RELIGIO-CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF SUFI SAINTS ON THE SOCIETY OF SHEIKHUPURA

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Abstract- Sufis played a significant role in the spread of Islam and promoting Islamic culture in Sheikhupura. By giving the example of their own life they spread Islam and changed the belief system and way of life of the local population. Due to their efforts for society, and miracles, they are still alive in the hearts of the people. This study is comprised of the two major Sufi Saints i.e., Syed Waris Shah and Mian Sher Muhammad Sharaqpuri. The shrine of Syed Waris Shah is located a little outside of the city in a village Jindiyala Sher Khan. The Shrine of Main Sher Muhammad is situated in Sharaqpur Sharif also little outside of Sheikhupura. This paper aims to find out the role and impact of these saints in preaching Islam and their impact on the theological and cultural conditions of the people of Sheikhupura. To search the influence of Sufism on theological and societal conditions, data is gathered with the help of questionnaires, and interviews apropos to the belief system and activities performed by the devotees at these two shrines. Outcomes have been drawn from the data via using SPSS. The shrines of these Sufi Saints are the center of visitation. People have a strong belief in the Sufi blessing. They believe that the Sufi Saints can respond to their wishes or vows after death too. People or devotees visit Shrines for spiritual comforts or attaining wishes etc., and perform many rituals or practices after the attainment of these spiritual blessings.

Key Words: Islam, Shrine, Sufism, Sheikhupura

I. INTRODUCTION:

Islam is a complete code of life, and Sufism is a divine feature of Islam. Sufis preach Islam all around the globe through their esoteric practices. They also impact the political, social, economic, and cultural life of the people and guided them towards the path of virtue. Sufism also played a powerful role in spreading Islam in Indian Sub content. Sheikhupura is politically, religiously, socially, economically, and culturally an ancient place. Many Sufis who came to this region had spread Islam and converted many non-Muslims to Muslims. The present study aims to determine the role of selected Sufis in spreading Islam, their contribution to the reformation of Society, and searched the impact of Sufism and Sufis Shrines to promote the religious and cultural condition of Sheikhupura. Two major Sufis, Syed Waris Shah, and Hazrat Mian Sher Muhammad Shraqpuri are selected as a case study

II. METHODOLOGY:

The statistics are gathered from the devotees at the shrines of Syed Waris Shah and Mian Sher. The sample of 25 devotees from each shrine has been selected through the Non-Probability Convenient Sampling technique and a total number of fifty respondents got filled questionnaires. This data has been collected through questionnaires and face-to-face structured interviews.

The survey is segregated into twofold. The former segment illustrates the demographic statistics of the responders and the latter segment was subsisted of seven inquiries. The core theme of the investigation was a belief system, activities performed at shrines during *Urs* (Annual death ceremony of a Sufi Saint), women's activities at shrines, and the purpose of visiting shrines. The questions were kept close-ended and the medium of the questionnaire was Urdu, Punjabi as well as English. The educated respondents filled the questionnaire by themselves whereas the same questions were asked from the illiterate

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respondents by the researchers themselves in the form of interviews and their responses were fill up in the questionnaire. Help was taken from a male researcher due to the norm of shrines to fill up questionnaires from male respondents and female respondents were interviewed by the researchers themselves. Results were analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) techniques.

Teachings of Syed Waris Shah:

Syed Waris Shah was an acclaimed Punjabi Sufi poet and as well writer who was born in Jandiyala Sher Khan in 1722 A.D close to Sheikhupura. He is known for his persuasive people story "*Heer Ranjah*", which later got famous as "*Heer Waris Shah*". He was the devotee of the *Chishti* order. Through, his verse he passes the educating of Islam. He died in 1798 AD. (Pervaiz, 2017)

When Sufi Saints came to India with Muslims' invaders they also brought their Islamic culture and traditions. Some Sufi Saints had taught Masnavi Rumi by Moulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, Gulistan-e Sadi by Shaikh Sharafuddin Saadi Shirazi, and Ghazila Diwan of Khawaja Shamas-ud-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi to the local population. These books were consisting of the Sufi thoughts which were taught in the Sufi seminaries. In the 17th century, in the era of Mughal King Jahangir, the educational syllabus was transferred to the Punjabi language. Punjabi poets also followed this tradition and had translated foreign love stories into the Punjabi language. (Kirmani, 2011)

