

**POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SUFI
SHRINES IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY
OF SIAL SHARIF**



Submitted By

**Qaisar Iqbal
PIDE2019FMPHILDS16**

Supervisor

Dr. Zulfiqar Ali

**MPhil Development Studies
PIDE School of Social Sciences
Pakistan Institute of Development Economics,
Islamabad
2022**



Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad
PIDE School of Social Sciences

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled: “: **“Political Economy of Sufi Shrines in Pakistan: A Case Study of Sial Sharif ”** submitted by **Qaisar Iqbal** is accepted in its present form by the PIDE School of Social Sciences, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad as satisfying the requirements for partial fulfillment of the degree in Master of Philosophy in Development Studies.

Supervisor:

Dr. Zulfiqar Ali

Signature: _____

External Examiner:

Dr. Abid Ghafoor Chaudhry

Signature: _____

Head,

PIDE School of Social Sciences: Dr. Hafsa Hina

Signature: _____

Author's Declaration

I Qaisar Iqbal hereby state that my M.Phil. thesis titled Political Economy of Sufi Shrines in Pakistan: A Case Study of Sial Sharif is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from Pakistan Institute of Development Economics or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after my Graduation the university has the right to withdraw my M.Phil. degree.

Date: _____

Signature of Student

Name of Student
Qaisar Iqbal

Dedication
To my family

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Almighty Allah.

I am humbly expressing my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, for his continuous guidance, support, and encouragement. During my tenure as his student, he has always been there to address my queries and questions. The freedom he allowed me was extraordinary, he allowed me to pursue the project according to my capacity and philosophical position.

I would like to express my gratitude to my family, who supported me not only in this project but throughout my journey of learning. I am forever indebted to my family for the courage, support and sacrifices they made for me.

Moreover, I must express my gratitude to my teachers at PIDE, SZABIST and all those who do not fall into institutional categories. I would like to express my gratitude to my host Sahibzada Asad Sahib, my host during field work. My field work could not have been so insightful without the wisdom of Sahibzada Ghayas *Sahib*, Asad *Sahib*'s Father. I am thankful to Shoaib, Bhai Khan, Ziafat (Jugera), and Zia who had been a great help during my field work. I would like to thank the managerial staff at Shrine who had always welcomed me with open hearts and cheers to all my respondents who Enlightened me to new horizons of knowledge.

In addition, I would like thank my respondents without their insightful discussions I wouldn't have completed this study

Finally, I am thankful to my friends Sami Ud Din, Javed Ali, Zakir Ahmed, Irfan Ud Din, and Ajmal Kakar for their academic assistance.

Abstract

Shrines in South Asian countries have never been alien to politics and economy. There is an interplay of various sociological institutions in shrines which strengthens the political economy of shrines. Indeed, politics needs mass following. Political popularity depends on certain factors, including economic, cultural, and religious. In fact, political elites use these factors to accumulate power. Moreover, this study is conducted to analyze the political and economic importance of shrines in contemporary socio-political milieu. Using qualitative methods and have used framework analysis approach to analyze the data. The findings suggest that without a shrine, *Pirs* and Sajjada Nashin could not achieve their cultural, religious, political, and economic position in society. Additionally, Shrine is a source to accumulate wealth which stems power. Another important aspect of this research is the hegemony of Shrines and *Pirs*. They control the agency of *Murids*. And, Shrines became the powerhouse of the country which is impeding structural development. In a nutshell, inclusive institution reforms are the dire need of time because a post-colonial state cannot function with colonial institutions.

Keywords: Sufism, Tasawwuf, Sajjada Nashin, biraderi, hegemony, Shrine, Religious spaces, Political Economy.

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Acronyms

CM – Chief Minister

ECP – Election Commission of Pakistan

MNA – Member of National Assembly

MPA – Member of Provincial Assembly

NA – National Assembly

PA – Punjab Assembly

PM – Prime Minister

PML (N) – Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)

PTI – Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaf

Glossary

ahl – people, as in *ahl-e Sunnah* means people of Sunnah

alim – (pl. *ulama*) man trained in religious law and science

auliya – (see *wali*)

auqaf – (see *waqaf*)

bai'at – act of swearing allegiance as the disciple of a *Pir* or *sheikh*

barakat – blessing; spiritual blessings of a saint transferred to his tomb and descendants after his death

biraderi – a community that is based on common descent

dar ul uloom – an institution of higher education on religion

darbar – a court of king, here court of saint

darvesh – a religious mendicant or itinerant

dastarbandi – turban tying ceremony which signifies succession to authority

dera – camp or settlement, where members of family or community sit together

deen – the Islamic faith and religion

dunya -- world

eman -- faith

fatwa – ruling issued by *alim* based on religious law

hadith – traditions of Prophet Muhammad

haji – the one who have been to Mecca as pilgrim

imam – leader in prayers

jame masjid – central mosque of a town or city

kafir – non-muslim, nonbeliever

khadim – servant of shrine or saint

khalifa – a religious leader, successor to the authority of a saint

khanqah – a *sufi* hospice

khateeb – the reciter of *khutba* in mosque

Khilafat – (1) leadership claimed by Muslim leaders of whole community, claimed by Ottoman Sultans in late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, (2) succession for a spiritual authority (3) movement started by Indian Muslims to preserve the Ottoman *Khilafat* during and after world war 1

Khutba – sermon delivered in Mosque

Langar – food offered in *sufi* shrines in public kitchens

Madrasa – (pl. *madaris*) institutions of higher education

masha'ikh – (see *sheikh*)

mehfil – (pl. *mehafil*) event or celebration

mufti – a learned man in Islamic jurisprudence

murid – disciple of a *pir*

murshid – a teacher or master

pir – a *sufi* saint

sayed – a title signifies descendance from Prophet Muhammad

sajjada nashin – the one who sits in prayer carpet, successor to the spiritual authority of a *sufi* and his shrine

sheikh – (pl. *masha'ikh*) honorific title of *Sufis*

shari'at – Islamic law that driven from Quran and *hadith*

sufi – Muslim mystic or the one who is associated to a *sufi* order

Sunnah – the way of Prophet of Muhammad

tabligh -- communication of revelation, it is sometimes interchangeably used with *daw'a* meaning propagation of faith or proselytization

tehsil – an administrative sub division in a district

ulama – (sing. *alim*) class learned individuals among Muslims

Urs – an major annual event at *sufi* shrines celebrate the death-day of saint who is believed to have united with God

wali – (pl. *auliya*) *sufi*, saint, friend of God

waqf – (pl. *auqaf*) pious endowments

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Sufism and shrines have a multifaceted role. Recent studies on Sufi shrines have found its multidimensional role in politics (Gilmartin, 1988), identity (Rozeahna, 2007), governance (Matzen, 2019), local collaborators and conflict resolution (Ansari, 1992), culture (Hassanali, 2010), economy (Strothmann, 2016), education (Ibad, 2018), peace, and co-existence (Sandano, 2012). In rural areas, shrines play an extraordinary role as compared to their urban counterparts. Shrines in South Asia have been regarded as ‘*anti-structure*’ ((V. Turner & Abrahams, 2017) and ‘*counter-structure*’ (Werbner & Basu, 1998). Strothmann (2016) proposes that shrines are places where state control is limited as compared to any other social places due its spiritual -cum-religious sanctity. This is due to the saint to whom the shrine is attributed had a reputation of challenging the political status quo.

Shrines, according to some scholars, have remained a cause of sectarianism (Kamran & Shahid, 2014), political bifurcation, and illiteracy and backwardness (Khan, 2005). According to (Epping, 2013), Sufism finds itself at crossroads with rival reformists such as Deobandis and Islamists like Jamat-e Islami. Secondly, modernity has challenged an outmoded set of practices and values attributed to South Asian Sufism. From the last century, many scholars showed interest in studying the political role of Shrines that includes Mayer (1967), Gilmartin (1979, 1988), Eaton (1984), Ewing (1983, 1997), Aziz (2001), and Khan (2005). Political role of a shrine is dependent on *Sajjada Nashin*, who alone is the custodian of shrine.

Sajjada Nashins have always caught the eyes of rulers as intermediaries between state and masses. Thus, rulers get the support of *Sajjada nashin*, as a result, state reciprocated and rulers bestowed land, public offices, and political patronage. As said, that they dance always pay the fiddler, *Pirs* act as local chieftains for rulers. Particularly, in the medieval era, *Pirs* assisted rulers in gaining political as well as popular support (Aziz, 2001; Ewing, 1997; Gilmartin, 1988; Khan, 2005). Further, Ansari (1992); Aziz (2001); and Gilmartin (1988) critically studied political engagement between the British government, and *Pirs*. According to these scholars, *Sajjada nashins* acted as local collaborators of the British government. In return, the colonial government granted them large tracts of land, which helped *Pirs* elevate to feudal class. As protégés, *Pir* acquired certain bureaucratic and local political positions. Consequently, *Sajjada nashins* were able to maintain their power among local people including non-followers

(Gilmartin, 1988; Khan, 2005). Katherine Ewing and K.K Aziz in their respective scholarly works critically review *Sufism*, *sajjada nashins*, and politics. They argue that after the creation of Pakistan, famous shrines of Multan, Pakpattan, Taunsa, Jhang, and Islamabad caught the attention of country's early modernist leaders. They tried to nullify spiritual and political authority by nationalizing shrines vis-a-vis establishing mosques, *madaris*, schools, hospitals, and other social welfare institutions. Despite such efforts, it failed due to lack of will and their vested interests in reforming Sufism and shrines (Aziz, 2001; Ewing, 1997).

Particularly, political elite targeted shrines in Punjab because People of Punjab and Sind are more religiously affiliated with *Sufism* and *shrines*. According to Aziz (2001), Ewing (1997), and Iqbal et al., (2020) spirituality, religious affiliation, family, *biraderi*, feudalism, unemployment, economy, illiteracy, and analphabetism are major factors in following shrines and *Pirs*. Consequently, the political economy of shrines develops which enables the *Pirs* capture political and economic institutions.

Moreover, political economy is the interplay of political and economic affairs of a society. According to Collinson (2003), "*political economy is the distribution of power and wealth in society*". The political economy includes processes by which societal relationships withstand and transform based on distribution of wealth and power. However, there are certain interest groups which are in a constant state of competition for power and resources. Here, competition soon becomes a process that generates wealth and influences the political sphere. Whereas, inter-relation of economics and politics is crucial to capitalize power in the modern state system. Shrines and *sajjada nashins* have certain interests and incentives; their interest is to seek and capture power in formal institutions, and their incentive is to influence social as well as public policy. Interestingly, religion and culture are two most prominent factors which strengthen the grip of interest groups (individuals or groups) over political economy. At this point, economic activities in shrines in the form of markets, rented properties, shops, donations, and prestations generate wealth. Later, these resources are used for controlling political and administrative affairs. Likewise, resource concentration eases constituency politics for caretakers of shrine; because a large number of people have a reciprocal relationship with shrines. For instance, people earn their livelihood from shrine markets and from other landholdings. So is the case with shrines in Pakistan and particularly the shrine of Sial Sharif is one such example.

Academia has always been interested in studying Sufism and Shrines. There has been much research on transnational Sufi brotherhoods but there has been little research on the political economy of shrines in South Asia. However, the shrine of Sial Sharif had not been given much attention. Few studies were conducted such as Iqbal et al., (2020) and Kamran & Shahid, (2014), which studied shrines' historical role in religion, politics and society as a whole. However, there is a research gap on the multifaceted role of Sial Sharif in contemporary socio-political milieu. Political aspects and economy of different shrines have been studied exclusively. Henceforth, this Study investigates “how Sial Sharif dominates politics, economy and society of Sargodha and peripheries.

1.1. Statement of the Problem (SoP)

The interplay of various institutions has a profound influence on social armature of any given societal order, such as the correlation of shrines and politics. Shrines in South Asia are places where state regulators remain at doors, and shrines themselves act as institutions. Albeit hierarchical positions, influenced and practiced by them. Such is the case with Sial Sharif and their classified role in politics of Pakistan. How have shrines been significant to promote nationhood and fraternity among contemporary Muslims socio-political society, as well as in history i.e. shrines serving symbolic roles in certain places with plausible narratives across certain times.

1.2. Research Problem

I am narrowing my research problem into “**Political Economy of Shrines in Pakistan; A Case Study of Sial Sharif**” and have operationalized my topic into following research questions and objectives.

1.3. Objectives of the Research

The key objectives for the research are;

1. Unveiling social, political, and economic role of shrines
2. Discovering determinants of power functions and experiential religiosity of shrines.
3. To investigate elements of reciprocity in the *Pir-Murid* relationship.
4. To unveil economic dividends of the economy and wealth of the shrine of Sial Sharif.

1.4. Research Questions

The study will investigate following key research questions;

1. Why have Shrines (Particularly Sial Sharif) become more important both for religious and political elites?
2. How *Pirs* of Shrines influence socio-political life of their followers and others?
3. What is the link between sacred places and political economy?
4. What is the mechanism of distribution of wealth and income among various stakeholders of shrine?

1.5. Significance of Research

Although a great variety of scholarly research has been conducted on the subject field, there is a room left for defining, determining and exploring roles of shrines in relevance with contemporary communal dwellings, politics and economies. It is important to unearth the political economy of shrines, as they are determining factors of society. Therefore, this study will significantly penetrate subject matters and shall propose new rethinking measures on it.

Chapter 2

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction

This chapter contains four parts, which includes research strategy, research design, methods of data collection, and sampling. In the first part of the chapter research design and research strategy have been elucidated and justified. The second part of the chapter contains tools of data collection, units of data collection and procedures of data collection have been explained and justified. The third part of the chapter deals with methods and framework of sampling and finally, qualitative analysis and framework analysis are explained.

2.2. Research Strategy

Qualitative research emphasizes to unearth social phenomenon and social settings; its aim is to achieve an in-depth understanding of social milieus. Quantitative research driven through measurable data which is then used for generalizations. On the other side, qualitative research uses meanings, interpretations, concepts and descriptions of things to understand social reality (Bryman, 2016). This research is concerned with the Political-Economy of Shrines of Pakistan, it deals with ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions, that is why qualitative research has been used as research strategy.

2.3. Research Design

In the last decades scholarship has noticed a plethora of researches which are being conducted using qualitative methods of research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The reason may be reliability and validity because there are phenomenon’s which cannot be expressed in numerical values. Thus scholars are jumping to qualitative means to understand their social milieus. Qualitative research tilt toward linguistics, thus, becomes more understandable and explainable to such social realities. Linguistic expression helps scholars to understand hermeneutics in normal context.

According to Bhattacharjee (2012) research design acts as a wide-ranging outline for empirical research. There are many research designs in social sciences and selection of research design is based on the nature of social problem that is being studied. As this study is concerned with the political economy of the shrine of Sial Sharif so qualitative research is more suitable. Because it will give more insights of the political and economic role of shrine being investigated. The aim here is to dig out behaviors, choices and opportunities, ideology, identity, and beliefs of people living in the neighborhood. Belief as a phenomenon becomes quite

impossible to study quantitatively. Thus, qualitative research is being used to understand how belief in saints buried here led to political affiliations. Further understanding of socio-political impact of shrine qualitative research is appropriate.

Case study or case research is popular research designs (Bhattacharjee, 2012), it deals with in-depth inquiry of social problems over an extended period of time. Case study examines a social phenomenon in its natural settings, subject of research can be an individual, group, a certain community, institution(s), phenomenon or social process. While a number of groups, institutions or phenomena can be studied using multiple case approaches. Case studies can be exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. Among three I have used descriptive study because it helps researchers to study and obtain precise description of a social phenomenon. I have explored questions of 'what' and 'why' of factors and roles of the shrine of Sial Sharif's political-economy. Shrine of Sial Sharif is my case, all other factors including political, economic, religious, and cultural aspects revolve around the shrine. It is the shrine that keeps them together and interplay of these various factors paves way for the political economy of the shrine of Sial Sharif.

2.4. Units of Data Collection

Units are segments of phenomenon which are about to be investigated. Units can be individuals, groups or organizations. Unit of data collections (UDCS) are sources of data (Bryman, 2016). My proposed UDCS are as given:

a. Sajjada Nashin

Sajjada Nashins are custodian of shrines, *Sajjada Nashins* are a key source of information for my research as they are being regarded with highest respect and have a huge political influence over institutions and masses. *Sajjada nashins* are key figures who control the political economy of shrine, he influences political and electoral processes.

b. Kin of Sajjada Nashin

Since kin of *Sajjada Nashins* are respected and they have influence over management of Shrine and *Urs*. *Urs* is a manifestation of power and wealth, people flock into shrines and pledge their loyalties. They are a great source of information regarding the shrine, and its management.

c. Chief Disciples

Chief disciples also known as *Murids* are prominent supporters of *Pir* or *sajjada nashins*. They play a key role in communication as well as maintaining *sajjada nashin's* political influence over rural areas. They act as intermediaries between *Pir* and *Murids*. I have selected them as my UDCs because of their influence in rural settings as well as their role in management of

Shrine and during *Urs* celebrations. Chief disciples as intermediaries play a key role in maintaining the political economy of Shrine by connecting masses with shrines.

d. Religious Scholars or *Ulama*

Ulama plays a vital role in narrative formation of masses in Islam and Barelvi *Ulama* have a strong affiliation with shrine along with a following in masses. because of such influence, I have selected them as UDCs.

e. Local Politicians

Politicians are key players in the political arena of Sial Sharif as they control local politics. These political leaders and shrines have a reciprocal relationship because they use their affiliation with shrines to get votes in local body elections and they pledge their loyalty to shrines when people elect them.

f. Visitors to Shrine

Visitors who come to venerate saints buried in shrines can be a key source for data collection because of their varying educational backgrounds, political affiliations and different socio-economic backgrounds. That is why I have included them as UDCs in my research.

g. Shop Owners

Shopkeepers in the market around the shrine will highlight the economic role of shrine. because they are ones who have knowledge of time shrine receives its maximum visitors.

h. Transporters

To assess how visitors, travel to shrines, transporters can be major informants. As rural masses usually use local transport.

i. Managerial Staff at Shrine

Managerial staff always stays at the shrine no matter what are the circumstances. So they know more about shrine than any one else.

2.5. Research Methods

Research methods refer to data collection techniques. Since, this research is qualitative and descriptive case study design has been used so data collection techniques are given below;

2.5.1. Rapport Building

In qualitative research, collecting data is conditioned with rapport building. It enables researchers to be part of society which is being investigated. In rapport building researchers mingles with society via friendly communication which may be informal. This communication with members of society opens knowledge paths as discussions related to research projects start to evolve. During rapport building, researchers get to know local culture and try to learn such

behaviors which rhyme with local culture. researcher does this in well-mannered behavior and avoids behavior which can be awkward to the local community.

