

## 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 Ganj-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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 Khawaja 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*.