Syed Waris Shah is a famous Punjabi Sufi poet. He also selected a Punjabi folk love story to pass his teachings. Waris Shah himself noted in his book that on the wish of his friends he wrote *Heer Ranjah* (Kirmani, 2011). According to Ghulam Rasool (devotee of Waris Shah), His mentor ordered Waris Shah to go to Malka Hans in Pakpattan District and offer his services as an Imam. The people of Malka Hans were not regular in visiting the mosque to perform *Salah (*Prayer), So, his fellows advised him to write *Heer Ranjah* to attract people. He followed the advice and wrote the story in lines of indigenous culture, and He used to read it to the audience himself (Rasool, 2016). He wrote the story of *Heer Ranjah* in poetic form to preach the message of truth, reality, and patience. One of his favorite topics to write upon was *Darvish* (Sufi saint). (Ahmed, N.D)
"*Waris Shah jeay bukhhey lakh phirdy,*
sabar faqir da qaol qarar hawey"
There are hundreds of people thirsty for Sufism like as me, but real Sufi recognizes himself as patience. Trust on Allah. he said,
"Waris jehnaan noon hor naa taahng koee,
kam ohnaan da Rabb sanwaardaa ee, " (Ali, N.D)
Waris! Allah solves the problems of those who do not expect anything from anyone but Allah.
This verse showed a Sufi *Tawakal* (trust) in Allah.
He mostly portrays the social condition and advised (Ali, N.D),
''*Ant ehy jehaan chhad jaanaa,*
eydey kufar apraadh kiyoon toliyey nee. ''
''You have must leave this world one day, then why committing evil deeds like lies or injustice''.(Kirmani, 2011) (Ali, N.D) In these lines, the concept of eternal life and Day of Judgment is portrayed.

In his book *Heer Ranjah,* he discussed the hypocrisy of fake *Ullemah* (Islamic Scholars) of those days. He also elaborated on the Punjabi culture, division of society, circumstances of the 18th century, and the foreign invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali and Nadir Shah. He also discussed the division of society based on the caste system and the decline of the Punjabi society. (Kanwal, 2005) (Kirmani, 2011) (Ali, 2016) (Waqar, 2009)

He discussed the religious, moral, and social issues in his book for in those days people like to read or listen to stories. *Heer Ranjah* by Waris Shah is a symbolic story. So, according to human nature, he used the worldly character to teach the lesson of eternal life. At the end of the story, he explained the metaphors of his books that the *Heer* (soul), *Ranjah* (body), *Punj pir* (five senses), *Kadoo* (devil), *Sahthei* (death), Bal Nath (guider or *pir*), *Tarengen* (bad acts), *Jung* (world), etc. Through these characters, he gave the concept that how a man should live in the world and don't follow the wrong path. According to Syed Waris Shah, the love of the world destroys man and he advised his devotees to act upon the teaching of the Quran and *Sunnah* (Life pattern of Hazrat Muhammad PBUH) He had quoted the verses of the Quran

in his poetry to convey his message. (Kirmani, 2011) (Shah, 2015) Waris Shah had displayed the Mosque as a community center, instead of being only a place of worship or religious practices. (Ijaz, 2011)

He completed his book *Heer Ranjah*[1] in 1766 A.D. (1180A.H) (Bukhari, 2012) (Shah, 2015) Waris Shah also set up a *Madrassa* (Islamic institution) named "*Dars-e-Waris Shah*" with the permission of Zikria Khan[2]. He translated *Qasida Burda Sharif* into the Punjabi language and write a book *Tib–e-Waris*. He learned *Torah* and *Zabur* from a Jew and Bible from William. But never a single writer noted or verified the above-mentioned work. His other literary works are *Qasida Burda Sharif, Sah Harfi, Barah Mah, Maraj Nama, Dohray, Abret Nama, Nasihat Nama, Chohitri Nama Ishtar Nama,* etc. He knew several languages and had a deep knowledge of music instruments, the race of buffalo and *Alfalfalah* (plant). (Kirmani, 2011) (Shah, 2015) (Akram, 2013). His book *Heer Waris Shah* consisted of 4500 verses. (Kunjahi, Haider & Asif, N.D)