Before starting data collection, I have contacted various friends and acquaintances in Jhang. I was involved in a community mobilization project, which enabled me to understand local customs, beliefs, and socio-political milieus. Mobilization comprises extensive field activities, which helped me know local individuals who later helped me for my data collection of this research. One of my co-workers introduced me to my host in Sial Sharif and he then helped me collect data. My host was an influential person and himself a Sialvi i.e. he was from the Sial clan of Sial Sharif. Thus, being his guest got me a lot of respect from the local community and visitors. When my field work for data collection began, I spent my initial time by doing informal discussions with Sial family members, locals, shop owners and workers, shrine management staff, and visitors. These informal discussions with staff introduced me to rituals and practices at the shrine. Which later I use to perform, not certainly as a devotee at most of times but as a participant to feel subjective experiences. Offering prayers at Masjid and performing some rituals such as offering *Fatiha*, cleaning shrine complex etc. became a welcoming act among shrine managerial staff. They would sit with me and discuss almost everything that happens in society. They would graciously invite me for lunch, which they received from the house of *Pir* Sial. My host's influence and my informal discussions and participant observations helped me to understand local culture and society.

2.5.2. Participant Observation

Participant observation is a technique in which a researcher observes social milieus, communication and interactions in an unstructured manner. Participant observation helps researchers to construct a social reality via observation about things with variant social settings. Participant observation does not bring any change in process as it's done in all natural and regular settings. Studying shrines involve participant observation because of various rituals and customs that attract visitors and *Murids*. Participant observation enlightened me about experiential religiosity among *Murid* and *Pir*. Though, as a participant I could not influence social realities. However, that participation helped me to understand processes and relationships among various stakeholders.

2.5.3. Interviews

Qualitative interviews are my primary tool for data collection. Interviews are conversational methods of data collection because verbal communication here is the primary technique. As a scientific tool for data collection, Interviews are intended to be carried out in a systematic way

with well-defined research questions and objectives. Interviews were conducted by researchers and controlled in a systematic way to avoid biases. Qualitative interviews include unstructured and semi-structured interviews both are in-depth in nature. researcher used both aforementioned interview techniques which are justified and explained below:

2.5.3.1. Unstructured Interviews

According to (Sarantakos, 2012), the basic difference between structured and unstructured interviews is that structured interviews are more rigid in their structure and operationalization of interview and gives little room for interviewee. While unstructured interviews proceed without restriction and there are no strict sequences. According to (Bryman, 2016), in unstructured interviews interviewee responds freely and interviewer retorts to points which s/he may find related to her research.

2.5.3.2. Semi-structured Interviews

According to (Bryman, 2016), semi-structured interviews contain a list of specific topics which are intended to be discussed. The list may include some questions as well but interviews are supposed to be restricted, the interviewer controls what to say and to what extent. There is no certain sequence and questions or topics which the interviewer has setup cannot necessarily go in the same order as intended rather discussions will bring themselves topics and questions. According to (Bernard, 2013), semi-structured interviews can be used to interview individuals who are not available for researcher such as politicians or bureaucrats.

2.6. Sampling

Sampling is defined as selecting a cluster of cases from a large population (Walliman, 2010). It is a selection of units from a large population (Sarantakos, 2012). And according to Bhattacharjee (2012), sampling is selection of subsets from population. We select a representation called subset from a large population because it is not feasible to investigate every member of society due time and resource constraints.

There are two types of sampling techniques, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. I have used non-probability sampling because of research design. Non-probability sampling refers to a type of sampling technique, where some units of population have no certainty of being selected as a subset. Whereas in probability every subset of the population has an equal chance of selection.

2.6.1. Quota Sampling

It is one of types of non-probability sampling where researchers purposely select subsets which according to him/her best suits to answer research questions. They are not selected randomly but strategically so that research purpose will be served. I have used purposive sampling for UDC1 i.e., *Sajjada Nashin*, UDC 2, kin of *sajjada nashins*.

2.6.2. Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique where existing subject referrals to further important samples. I had relied on my subjects to refer me some important local politicians for my UDC 5.

2.6.3. Convenience Sampling

As Becker et al., (2012) defines convenience sampling as “*available to the virtue of its availability*”. Convenience sampling is generally used by researchers for their ease and access. According to Bhattacharjee (2012) it is accidental or opportunity sampling because the subset is drawn from the available portion of population. UDC 6, Visitors, Shop owners and Transporters were interviewed using this method. to shrine were interviewed using convenience sampling. Samples were selected based on convenience of the researcher.

2.7. Data Analysis

There exist many techniques to do qualitative data analysis. Much ink has been spilled over different techniques and approaches, however, (Darlington & Scott, 2020)has identified more than twenty different techniques of data analysis. He further argues that each of these techniques employ similar stages, however, certain choices had to be made regarding the data and type of data. According to (Bryman, 2016)analysis is the management and interpretation of data. On the other hand, (Ryan, 2006)explains data analysis as the technique to explore the hidden knowledge in people’s words and actions. Though, says the process should be organized so that themes and patterns could be identified.

2.7.1. Thematic Analysis

For this study I have chosen thematic analysis technique for data analysis. It is one of the widely used technique in analyzing qualitative data. In order to report themes and various patterns, thematic analysis assists researcher to identify, report and describe the data. Further, there are two methods of thematic analysis; namely, Inductive and deductive way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The former is more data driven where themes are identified through data sets while the latter is more analyst driven and themes are identified through literature.

For this study I have employed both inductive and deductive way of thematic analysis. Using both, it allowed me to identify themes from interviews (data) and from existing body of literature as well.

2.7.2. Framework Analysis

There are other tools that can be applied along with Thematic analysis to do qualitative data analysis. Among such includes, Grounded Theory, content analysis, and framework analysis. I have used framework analysis tool along with thematic analysis because it has a well-established procedure to generate themes, which are as follow.

2.7.2.1. Transcription

Transcription is the textual representation of spoken and behavioral languages (Mayring, 2014). There are various methods of transcription, nevertheless, I have employed clean read or smooth verbatim transcript. This transcription involves word to word transcription of data. However, utterances like ahh, hmm and decorating words like right, you know etc. are purposefully left out (Mayring, 2014). The text represents original wording with more accurate and sensibly grammatical structures. Similarly, in this study I have produced a text that was original representing views of respondents in a more grammatically sound structure.

2.7.2.2. Familiarization

Since, qualitative data exists in different forms such as recording, interviews, verbatim transcriptions, and discussions. So in order to familiarize with the data I have read the transcripts for at least two times as suggested by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I read with intense attention my transcripts, field notes, and tape recordings in order for patterns and meanings.

2.7.2.3. Indexing and Coding

The next step in framework analysis after familiarization is coddng, here I gave initial codes to data and the process is called indexing (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All the data in the form of transcripts was given numerical and colorful codes which, thus organized into conceptual meaningful groups. Additionally, I have used manual technique for coding and indexing.

2.7.2.4. Identifying and Characterizing Themes

During this research the process of identifying and characterizing the themes begin from very early and continued till the final step. Every time I read and reread the transcript themes would prompt out. I had tagged the codes in the manuscript more than once. Separate charts were made for each code which further consists of codes and sub-codes. And then these

codes were rearranged in different columns. Finally, I opt data condensation technique to have my themes ready which served the research purpose.

Chapter 3

3. Review of Literature

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with review of literature. This chapter contains four parts; namely, introduction of Sufism, Politics and Sufism, Economy of shrines, Shrines as Institutions and final part illustrates conceptual framework. Each part of this chapter is subdivided in to different parts, so that available literature can be extensively reviewed.

3.2. Sufism

Sufism, also known as *Tasawuf*, is Islamic version of mysticism. The term Sufism implies inner-self activities and the one who practices it, is called *Sufi*. *Tasawuf* or Sufism is both practice and philosophy in which a Sufi aims to directly communicate with God the Almighty.

3.2.1. Etymology

The term *Sufi* is very contested, scholarship is divided about its meaning and origin. According to *Kashaf Ul Mahjub*, the oldest Persian treatise on Sufism in South Asia written by Ali bin Uthman al-Jullabi Al-Hujweri¹ (Al Hujwiri, 1911; Al-Hujwírí, 1936; Nicholson, 2006). There are many claims from scholars regarding the origin and meaning of the term *Sufi*, Hujweri agrees on four possible sources of origin of Sufism. A *Sufi is called so* because he wears woolen garments (*jama-e juf*). Others believe that a Sufi is called so because he belongs to people of porch (*ashab-e suffa*). Other scholars argue that the term originated from first rank (*saf-e awal*), and according to others the term has originated from purity (*safa*). Many contemporaries such as Qurashi and later Sufi saints agree with Ali Hujweri on the origin and meaning of the word *Sufi*. Modern scholars such as Khanam (2011) and (Subhan (1960) also agree on these etymologies and meanings of the word *Sufi*.

The etymological position of Ali Hujweri is that *Sufis* are highly regarded with purity (*safa*), purity is opposite to *kadar* (impurity). He concludes the word Sufi originated from *Safa*. He further argues that the pure, the Apostle of God, Muhammad (upon whom peace be) has gone now and only the impure (*kadar*) has left in the world. To conclude Hujweri's argument, *kadar* (impurity) is the quality of man and among man *Sufi* is the one who bequeaths behind and

¹ 1. Ali Hajweri is a famous eleventh century Sufi, who travelled to Lahore after Ghaznavid conquest of the city and established his *Khanqah* in the outskirts of Lahore, which now is the biggest shrine of Pakistan. As a pioneer of Sufism in Indian sub-continent, he is respected by the followers of every Sufi order

undertakes a path of purity. Purity is a distinctive feature of lovers of God, who are dead in their own attributes (*fan'a*) and live in the attributes of beloved (*baq'a*), thus the purity is not of the lovers rather it is of beloved which is transcendent to him.

Farida Khanam in her book, *A simple guide to Sufism*, argues that origin of the word Sufi lies in *Suf* or wool. Because *Suf* the attire of Sufis. Many of early *Sufis* wear undyed wool which symbolizes with voluntary poverty and renunciation of the material world and its pleasures (Khanam, 2006).

3.2.1.1. Origin of Sufism

Sufis traces origin of *Tasawuf* and their legacy back to the prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH) through different *Silsila*. According to Sufis, Muhammad was recipient of two-dimensional revelation, one was in form of contents of Quran and the other was in his heart in form of divine inspiration. The former was also called *exoteric* aspects of revelation (*ilm-e safina*) carried by the religious scholars or *Ulama*. (sing. *Alim*) They were experts in this aspect of revelation, while later the *esoteric* aspect of revelation also known as “knowledge of the heart” (*Ilm-e sina*) belongs to *Sufis* (Subhan, 1960).

Sufis affirm that their origin dates back to the life of the Prophet himself. According to them, their claim is based on certain facts. The Prophet and his companions lived a simple life which is now the objective and founding principle of Sufism. The Prophet bared himself from all kinds of luxuries and whatever he earned or received gave it into charity. When he conquered whole Arabia, his belongings were no more than a mattress to sleep and an ewer for water. According to claims of Sufis the Prophet and some of his companions were engaged in prayers in which they are completely absorbed into. Later it became the footing of *Tasawuf*.

Jhon A. Subhan, while discussing the earliest forms of Sufism asserts that early Sufis were characterized by their simple life. They have renounced the world of desire and pleasure. Moreover, he clarifies that some three hundred years later after the death of the Prophet (PBUH) elements of pantheism and idealism came into Sufism. He adds that early Sufis were simple ascetics with poverty as their ideal (Subhan, 1960). As Ali Hajwiri says: “*know that poverty has a high rank in the way of truth and the poor are greatly esteemed*” (Al Hujwiri, 1911; Nicholson, 2006). Ibn-e Khaldun had recorded a similar account in his famous historical work, for him Sufis are the ones who are secluded from society, vanities, and mundane activities. Additionally, they have renounced authority, material wealth and are devoted to God (Khaldun, 1958).

3.2.1.2. Sufi Way

The ultimate goal of any Sufi is to achieve Union with God and that can be achieved by elevating spiritual life as a 'journey' (*Suluk*). And the one who seeks a journey is called *salik* or traveler. Sufism ushers a Sufi to accomplish the 'perfect knowledge' called (*ma'rifat*) of Almighty. Then the inquisitive soul is led to the 'stages' (*maqamat*) and then to an experience of certain 'states' (*ahwal*), along with a path (*at-tariqat*) and finally to craved destination of 'union with God' (*fana fi'l-haqiqat*) (Subhan, 1960).

According to religious scholars (*Ulama*) no one can attain the highest form of religious education. On the other hand, Sufis believe that, to attain the highest spiritual stage (*maqam*) or state (*ahwal*) *salik* needs a spiritual guide known as *Sheikh* or *murshid* or *Pir*. Who unceasingly guides *salik* in his *Suluk* (travel). The *Shaykh* blesses the *salik* at the beginning of his *Suluk* and *Salik* receives spiritual blessings. Sufis believe that these blessings are transmitted from the Holy Prophet and passed to different *Sufis* through the lineage of Ali. Except for *Naqshbandiyas'* they believe in Abu Bakr (r.a) lineage. The chain is still unbroken and is connected through different *Sufi Silsilas'* (Sufi Orders).

In the early times there were great Sufi masters or *Shaykh* and they did have large following but their movements were not institutionalized in the form of *Silsilas'* or orders. The process of manifesting Sufism as an institution began after the 11th and 12th centuries. The first of the Sufi order or *Silsila* was instituted by Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1071-1166). Then one of his contemporaries Abu'l Najib Suhrawardy (1098-1168) founded the *Suhrawardy Silsila*. Then later Sufi masters established other orders such as *Naqshbandi order* by Khwaja Baha' ud din Naqshbandi (1318-1318), another great *Sufi Silsila* named *Silsila e Chishti* was initially founded by Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami (d. 940) in *Chisht*. However, this *Silsillah* reached its pinnacle when Moinuddin Chishti (d. 1240) established *Khanqah* in Ajmer India. Among these dominant Sufi Orders this research is concerned with *Silsila e Chishti* because the shrine I have studied belongs to a *Chishti Nizami Sufi Sisilla*

3.2.2. Chishti Order

Chishti order originated in *Chisht*, Khurasan in the Tenth century. It was founded by Shaykh Abu Ishaq Shami (d.940) who is said to be ninth Sheikh after Hadrat Ali in spiritual succession. In the twelfth century Moin Uddin Chishti introduced *Chishti Sufi Silsillah* to India, he attracted not only Muslims but Hindus and people from other religions. He cared for the spiritual as well as physical well-being of his followers. And later Farid Uddin Ganj Shakar established his *Khanqah* in Pakpattan, Central Punjab. Baba Fareed Uddin Ganj Shaker resonated Punjabi

culture into his Sufi teachings. The prose and poetry of Baba Fareed were composed in native Punjabi language, which attracted millions of natives towards his teachings. Other key assimilating factors of Chishti's and locals were the *Ziker* (Dhikr) and *Sama* the devotional music of *Chishtis*'.

Silsila e Chishtiya traces back its spiritual lineage to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the fourth Caliph Ali (Prophet's son in law and cousin). Chishti's highly regarded to prominent Sufis like Hasan al-Basri and others as well as the Ahl-i Bait. Evolution of *Chishti Silsila* is traced back to Shaikh Abu Ishaq Chishti, who was a Sufi in Chishti in Modern day Afghanistan. Chishtis' in India followed an unprecedented approach to appeal to the masses, their appeal was more Indian than their counter parts like Suhrawardys' or Naqshbandis'. Chishtis' used local languages and other practices which are regarded with Hinduism but they remained within the folds of Islam and its fundamentals. In India, pioneer Chishti Sufis include Moin Uddin Chishti, Shaikh Freed Uddin Ganj Shakar, Shaikh Nizam Uddin Auliya and Shaikh Chirag-i Delhi. They belong to different epochs and the era of Shaikh Nizam Uddin Auliya during fourteenth century, Delhi witnessed the rise of *Chishtis*. In Punjab, the credit goes to Shaikh Fareed Uddin Ganj Shakar, whose poetry and teachings attracted hundreds and thousands towards Sufism. Pakpattan (then *Ajodhan*), where Khanqah of Ganj Shakar existed, became the epicenter of *Silsila e Chishtiya* and people across India visit here for *Baraka* (spiritual blessings). After Fareed Uddin, Nizam Uddin Auliya became the key protagonist of the brotherhood meanwhile the ascendancy of Nizam Uddin Auliya became a cause of schism within the brotherhood into Nizami and Sabri sub branches. Shaikh Ali Sabri of Kayler became the founder of Sabri branch. However, they remained confined to the surroundings of *Awadh*, while Punjab and other parts of India hardly felt its impact.

After Shaikh Freed, Punjab witnessed a decline in Chishti *Silsila* and a rise in its counterparts especially Qadiriya and Suhrawardiyya. Both of these Sufi brotherhoods develop a waxing influence over Spirituality, society and State. However, the Chishti Sufi Brotherhood did a comeback centuries later, during the eighteenth-century India witnessed a political turmoil. Decline of Mughals and Sikhs and British started ousting former rulers. Local *Chishtis* began to reorganize and revive their religious and political movement, they re-adhered to *Shari'a* and started *Jihad* against infidels. Similar tactics were used by Muslims in Africa, East Asia and Caucasus, because all of them feared colonial suppression. Noor Muhammad Maharwi played a significant role in Chishti revivalism, his disciples including *Sajjada Nashin* of Sial Sharif fought the expanding Sikh kingdom (Kamran & Shahid, 2014).

Noor Muhammad Muharvi (1730-1791) establish his *Khanqah* in Bahawalpur. His influence reached every major city and town of Punjab, which become the source of Chishti revivalism (Ibid.). The pinnacle of Chishti revivalism was at Taunsa, Sial and Golra sharif and the three are linked spirituality through *baith* (spiritual oath).

3.2.3. Sufism and Mysticism

The story of Mysticism goes back to the religion itself. In fact, religion and mysticism are entwined to each other, yet having different perspectives. Mysticism has some practices which religion(s) prohibit, though every religion has some mystical aspect in it. Mysticism is based on spiritual sensation in lieu of knowledge and mysticism tries to surrender to God by surrendering her existence.

In medieval era, Muslim world witnessed tumultuous political and administrative situation. This period was marked by theocratic unrest as well because many groups had their claims upon leadership. During these turbulent situations in the Umayyad era, many ascetics turned toward mysticism and pious people among Muslims started to renounce the material world. They believed that this was the only way to be rightful. These ascetics or mystics were called Sufis, Jhon A. Subhan (1960), notes that the word Sufi has no mass presence but the term appears only in the late 2nd century after Hijri and Khanam (2006) agrees with him. During the Abbasid period Sufi Masters began to establish their hospices and Sufism was on its way towards institutionalization. Sufis started to have their own practices and rituals. On the other hand, these Sufi masters travelled to different parts of the world to disseminate their message such as India where the message of Islam was conveyed by Sufi masters rather than *Ulama*. These Ascetics would follow certain paths and practices each made them different from each other. When such paths and practices were transferred to later generations Sufi orders started to evolve. These orders which have been discussed earlier started to expand through the line of succession of disciples (*Murid*), *Khalifas'* and their descendants. Their descendants were known as *Sajjada Nashins*, who later became custodians of *Khanqahs* and Shrines (*Astan*) of their forefathers. Shrines soon attracted hundreds of thousands of *Murids* who visited shrines to venerate the saint(s) buried there. With Masses as followers, shrines soon started exerting socio-political influence upon society and state. Events held in shrines such as *Urs* and other conferences (*Ijtima'at*) have a huge economic and political effect on masses then and now. Those events become a stage for *sajjada nashins* to propagate their political narratives.

