сказки могут пом **1** Ходжа Насредд **1** Как Ходжа Наср **1** Как человек вы **4** Они неизменны п **1**  
 The tales that ha **7** In my humble opin **1** He is super cool **2** Unfortunately not **3** Generally positiv **1** I think they are ver **1**  
 Сказки, которы **3** Никаких **6** Насреддин Ход **1** Про верблюда **1** Может быть в х **1** Просто как шутки **2**  
 Folktales are the **6** On my opinion, ev **1** Mulla Nasruddir **1** Baklava is the mc **1** Short stories and **1** Mulla Nasruddin's **1**  
 Tales, which wei **5** For children even f **4** We in my countr **1** I do not remembe **4** Of course good, **1** All tales of Mulla **1**  
 Folk tales are the **2** The folktales that a **1** I am from Uzbek **1** The one which is **4** All of his tales a **1** In his tales we can **1**  
 Folklore stories l **9** Through folktales t **2** A joker, he is kn **1** "If God wants, I **1** In a good way. **1** His tales are very u **1**  
 A tale or legend **1** Folklore and folkta **3** He was consider **1** There are many f **4** Mulla Nasruddir **1** There are many use **1**  
 Фольклор народ **1** Основным на пра **6** Ходжа́ Насредд **1** Тамерлан и Афа **1** Имеется хорош **1** Имеет воспитател **1**  
 Folktales are sto **1** They could increas **1** He was a popula **2** Stories about che **4** In a good humor **1** Don't Know **3**  
 Folktales are fict **3** One can be aware c **2** Mulla Nasruddir **1** I don't remember **4** It perceived in a **1** It shows the nation **1**  
 An interesting ta **5** It helps us to be sm **1** He is the main p **1** One day Nasridi **1** In a good way **1** Nowadays the char **1**

<u>Q7 B</u>	<u>Q7 B (Code)</u>	<u>Q1 B Category</u>	<u>Code</u>
I think, it is very good	1	Oral Story	1
Silk road is a vast history	2	Passable	2
Прошу прощения.	4	Fiction	3
Don't know	4	For Children	4
интересная тема	1	Teaching Stories	5
Сказки выражает историю	5	Short Story	6
Данная тема имеет значение	2	Connected to Folk	7
По моему, это очень интересно	2	Culture&Tradition	8
Очень интересная тема	1	Other	9
Такая тема очень интересна	1		
Интересная тема, у меня есть	1		
Тема исследования интересна	1		
Интересная анкета, интересный	1		
По моему, это очень интересно	2		
Нет мнения	4		
Интересная анкета, интересный	1		
Сравнить образы Мухоморова	2		
Don't know who is the best	5		
Mulla Nasruddin, not the best	3		
No opinion.	4		
Нет мнения	4		
Эта тема очень интересна	1		
Честно говоря, после прочтения	5		
My opinion about Mulla Nasruddin	5		
Topic is well chosen.	1		
This topic is unique. I like it.	2		
Research topic is very interesting	1		
In my opinion the author is good	1		
Someone wants to read more	5		
Nice research, but the topic is old	3		
Folktales are the inevitable part of	5		
According to me, research is	2		
It's a good topic, this is a	1		
It's a very interesting topic	1		
Interesting topic which is	1		
Research topic is a good choice	2		
This research topic is well	2		
Исследовать восточную культуру	5		
I think this topic is relevant	1		
Interesting theme, especially	1		
It is a good choice of topic	1		
Исследовать восточную культуру	5		

Very interesting poll,	1
The above-mentioned	2
Your research topic is	1
Я ничего не слышал	5
Весьма интересная, :	1
Интересно.	1
Мне кажется, что в I	5
Актуальна, правда н	2
Нет мнений	4
Не совсем понятно, ч	5
Думаю, что исследо	2
Она интересна, имее	1
Данная тема затраги	2
По моему мнению, е	2
Данная тема исследо	1
Интересная тема, ак	1
Тема интересная,	1
Я не знала ничего пр	5
Тема весьма актуаль	2
Очень интересная и	1
Unfortunately, I don't	5
Данная тема мне ма	1
На самом деле очень	1
Тема исследования в	2
Я думаю, что данная	1
Меня заинтересовал	1
Тема исследования и	1
Нахожу данную тем	1
Нет никаких мнений	4
Нет мнения	4
Тема необычна и ин	1
Интересная тема. Ос	1
Результат покажет н	5
Изучение сказок, об	2
Нет мнения	4
Нет мнения	4
Хорошая	1
Интересная	1
Тема исследования и	1
This topic is worth to	2
I was expecting this r	5
To be honest, i wond	1
I am very proud of be	1
I think it is a quiet in	1
Even though Mulla N	2



It's useful for tales an	2
Поскольку нынешня	2
I am happy that I am	2
Общая тема. Объект	5
I think it is very infor	5
It is great job done by	1
I appreciate this resear	2
The topic is very inter	1
Commonly we can sa	5
Я согласен	5
I strongly believe that	2
I think it would be ve	1
In my opinion, Nasric	5

<u>Q2 B Category</u>	<u>Code</u>
Learning	1
Cultural Values	2
Teaching Kids	3
Moral Message	4
Don't Know	5
Other	6

<u>Q3 B Category</u>	<u>Code</u>
Name/Title Stated	1
Description Given	2
Not Popular	3
No Response/Don't Know	4





<b><u>Q4 B Category</u></b>	<b><u>Code</u></b>	<b><u>Q5 B Category</u></b>	<b><u>Code</u></b>	<b><u>Q6 B Category</u></b>
Title Stated	1	Good Way	1	Relevance Stated
Title & Tale Stated	2	Both Ways	2	No/Less Relevance
No Response/Don't I	3	No Response/Don't Kr	3	No Response/Don't Kr
Other	4	Other	4	





<u>Code</u>	<u>Q7 B Category</u>	<u>Code</u>
1	Interesting/good	1
2	Relevant	2
3	Ok	3
	No Response/Don't Know	4
	Other	5