Teachings of Hazrat Mian Sher Muhammad Sharqpuri

Hazrat Mian Sher Muhammad Sharqpuri was born in 1865AD. He was a holy person by birth and his entire life was according to the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (SAW). He has a significant place in Naqshbandi Silsila (Spiritual lineage). He preached to his followers the same teaching which He followed. He converted many non-Muslims to Muslims. He died in 1928AD. (Pervaiz, 1999) (Maqsood, 1968)

It was the quality of Mian Sher that He used to talk with people according to their level of understanding. To the masses, he used examples that are easy to understand. To the educated people He gave the example from Science to make them understand the creativity and power of Allah Almighty. To religious *Ulema*, He used to show the verses of the Holy Quran and put an emphasis on *Zikr* (worship of Allah) and *fikr* (thoughts about creations of Allah). (Qasuri, N.D) Because he was the true follower of the Naqashband order, he mostly advised them to recite "*Allah Hoo*" (A special *zikr* in spiritual lineage). To preach the message of Islam He went to funerals, marriage ceremonies and fairs to advise the people to act upon the *Sunah* and *Sharia*. (Qasuri, N.D) (Khan, 2012) He built a Mosque and advised his followers to respect and taking care of the Mosque. (Monga, 2006) According to the nature of people, He advised them to read books like Masnavi Rumi, Kashaf-ul-Mahjub of Hazrat Ali Hajvari (Khan, 2012) Mostly *Ullema*, *Gadhi Nasheens* (Successor of Sufis), worker, political leader, government employees and young boys were His regular visitors. (Khan, 2012) His teaching can be estimated by his character too. He had immense love for Allah and Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He strictly followed the *Sunnah* and teachings of the Holy Quran. He was regular in offering prayers and fasting. He advised his disciple or devotees to offer prayers regularly and advised them to recite the verses of the Quran. (Khan, 2012) He also advised his followers to visit the Shrines of Sufi Saints whereas, He disliked the occasions of fairs. After *Tahjud* (early morning *Sunnah* prayer) he had a routine to recite *Darood Khizri* (praise of Prophet Muhammad SAW). He advised men to wear a cap (made of date leaves), grow the beard and never liked clean shaved men. He also said that women should wear a veil and cover themselves with a thick and simple cloak. (Qadri, N.D) He was very kind and hospitable to others. He had a routine to offer his *Ishraq* (*Sunnah* prayer when the sun rises after the morning) at Masjid Loharan and *Chasha*t (*Sunnah* prayer after *Ishraq*) at Tahli wali Masjid located in Sharaqpur of Sheikhupura. He started the tradition of food distribution from His right side. He used to eat in ceramic crockery. People visited Him for *Rohani Faiz* (spiritual comforts) all day and night. (Monga, 2006)

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[1] It said that Damodar was a Patwari of Jhang in the period of King Akbar. He wrote this love story because he told that he was the eye witness of this incident .Ranjah belongs to Takhat Hazra and Heer lived in Jangh and belongs to Sayyal family.Ranjah was the servant of her father. They feel in love. But due to, the uncle of Heer they cannot merry. Inculding Damouder many writer wrote their true love story.It also translated in persion, English urdu and Punjabi langue.All of them Waris Shah is more famous he used this story for the reformation of society and Pass the message of Quran and Sunnah.

[2] Zikria Khan was Local Political leader of Jindiya Sher Khan.