3.3. Sufism and Politics

Since, Sufism in Muslim world is an amalgamation of religion and mysticism which has been discussed above. Nath & Phil (2015) critically evaluates the role religion plays in the third world and according to them religion drives every aspect of life. In religion people try to find answers to questions related to life and death. They further argue that since science has not developed in these countries therefore people invoke religion. Religion provides a recipe to build character of an individual that is why political institutions make use of religion to strengthen their political entities. Linus Strothmann (2016) in his book *Managing Piety: The shrine of Data Ganj Baksh*, argues that Shrine of Data Ganj Baksh is a classic manifestation of how religion and Sufism/shrine is used by the political elite of Pakistan in order to gain maximum political popularity and vote.

Shrines and saints dominate the political sphere in Pakistan, predominantly in the countryside. The source of *Sajjada Nashins* power lies in the shrine itself which attracts followers (*Murid*). Since *Muridain* are spirituality bound to obey their master (*murshid*). Therefore, *Sajjada Nashins* influences political sphere (Kalhor & Khan, 2017; Werbner & Basu, 1998). This concept of power and authority rhymes with concept of power given by Max Weber. According to Weber (1958); “*traditional authority typically depends on holding a traditionally sanctioned office, such as monarchy.*” Similarly, J. H. Turner et al., (2011) cited Weber that, “*authority will be called traditional if legitimacy is claimed for it and believed in by virtue of sanctity of old-age rules and powers*”.

The fundamental rightfulness of the traditional system is custom, leaders claim their right to power and position and justify it in the light of long-standing patterns. As Weber asserts; *Sajjada Nashins* claim their authority under the same patterns which have been established over a long period of time. Shrines act as offices of this traditionally sanctified authority which have an immense impact on the socio-political structure of society.

The following sub-chapters discuss the political role of shrines over time and space.

3.3.1. Sufism and Politics in Medieval Era

With the evolution in Sufi Institutions or *Silsilas*, *Sufi* masters (*Sheikhs or Pirs*) significantly enhanced their religious and political stature (Hassanali, 2010). Sufi Saints in Islamic world always had political influence, which dates back to the early emergence of Sufism as an institution. Likewise, Olcott (2007), argues that one of the early Sheikh of *Naqshbandiya Silsila* (one of the main *Sufi* brotherhood or order) Sheikh Amir Kulal, politically inspired Amir Taimur (Tamerlane) to conquer and establish his empire in Transoxiana (Central Asia). He was

the first Sufi leader to exert such political influence. Martha B. Olcott further studies how it benefited the brotherhood because it gave a political and state refuge to Naqshbandiya *Silsila*. They became independent to carry out their preaching's. One of the disciples of Sheikh Amir Kulal; Baha ad-Din Naqshband who became the second Sheikh of the order, and became so influential that the *Silsila* adopted his name known as *Naqshbandiya Silsila* (Olcott, 2007). The symbiotic relationship is not peculiar to Central Asia but can be seen everywhere. For instance, Khan (2005), argues *Pir-ruler* tie is beneficial for both rulers and *Pir*'s. The rulers get support from followers of saints or *Pir*. Meanwhile *Pir* receives political patronage and can exert full religious authority over his followers.

Malik & Mirza (2015) argues that the arrival of Sufism dates back millennia. Sufi saints were ascetic missionaries came from Arab and Persia to spread Islam in the Indian Sub-continent. They were primary source of spreading Islam (Strothmann, 2016). And also, Sufis were the primary source of religious interpretation. Thus, this relationship between masses and Sufis which is more than a thousand years old plays a significant role in socio-cultural, economic and political affairs of South Asia.

Hassanali (2010) analyzes the political role of shrines in medieval era and argues that religion and politics were parallel to each other. Since, Sufi saints have large followings and have the direct control over masses, thus they used their *khanqahs* for political purposes. On the other hand, the ruling elite knew the importance of these *khanqahs*, therefore, they cooperated with *Sufi masters* and invested in shrines by granting landholdings to *Pirs*. Rulers support *Pirs* and vice versa legitimizes both among masses. All Sufi orders, including *Chishtiya*, *Qadiriya* and *Suhrawardiya* received royal patronage (Paracha, 2020).

Land grants helped administration to maintain stability in society. Further, influence of *Pirs* over their *Murids* were used for military recruitments on premature notices. Land grants known as *madad-e mash* received by *Pirs* initially from *Sultans* of Delhi and then later from Mughal emperors. Sufis, known as *Lashkar-e-Dua* (army of prayers), were most trustworthy allies who came to rescue the *Sultans* and *Mughals* in any political crisis (Hassanali, 2010).

The political influence of the Sufis was multidimensional, though they were not explicitly involved in politics during the *Sultanate* era or later in the Mughal era. However, they were involved implicitly as discussed above. According to historian K.K Aziz many *Sultans* of Delhi were blessed by their contemporary Sufi's, such as Iltutmish (d.1236) was blessed by Khawaja Muinddin Chishti, similarly, Ghais Balban (d.1287) was blessed by Baba Fareed and Muhammad Tughlaq was blessed by Nizamuddin Auliya (Aziz, 2001). In virtue of these events people soon started to believe that it is impossible to achieve anything without the blessings of

a *murshid*. Soon masses flocked to the *khanqahs* to pledge their allegiance (*bayat*) to *Pirs* and receive their blessings. The spiritual allegiance was soon converted into political allegiance by Sufis. If the relationship between ruler and Sufi was not good, then the ruler would simply limit his patronage to saints. Thus, the disgruntled saint would withdraw his blessing upon the ruler (Paracha, 2020).

This peculiar symbiotic relationship between Sufis and rulers was a key source to maintain peace, stability and social order in society. Thus, it became a source of goodwill for both state and her citizens (Anjum, 2014). During the sultanate era, *Pirs* enjoyed not only a religious role but a political role of mediators between common masses and rulers. This restricted anarchism as *Pirs* would advise their followers to follow the rulers (Anjum, 2014).

Power brokering role was beneficial for Sufi masters, state, and rulers. It was easy for Sultans and then to Emperors to maintain their order, thus maintaining authority. *Pirs* gained socio-economic benefit which they utilized to maintain stability in their own spiritual kingdoms. Scholarships seem to be divided over *Pir* and ruler relationship; certain scholars argue that this relation was for welfare of masses and to save the people from suppression by rulers (Anjum, 2014; Suvorova, 2004). While, other scholars argue that this relationship of *Pir* and Sultans or emperors was for sustainment of *khanqahs* and to enhance their *Sufi Silsilas* (Aziz, 2001; Hassanali, 2010). The posterity² of these Sufis were explicitly and implicitly involved in politics (Aziz, 2001; Eaton, 1984; Khan, 2005).

The coalition of power and religion gave an unquestionable authority to *Pirs* over their followers; they were faced by the state in rural areas. The rigid control over masses gives *Sajjada Nahins* political power and control.

3.3.2. Sufism and Politics during British Raj

Pirs have support and control of masses, thus, have the ability to legitimize state among masses. During the medieval era, the rulers and then later, the British also turned towards them for state legitimization. *Pirs* enjoyed powers in local administration, which became a substantial part of their spiritual kingdoms. According to Gilmartin, state patronization of *Pirs* continued and grew exponentially, they were allocated agricultural land and other privileges and in return the state had their loyalty ((Gilmartin, 1988). Gilmartin (1979) scrutinizes the political role of *Sajjada Nashins* (*Pirs*) during the Mughal era. According to him *Pirs* were not only just

² The posterity of Suhrawardiya Sufis later became governors of Multan region, while Chishtis would control Pakpattan, Lyallpur and neighboring towns and the Syed or *Sada'ats* used to enjoy the rulership of Jhang and Chiniot districts.

religious leaders, they acted as local chieftains similar to a tribal leader, and their political role was based on hereditary not on Piety. They manifested central governments in granting honorary titles, and land. In Multan, the relationship was so strong that a local Sajjada Nashin was appointed as governor of the province. But there were some other Sufis who opposed the local Sikh government such as *Chishtis* and that is the reason Strothmann (2016) finds out that during British Raj *Silsila e Chishtiya* spread more and more as compared to any other *Sufi Silsila*³.

According to Mubarak Ali, British government recognized the importance of religious leaders especially influence and grandness of *Pirs* because they had spiritual allegiance to people. When the British annexed Punjab during their rule, they bargained and manipulated Sufis, so that *Pirs* would help them run the affairs of state without any political disruptions. *Pirs* under the British patronage soon became foci of local politics. Later their descendants of great saints from Jhang, Pakpattan and Multan became the *Ziladars* of their respective districts. They were also appointed as magistrates and enjoyed the membership in the district councils. This helped *Pirs* to expand their shrines, landholdings and other assets.

Land alienation act of 1900⁴ helped *Pirs* to strengthen their control over the rural population. Previously, the evolving landless urban class started buying agricultural land by money lending traps or by paying higher rates. This act marked a full stop on land acquisition by urban areas which could be a challenge for the former elites such as *Pirs*, thus, *Pirs* have strengthened their control over rural land and people.

There are many scholars who studied non-land privileges bestowed by The British to *Pirs*. For instance, *Pirs* and their families were honored with administrative positions in municipal corporations in their shrine's vicinity. Similarly, membership in district councils. Some prominent Sufis were nominated for provincial and state councils and as discussed and some were given Governorships of their respective provinces. In addition, *Pirs* were bestowed with honorary titles of that time such as Nawab, Khan Bahadur etc. (Aziz, 2001; Gilmartin, 1979). K.K Aziz further argues that titles and administrative appointments were based on following of *Pirs*, if a *Pir* has a large following then he would be accommodated accordingly. The given appointment would suit his religious and political stature. For instance, if *Murids* spread over

³ Not only Chishtis but other Muslim sects like Deoband, and other separatist's political movements attracted masses due to their anti-colonial sentiments

⁴ Punjab land alienation act of 1900 divided Punjabis into two groups: agricultural tribes and non-agriculturalists. The act banned sale, gift, exchange, and wills to non-agriculturalists. the aim of LAA 1900 was to preserve the rural status quo and to stop the growing influence of urban money lenders. For more details, see, Chaudhary, L., & Swamy, A. V. (2020). A policy of credit disruption: Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900. *Economic History Review*, 73(1), 134-158.

a district then he will be adjusted in a district level political post such as, *Ziladar, lambardar etc.* Progeny of *Pirs* would be honorary recruited in the military and *Pirs* would then have a multi-dimensional influence. *Pirs* were highly interconnected through marriages and other social ties. Thus, forming their own cults which resulted in political and religious support to each other (Aziz, 2001).

Ahmad Raza Bareli (1856-1921), a Sunni Hanafi scholar who is credited of being founder of 'Barelvi' Sunni sub-sect. His works are majorly reactionary towards Deobandi and Ahle-Hadith polemical writings and speeches towards Sufis. He called himself a staunch follower of Sufism and himself a *Sufi*. He defended Sufi ritual and saint venerations and other practices associated with Indian *Sufism*. Soon he became popular among Sufis and famous Sufi orders such as *Chishtis* and *Qadiris* aligned themselves with Ahmad Raza Bareli. On the other hand, reformists, such as *Deobandis* and *Ahle- Hadith* declared Sufism as 'superstitious' and 'un-Islamic'. Ahmad Raza Bareli defended Sufism and declared that there is nothing un-Islamic in Sufism and all practices have their roots in the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet. He defended role of shrine as hospices of Islam. According to him, shrines equally treat people with different socio-economic and religious backgrounds with the same enthusiasm. He further exerts that Shrines have stopped being politically beneficial for Muslim rulers. And in proselytization of Indians, shrines have played a crucial role. Diverse and empathetic role of shrines helped rulers to maintain their rule over a non-Muslim majority of subjects (Paracha, 2020). Raza became a socio-political voice of Sufis and masses flocked to his discourse and associate themselves as Barelvis. Though Raza and his fellows never called themselves Barelvi.

When the *Khilafat* movement surfaced in the socio-political realm, Raza immediately refused to join it, by following him, many Sufis distanced themselves and then AIML also refused to support the movement. *Ulama* actively voiced for the *Khilafat* movement and captured the public eye; they demanded to restore lands which the Ottoman Empire lost in the world. In Contrary to many Sufis, *Pir* of Sial Sharif joined the movement and actively participated in it (Sajanka & Mushtaq, 2021). With the refusal of majority Barelvis to take part in the movement, it created a vacuum which was filled by traditional *Ulama*. *Ulama* only had space for Mosques and Madrassahs, but now they were vigorously participating in the political sphere. Traditional *Ulama* were aligned with Deobandi ideology. Vacuums have been created in two fronts; first religio-political sphere which was filled by Deobandis (*Ulama*) and second, political (more secular) which was filled by INC. For Nadeem F. Paracha, Gandhi's' support for Khilafat movement was like a '*bolster*' for his drive against British. The movement was nothing but a failure but it did bring traditional *Ulama* into politics like *Jamiat Ulama-I Islam Hind*, inspired

by Deobandi ideology aligned with INC. On the other hand, All-India Sunni Conference (AISC) aligned with Jinnah's Muslim League (Paracha, 2020). *Khilafat* movement is a classic case of how vacuums are filled by rivals and how new actors appear into political arenas.

AISC became major political representation of Sufis, but with *Pir* Jamat Ali Shah's⁵ support, AISC's popularity grew exponentially. AISC was dominated by *Chishtis* and *Qadiris* and Jamat Ali Shah despite his proximity to Naqshbandis, supported it. *Chishtis* and Naqshbandis are rival *Sufi* orders. *Pir* Jamat Ali Shah censured traditionalist *Ulama* as well as modernists. He urged AISC to unite Sunnis, as they have real majority in India. He also recommended to start evangelical missions and build more madrassas, this resulted in sudden rise in popularity of *Pir*. His popularity attracted more financial support for AISC as well. Taking a turn, Shah bridged gap between modernist leaders of AIML and Sufis, the two came closer and in 1939 shah described flag of AIML as the '*Flag of Islam*'. Some scholars see this coalition as reactionary to coalition of INC and JUIH (Paracha, 2020). Before historic elections of 1945-1946, AIML urged Barelvi leaders and *Pirs* to support party in upcoming elections and by doing so support creation of Pakistan. Before elections Sufi *Pirs* had supported Unionist party in Punjab, but then alliances changed and *Pirs* enthusiastically supported AIML. Consequently, *Majlis-e Itihad-e Millat*, a Barelvi political party was merged into AIML in 1938.

Urs festivals, where masses gather to venerate saints buried in shrines and to perform other activities played a crucial role in disseminating the political message of AIML. *Sajjada Nashins*, who presides over *Urs* festivals, direct their followers to support and vote for his blessed AIML candidates. Campaign was overwhelmingly successful in Punjab and Sind, where the majority of population belonged to the Barelvi sect or to *Sufi* orders. Elections were decisive because AIML won areas of Punjab, Sind, Bengal and later North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). These provinces later became territory of the newly born nation 'Pakistan'.

The British government gave *Pirs* political and religious space, and according Aziz (2001) in 1920 and 1945-1946 elections *Pirs* had 19 percent of rural representation in legislature. Though many *Pirs* supported the Unionist party but later when *Pir* Jamat Ali Shah persuaded others of his clique to support AIML and creation of Pakistan they did. However, this was just the beginning of their political role. Following section will discuss the political role of Sufi *Pirs* in Pakistan.

⁵ *Pir* Jamaat Ali Shah was a prominent Sufi leader from Alipur Punjab. He was an anti- Quadiani, anti-Wahhabi leader of Sunnis. He was a central figure in *Khilafat* and *Shaheed Ganj* movements. For more details on him, see, Tazkara Shah Jamaat, Hazrat *Pir* Jamat Ali Shah, Urdu

3.3.3. Politics of Sufism in Pakistan

Soon after the creation of Pakistan, Qamar Uddin Sialvi, a Sufi leader from Sargodha, Punjab, a direct descendant of *Pir* Khawaja Shams Uddin Sialvi (1799-1883), who himself was a renowned *Pir*, approached Quaid-I-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to impose Sharia's laws in the newly born country. Islam was the basis for the formation of the country therefore it was advised that sharia be made the framework, however, Jinnah thought in contrary. This resulted in the formation of *Jamiat Ulama-e Pakistan* (JUP) in just a year after creation of Pakistan i.e. in 1948. Which marked the beginning of Sufi and Barelvi politics in the newly born country. JUP was formed by famous Sufi *Pirs* and Barelvi clerics. All-India Sunni Conference (AISC), which had an alliance with AIML before creation of Pakistan transmuted and reemerged as JUP. Before partition, AISC and AIML were allies but after creation of Pakistan JUP criticized state and government for being interested in interacting only with adversaries of creation of Pakistan. By this, they meant Deobandi political outfits and so called 'Islamists' Jamaat-e Islami (Paracha, 2020).

The political role of shrines goes back to the advent of Islam in South Asia. Islam as a religion, undermines race and ethnicity and emerged itself as a cause for nationhood (even nation) and division of sub-continent was based on religion. Movement of Pakistan was carried by religious scholars and students specifically in its later period. As it was expected, Islam became a unifying factor in Muslim majority areas precisely in Punjab (Gilmartin, 1988). Islam believed to spread enormously in Sub-continent through these saints and Shrines of different Sufi orders (*Silsila*). Importance of shrines continued until Mughals were replaced by British, this was a high time for Muslims of the Subcontinent. Afterwards, struggle by Muslims for a separate homeland continued till they achieved it in 1947. And the role of clergy never vanished rather it increased as *Ulama* and *Sajjada Nashins* who were wealthy and had deep political roots now become political class.

Objective resolution and later constitution were indecisive to choose between Islamic laws and modern principles of democracy. First, it declared that every law will be guided in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah. However, to eliminate risks of establishing a Theocracy, people's representatives would be elected (H. Khan, 2011). This gave more power to *Ulama* and *Pirs* because they already had a following, and the elections of 1946 were its prime demonstration (Iqbal et al., 2020). In elections of 1945-1946 ML's appeal was based on sentiments of religion and community. Even though, Quaid I Azam, was a believer of secular ideology but still

Muslim League contested election on Islamic rhetoric (Haqqani, 2010). Similarly, there are many movements which were organized by religious class to show their political power, such as, Tehreek e Khatam e Nabuwat (Iqbal et al., 2020), Sunni Tehreek, Tehreek e Nifaze Shariat-e Muhammadi (Waseen & Mufti, 2009) which dominate discourse formation in Pakistan.

The political power of *Sajjada Nashins* and *Pirs* is legitimized by their widespread followings, these followers believed in *Pirs* and accepted their authority. *Pirs* were somehow able to converge spiritual authority into political authority through their influence. Spiritual authority amalgamates into political authority through support of traditional practices and beliefs (Eaton, 1984; Werbner & Basu, 1998). After the creation of Pakistan, the relationship between *Pirs* (*Sajjada Nashins*) and state considerably changed. Nadeem F. Paracha argues that the State tilted towards Deobandi ideology (Paracha, 2020). On the other hand, Linus Strothmann argues that political elite of Pakistan tried to weaken *Sajjada Nashins* (Strothmann, 2016). The subtlety of Strothmann's arguments comes from the concept of Shrine as "*Counter or anti-structure*" (V. Turner & Abrahams, 2017; Werbner & Basu, 1998). Political elite (modernists) of Pakistan regarded *Sajjada nashins* as their rivals especially in rural areas where *Pirs* dominated socio-political milieu. Government and state simply could not eliminate the challenge of *Sajjada Nashins*. Hence, the state announced various policies through which shrines and *Sajjad Nashins* could be incorporated and challenge the 'other' could be eliminated (Ewing, 1997).

