Abstract

Sufism is recognized as an important mystical facet of Islamic history. The expansion of Islam is also indebted to Sufis who migrated to different regions with the universal message of Islam and they further established and developed various Sufi orders and schools of thought. Among the many orders that took root in the subcontinent, the Chishtiya order gained prominence and became conspicuous. Chishti Khanqahs or the dwellings of the Chishti Sufis were grounds of spirituality where a unique culture thrived. These abodes fundamentally altered the socio-religious history of the region. Hundreds of Chishti Dargahs all over India and Pakistan continue to work as independent living institutions even today.

Much scholarly work has been produced on the Chishtiya Sufi order in the subcontinent and studies have been conducted to compare its teachings to those of different schools of Sufi thoughts in various times and ages. Researchers have also made in depth studies of the Khanqahi structure of Chishtiya order but little study has been made on the spiritual/Sufi practices at the Chishti Dargahs and the social, political, religious and economic role of these Dargahs in contemporary times. This research attempts to look at the Sufi practices at the two Chishti Dargahs in West Punjab, Pakistan. For this study the Dargah of Baba Farid Masud-ud-Din Ganji-e-Shaker in Pakpattan, Sahiwal and Khawaja Shams-ud-Din Sialvi in Sial Sharif, Sargodha have been chosen for their multifunctional role in the region. Both, Chishti Khanqahi and Dargahi structure are analyzed side by side as both are intertwined with each other. The study also comprehends the multifunctional character of Dargahs and studies the character of Khanqahs and their function and perpetual impact on the region of Indo-Pak subcontinent.

The first chapter explores the historical role of the Chishtiya school of thought, its teachings and practices. It also discusses Chishti Khanqahs' function and their impact on the medieval Indian society. It attempts to trace Chishti Khanqahs' syncretistic tendencies that synthesize Indian art and culture with Muslim traditions. The chapter also
tries to locate the reasons that make *Chishti Dargahs* a living institution in contemporary times.

The second chapter locates Medieval Punjab as the first South Asian region to encounter the impact of early Sufi mystics. The research analyzes the socio-cultural set up of the times and the role of *Sufi Khanqahs/Dargahs* such as that of Ali bin Usman Hajviri’s, commonly known as *Data Sahib* and *Chishti Dargah* of Baba Farid Ganj Shaker in Pakpattan. The study attempts to investigate both *Dargahs'* intellectual, social and religious impact on the socio-cultural and religious set up of the Medieval Punjab.

Third chapter studies the historical narration of the *Dargah* of Baba Farid Ganj Shaker. Investigation is done from its *Khanqahi* structure and its working in 11th century’s Punjab to its *Dargahi* structure and its functioning in contemporary Punjab. The major purpose of the chapter is to analyze the *Dargahi* structure which is multifold in its character, such as its socio-religious, spiritual, political and economic function and impacts on its environs.

The fourth chapter discusses manifold role of the *Dargah* of Khwaja Shams-ud-Din Sialvi in the region. The chapter aims to analyze the significance of *Chishti Sufi Dargah* in late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It also explores the political, social, sacred and economic role of the *Dargah* in the region. Another distinctive feature of the *Dargah* which study highlights is its literary and scholastic contribution throughout the region and overall the country.

In the fifth chapter the main focus is given on ritual, religious/Sufi rituals and their performance by giving emphasis on the Sufi practices at both *Chishti Dargahs*. Study tries to locate the reasons behind the visitation of *Dargahs*. To get the actual findings anthropological research is conducted and for that most of data was collected during *Urs* celebrations at both *Dargahs*. The study also takes into account the architectural structures and spaces of both *Dargahs* and analyzes how they have evolved through time and affected some of the Sufi practices at the *Dargah*. 