Table 1: Rate of recurrence Dissemination of Responders as per their, Gender, Locality, Marital Status, and Profession

Traits	Rate of recurrence	Proportion
Gender		
Male	38	76
Female	12	24
Locality		
Rural	36	72
Urban	14	28
Marital status		
Married	29	58
Single	21	42
Profession		
Housewife	4	08
Housemaid	02	04
Teacher	00	00
Worker	15	30
Student	11	22
Businessman	18	36

The statistics in Table 1 illustrate the demographic statistics of the responders pertinent to gender locality, marital status, and profession. The statistics declare that 76 % of the respondents were male and 24 % were female. The next section as to locality shows that 72 % of dwellers were of rural areas and 28 % were of urban areas, 58 % of the responders were married and 42 % of them were single. For the section of the profession of the respondents, 08 % of the respondents were housewives, 04 % were housemaids, zero % of the responders were of the profession of teaching, 30 % were workers, 22 % were students, and Businessmen were 36%.

The data confirms that several of the responders who visited the shrines were men. It furthermore demonstrates that the folks who visited the shrines belonged mostly to the rural areas and were married. The majority of the respondents who visited shrines were businessmen.

Frembegen (Frembegen, 2012) cited that mostly the regular visitors of shrines are either from a rural area or urban poor. Hassan says that *Sajjadahnashins* (Descendent) mostly rule and influence rural areas, as they have a solid financial and spiritual influence on their disciples. (Hassan, 1987) Khan and Sājid research also proclaimed similar results that most visitors belong to rural areas because *Sajjadahnashin* can easily exercise their commands on their pupils living in rural areas in comparison with urban areas. (Khan & Sajid, 2011)

Table 2: Dissemination of the Responders as per their Education

Tier of Education	Rate of recurrence	Proportion
Illiterate	04	08
Primary	08	16
Middle	06	12
Matric	16	32
Intermediate	11	22
Graduation	2	04
Higher	03	06

Total	50	100

The statistics in Table 2 reveals that 08 % of the respondents were illiterate and 16% of respondent had a primary level of education, and percentile of the middle level of education was 12%, 32 % were having matriculation, 22 % of the respondents were having education of intermediate level, 04 % had graduation level of education and 06 % of the respondents had a higher level of education.

The statistics show that the majority of the respondents have a qualification of matriculation level and there is a small proportion of respondents with a higher tier of education.

Table 3: Dissemination of Responders as per their Age

Age	Rate of recurrence	Proportion
15-30	28	56
31-45	10	20
46-60	07	14
61-75	05	10
Total	**50**	**100**

The statistics demonstrated in Table 3 describes that 56 % of the responders were of 15-30 years of age, 20% of the responders were of 31-45 years of age, 14 % were of 46-60 years of age, and 10 % of the responders were between 61-75 years of age.
The outcomes demonstrate that majority of the respondents belonged to 15-30 years of age.

Table 4: Dissemination of the Responders as per their Sufi Order

Orders of the Respondents	Rate of recurrence	Proportion
Chishti	5	10
Qadri	12	24
Naqashbandi	23	46
Suharwardi	6	12
None	4	08
Total	**50**	**100**

The data presented in Table 4 indicates that 10% of the respondents belonged to the Chishti order, 24 % of the responders were followers of the Qadri order, 46 % of the visitors were followers of the Naqshbandi chain of Sufism, only 12% of responders were of Suharwardi order and 08 % of the responders did not follow any Sufi order.

Trimingham through the description of the Sufi orders in Islam described that the dissemination of Islam in the subcontinent is due to the endeavors of the Sufi saints, the majority belonging to the Qadri order. (Trimingham, 1971) Sufi Saints have a significant contribution to the spread of Islam in the subcontinent. Also as per Loimier's narration, Qadri's order somehow has spiritual superiority over all other Sufi orders. (Roman, 2013)

Table 5: Dissemination of the Respondents as per their Beliefs on Sufi Saints

Beliefs of the Respondents	Rate of recurrence			Proportion		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive %	Negative %	Total %
Religious personality	18	32	50	36	65	100
Sufis are a mediator between Allah and them	13	37	50	26	74	100
Allah listens to them	8	42	50	16	84	100
They can change your fate	4	46	50	08	92	100
Because my elders have faith in them	7	43	50	14	86	100

The statistics providing in Table 5 depict that 36 % of the visitors believed that saints were religious personalities. 26 % of the responders had a faith that Sufis are mediators between Allah and them. 16% of visitors believed that Allah listens to them, 08% of the respondents believed that Sufi saints have miraculous powers and they can provide resolution to the problems and could change their fate. 14% of responders believed in Sufi saints because their elders have faith in them.