Katherine Ewing in her book, *arguing sainthood: modernity, psychoanalysis, and Islam*, argues that, when British colonial rule was about to end in Indian-Subcontinent, religion once again became focal ideology for separatists' movements. Religion, once was relegated from the public sphere to private by the British to counter the narratives by religious authorities. By countering religion Britishers were successful in monopolizing hegemony of colonial discourse. Islam and Hinduism were new identities which were interpellated by colonial power to their subjects. Result were very cruel because of bifurcation which led to mass migration followed by bloodshed (Ewing, 1997).

Javed Iqbal, son of national poet of Pakistan Allama Iqbal, wrote a book *ideology of Pakistan* published in 1959, he criticized role of *Sufis* and *Sajjada Nashins* and termed them as "spiritual aristocrats⁶". These *Sufis* and *Pirs* have systematically kept esoteric forms of knowledge exclusively for their coterie. Therefore, Javed Iqbal suggests creation of a ministry of *Auqaf*

⁶ Here "Spitiualaristocrats" represents an aristocratic class that is unnecessarily married with spirituality.

(endowment), the ministry would be responsible for managing these religious places (Ewing, 1983, 1997). In the book Javed Iqbal quotes his father;

“The establishment of such a Ministry on lines suggested above is only remedy for paralyzing influence of Mullah and Pir over rural and urban masses of Islam. Unless and until Mullah and Pir are excluded from our religious life, there is no likelihood of successful dissemination of enlightenment, liberalism and a meaningful and vital Faith among people of Pakistan” (Javed, 1971).

Ayub Khan, the then President, received the book with good regards, shortly after reading it. President wrote a letter to Javed Iqbal on 11th July 1959 and said that he had been thinking the same line. And later Ayub’s government through an ordinance took over Shrines, mosques and other religious properties. *West Pakistan Waqf properties ordinance of 1959* gave Ayub regime direct control over religious spaces. Ordinance was superseded by two other ordinances; one by Ayub regime as, *West Pakistan Waqf Properties Ordinance of 1961* and one by Bhutto regime, which brought waqf under federal government as, *Waqf act of 1976* (Ewing, 1997). According to Katherine Ewing and later scholars such as (Strothmann, 2016) this was a deliberate move by Ayub and Bhutto to weaken *Sajjada Nashins*. The properties which had been under ownership of the family of these *Sajjada Nashins* now came under the control of the state. *Pirs* had been intermediaries of masses and now the state had officially relieved them from their duty.

Jamal Malik’s *Colonization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan* argues that nationalization of shrines was a political move in part of the state. Government wanted to put these ‘counter institutions’ under bureaucratic control, or else, it could be a potential threat (J. Malik, 1996). Apart from that, Javed Iqbal’s concept of *Pirs* as “*social reformers*” and Ayub Khan thought of himself as reformer too (a modernist). President liked the idea of Javed Iqbal and instructed the Auqaf department to distribute pamphlets outside shrines during *Urs* and other gatherings. Pamphlets consist of stories related to *Pirs* which purposefully ignored parts in which miracles were attributed to *Pirs*. Hagiographies of these *Saints* were orally produced and some were written by individuals having no credential and were transmitted to generations. Hagiographical accounts published by the Auqaf department in 1960 described *Pirs* as common and ordinary individuals. And presented them as the ones who abhor rich and influential people. This was purposefully written to target *Sajjada Nashins* who owned estates and agricultural landholdings (Paracha, 2020).

Katherine Ewing seems to agree with Jamal Malik's view of colonization of Islam particularly with Shrines and its discourse. Pamphlets played an important role in achieving that goal. Pamphlets described *Pirs* as 'open-minded' individuals, who served humanity beyond caste and creed, by doing this, the state wanted to deconstruct *pirs* identity which was related to a certain caste or *biraderi*. Pamphlets further goes on by saying that there is no need for any middleman (*Pir or mullah*) to reach Allah (Ewing, 1997). This was an offensive attack on the essence of *Sufism*. Because there is no requirement of any *Pir* or *murshid* to guide a *salik* (traveler) into his *suluk* (travel) to reach spiritual *maqama'at* (stages) and *ahwal* (state). President Ayub Khan took an unprecedented step and went to attend *Urs* celebration, thus, became the first head of state to do so (Paracha, 2020). Ayub Khan's modernist regime introduced his ideas into shrines and started building hospitals, libraries, mosques and schools (Ewing, 1983). Hospitals challenged so-called '*Pirs* spiritual healing powers', schools and libraries disseminated state's discourse and challenged orally transmitted hagiographies.

Ayub Khan in 1966 said that gap of Islam and rationality which persists in our or society today did not exist in the earlier times. There was no such gap and there has never been a conflict between Islam and science. He further asserted, Islam as a religion has unfortunately lost its intellectual spirit. The *Auqaf* department later established libraries in different shrines such as, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sind, Bulleh Shah and Khawaja Freed Ganj-e Shakar in Punjab (Paracha, 2020). Ayub's effort to mold interpretation from a traditionalist perspective to a modernist one could not be achieved. However, he set a precedent for the State to interpret Sufism in accordance to their own interests.

Similarly, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became head of state, he didn't attack Sufis the way Ayub did, in fact he came with his own idea(interpretation) of Islamic Socialism. However, he strengthened mandate of *Auqaf* department. *Auqaf* department printed series of pamphlets which propagated that Sufi saints believed in a classless society. The idea was based on egalitarianism preached by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), popularly known as *Musawa'at Muhammadi*. This concept rhymed with Bhutto's Islamic socialism. *Auqaf* department portrayed saints as revolutionaries who were fighting landlords and feudalists who are oppressing lower classes. Bhutto started visiting shrines in *Shalwar Kameez* as he wanted to be called *Quaid-e-Awam*⁷ so he wanted be seen as one of them. He made sure that his visits to shrines of famous saints would be covered by media, while his predecessor did it twice. According to Nadeem F. Paracha he even advised his ministers to visit shrines, especially on

⁷ leader of masses

occasion of *Urs*. Soon *Urs* festivals started making headlines in country's print media (Paracha, 2020).

According to Katherine Ewing (1983), former Presidents Ayub Khan and Zia ul Haq (both Martial Law Administrators) and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto then PM, used shrines as means for their public appearances which gained them popularity. It also provided a platform to convey their political manifestos. They converted visitations to shrines as a political stage. Correspondingly, Strothmann (2016) also reveals how Shrines, specifically Data Darbar, has been used as a political stage by politicians. Former Late PM Benazir Bhutto upon returning to the country in 1986 first visited the Shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh in Lahore and then her political program continued. These (political) visits to shrines or veneration of shrines show their role and its meaning to followers of saints buried over there.

Ayub Khan's policy of building schools and libraries in shrines was appreciated by the Bhutto regime and went ahead by building low price rest houses, hostels and restaurants in the vicinity of shrines. Government spent thousands of rupees in veneration and beautification of shrines, which was welcomed by Barelvi outfits especially JUP (Paracha, 2020). Bhutto propagated his 'populist socialist' narrative by dragging *Sufism* into politics. However, Sufis or Barelvi political outfits were silent as long as Bhutto's interpretation was not directly coming in conflict with them. But in 1974 JUP played a crucial role in the violent attacks against the Ahmadiyya community (Paracha, 2020). Its leaders used shrines to raise support for the movement, Qamar Uddin Sialvi *Pir* of Sial Sharif actively participated in this movement. He was president of JUP in the 1970s and later was nominated twice as member of Council of Islamic Ideology.

The Bhutto regime established Lok Virsa in the 1970s to celebrate cultural diversity in the country, which was an extraordinary step because no previous government dared to take such a bold step. People thought promoting 'other' languages than Urdu might provoke elements of provincialism. However, the Bhutto regime wanted to use diversity as a strength. Establishment of Lok Virsa gave folk artists an opportunity to enter into the mainstream art and music industry especially *Qawwals* made an entry to corridors. Urban dwellers seem to love music especially after the arrival of Television in the country. Folk singers sung Sufi songs on national TV and radio. Urdu *Qawwalis* then became super hits especially *Qawwalis* of Aziz Mian and Sabri brothers. The idea benefited Bhutto's populist narrative of Islamic socialism. A new interpretation appeared onto the screen which Nadeem F. Paracha termed as "*Pop-Sufism*". It attracted urban educated classes which were either modernists or socialists, obviously a major chunk of urban population inclined toward Deobandi and Ahl-e hadith ideologies (Paracha, 2020).

In an orderly nutshell, interpretations of Sufism till Bhutto's regime; it was Islamic at eve of independence and was married with ideology of Pakistan. And after creation of Pakistan, leaders seem to divorced it over other interpretations of Islam. Ayub Khan wanted Sufism to be modern and then Zulfikar Ali Bhutto wanted it to be socialist and later it became 'pop Sufism'. One thing that was consistent, was Sufism itself. Ultimately Sufism dominated political ideology and discourse. It was never relegated from politics though politicians tried to limit it to shrines but were merely successful. However, *Sajjada Nashins*, because of their hereditary status of being spiritual and religious, were able to maintain their position (Ewing, 1983).

When General Zia ul Haqq toppled Bhutto's government he sought legitimization in public (J. Malik, 1996). This was the first time Pakistan went through a process of radicalization. Sufism, was once again interpreted in a new form, this time the government presented *Sufi saints* as pious religious men, who were strict followers of *Shari'a* (Ewing, 1997). Zia regime emphasized exoteric perspective of Islam and published various articles about *Sufis* being Islamic scholar and having no special powers (Paracha, 2020). state patronage over Shrines started declining and *Urs* celebrations received less state dignitaries (Ewing, 1997). According to Nadeem F. Paracha Zia regime even proposed taxing shrines, and *Pirs* however, expecting a public outrage idea was soon shelved (Paracha, 2020).

The Zia regime met its end with the tragic incident of plane crash. Benazir Bhutto daughter of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto returned to the country. When she landed at Lahore airport hundreds of thousands of her party workers received her and then she headed straight away to the Shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh (Strothmann, 2016). This was a historic moment in Sufi politics, because the leader of the biggest political party of country had just put an effort to capture popular support of *Sufis* who felt ignored under the Zia regime. Next decade was disturbing for political class because of tug of war between Pakistan People's party and Pakistan Muslim League. The last decade of twentieth century ended with the end of democracy in Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf sent home an elected government. Pakistan was at this time facing threats of sectarian violence and rising religious extremism. Musharraf idealized modernization of Ayub Khan and Ata Turk of Turkey, however he had his limits. As Ayub Khan's era was long gone and rise of Recep Erdogan nullified efforts to introduced *Laicite* secularism⁸ (Paracha, 2020). So, Musharraf introduced his idea of '*Enlightened*

⁸ A concept of secularism peculiar to France which restricts individuals to practice religion in public spheres. Introduced in the 19th century to free the state from Catholic religious institutions and in modern France the President elect cannot be sworn in by taking an oath on Bible or any other religious text.

Moderation of Sufism’, he wanted to tackle rising fundamentalism through Sufism. Sufism again started to dominate state discourse and Musharraf with help of grandson of Alama Iqbal, setup *National Council for promotion of Sufism (NCPS)* (Sulaman, 2018). The Musharraf regime unprecedentedly dragged not only Sufism but also Barelvi political outfit into politics to challenge the country's rising challenge of Deobandi/Salafi ideologies (Paracha, 2020). Musharraf reiterates the long state narrative of declaring Punjab and Sind as ‘land of Sufis’. After the US war on terror, Sufi Shrines in Pakistan became the target of suicide bombings. According to DAWN newspaper’s timeline first suicide on Sufi shrine occurred in 2005 in Jhal Magsi, Baluchistan (DAWN, 2017). This heinous attack on shrine of *Pir Rakhel Shah* triggered series of bomb attacks on other shrines in different parts of country, major shrines came under attack. Growing extremism led by Deobandi outfits and terrorism became precursor of Barelvi political activism which was unprecedented in history of country. Suicide bombings in Sufi shrines and other public places created hatred among masses and people once again started to tilt their political and religious ideologies towards different Sufi orders. Different Barelvi factions came under banner of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC)⁹ in 2009. SIC soon started public appearances and started disseminating their political and religious ideology. The country witnessed SIC’s first long march which started from Islamabad and was destined to reach Lahore. Slogan in the long march was entirely political, the major slogan was “to save Pakistan”, a slogan generally used by the country's political parties. Many political and apolitical organizations which had setup SIC had now formally entered in politics. The long march is just one example of political activism in Pakistan which has now reached the formation of Tehreek Labaik e Pakistan (TLP). TLP, which received around 2 million votes in the general election of 2018 (ECP, 2018). According to these statistics of electoral voting percentage TLP is now the fifth largest political party in terms of popular votes received by political parties in the general election of 2018. This has never happened overnight but an aftermath of decades of Barelvi political activism.

With the end of the Musharraf regime, democratic governments continued their predecessor's policies about Sufism, however NCPS was rebranded as *Sufi Advisory Council (SAC)*. Barelvi political outfits were adjusted in newly established SAC, JUP, Sunni Tehreek and Suni Ittehad Council were patronized by state. Sunni Tehreek (ST) was heavily financed by United States to organize rallies to mobilize public against Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (a Deobandi outfit

⁹ Formed in 2009, Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) was an organization formed by amalgamation of different Barelvi political and religious outfits. Initially the organization aimed to counter growing extremists’ narratives.

(Strothmann, 2016), US gave ST an amount of 36,607 in US dollars (Express Tribune, 2012; Paracha, 2020).

In 2011, things changed and Barelvi outfits turned the tables and started criticizing government over remarks of then Governor of Punjab Salman Taseer in Asia Bibi case¹⁰. One of security personnel of official protocol of the governor of Punjab named Mumtaz Qadri gunned down the Governor whom he was supposed to protect, over remarks by Salman Taseer where he described blasphemy laws as “*black laws*” (Paracha, 2020). Mumtaz Qadri belonged to *Sufi Order* of Qadriya, and was formerly a member of *Dawat-e Islami*. Sunni Tehreek hailed the killer and the US immediately ceased funding of ST (Paracha, 2020; Strothmann, 2016).

Then Barelvi politics was driven by Mumtaz Qadri's issue, Barelvi outfits wanted acquittal while the state never bent down. Barelvi political outfits used shrines to raise political support and marked beginning of Tehreek Labaik-e Pakistan (TLP). Though TLP appeared as a pressure group for Mumtaz Qadri's acquittal but later they marched Islamabad over 2017s election reform bill (ELECTION ACT AND ELECTION RULES, 2017), the government of PMLN was labeled as sympathizers of the Ahmadiyya community. Hatred towards Ahmadiyya is a long political tool of religious parties in Pakistan which dates back to before partition. TLP later emerged as guardian of second Amendment¹¹ of constitution of Pakistan.

The State of Pakistan has tried to limit Sufis to their shrines however, it was a total failure because Sufis control discourse of shrines and their authority is based on tradition which is deep rooted in centuries old practices. However, there is a wide range of scholarship which argues that religious and political space of Sufis has been squeezed to rural areas (Buehler, 1997; Hassan, 1987; WRIGHT, 1999). The reasons they argue are interesting and revealing, assumption state's political interference might have reduced but it is de-colonialization, technological advancement, scientific education and reform movements within Islam (Buehler, 1997; Hassan, 1987; WRIGHT, 1999). However, Punjab and Sind's rural areas are still dominated by *Pirs* and their politics. And their wealth and power are justified by *muidrs* as blessings from God.

3.4. Shrines and Economy

¹⁰ A Christian woman, accused of blasphemy and later was sentenced to death by a lower court in Pakistan, however in 2018, the Supreme court of Pakistan acquitted her. For details see, (BBC, 2019)

¹¹ Second amendment of the constitution of Pakistan was codified on 17th September 1974, which declared the Qadianis as non-Muslims. Qadianis are a group who do not believe on the finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Political influence gives *Pirs* a vital economical role as well. Once *Pirs* (Sajjada Nashins, Custodians of Shrine) had their monopoly over shrines and its properties, then property became a source of income for them via donation or Waqf (*pl. auqaf*) (Strothmann, 2016). Donations consist of moveable and immovable properties and in legal form (Kozlowski, 1985). Political mediation or brokering by Sufi saints paid very well not only for them but also to their descendants. implicit support of Saints and their followers paid in terms of land, revenue and other economic gains, ensures Sufi Saints to strengthen their grip on their “spiritual kingdom” (Kalhoro & Saleem, 2016). However, scholarship is divided as whether early Sufi Saints were involved in political meditations for economic and political benefits or simply these efforts were for a betterment of a larger society (Kalhoro & Saleem, 2016).

Linus Strothmann (2016) studied both the economic and political role and importance of shrines for *Sajjada Nashins*. According to him Custodians of shrines have a crucial role in Pakistani society especially in rural areas, where followers termed as *Murids* have to follow master *murshid*. The allegiance of *Murids* gives unquestionable political support to *Pir*'s which not only pays them in politics but also in terms of economy. As every shrine has its direct donation system like Data Darbar in Lahore, which has four major donation boxes within premises of shrine (Kalhoro & Saleem, 2016). The relationship of *Murid* and *murshid* is beyond economics and politics. Rural masses in Jhang are devoted to their pious saints who are buried in these shrines of Shah Jeewna or shrine of Hazrat Sultan Bahu (Kalhoro & Khan, 2017) this relationship compels *Murids* to support and vote their *murshids* (Kalhoro & Khan, 2017).

Shrines of pious Sufi saints are a source of income not only for Custodians of shrines but also to local community and even national government earns through taxes and visa fees. (Ebadi, 2016) studies shrines and their visitors in Iran and reveals that annually 50 million travelers visit these shrines in Iran, these religious tourists come to Iran from all over the world. This religious tourism is not peculiar to Iran but during *Urs* (the annual celebration) at shrines thousands of people gather to venerate saints buried in shrines (Buehler, 1997). *Urs* celebration has religious, economic and political benefits for *Sajjada Nashin* and even National Leaders like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto used to visit shrines during *Urs* (Strothmann, 2016).

Shrines are directly connected to the rural economy; every shrine has a market where people come for work from all over the country (Strothmann, 2016). *Urs* celebrations, which attract thousands of devotees from the countryside, are a chance to earn money for hundreds of families. Locals are engaged in economic activities like catering, restaurants, Souvenir sales, flower sale, tuck shops and many more but these are major employment providing sources. Shopping is a universal trait of all tourists of any form, similarly religious tourism especially

in case of Bari imam where tourists take back souvenirs with them as a symbolic attachment of their journey (Ibadat, 2016).

Another important aspect of shrine is its role as peace broker or dispute resolution by Custodian *Pir's*. They mediate between conflict parties without going through courts or involving police (*thana katcheri*), this gives *Pir's* and Shrine a unique status in society (Kalhor & Saleem, 2016). Conflict resolution aspect of Shrines has been briefly studied by (Kalhor & Khan, 2017), according to them *Pir's* of Shrine have a huge impact on society as their decisions and sayings are accepted by everyone as their moral obligation and inside or outside of casts accept verdicts by *Pir*, “*When Pir visit the devotees' house, it becomes a moral obligation for them to act as per the will of Pir*”. If someone does not accept decisions by the *Pir* community pressurizes individuals to honor the verdict or decision.

In this regard, this study will investigate what are the factors, social capital etc. that gives shrines so much leverage over other institutions, and what are factors that made control of *Pir's* over the followers still make it possible despite of education, reformist movements within Islam and how it is beneficial for *Murids* to follow their *murshids* beyond religion?

3.5. Shrine as an Institution

Strothmann (2016) in his study on data Darbar in Lahore, argues that shrines as a space continuously produces and reproduces Islam in different ways. As discussed above shrines have a multifaceted role, so does it have an interplay of institutions within shrines. Shrines incorporate other institutions so that it can maintain connectivity with the public, for instance a *Masjid* can be found in premises of shrines (though, originally part of Islamization driven by Auqaf). A *Masjid* attracts people at least five times a day and it keeps people attached to the shrines. There are other institutions as well and will be discussed in this study.

3.5.1. Madrassah

One of the important sub-structures or institutions that exists in Shrines is *Madrassah* (seminary school). *Madrassah's* in Muslim world play a significant role in educating underprivileged segments of society. When the states fail to educate children because of lack of funds then *Madrassahs* are left to rescue. Majority of them are funded via charity. Well-funded *Madrassahs* often provide free food and accommodation along with free education. Seminary schools are affiliated with certain central bodies, central bodies usually belong to their own sect. To illustrate, *Madrassahs* which are built in premises of Shrine are usually affiliated with Bareilvi sect central body, which is *Tanzim al-Madaris*. It's an umbrella organization established in 1959 to counter the modernist narrative of Ayub Khan with the aim

of establishing more *madrassas*. Students who study in these *Madrassas* belong to far flung areas and usually belong to poor-rural households, however, there are students who belong to economically well off families also. Those are families of *Pirs and sajjada nashins*. These students have association and attachment with saints so they choose specific *Madrassah*.

Madrassas are the easiest tool to propagate and disseminate ideologies, students who study here when visiting their home towns are respected and people consult them on certain matters such as marriages or burial ceremonies. Hence, these students would sometimes object to cultural practices which collide with Islamic teachings. Strothmann (2016) calls these students as “*multipliers of ideologies*”, after completion of their studies these students take jobs of *Imams* or *khateeb*s in their local Mosques and begin their job as resurrectors of faith. These students are influenced by *sajjada nashins* and saints buried in shrines, so they take the message back home and propagate it to the masses.

3.5.2. Library and Resource Centers

Libraries and resource centers play a crucial role to produce, reproduce and proliferate discourse produced in premises of shrines. Libraries publish material on saints and Sufism, and put them for sale in the vicinity of shrines. It is also an important resource to attract educated individuals towards shrines.

Strothmann (2016) discusses institutions in detail in his major work on the shrine of Data Ganj Baksh in Lahore, among other institutions are welfare trusts, *ulama* boards etc. However, the shrine of Data Ganj is under authority of Auqaf department but shrine here being investigated is managed by *Pirs* of Sial Sharif who are descendants of *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi*. This study aims to briefly study institutions that exist in the ambit of shrines and what are their roles.

3.6. Conceptual Framework

As argued above, politics and *Sufi Shrines* are entwined to each other. Shrines act as a central force which binds all elements together. However, other variables such as *Urs*, *Sajjada Nashins*, chief disciples, *ulama*, visitors, politics, economy, institutions, religion etc. help to intensify the diameter of the shrine and its penetration in society. But each of the above-mentioned variables have a significant role in society. The relationship of politics and shrines have been studied briefly by different scholars, as literature reviewed above also indicated the same results. Similarly, shrines have an economic role especially in rural areas. To investigate the political economy of shrines it is important to study all these factors and elements together. As the pictorial diagram indicates the linkages between these elements which maintain the political economy of shrines.

There are two important aspects of shrines; *Sajjada Nashins* and *Urs* festivity. Both are separate but are interlinked with each other, *Sajjada nashin* and *Urs* are the two most prominent factors which attract economy and politics to shrine. As discussed in literature review, *Urs*, which is ceremoniously headed by *sajjada nashin* attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors, these celebrations are a great source for shrines as well as nearby communities' wealth and livelihood. The pictorial representation of my conceptual framework shows the linkages between shrines at top in hierarchy, which is divided into three constructs; *Ulama*, *Sajjada nashins* and *Urs* celebrations. Each of these have a huge impact upon the political economy of shrines. representation of *Ulama* shows elements of religiosity which otherwise be declared as heretical, such was the case of Ahmad Raza Bareilly which is briefly discussed in literature review. *Sajjada nashin* as successor and custodian of shrine presides over all ceremonies held in shrine and people consider him as *murshid*. Finally, *Urs* celebrations attract visitors but this does not all occur in a vacuum all of these are interdependent and have a reciprocal relationship. In next stage, the role of chief disciples is very important; they act as representatives of *Pir* and have a visible presence in communities. They are a source of connectivity between *Pir* and *Murid*, they are sometimes known as *Khulafa*. They work under direct leadership of *sajjada nashin* and exert a huge socio-political influence over communities. Finally, the above mentioned element draws visitors to shrines which generates economic activities in and at the vicinity of shrine. Economy and wealth enables *sajjada nashin* to influence electoral politics which gains them a huge political support and then shrine controls local politics. As literature indicated that once shrines or *Pirs*' controlled local politics they also acquired land and in case of major shrines rural agricultural land was acquired by shrines. Afterwards when shrine becomes sustained it emerges as an institution and exerts influence over the socio-political milieu of society. This is a cyclical and a never ending process. The whole political and economic interplay of processes with support of religiosity leads to the political economy of shrines.

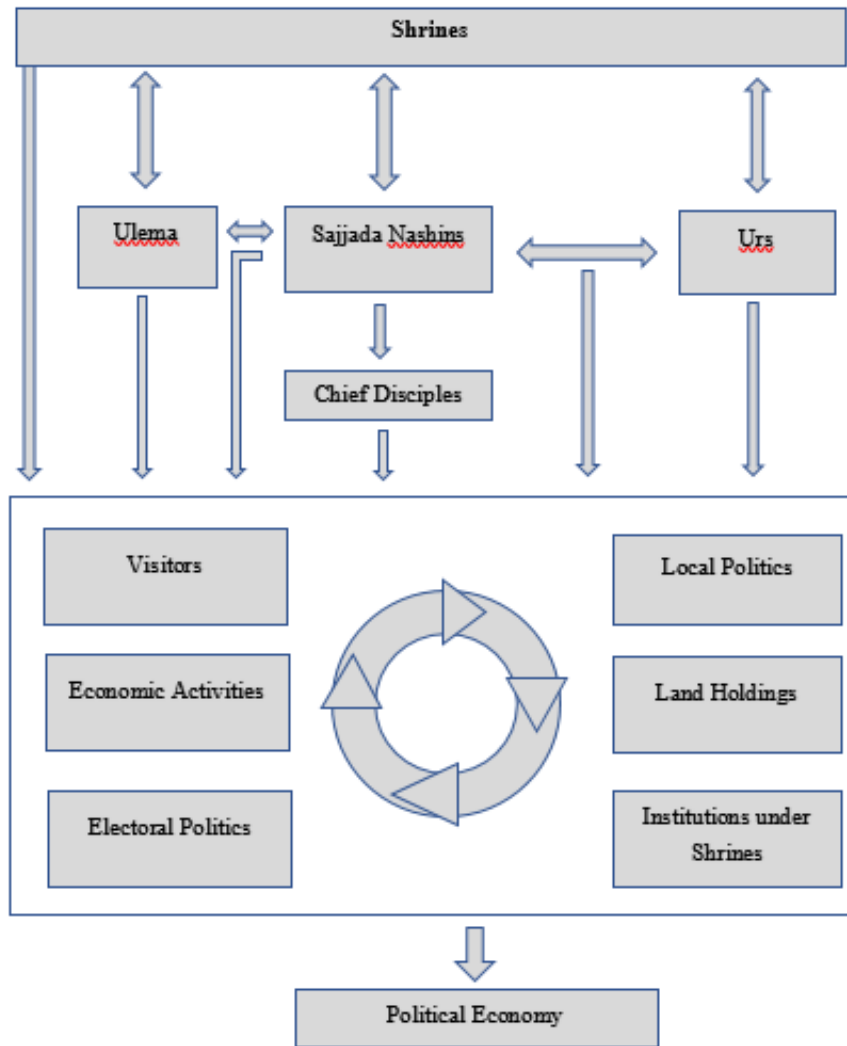


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Chapter 4

4. Locale

4.1. Sial Sharif

Shrine of Sial Sharif is located in Tehsil Sahiwal, District Sargodha formerly known as Shahpur. Demographically it consists of a rural population because it is distanced from Sargodha city. This region is dominated by Sufis, Shias and Deobandis. Among Sufis, *Pirs* and *sajjada nashins* of Sial Sharif are one of most powerful Sufis (Iqbal, 2017). Village Sial (official name) is famous because of shrine of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi, famous with the name of *Pir* Sial. *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi belongs to the revival creed of *Chishti Nizami Silsillah*. As *Pir* he reached a highly elevated status among Sufis, even his *khulfa* became influential saints. For instance, *Pir* Meher Ali Shah of Golra became a widely celebrated Sufi of his time (Chishti, 1997).

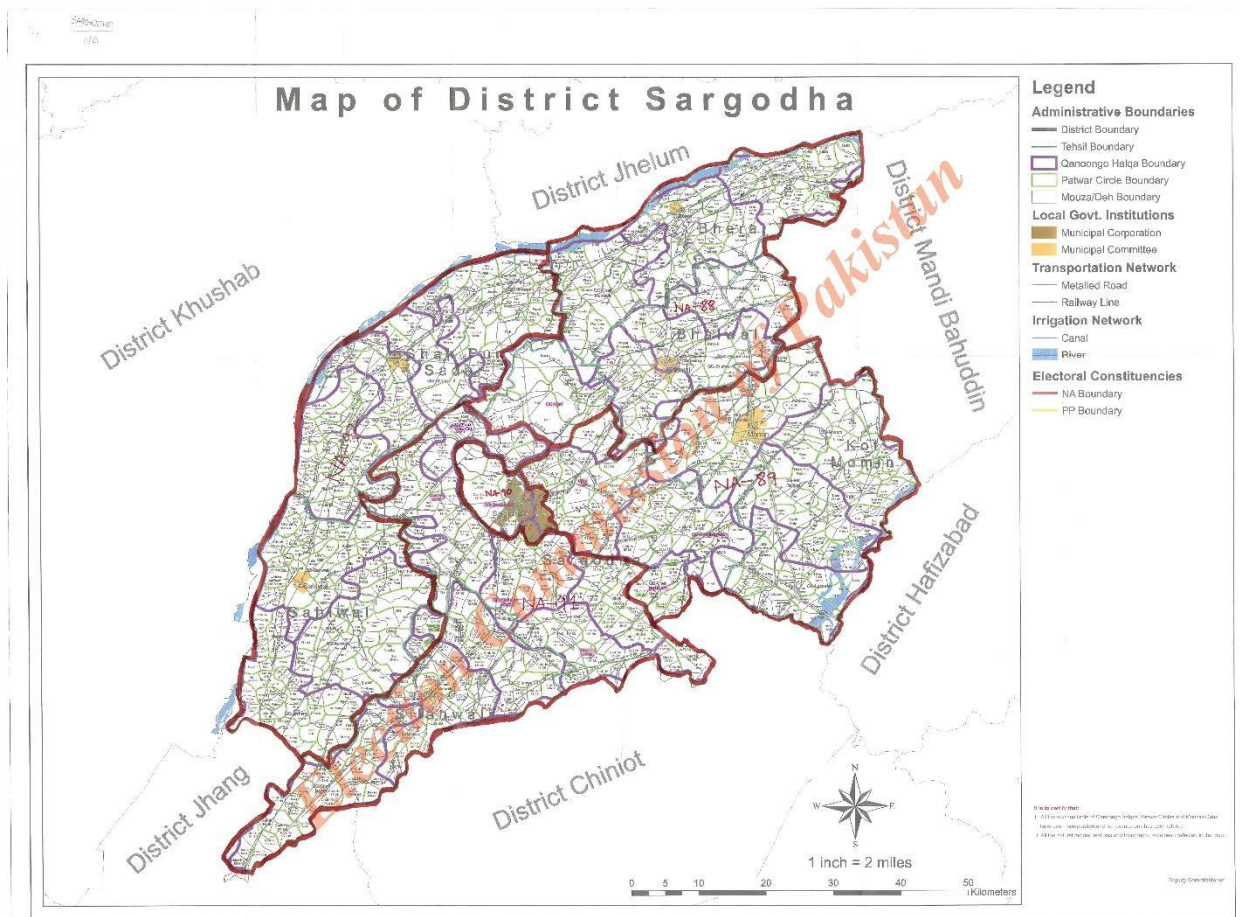
Official name of village is Sial and Sharif is honorifically attached with it, which signifies the shrine of *Pir* Sial (Kohati, 2010). Sial Sharif is a very small village with only few thousands of native populations. However, streets are always covered with pilgrims and visitors. Notwithstanding, being a small village, Sial Sharif has profoundness all over the country.

4.2. Background of Sial Family

In Punjab, there are two families with the name of Sial. First, *Sial* family of Jhang, they are *Rajpoot*. Sials of Jhang were proselytized to Islam by Shaykh Fareed Uddin Ganj Shaker. While, other Sial family who are subjects of this study trace their roots back to Khokhar Quteb Shahi's family whose lineage goes back to Hadrat Abbas bin Ali al-Murtaza. The name '*Sial*' of Sargodha is actually "*Saal*". According to genealogy of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi, one of his ancestor's name was Saal which took shape of Sial in later periods and thus family took this name. Khawaja Shams Uddin Sialvi established *Khanqah* in Sial village, because of his *Khanqah* and later *Astana*, honorific '*Sharif*' has been added to Sial (Chishti, 1997; Iqbal, 2017; Iqbal et al., 2020; Kamran & Shahid, 2014; Kohati, 2010; M. Chishti, 2010).

Khawaja Sher Karam Ali Qadri, a Primogenitor of the Sialvi family was a Khalifa of Musa Pak Shaheed (d.1592). His shrine still exist in Dhada Bahg¹² near Shrine of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi (Chishti, 1997).

¹² Dhada Bahg is the ancestral graveyard of the Sialvi family. Located one kilometers west of shrine



Map 1: Map of Sargodha District. Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

4.3. Biography of Shams Uddin Sialvi

Khawaja Shams Uddin Sialvi was born in 1799 (1214 A.H) in village Sial of formerly Shahpur district now known as Sargodha district. The prophecy of Musa Pak Shaheed (d.1592) regarding birth a pious descendant from descendants of Sher Karam Ali Shah fulfilled with birth and rise of Shams Uddin Sialvi (Chishti, 1997; Iqbal, 2017).

Shams Uddin Sialvi's father took extra interest in his education. At a very young age of seven years he became *Hafiz* (one who learns Quran by heart). He was educated at famous institutions of that time including Taunsa Sharif, Makhad Sharif, Peshawar, and later traveled to Kabul and got a degree in *Authority of Hadith*. At the age of eighteen, young Shams Sialvi traveled to Taunsa and came under Spiritual mentorship of famous Chishti Sufi, *Pir Suleiman Taunsvi*. *Pir Suleiman* was Khalifa of famous Chishti reformer and revival *Pir Noor Muhammad Maharvi* (Chishti, 1997). *Pir Suleiman* was *Murshid* of Shams Sialvi, then *murshid* bestowed him with the title of his *Khalifa* at the age of thirty-six. Shams Uddin Sialvi established his *Khanqah* at his native town, Sial (Chishti, 1997). Located at famous Jhang-Sargodha road, his

Khanqah was famous for providing *Langar*¹³ thrice a day. *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi was believed to be a kind hearted person, who always treated poor people with respect and dignity.

Pir Sham Uddin Sialvi and his descendants highly regard *Sayyid*¹⁴(s). During my field work, one of my respondents narrated an anecdote. According to the story two people from lower classes (economically) came to the great grandson of *Pir* Sham Uddin Sialvi, *Pir* Qamar Uddin Sialvi, they are believed to leave their belongings near boundaries of Sial Sharif village and came bare footed to *Pir* Qamar Uddin. They wanted to check the generosity of *Pir* Qamar for humanity, especially for Sayed. They said we are Sayed and we have lost all over material wealth and demanded some donation. *Pir* Qamar asked them to enlist all their desires and ordered his *Khadims* to bring it all to them. It is said that *Pir* Qamar Uddin himself carried the goods to the boundary of Sial where they had left their earlier belongings. He then said from this you became Sayed (false) and now you are again here as what you were. And from on may Allah be with you¹⁵. Every other visitor would narrate such stories and regard Sayed's in high regards (Saeed, 1998).

4.4. Strict Adherence to Sharia

The Era of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi was tumultuous, politically there was tug of war between Mughals and Sikhs, then the British entered and captured Punjab in 1849 (Iqbal, 2017). Muslims were in fear of losing political and religious grounds to rivals i.e. Hindus, Sikhs, and Christian missionaries. As reactionary effort *Ulama* at *Darul Uloom Deoband* urged Muslims to revisit how they practiced Islam and advocated for pristine Islam to revive. *Pir* Suleiman Taunsvi and Deoband movements influenced Shams Uddin Sialvi to revisit some of Sufi practices (Kamran & Shahid, 2014). Consequently, he ordered to abrogate *Samaa bil mazaamir* (*qawwali* with music) which now he believed was violation of *Shari'a* law. He became a bridge between *Ulama* and masses by allowing and inviting them to deliver lectures to public

¹³ *Langar* is a word of Punjabi language which means communal kitchen. The sacred places of the Sub-continent including the temples of Hindus and Sikhs, and Shrines have this welfare practice in common. Shrines provide free food for the visitors and travelers. This is all provided to venerate the saint buried in shrine (Strothmann, 2013)

¹⁴ *Sayyid* is an honorific title used for the descendants of Muhammad through his daughter Fatima and his cousin and son-in-law Ali. The term literally means master, lord, prince or the one who achieve honor, and eminence position. The term is pre-Islamic and was used by tribal chiefs and particularly by Banu Quresh and Banu Hashim as Custodians of Kaba'h. Ahle Baiat are called sayyids; Ali as *Sayyid al-Muslimeen*, Fatoimah as *Syedah* of women, and al-Hassan and al-Hussayn as sayyids of youth in paradise. Initially, in addition to sayyid, *Shari'f* was also used for both grandsons. However, with time, sayyid became particular honorific of Hussayn's descendants and *Shari'f* became honorific of Hassan's descendants. In *Mirat ul Ashiqeen* there is an entire chapter dedicated for admiration and honor of Sada'at. *Pir* Shams Uddin says that a *Sayyid* should be exclusively respected for his lineage. For more details, see, Oxford Studies Online

¹⁵ These stories are collected from field work

gatherings during *Urs* celebrations (Kamran & Shahid, 2014). The “streak of reformation” continue with his successors and was more rigorous at the time of his Grandson Zia Uddin Sialvi.