The present data demonstrate that most of the respondents perceived Sufi saints as a spiritual character. They believed that Islam had spread in this region with the efforts of these Sufi Saints and they also believed in their spiritual power. Minhas in his research found similar results regarding the beliefs of the visitors. (Minhas, 2018)

Table 6: Dissemination of the Respondents as per their Focal Motive of Visiting Shrines

Focal Motive of Visiting Shrine	Rate of recurrence			Proportion		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes %	No %	Total %
Physical healing	03	47	50	06	94	100
Spiritual healing	19	31	50	38	62	100
For recreation	01	49	50	02	98	100
For *sawab* (Reward)	15	35	50	30	70	100
For buying drug	0	0	0	0	0	100
For domestic problems	04	46	50	08	92	100
Financial Problems	03	47	50	06	94	100
Infertility	05	45	50	10	90	100
Poverty Alleviation	0	0	0	0	0	100

People visit Shrines on daily basis for many reasons. The proportion in Table 6 illustrates that 06% of the responders' focal purpose of attending the shrine was physical healing. While 38 % of them visit for spiritual healing. 02% visited for recreation.30 % of the respondents visited shrines for Allah (*Swab),* zero% of the respondents visited for buying drugs. 08 % of the respondents visited shrines for their domestic problems while 06 % for financial or business problems. 10% of visitors had visited the shrine for infertility. To get rid of poverty zero% respondents visited the shrine.

The result of the current study demonstrates that a greater quantity of the respondents visited shrines for spiritual healing. Khan and Sajid describe that people visit Shrines for spiritual console and social adherence. (Khan & Sajid, 2011) According to Nelson Shrines are used for Spiritual, traditional and recreational pursuits. (Nelson, 1996)

Table 7: Dissemination of the Respondents as per the Activities Executed at Shrines during *Urs*

Rituals or Activities Performed During *Urs*	Rate of recurrence			Proportion		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive %	Negative %	Total %
Recitation	5	45	50	10	90	100
Na'at (Praise Prophet Muhammad SAW)	3	47	50	06	94	100
Qawwali (Sufi music)	4	46	50	08	92	100
To listen the Address of *Pir* (Sufi Saint)	6	44	50	12	88	100
Zikr	16	36	50	32	68	100
Lighting on shrine	3	47	50	06	94	100

Regional games (*Kabaddi*, horse dance, etc.)	2	48	50	04	96	100
Dhamal (Emotional Dance)	2	48	50	04	96	100
Theatre	1	49	50	02	98	100
Burning the candles	3	47	50	06	94	100
Spread flowers	4	46	50	08	92	100
Thread knotting	1	49	50	02	98	100

The statistics in Table 6 shows that 10 % of the responders recited Holy Quran during *Urs*, 06 % of the respondents attended to listen *Na'ats,* 08 % of the respondents attend *Urs* to listen to *Qawwali* or *Sama,* 12% listen to the address of *Pir* on *Urs* occasion, 32% pay *Zikr,* 06 % visitors had arranged to light on shrines or lit oil lamps, 04 % of the respondents enjoyed and took part in regional games like *Kabaddi,* Horse dance, etc, 04 % performed *Dhamal* and 02 % of the respondents attended *Urs* or fairs for recreation, theatre, etc. 06% respondents had burnt the candles outside the tomb. 08% of the respondents spread flowers or garland over the grave of the saints, and only 02% of the respondents were asked pledges through thread knotting. The existing research explains that many of the participants were busy in *Zikr* during *Urs.* Batool *et al* (Batool *et al*, 2015) labeled *Zikr* a fundamental Islamic ritual and said that through it the state of concentration known as *Istaghraq* is attained. *Zikr* alters the follower's hearts by filling the divine energy in them. Z*ikr* is a common practice in each Sufi order, especially in the *Naqshbandi* order.