4.5.Sajjada Nashins of Sial Sharif

According to *Mira'at ul Ashiqain*¹⁶(Saeed, 1998), *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi predicted his day of departure from this world to after-life. The book further says; he had nominated Khawaja Muhammad Din Sialvi as his spiritual successor. Hafiz Muhammad Din Sialvi was very vigilant and *Mirat ul Ashiqain* and Other sources of literature¹⁷ frequently mentions him on various occasions. On the death bed he advised Muhammad Din to follow two principles; firstly, to have empathy towards *darvishes*¹⁸ and secondly, love and obedience of *Sheikh*. Muhammad Din Sialvi born in 1837-38 became Sajjada Nashin of Shrine in in 1883. Muhammad Din Sialvi was also a Khalifa of Hazrat Taunsavi and used to highly revered his Sheikh. He committed to his father’s mission and lived a life dedicated to the cause of *Chishti* Sufism. He is commonly known as *Sani Lasani and Sani Ghareeb Nawaz*¹⁹. Sahibzada Muahmmad Din Sialvi died in 1909 and his son Sahibzada Zia Uddin Sialvi²⁰ succeeded him as Custodian of Shrine. He was born in 1986 and was very interested in studying *dunyavi uloom* or exoteric aspects of knowledge (Chishti, 1997; Iqbal, 2017; Kamran & Shahid, 2014; Kohati, 2010).

Sahibzada Zia Uddin Silavi was very popular among *Ulama*, particularly reformist *Ulama*. Zia Uddin Sialvi was accredited to establish *Dar Ul Uloom* in Sial Sharif. He played a crucial role in emergence and development of *Khilafat* movement, despite of Sargodha as Unionists fortress, *Pir* Zia Uddin Sialvi disseminated *Khilafat’s* message to every corner of Sargodha region (Sajanka & Mushtaq, 2021). He died in 1929 and was succeeded by his son Khawaja Qamar Uddin Sialvi. Qamar Uddin Sialvi was born in 1906 and was known as *Sheikh Ul*

¹⁶ Collection of Sayings and Speeches of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi

¹⁷ Such Different volumes of Foz ul Makail; Khulfa e *Pir* Sial etc.

¹⁸ *Darvish* are religious mendicants, who are wanderers and travel to different places. They choose material poverty over spitiualwealth

¹⁹ *Sani Lasani* means or literary translates as Unmatched the second, i.e. he was referred as the second *Pir Shams Uddin*. *Sani Gharib Nawaz* means or literally means Patron of the Poor the second, here the second indicates as being successor of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi.

²⁰ Zia Uddin Sialvi is popularly known as Zia Ul Islam and Mujahid-e Islam. *Zia ul Islam* means Light of Islam and *Mujhaid e Islam* means the warrior of Islam. These Honorariums are conferred because of his efforts in establishing *Dar Ul Uloom*, Madrassah and his reforming drive of tilting Sufism toward Islamist (reformist) perspective.

*Islam*²¹. Qamar Uddin Sialvi became the political paterfamilias of Sialvis. He actively participated in the Pakistan Movement. He proved to be crucial in diffusing the political challenge of the Unionist Party. After independence Qamar Uddin Sialvi became a political stalwart of JUP, under his leadership JUP won majority of seats from Jhang and neighboring districts (Iqbal, 2017).

Qamar Uddin Sialvi was twice chosen as member of Council of Islamic Ideology²², where he actively voiced for Islamic laws in the country and pushed for a strict scrutiny of laws under Islamic Principles. He died in 1981 and was succeeded by his son Khawaja Hameed Uddin Sialvi.

Khawaja Hameed Uddin Sialvi became member of Senate of Pakistan in 1988 till 1991. Practically, after the death of Qamar Uddin Sialvi, Sialvi's politically remained confined to the vicinity till 2017 (Rumi, 2018). In 2017 after the amendment in election bill Khawaja Hameed Uddin Sialvi took the streets and redeemed his lost political status. He played a crucial role for PTI in election of 2018 from central Punjab. He died in 17 September, 2020. He was succeeded by his son Khawaja Zia ul Haq Sialvi, and is the current Sajjada Nashin of Sial Sharif.

²¹ *Sheikh ul Islam* is an honorific conferred prominent Muslim scholars, he is considered to have the highest knowledge upon things related to Fiqh (jurisprudence) and whole Islamic theological hierarchy.

²² Council of Islamic Ideology was established in 1962 and was reaffirmed in Article 227 of 1973 constitution. Its primary objective is to bring every law under the conformity of *Sharia and Sunnah*. Masud, M. K. (2015). Role of the Council of Islamic Ideology in the Islamisation of laws in Pakistan. *Adelaide: University of South Australia*.

Chapter 5

5. Findings and Discussions

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. First part of the chapter deals with results, findings, analysis, and discussions. In this part I have studied the political economy of the shrine of Sial Sharif. In the second part of this chapter, I have enlisted and briefed about various institutions that exist and help the shrine and *sajjada nashin* to have control over the masses. Following data has been analyzed using the framework analysis approach.

5.2. Shrine as Nucleus

Religion shapes contours of a society, there is a deep and complex relationship between religion and structures and institutions of society. Particularly political order of society is directly influenced by religion. Clifford Geertz defines religion as a “cultural system,” a system of symbols which synthesizes a peoples “ethos” and explains its order²³ (Geertz, 1973). David Gilmartin extends this idea of Clifford Geertz and applies it into Punjabi ethos. According to him “cultural system” formulates systematic relationship between religious institutions and its ideas, on one hand, and political milieu in which they evolve and operate, on other (Gilmartin, 1988). In Punjab in particular and in Pakistan in general, political structures and religious institutions have developed in a close proximity. Thus, understanding religious institutions and their development is pivotal in order to understand the political system and structure of colonial and post-colonial state.²⁴ Thus, shrines have been constructed with the help of Sultans in the Sultanate era in order to transcend their symbolic importance into political orbits. By “Symbol” Geertz means anything outside organism which influences behavior and thought patterns. Shrine of Sial Sharif is one such symbol, which occupies centrality in local structures.

Shrine of Sial Sharif acts as a central figure in the socio-political landscape, it is the nucleus to which everything is attached. It attracts people, who visit here for *haziri*, to recite *fatiha* for the *Pir* buried, some pay their regards, venerate *Pir* and pray to God by intercession (*tawassul*) of *Pir*. Shrines are generally considered by common folks as centers for cure of physical and mental illnesses i.e. they are intercession centers. The shrine of Sial Sharif has many graves of *pirs*, *sajjada nashins*, and their immediate family members, but the grave of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi overshadows all other graves in the complex. The power of shrine does not end in the

²³ Clifford Geertz “Religion as a Cultural System”

²⁴ David Gilmartin “Empire and Islam and the Making of Pakistan”

vicinity of Sial Sharif, but it extends to shrines of its *Khulfa* and other shrines of Sufi *Silsilla*. This interconnectivity or network of shrines became a source of power for the shrines. Sufi *silsillah* (brotherhood) and *Shajra-e Tareeqat*²⁵ play a prominent role in attracting masses towards the shrine.

The shrine or *Mazar* was erected in the very same soil where *khanqah* of *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi* existed, therefore, the soil is considered sacred by locals and *Murids*. During my research field work almost every other respondent took my attention and briefed me about the reminiscence that once *Baha ul Haq Zakriya* (d.1260) was traveling from village of Sial, when he came near the area, where now shrine is situated, he stopped riding his horse and started walking and it is believed that he said “one day a *wali* (plural *Awliya*) of Allah will emerge from this soil. Thus, the soil of Sial Sharif is considered sacred (Chishti, 1997) and people narrate similar stories from the past.

No doubt Sial Sharif is considered to be the center of Spirituality in the entire central and northern Punjab. However, the shrine is also considered to be a central figure of affairs of *Deen* (religion), *Sunnah* (the traditions and practices of Holy Prophet) and *Shari'a* (Islamic religious law). Apart from Spirituality and religiosity, shrines have a cultural and economic role. Culturally, the shrine acts as a centripetal force to hold local customs, practices and knowledge. Economically, shrine is the driving force for market and transportation. There are no markets in neighboring villages except that of Sahiwal Tehsil headquarter but the market around the shrine is getting modern touch and new shops and plazas are being constructed.

Shrine are also called as *dargah* and many respondents interestingly and in a hubris manner pointed out that Sial Sharif is not just a *dargah* rather it is a *Darsghah* (academy). Where we learn about *deen* and *duniya* (religion and world). One of the respondents expressed this phenomenon as;

“*yahee batatay hai sahe kya hy or galat kya hai*”

They (Shrine and *Sajjada Nashin*) tell us about right and wrong.

Since, *sajjada nashin* hereditary receives all the spiritual powers from *Pir* buried in shrine and the lineage is not discontinued and reaches to the Prophet Muhammad through *Hadrat Ali*.

²⁵ Spiritual lineage that is connected to Prophet Muhammad through a chain of *Ba'ait*

Masses flock to shrine for *ziyara* and *haziri*, though many traditionalists are critical of concept of *ziyara* to shrines, however, Sufis regard them with great esteem. During interviews and informal discussions, when I asked how often you pay a visit to the shrine? The most common reply would be “*jab Pir sahib bullaye*” whenever *Pir* summons. So, for murids it is actually the *Pir*, who commands them, of course in a spiritual manner and he chooses who gets to visit the shrine. The command here is spiritual and is commanded by *Pir* buried in shrine i.e. *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi*. Another reason for *haziri* is mental health issues among men and women of every age and class. A common reason from both women and men is that;

“*yaha zehni sakoon or itminan e qalb k liye atay hy*”

We come here for peace of mind and Quietism.

The multifaceted role of the shrine puts it in the center of society. From religion to economy to spirituality to wellbeing and politics to culture are controlled by the shrine. Every shrine has a *sajjada nashin* who is custodian of the shrine and wears crown of his spiritual kingdom. Shrine of Sial Sharif is a central part of sacred landscape; architecture, archeology, history, literature, economy, politics, culture, shrine families, community, patronage, endowments, rituals and practices are all associated with the shrine.

5.3. Shrines Role in Political Sphere

As discussed, the shrine is not just a mere architectural site rather it has a sacred significance in society particularly in the locale. Generally, its presence can be seen in other parts of the country where sufism persists. Sacredness emanates with an intertwined influence, influence is both social and political. Not only *Sajjada Nashin* draws his influence from the shrine but every single person that is attached to the shrine draws or exerts pressure on society. Yet a hierarchy persists on the level of influence. Highest level of influence is wielded by *Sajjada Nashin* who is believed to be the living manifestation and inheritor of *karamaat* of *Pir* buried in the shrine. Next in ladder is immediate family members of *Sajjada Nashin* and then comes kin or descendants of *Pir* they all are called *Pir sahibaan* and they write *Sahibzada*²⁶ with their names. Their influence on public also depends on the level of interactions with masses. Next in line are *Ulama* and managerial staff in the shrine who exert a certain amount of influence accordingly. But *Sajjada Nashin* is unchallengeable, everyone bows down to him and accepts his leadership. Therefore, people (even powerful ones) try to come closer to *Sajjada Nashin*.

²⁶ *Sahibzada* means Son, son of a nobleman or a lord. Kin of *Pir Sialvi* use *Sahibzada* with their names.

The most common practice though which one can come closer to Sajjada Nashin is to become *Murid* and swear an allegiance to him. Consequently, sajjada nashin transforms spiritual allegiance into political. It is important to note that, it is not necessary that Sajjada nashin always participate in electoral politics rather he is a symbol to get more political support and vote. A *Pir* cannot stay aside from politics as many claim, rather it becomes a compulsion to come into politics. One of kin of Sajjada nashin explained this situation as;

“Sajjada Nashinu (Piru) ko shoq se ya majburi me siyasat me ana parta hy, kyun ki riyasat ko b in ki zaroorat hoti hy or inhy b riyasat ki. Farz karay agar ye siyasat se mukamal kinara kashi ikhtiyar karay toh aik khala paida hoga jise koi or pur karay, hosakty wo Sajjada Nashin ya in k mureedun k mukhalif ho ya koi aysa iqdam uthaye jis se halaat kise or taraf jaye ya koi tanaza shuru ho”

Sajjada Nashin (Pir) is left with no choice, he ought to be in politics for they serve the interests of state and vice versa. For instance, if sajjada nashins and their followers abandon politics, any other will serve to fill the political void; giving potential opponents opportunities to go against them.

The political role of shrines is not peculiar to only Sajjada Nashin but every individual that is related to the shrine has a political role to play in the electoral process. For instance, during my field interviews, one of respondent was a managerial staff member. He said when elections are due people start enquiring about which candidate and political party to support. They ask us because we studied here, live here, do our jobs here and, somehow, are closer to Sajjada Nashin. And we communicate to our families and friends about which candidate to vote for. This is a classic example of how the shrine controls the political arena because a mere student who is now doing a job in the shrine can create a political atmosphere for the blessed candidate of Sial Sharif. There are other reasons and factors too which are discussed below.

5.4.Sajjada Nashin

As discussed above, Sajjada Nashin is spiritual and worldly successor of *Pir* and shrine. In the context of rural Punjab, *Pirs* have a central role in almost every aspect of society, particularly politics. *Pirs* are a bridge between folk cultures of Punjab and Islam and Muslim community in Punjab. Thus, every power structure has to incorporate them in political hierarchies, after all they are intermediaries (both religious and political).

In Pakistan, if Sajjada Nashin and his family own the shrine and its properties then their power is unmatched but if the shrine is owned and administered by the *Auqaf* board then Sajjada Nashin is not that much powerful. However, in the case of Sial Sharif, Sajjada Nashin is the heir to *Pir* and he and his family owns the shrine. Spiritually, he is considered to be *Pir-o-Murshid* and worldly he has final authority over matters related to shrine and politics. During the course of my field work, visitors and locals attributed Sajjada Nashin for all the material wealth, respect, and *Eman* they have. A common metaphor used by almost every individual was; “*ye sab Pir sahib ka karam hai*”, it’s all due to *Pir* sahib’s blessings. *Ulama* would highly regard Sajjada Nashin and many of my interviewees categorically said that

“*ye nisbat hai Pir sahib se warna kon hamay puchta hai, unhe se hm jurray huay hy or log izat karty hai*”

Our association with Sajjada Nashin gives us a unique position in society else we would have been unknown.

Accrediting everything to *Pir* is analogous to *Tawasul* (intercession), intercession can be exercised by both dead and living *Pir*. In sacerdotalism of *Pirs*, *Shajra-e tareeqat* (spiritual lineage) plays a key role. As *shajra* goes back to Holy Prophet and he was *rehmat ul alameen* (Mercy for entire universe). Hence, they have a *shajra* or lineage of blessings that is unbroken and reaches to prophet. The manifest function of *chishti* shrines such as Sial Sharif is to strengthen the relation between man and Allah not between *Murshid* and *Murid*. But in doing so *Murshid* is highly revered for being *waseela* (source) of *tawasul* (intercession), thus the relation between *murshid* and *Murid* strengthens as a latent function.

Politically, data revealed that the majority of voters cast their vote for a candidate who has been blessed by Sajjada Nashin. *Muridain* characterize current Sajjada Nashin *Pir* Muhammad Zia ul Haq Sialvi as young and energetic. People were overwhelmingly optimistic about his leadership and future. *Murids* claimed that current Sajjada Nashin is politically neutral, even practically he has been Sajjada Nashin after death of his father *Pir* Hameed Uddin Sialvi in September 2020 while elections were held in 2018 and next elections are expected in 2023. However, upon enquiring of political preferences people would react as;

“*Jo Pir sahb ka hokum ho*”

“*Whatever Pir commands*”

Another respondent said; “*asal baat Pir sahib ka hokum hai or wahee kafi hai*”

“*the point is, what Pir commands and that’s enough for us*”

And when I ask about leadership of Sajjada Nashin and his ability to lead respondents said;

“*Hum kon hotay hy unhay un ki salahiyat ka fesla karnay walay*”

“*Who are we to judge him and his abilities*”

These responses from the people in the shrine signifies the power and influence of *Pir*. Though, it is not peculiar to the Shrine of Sial Sharif rather prevalent in almost every other shrine and *sajjada nashins*. In Sufism command of *Pir* is very important and *Murid* does not cross question it. In *Mirat ul Ashiqeen*, *Pir* Shams Uddin himself highly emphasizes on *Murids* to obey their *Pir* (Saeed, 1998).

Political role of *Pirs* of Sial Sharif is an open secret, their role in politics during the Pakistan movement and then in newly created Pakistan was apparent and applaud-able. One of my respondent, a religious scholar said that *Pir* Sial is our *Buzrogh* and role of *Pir* Qamar Uddin Sialvi in Pakistan movement is remarkable. According to my respondent that was the movement where the political role of the Sial Sharif began. *Pir* Qamar Uddin was very active in politics from political platform of Jamiat *Ulama* e Pakistan (JUP). After his death his son *Pir* Hameed Uddin Sialvi was very vocal and became senator. *Pir* Hameed Uddin’s role in Kahtam e Nabuat issue in 2017 gained attention in mainstream media and people recognize his role is among many factors which led to PMLNs defeat in 2018 general elections.

However, by looking at the political narratives and responses from my respondents, I can argue that the *Pirs* and politics are intertwined in the heartland of Pakistan. If a Sajjada Nashin does not directly participate in the electoral system, then other politicians would contact for his support. One of my respondents, who was a student in *Darul ul Uloom*, gave me an insight. According to him, it is not necessary that the *Pir* directly participate in electoral politics. Even if he chooses to stay away, politicians of different political parties would use his name and his images in their election pamphlets and speeches to develop a discourse that involves *Pir* Sial. The reason is they know that his name and image carries a vote bank and they want to capitalize it. As the respondent was from Jhang district, he explained how every candidate in his constituency uses portrays, images and the name of Sial Sharif to attract voters. The slogans of

Pir Sial are very popular in times of elections, and the most common slogan is *Pir Sial Lajpal Lajpal*.

5.5. Between the Mosque and Shrine: Ulama

Between the Mosque and shrine lies the *ulama*. *Ulama*, religiously sanctions sanctity of shrine and *Pirs*. W.C. Smith declared *ulama* as “custodians of community” (W. C. Smith cited by (Gilmartin, 1988). The relationship between *ulama* and the public is Unique, no other social group has so much interaction with masses then *ulama*. People at least five times a day come in contact with *ulama*, this is much more intense in rural areas. Majority of Punjabi rural areas are dominated by Barelvi school of thought, who highly regard *Pirs* and shrines. On counterpart, Ahl-e Hadith and Deobandis are critical of such structures and practices. And they even do not hesitate to declare such structures and practices as not only *bidat*²⁷ but *shirk*. However, Barelvi *Ulama* defend Shrines and *Pirs*, Ahmed Reza Khan Breilly (d. 1921) is prime example of those Barelvi *ulama* who vigorously defended *sufi* practices. Ultimately, an entire school of thought emerged as *Barelvis* which assimilated all *sufi* brotherhoods. Same is the case with Sial Sharif, Sajjada Nashin and *Pirs* cannot physically connect with all rural masses so *ulama* steps in to do a job.