Table 8: Dissemination of the Respondents Related to Their Believe on the Attainment of Desires/Needs

Do you believe on the Execution of *Mannats* (Desires/Needs)	Rate of recurrence			Proportion		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes %	No %	Total %
	41	9	50	82	18	**100**

The information given in Table 8 reveals that 82% of respondents have a strong belief in the fulfillment of *mannat* (Vows). Batool *et al* also concluded that visitors have a strong belief that the vows they asked on the shrine of a Sufi saint must be fulfilled. (Batool *et al*, 2015)

Table 9: Dissemination of the Respondents Related to Deeds and Rituals Executed by Women on Shrines.

Deeds and Rituals performed by women on shrines	Rate of recurrence			Proportion		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive %	Negative %	Total %
Vows for marriages	05	45	50	10	90	100
Solution of disputes	03	47	50	06	94	100
Cure Of illness	6	44	50	12	88	100
Having child	7	43	50	14	86	100
For passing Exames	8	42	50	16	84	100
For Jobs	4	46	50	08	92	100
Making vows	17	33	50	34	66	100

The statistics in Table 9 indicates that 10 % of the repliers visited shrines to make vows for marriages. 06 % of the respondents reported that they visit shrines and ask *mannat* for the solution of disputes. 12 % revealed that they make vows for the cure of illness, 14 % reported *mannat* for having child, 16 % of the

responders told that students visit shrines and make vows for the passing exams and 08 % reported that they visit shrines to make vows for jobs. 34% of respondents revealed that they make vows to get their desires.

The existing study portrays that most of the participants testified that women visitors make *mannat* on shrines. The majority of the scholars *i.e* Kiyani and Farooq, Batool *et al,* and Minhas *et al*, (Minhas *et al*, 2018) (Farooq & Kayani, 2012), etc in their researches mentioned the same that the majority of women visitors come to shrines to make vows and *mannat .* Kamboh and Zaidi (Kamboh & Zaidi, 2001) argued that people visit shrines for making *mannat* and to get internal desires and wishes to be rewarded. (Kamboh & Zaidi, 2001)

Table10: Distribution of the Respondents as per their Activities Executed on the Attainment of Wishes/Needs

Activities Executed on the Attainment of Wishes/Needs	Rate of recurrence			Proportion		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive %	Negative %	Total %
Pay *Nawafil*	16	34	50	32	68	100
Distribute eatables on shrine	26	24	50	52	48	100
Nazrana (give money to *Pir*	3	47	50	06	94	100
Garoli (A hand made decorated piece of model)	03	47	50	06	94	100
Do nothing	02	48	50	04	96	100

The proportion of the respondents who describe their deeds executed on the attainment of vows is illustrated in table 10 which describes that 32% of responders pay *Nawafil*, 52 % of the responders distribute food items on shrines on the accomplishment of vows. 06 % responded that they gift money to *Peer* on the attainment of their vows, 06 % response that they put *Garoli* on the shrine and only 04% of the respondents do nothing on the fulfillment of their wishes.

The current findings depict that eatables like sweets and different other types of food like rice, milk, porridge, candies, etc are distributed by the people on shrines after the fulfillment of their vows. Numerous other investigators such as Kamboh and Zaidi and Batool *et al* Evaluated, that populaces happily give out food on the attainment of their *Mannat*. (Kamboh & Zaidi, 2001) (Batool *et al*, 2015) Minhas *et al* also got similar findings. (Minhas *et al*, 2018)

IV. CONCLUSION

Sufis have had a magnificent role in preaching Islam in this area. The religious and cultural conditions of the people were persuaded by them. People have a strong belief in their hidden spiritual powers. For the attainment of eternal blessings, people visit the shrines of Sufis. Mostly rural people visit shrines and pay regard to them. The disciples of these two saints ponder them as magnificent Sufi characters. Numerous ceremonials and practices are executed at shrines in the course of *Urs/Mela* (fair). Most of the disciples, who visit these shrines during *Urs* especially perform the ritual of *Zikr*. Spiritual healing is the main purpose of the followers to visit the shrine of these Sufi Saints. Females also visit shrines and ask for vows. On the fulfillment of vows, devotees or visitors distribute eatables.

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