Ulama and *Pirs* have a symbiotic relationship, people not only pray in mosques but also send their children to those Madaris which belong to those *ulama* who venerate Sufis and regard them with high respect. Similarly, *Pirs* can easily reach out to masses via *ulama* and their message can be communicated easily, especially political ones. One of my respondent was an *alim*, he said;

“me 2 masjidu me khateeb hu aik jagah jumay ka khateeb b hu, me ne apny mansab or ohday ka sahe istimal kia or 2018 k elections se pehly meri ye koshish thi ki jitna hosakay awam ko PTI ki traf ragib karun kyun ki 2017 me PMLN ne election bill me khatam e Nabuat ki shiq khatam ki thi or hamara yani Sial Sharif ka un se alliance khatam hogaya tha. Lihaza hamari yahee koshish thi ki logu ko jo kafi time se PMLN ko vote kr rahy thy abh ki bar ham unhay PTI ki taraf lay aye. Khutbay k ilawa masjid me ya awam me b jaha b awam se milna jhulna hota toh election k waqt bs har tarah se koshish ki PTI k liye kyun ki hamaray Pir (Sajjada

²⁷ *Bidat* is called innovation, innovation in religion. There are two types of Innovation; one that accords principles and tradition and is not contradictory in nature it is called (*bid'a ghayr madhmuma*). Second of its type contradicts with principles, Sunnah, and traditions it is called (*bid'at dalala*). <https://www.dar-alifta.org/foreign/ViewFatwa.aspx?ID=6903> ; <https://www.minhaj.org/english/tid/2935/The-Concept-of-Bid-ah.html> . Accessed on 10 September 10, 2021

Nashin) ka alliance tha PTI se. our ye alliance srf is baat pay qaim hy ki PTI apny wadayk mutabik Islami Qawanin khususan Khatam-e Nabuwat me cherh charh na karay, agar aysa karnay ka socha b toh itihad khatam or rahay juda”.

I am Khateeb at two different Mosques. I give Khutba on Friday at a Mosque. I wisely used my position and platform. Before the 2018 general elections and I tried my best to spread awareness to vote for PTI. Sial Sharif parted ways from PMLN because of the khatam-e nabuwat issue in the election bill of 2017. Since we have been voters of PMLN for a very long time, it was quite difficult to persuade the public about whom to vote for, however due to my position and my link with Sial Sharif I was successful in spreading awareness. Other than khutbas, in informal sittings in Mosques and in the public sphere I use to persuade the public to change their electoral preferences and vote for PTI. Sial Sharif and our Sajjada Nashin had an alliance with PTI, but this alliance only depends on the condition that PTI keeps its promises by not interfering Islamic clauses in the constitution of Pakistan. If they even think of changing any Islamic laws, the very important clause of Khatam-e Nabawat, our alliance would end here.

This response is not just the viewpoint of an alim rather it signifies grand narrative that exists in the heartland of Pakistan. Interestingly, Gilmartin (1988) even credits the making of Pakistan to *Ulama* and *Pirs*, such is the level of their penetration in society. Another Imam Masjid, who was also a school teacher and Imam in a Mosque shared his experience as;

“hamaray yaha Imam Masjid se log boht kuch batay hy koi apnay masail ya apni zindagi k mutalek kuch b, kuch apny mashi masail ya halaat ki baat karty hy ya mazhabi masail pay, is se hota kya hy ki hamri awam k sath tauk mazboot hojata hy or izarat o waqar b barh jata hy jis se wo hamari bat suntay. Our hm ise ka faida uthatay hy or Dargah ya Sajjda Nashin sahib ka paigham awam tak pouchtay hy or koshih karty hy ki awam ko razi kr lia jaye. Aik or wajah ye b hy ki har banda jo dur daraz ilaku me rehta ho wo hamesha mazar ya Pir sahib k pass hazir ni hosakta waha Ulama apna kirdar ada kartay hy”.

Here in this part of the world a religious scholar (alim, Imam, or Khateeb) is the only source of knowledge and education. An Imam’s job is to interpret religious laws and guide people. So people share everything with Ulama. Generally, family, financial and religious issues are taken before us and we guide them according to our Fiqh. Thus we come close to the masses and we capitalize such moments and preach the message of our Pir especially political messages in

times of election. Another factor is that people cannot always visit shrine and Sajjada Nashin so we play our role.

The nexus between *Pir* and *Ulama* is a prevalent characteristic of Pakistani rural societies, specifically in rural Punjab. Medieval perception of not challenging the religious authorities is still ubiquitous in aforementioned areas. *Ulama* gives required legitimacy to *Pir-Muridi* culture of Pakistan, thus it converges quasi spiritual headship into a supplementary political leadership.

5.6. Significance of Urs

Festivals are prevalent characteristic of South Asian Islam in general and Sufism in particular, among such *Urs* festivals are widespread across *sufi* shrines. As a matter of fact, Sufi shrines are thought to be incomplete without *Urs* celebration. Nonetheless, the nature of the celebration may differ in time and space and from Silsilla to Silsilla. According to Gilmartin (1988), “*Urs literally means wedding and during Urs festivals communion of Sufi saint is celebrated and it is dramatized every year to mark this union*”. Sajjada Nashin performs many sacred and cultural rituals during the ceremony and it also legitimizes and signifies Sajjada Nashin as inheritor and intermediary of *Barakah* (blessings). And *Urs* is a moment to receive as many *barakah* from a sacerdotal event by offering prayers, money, land, livestock etc. A visitor in shrine when I interviewed who was in his middle ages explained phenomenon of *Urs* as and is closely translated as;

“jab koi Allah ka wali fout intiqal farma jata hy tabh wo apany rab se mil jata hy jise fana fil’llah kaha jata hai. or is din ko Urs kaha jata hy or har saal manaya jata hai. Urs mananay ka maqsad us din Allah apni rehmat nazil karta hy mazar pay or Pir sahib pay or hm yaha wahee rehmatay ikhati karnay atay hy ta ki in awliya k nisbat hamay b kuch rehmat naseeb ho.”

When an awliya of Allah dies, and unites with Allah which is commonly known as fana fil’llah. That is what Urs is, and we celebrate it every year marking his unity with the Almighty. At a very particular moment God sends his blessings to Pir and Shrine and every year those barakah befall upon all those who would visit the shrine and we come here to receive barakah of which Sajjada Nashin inherits.

The very same respondent went on and says; “*Urs connects us with sharia’h and religion*”. Another respondent who was a shopkeeper but a learned man differentiated *Urs* and Mela, according to him, “*Urs (of Mashaikh-e Chishti) is held according to Islamic lunar calendar,*

on the other hand, Mela is held according to local Punjabi calendar. The origin of Mela festivities dates back to pre-partition and is a cultural festival while Urs is specifically a spiritual cum religious event.

Many Chishti shrines have relinquished *mela* celebrations. Because at times of the Chishti revivalism in 18th century, Chishti Sufis such as Khawaja Nur Muhammad Maharvi asked their *khulfas* and *Muridain* to strictly adhere to *sharia* 'h. He further advised them to dissociate from such local practices which they thought to be adopted from Hinduism. That is why the respondents of my fieldwork were connecting *Urs* with *Sharia* 'h.

Urs acts like a natural stage for Sajjada Nashin, wherein he is with public all time, many prominent business persons, social and political leaders would attend *Mehafil* of *Urs*. My respondents would proudly say that different political leaders and bureaucrats would attend *Urs mehafil*. However, when I asked about the political significance of *Urs* they would deny it. One of my respondent said;

“Urs has no political role because no one talks politics on that auspicious occasion, people talk about religion, Sharia 'h, Spirituality and Pir sahib.”

Another respondent explained the situation in *Urs*,

“we do not get space to sit in mehafil of Urs, despite of issues of space somehow we try to connect with Pir”.

As the legends say ‘apolitical is political’; there is no such thing as ‘apolitical’. Biasness and subjectivity always prevails in human societies. When it comes to *Pirs* it takes no time to shift their discourse from religious to political context. *Murids* frequently visit their *murshid* at shrines during *Urs* to seek spiritual satisfaction, wherein their opinions are altered by *Pir* for their political gains. The reason is *Murids* have unconditional allegiance towards their *Pirs*. Similarly, a respondent said;

“Ye Jo parwanay yaha atay hy wo sb un pay Qurban hai”

These Visitors “moths” willingly sacrifice themselves upon them (Pir)

Another important aspect of *Urs* is its Economic significance for local businesses and transporters. Sial sharif has a fully developed market which will be discussed below. Devotees and visitors of the shrine are the sole customers of market, and during *Urs* celebrations

hundreds of thousands of devotee's flock to the shrine to participate in *Urs mehafil*. Every shop owner or restaurant owner, *rehriban* or transporter I interviewed responded that *Urs* is vital for their business and livelihood. We earn more in two or three days of *Urs* than what we earn in months during ordinary days. One of my responded said that;

“Urs me toh palakh japakhnay ki b waqat nahee milta itna rush hota hai”

During Urs I do not even have time to blink my eyes.

Such is the state of business during *Urs* festivities, this signifies the importance of Shrines in general and *Urs* in particular for rural economy. It is a vital source of livelihood for hundreds of families. The very first respondent during my fieldwork who was a shopkeeper said this year i.e. 2020 we couldn't sell what we bought initially because of Covid-19. The number of visitors to the shrine has declined significantly. *Urs* celebrations have a pivotal significance not only for Sajjada Nashin and Shrine but also for rural economy.

5.7. Donation and Prestations

The method of donating money is quite different and unique in Sial Sharif, there are no cash boxes installed in the shrine complex. There are two *Changeris* (bowls) that are kept in the shrine complex. One box is placed in the Mazar of *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi* and the other is Placed at the Mazar of *Pir Hameed Uddin Sialvi*. Women throw donations from a window that exists to facilitate women and *Darbari* or his assistant collects money donated from these places. Other than these designated areas, there is no prescribed place or box to donate money. This is a unique characteristic of the shrine of Sial Sharif because in Pakistani shrines donation boxes are a prevalent characteristic. Similarly, Strothmann (2016) in *Managing Piety* has briefly discussed donation boxes as a source of income for the shrine and according to him money collected through donation boxes is 80 percent of shrine's total income.

However, no donation boxes in the shrine complex doesn't mean people do not donate, almost every devotee donates some money which is collected by assistant *darbari* which then he then handovers to chief *darbari*. According to them, the money is used to manage shrine and used in *Langer* (see below). Another perspective derived from researchers' participant observation is that when money goes into donation boxes its volume or sum appears larger but when assistant *darbari* every time collects then it appears low in volume or sum. When I discussed the very same phenomenon with shrine's managerial staff they agreed but they did not reveal the sum of donations and upon insisting they said, *“this money does not even help to manage*

shrine expenses that is why we send money to langar and Sajjada Nashin himself bears all expenses.” However, donation mechanisms are still ambiguous and undisclosed.

Despite the absence of common donation collection practices, donations and prestations still dominate the shrine. One of my respondent was a *Murid* who was a frequent visitor to shrine said;

“yaha aysa ni y ki ap ne lazmi paisya denay hai, balki jo hasb-e taufeeq ho dy dy. Is me paisay b hosakty hy ya langer b. hamary Pir sahb kehty hy ki khud langar pakwa k Pir bhau me takseem karwao is me barakah hai”.

In Sial Sharif it’s not necessary to donate money however people donate according to their Hasb-e Taufiq (according to one’s status or willingness). This can either be money or langar, even Pir sahb commands us to cook at langar and distribute among Pir Brothers because such acts lead to barakah”.

Another *Murid* said;

Ye ap ka or un mamla h yap kitna nazrana detay hy, hum unhay kya detay hy balki yaha a k un s lay k jatay hy or unhi ki di hui sahuliaat istamal kartay, pani un, khana (langar), parking, bijli sb kuch n ka istimal kartay hy, nazarana agar ap ka dil hy toh dy warna nahee”.

Donations and bestowments entirely depends upon visitors, we do not give them (shrine) rather we do take away many things (indicating barakah) and using their services such as water, food (langar) parking, electricity etc. if you want to donate you can but if you don’t want no one forces you to do so”.

Both of these two responses neglects and under shadows the giving culture at Shrines. A study by Pakistan Philanthropy council, revealed that giving at shrines in Punjab is almost forty-nine percent (PCP, 2016). Similarly, during fieldwork of this study, whoever I interviewed or held informal discussions accepted that they usually donate some amount of money, but they always downplay it with *barakah* they receive during their visit to the shrine.

Another respondent who claimed to belong to a neighboring village and according to him he was not *Murid* of *Pir Sial* but his family is. He had a *Dhaba*²⁸ in the vicinity of shrine he sells Tea and Samosa etc. he said;

²⁸ Road side informal food stall

Every morning when he come to Sial Sharif and before opening his *Dhaba* he pays his regard to *Pir Sial* and pray for *Pir* and himself and then he donates Rupees one hundred, according to him;

“*unhe k dar pay bethay hy or unhe k sadqay kamatay*”

We are at the gate of the Shrine and what we earn is because of blessings of Pir Sial.

Devotees completely neglect giving patterns in shrines, as for them blessings and spiritual proximity are more important than their donations. This gives an insight into how *Pir* capitalizes thought processes of *murids*. By doing so, the agency of visitors is controlled by *Pirs* through ideas and institutions, which is discussed below.

5.8.Role of Hereditary Muridi and Biraderi Affiliation

In the book “*The Pakistani voter, Electoral Politics and Voting behavior in Punjab*”, A. R. Wilder asserts that in Punjab *biraderi* affiliation is a key social determinant of voting preferences. However, (Malik & Malik, 2018) analyzed *Pir* politics and revealed that despite being less in number *Pirs* have outclassed landed large *biraderis* across Punjab. The hereditary *muridi* plays a key role in maintaining the political power of the *Pirs*. The concept of hereditary *muridi* goes back to proselytization of *biraderi* to Islam. Since, Sufis are accredited for convergence of populace into Islam. Therefore, every *biraderi* has a *Pir* and is devoted to a Shrine, that is why they are affiliated politically with Shrine and Sajjada Nashin. Thus, a person nonconformist to his *biraderi* and goes against its collective decisions, would have to face consequences. Consequently, a conforming behavior is hereby adopted by the populace and voting preferences are an amalgamation of *biraderi* oriented hereditary *muridi*.

Biraderi culture does not operate as a distinctive system rather it is divided into many sub-systems. Each sub-system has its head who act as power brokers, who are assigned to do political and other power bargains. Since, they are in continuous correspondence with members of *biraderi* and political elite and bureaucracy; people listen to them. The brokering system is incomplete without the *Dera* system. In fact, the culture of rural Punjab is incomplete without *Derajaat*. In those *Derajaat* members of *biraderi* sit and discuss politics and society. However, every *biraderi* has internecine strifes which impacts political consensus in *biraderi*. These conflicts may arise over land and water disputes, property disputes, differences over marriage patterns etc. However, *biraderi*'s hereditary *muridi* to *Pir* becomes a source of conflict

resolution. One of my respondent who had been in Sial Sharif for a very long time, he was a student of *Dar Ul Uloom*, and now works at the shrine said;

“har biraderi me apas me masail, tanazaat hotay hy or bazawkaat log aik dusray se milty tak nahee or salalam dua b khatam hojaa hy, lakin jab baat ati hy Allah ki, Us k Rasool Pak ki or Pir o Murshid ki tbh log bahimi tanazaat bhul k aik hojatay hy or koshish karty hy ki election Pir sahib k candidate ko jitya aja sakay. Jab Pir ka hokum ho toh ye tanazaat itnay ahem ni rehty, Pir ka hokum zyada ehmiat ka hamil hota hai.”

Every Biraderi has internal conflicts to the extent that people stop interacting and greeting each other. However, when it comes to Allah, Prophet and Pir-o Murshid then people forget their internal conflicts and issues and unite with each other to support and vote for Pirs candidate. The command of Pir is more important than those conflicts.

Another respondent who was a *Alim* (religious scholar) said;

Wesay amuman log (biraderi) akhatay nahee hotay or log jama karna bara mushkil kaam hai, lakin jab hum bator ulama u k pas ja k Pir k nam pay ikatha honay ka kehty hy toh log jama hojatay hy. Is Pir k sadqay jo hamari izat krty hy wo b kahee had tak kaam ati hy or us bethak me logu ko vote denay ki targeeb di jati hy. Wo b aysa karnay k liye man jatay hy kyun ki wo b Pir sahib k he Murid hotay hai.”

Here it is difficult to gather people under one roof, but as Ulama when we asked them to do so they responded positively because they respect us. We use our stature and Pir sahib's name. In those gatherings of members of Biraderi we ask them to vote for the candidates of Sial Sharif and they do reciprocate because they are too Murids of Pir Sial.

However, another respondent from Sargodha said; our *biraderi* itself chooses our political and voting preferences. He further said; he does not see any political role in the shrine of Sial Sharif. And another respondent said; here *biraderi* culture is not that dominated. Since, Sahiwal in general and Sial Sharif in particular have the highest literacy rate in district and union councils respectively. According to an Imam Masjid; *people are getting political awareness and secondly here in our constituency (Sahiwal-Sial Sharif) people are generally inclined to PMLN, because many of the voters are either Kashmiris or Mohajir”*.

Biraderi system is a prominent feature of Punjabi society and it intensifies *Pir-Murid* relationship. Hereditary *muridi* is one of the key factors that *Sajjada Nashins* have not required much struggle to enhance their spiritual cum religious following.

5.9. Convergence of Spiritual following into Political

Factors such as compliance, obedience, conformity, and reciprocity are key in maintaining spiritual /religious cum political power of shrines. Power is not always brute in nature unless it is legitimized. The power *pirs* and shrines have is extraordinary as compared to that of any other institutions because it involves factors of obedience and conformity. However, when politics is involved, religious power converges into political power. In the *pir-muridi* relationship *pir* always claims and demands obedience from his *murids*. While *murids* are bound to obey and this obligation however, has been portrayed as voluntary obligation. Obligation to obey stems from *sufi adaab* (sufi ethics and norms) which will be discussed later. *Adaab* are an essential component of *khanqahs* and *sufi* shrines and violation of those are widely believed to invoke evil and other supernatural forces. A respondent who was an *Alim* and *Murid* of *Pir Sial* said;

“log yaha par Pir sahib k Murid hai is liye un ki ita’at Muridu pay wajib hai. Agar baqaida hokum ho phr ita’at har haal me wajib hojata hy or agar baqaida hokum na ho phr marzi hy lkn koi zabardasti ni karsakta. Agar Pir sahiban khud election me atay hy toh ikhalaki tor pay vote dena wajib hai”.

Since, people are murids of Pir Sial hence, they are obliged to obey his commands and if the order or command is sound and clear then they are obliged to do so. If there are no orders then people are free to choose, but if Pirs (Pir and his kin) are contesting elections they are ethically bound to vote for them.

The above response indicates the impact of *sufi adaab* and how *murids* think of their *Pirs* commands and wishes. *Pir*'s and shrine's political influence is just a small portion of its control over wider society and its structures. Here clientelism plays a key role in deepening *Pir-Muridi* relationship. *Dar Ul Uloom*, welfare foundation, langar and other social services are considered as *quad pro quo* for political support., through such institutions *pirs* are reconnected with *murids*. As in the above paras, I have discussed the economic importance of Shrine and below I will be shedding light on how *Pir* and his kin are a source of economic activities. According

to data, people were found praising the role of shrine in providing them with sustenance so they are ideologically bound to obey *Pir* and this changes the spiritual landscape into a political one.

Another respondent said;

“hum Pir sahib k Murid hai toh zahir hai hm siyasi lihaz se b unhe k perukar hai. 2013 me Pir sahib ne PMLN ko support or vote ka kaha hm ne yahee kia or 2018 me PTI ko or hm ne labaik kaha aura gay b yahee hoga.”

We are murids of Pir Sial, so definitely we follow him in politics too. In 2103 our Pir supported PMLN and we did as he asked and in 2018 our Pir supported PTI and we followed his guide.

The concept of obligation to obey; *Adaab* plays a key role in converging spiritual following of *Pir* into politics. As according to Sufi doctrines; a *murid* has to follow his *murshid* and that is the case with Sial Sharif. Politics itself plays a key role in converging a semi-autonomous organization into an institutional framework due to the fact that *Pirs* now intermediates with state and bureaucracy.

5.10. Sufi Ethical Doctrines

Sufi Shrines across the Muslim world are dominated by discourse of *Adaab* (Ethics). It is an indispensable part of *khanqahi* and shrine system. It all begins with *bai'at* (oath/vow) meaning giving one's hand into to other and to make a pledge to abide to his commands. It is spiritual allegiance to *murshid* by *Murid*. Putting simply, *murid* accepts intercessionary or intermediary role of *murshid* to achieve Spirituality. Much ink has been spilled over the importance of *adab*, I do not want to go into further details as this research's primary objective is not *sufi adab*. However, I will quote famous sayings of two famous *sufis* from two different regions. Mawlana Rumi and Waris Shah from Persia and South Asia respectively. Rumi famously said; *“Rumi did not become Maulavi by himself until he become the slave to Shams Tabrez”*. Similarly, Waris Shah in his wide-famous poem *Heer* said; *Without a murshid one cannot find way ‘(in the same way) that without milk one cannot cook the pudding’*²⁹.

Similarly, the shrine of Sial Sharif is no different, there is strict adherence to Sufi *adaab*. discourse is dominated by ethical virtues and for many of visitors and others attainments of *adaab* is key to Spirituality. When one goes to a shrine s/he witnesses *adaab* everywhere. In

²⁹ For Details, See, Chaudhry, H. U. R. (1996). *Saints and Shrine. in Pakistan: A Case Study of Potwar Area* (Doctoral dissertation, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, Pakistan).

the vicinity and inside the shrine you will hear “*Pir-bhai*” (fellow disciple/brothers by vow), this is how people address each other in and outside the shrine. At the entry point a guard asked me “*Pir-bhai cover your head*” and gave me a green cap, which is commonly found in *Barelvi* Mosques. However, my stay was prolonged so I went to shop near shrine and bought a white cap which according to shop owner was attributed to *Pir Qamar Uddin Sial*³⁰, during my stay there for three and more weeks I wore that cap. Covering head is considered to be tradition of Prophet Muhammad, and *sufis* eminently follow this tradition. When I interviewed very same shop owner, he said;

“Mera karobar mazar pay he inhasar karta hy, lakin hum in ko loot nahee sakti, hamara rawaya or keemat munasib hona chahiye kyun ye hamary mazar k iqdar ka swal hai”

My entire business depends upon the shrine and its visitors. I cannot loot them by over pricing, our prices and ethics should be appropriate because it affects the values of Shrine.

It is important here to note that penetration of the Shrine in daily life of *Murids*, even doing business they kept their promise of fair trade and dealing. Another respondent (it is worthy to mention that this respondent didn’t belong to *Tariqaye Sufiya* in fact he belongs to Tweller branch of *Shi’ism*, of which shrine of Sial Sharif is very critical, a brief account has been given in literature review) said;

“log yaha dihati zaroor hai magar Jahil nahee, warna aksar log dihati ho kar jahil he reh jatay hy. Us ki aik wajah darbar hai kyun ki yaha logu ko ikhalqiat or adaab sikhaye jatay hy”

People here are villagers but they are not ignorant, else you will find villagers are helplessly ignorant. The reason is the Shrine, here ethics (adaab) are taught to everyone.

These respondents credit the shrine for their *ilm* and ethics, these ethical values are an important factor in maintaining hegemony of *Pirs* over *Murids*. Accepting ethical codes means accepting leadership of *Pir*. And by virtue of *adaab* *Pir* is able to converge spiritual following into political following which has been discussed above. The institutions in the shrine play a key role in transferring these *Adaab* (codes of ethics) to next generations. *Dar Ul Uloom* is one of the key institutions which is responsible for character building of young generation. According to a student from *Dar Ul Uloom*;

³⁰ These caps are called *Kufis* or *Taqiyahs*; at bottom a red strip is attached Kufi, which signifies blood of *Ahl-e Baith* spilled at Karbala

“yaha par kirdar or tarbiyat pay zor dia jata hy baki sb kuch baad me ata hy, number Layna, ya koi nokri karna ye zaroori nahee samjha jata hai. Buniadi cheez kirdar or tarabiyat hai”

Here (in Dar Ul Uloom) ones' character and character building are more important than grades and careers, character building is the essence and primary objective.

The above mentioned statement indicates the importance of character building of a student. A student is a *salik* in Sufi doctrine and his character is more important. However, codes or principles on which character building is based remains ambiguous because there is no universal set of principles³¹. In such circumstances, as in the case of Sial Sharif, principles codified or sanctioned by *Silsillah* and *Pir* are fundamentals of character building. Similarly, a teacher who was an *alim* said;

“hamara Pir o Murshid dunia me apanay ikhlaaq ki wajah se jana jata hy or ise liye hm apany shagardu ki ikhalqi tarbiyat pay zor detay hy taki wo behtar shehri ban saky”

“our Pir Murshid is known for good ethics and we teach ethics and build their character thus making good citizens”

A person who has no *Pir* he is known as ‘*bay-Pirah*³²’ which is derogatory. That is why in the *Barelvi* school of thought, *bai'at* of *Pir* is necessary who guides a person about the realms of *Deen* and *Dunya*. Thus it is a religiously sanctions that an individual pledge his/her allegiance to a *Pir* which favors both. Consequently, *Pirs* capitalizes *Muridi* institute and uses them for political gains and *Murids* reciprocally uses Institute of *murshid* for their political and economic benefits.

5.11. Poverty and Humility

Poverty has always been glorified by many Sufis, especially in the past, poverty had been a major attribute of Sufi travelers. Humility is a man's reliance on God for every physical need. Having/owning physical resources is not itself a bad thing but loving those and forgetting those is evil. According to Ali b. Usman al-Hajweri; poverty is indeed a distinction of poor and he has free choice because he fears nothing to lose. He further says that wearing a patched frock

³¹ Additionally, character and ethics both are cultural terms (relative terms) and their meanings vary according to time and space

³² The one has not have sworn *bai'at* to Pir

is of high regard which is known as “*murraqa 'a*”. Wearing such cloths has been identified as *Sunnah* of prophet Muhammad and of his companions³³.

People visit shrines for many purposes and they visit to achieve spiritual cum religious proximity to eternity, a respondent in field work said;

“yaha jo zaireen atay hai wapsi par zaroor ham se kuch khareed k jatay hy bataor tabaruk, ye aysay he khareedtay hy jese haji Makah me kuch na kuch bator tabaruk khareed layty hai. Ye log chunki gareebh hy is liye Makah nahee ja saky ise liye yaha atay hy”

These visitors after visiting shrine buy something from our shops as Tabaruk (consecrate) same as Hajis do in Makkah, these are poor people who cannot go to Makah because of their financial position that is why they visit shrine”

Similarly, every shop owner whom I interviewed and held informal discussions during my field work would express satisfaction over their income. Even the majority of them were of view that they are blessed to be working here and they are spirituality rich. Majority of shop owners and other workers said;

“Main khosh hu, thora boht milta hai par bhot hai, jitni zaroorat hai malik dydyta hy”

“I am happy with what I earn; I may be earning little but it is enough. God provides me what I need”

As literature suggests that *Pirs* are rich and *Murids* are poor, likewise, my observations from field work also drew similar conclusions because the majority of visitors I encountered appeared to belong to lower classes. During my interviews from visitors, *ulama*, teachers, community members and kin of *sajjada nashin*, I was told that literacy rate is higher in village of Sial Shrine. The reason they put forward was establishment of government schools which were projects of former MPA Sahibzada Ghulan Naseer Uddin Sialvi and *Dar Ul Uloom* plays a key role. It was unique and generally it is assumed that where shrines exist, schools or literacy rate is low; nevertheless, the case of Sial Sharif is different. A respondent who was close relative of Sajjada Nashin said;

³³ For a detailed account, see, Hujwiri, A. B., al-Jullabi al-Uthmani, & Nicholson, R. A. (1936). *The Kashf Al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Series on Sufism*. Luzac.

“chunki yaha Sial Sharif me taleem ki sharh zyada hai ise liye hamay labor sath Jhang zilah se mangwana parta hy”

Since, literacy rate in Sial Sharif is much higher so we have to bring labor from neighboring Jhang district”

5.12. Health Seeking behavior

Sufi Shrines and health seeking behavior among devotees is part and parcel to each other. Hundreds of devotees flock to shrines to seek cure from biological as well as from mental illnesses. Mental illnesses currently dominate the realm of health in shrines. However, health seeking attitude is not only peculiar to shrines only, other sects of Islam practice it too. Shah Wali Ullah (d.1763) and Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (d. 1943) have written details of Amulets for different diseases. Though the modern health system has deeply penetrated into the realm of Amulets and other prescriptions however, health seeking still prevails among devotees and non-devotees. Sial Sharif is no different, every day there are people who visit the shrine and pray for health and ask *Pirs* intercession. Visitors go to specific sites to ask for Amulets. There are three of such defined places where *Murids* go and collect amulets, for further details please see below section on Amulets.

Health seeking attitude is not limited to amulets; it is just one aspect of such behavior. The shrine is itself considered to be the biggest source of blessing for health. During my field work I observed that, majority of *Murids* and devotees would pray for health. One thing that needs to clarification is that, praying for health does not mean one is actually sick rather they pray for a healthy life. Devotees would eat salt as *tabarruk* which is kept beside the grave of *Pir Hameed Uddin Sialvi* who died in 2020. People would massage their body with *laal*, a wooden object placed on the tomb of *Pir Sial* and pray for health. During my observation a person brought a little cripple boy to the shrine, he carried the boy all the way from parking area to Mosque in the shrine complex. When entered the shrine from *bab-e Hameediya* he tried to support the boy to walk, which he could not, however he led the boy to pray in all four graves of *Piran-e Sial Sharif*. And after praying for boy to be able to walk his father repeated the same action and while exiting from *bab-e Hamidiya* he carried the boy again.

When I was interviewing a visitor who was also a *Qari* from Faisalabad, he recalled how he and his family became *Murid* of *Pir Hameed Uddin Sial*. He says; *his sister suffered paraplegia (paralysis of lower half of body) since childhood. No doctor could cure him, we*

went to many doctors and hospitals in Faisalabad and in Lahore but not to avail nothing. Once our neighbors advised our mother to visit the Shrine, when we shared it with father he said *jo kuch hai Allah hai baki kuch ni*. Our mother then tried to persuade him about what she learnt from our neighbors about Pirs and their Intermediary roles. One day she said it's not shirk, as he thought about it. Since, we belonged to the sect of Deoband and according to Deobands popular beliefs, visiting shrines and praying there was equivalent to Shirk. It took 1.5 years to persuade our father to visit the shrine and finally he agreed to it. Before departure he said "*chalo dekhty hy Piru ka kamal*" (let's see what Pirs are capable of). When we reached Sial Sharif we could not enter because of rush, while waiting a person came and told us Pir sahib had called us. It was shocking how Pir sahib knew we were here. He asked me and my mother to accompany my sister as he refrained himself from going in. when we went inside. Pir sahib enquired weather we are the ones came from Faisalabad, then suddenly he called a khadim to call my father as he was waiting outside upon which my father came too. Then he said; "*tu hai jo nahee manta*" (so you're one who does not have faith in us?) He proceeded as said you took a long time to come here. It was shocking for us as he come he know everything about us, he then said "*cholo me abh apnay ap ko manwata hu ki hm Allah walay hai*". He then placed his hand on my sister's shoulder and said "*abh agai ho is dar par toh Allah k hokum se shifa layjao gi*". He then murmured prayers to her and gave a bottle of water and said after 10 days you will be able to come here by walking. We came back and for 8 days no signs of recovery on ninth day at around 2.30 am, my mother checked on her (regularly she does) but she did not find her and woke all of us. We started looking for her but then saw someone in lawn and when went outside it was my sister, she was walking. I could not believe it and called everyone outside. It was shocking for us. Upon enquiring she said that an old man came and told me to stand up otherwise your father will not come to Sial Sharif again. He then said recite kalma and start walking and when I started walking he said now come to Sial Sharif. After the period of 10 days we came to Sial Sharif and stayed here for 5 days and entire family performed *baya'at* in hands of Pir Hameed Uddin Sialvi.

Health seeking behavior is supported by prevalent spiritual myths that dominate discourse in The shrine.

5.13. Prevalent Spiritual Myths

Existence of superstitious beliefs among rural Punjabis is not only peculiar to Muslims but also of Sikhs. However, this research is concerned with *sufi* Muslim shrine of Sial shrine thus, will

only discusses superstitious beliefs among rural Muslims. *Pirs* are not simple mediators, their live accounts are full of hagiographic content, which are entwined with Punjabi folklore. Discourse is dominated by such myths, fables and any extraordinary event becomes a *karamaat* and would pass on from generation to generation. For many such stories appear to be illogical, however, these stories and myths attract large number of gullible rural masses. It is widely acknowledged that these tales and myths are tangled with folklore, usually these are created by chief disciples. During my field work, I encountered many of such stories. However, there is an another perspective that prevails among *murids*, “a *Pir* does not reveal his *karamaat* because *tabligh*³⁴ requires *ilm* and logic. If *pirs* rely on revealing *karamaat* for *tabligh* and *dawah* it would only attract blind following”. So, if we reject these myths as illogical then this general perspective covers it up.

While interviewing Imam of Mosque of the shrine recalls an anecdote according to his words that closely translate as;

“Once Pir sahib commanded me to go to Taunsa Sharif to attend Urs ceremonies, I was seated in the front seat of car, on th way, I met with an accident. From the accident I only remember the moments right before incident and when I woke up I realized that I was not in car but on the footpath unharmed while, car completely crashed”.

A reader may not find something supernatural about this incident because many people face similar incidents during their lifespan. However, for Imam it was indeed one of *karamaat* of *Pir* because if *Pir* has not blessed him before journey he would have been seriously injured or killed in worst scenario. Like this story, every other story does not have any extraordinary characteristics. Such stories/traits are attributed with every *Pir* from different time and space. During my interview, one of my respondent was a close relative of Sajjada Nashin, he was a learned man and respected by everyone. Responding to such stories and myths he recalled a Persian saying; he translated it into Urdu;

“Pir nahee urta us k Murid usay urra detay hai”

“Pir does not have the ability to fly, his murids make him so”

³⁴ *Tabligh* means preaching; in modern usage it means communication of revelation, it is sometimes interchangeably used with *daw'a* meaning propagation of faith

His response was just one liner but enough to understand the entire complexity of phenomenon. However, such superstitious myths create a large following among gullible rural masses especially among women.

5.14. Women and Shrines

Women's devotion to saints and shrines is more personal and emotional than men. In such devotional practices, they weep, and beg to saint-buried to intercede on their behalf (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2002). While Aziz (2001) holds a view that socio-economic standing of women is more vulnerable. Comparatively, the influence of shrines on women is more than men.

Women in rural Pakistan are responsible for nurturing children and some consider them to be the fulcrum of family because of their role and influence. They pass on values and customs to new generations, this makes them the central figure of the family. Even though, visibly they may not appear to be central figures but their indirect influence is more than those who appear as central figures (men). Young ones in shrines usually come with their mothers or other female members of the family. However, they sent them to their male members so that they would have a look at the shrine from inside and perform rituals and after that they again went to the female's section. It is important here to discuss that women are not allowed to go inside the shrine of Sial Sharif. They have a separate allocated place to see graves of pious saints and pray for whatever they desire. Separation of genders is a trait of almost all shrines of *Chishti Silsilla*. This was explained by a responded, which is closely translates as;

“Since these devotees (women) you see here are na-mehram that is why they are not allowed to go inside the mazar, however they have been assigned a separate place to see the shrine from behind a window”.

As discussed, women generally take more interest in family matters because in Pakistan rural contexts men are expected to provide sustenance to family while women do household chores and other family issues. Women who visit the shrine to seek intermediary role of *Pir* on issues like mental health, economic issues, childlessness, male child, unemployed son(s), unmarried daughters, abusive/disloyal husbands, family disputes etc.

5.15. Kin (*Pirs*) of Sajjada Nashin

In the context of respect and Spirituality, locals prefer to call all Sialvi family members as “*Pir*” but not all of them hold *Pir* as the official title.

In the Sial Sharif every member of the family of Sial is called “*Pir*”. People would greet them as *Pir*. Since, they are from direct lineage of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi so they all are spiritual ity alleviated individuals. Their presence in the socio-economic and political landscape is apparent, even to those who for the first time visit Sial Sharif. They dominate the political sphere of Sialvi Sharif (political role has been briefly discussed above). Small business community of Sial Sharif accredits *Pirs* of Sial Sharif as key stakeholders. Since, land around the shrine is owned by the Sial family. They have built markets and local people as well as from other cities have rented shops and tuck shops for visitors. They pay the rent and do their business. *Pirs* (Kin) of Sajjada Nashin have themselves setup shops and have employed people from the local community as well as from neighboring cities. A large number of employees are from Jhang.

Employees in those shops earn a little but they were happy as they believed they were serving in the sacred soil of Sial Sharif and serving their *Pir*. Again *Pir* here means anyone who is descended from *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi. A fast food restaurant owner nicely narrated the entire scenario, because as an outsider I failed to see how *Pirs* contribute to the rural economy. According to him;

“me yaha burger or juice wagera bhjta hu, jo ki amuman dihat me pasand ni kia jata, lkn mera karobar chal raha us ki aik wajah to zaireen hai he, lkn jpo Pir sahiban hy jo shehru me rehty hy wo ataty hy yaha gar to mujh se fast food wagera mangwatay hy. un me student b hy or professionals b hy is aik faida ye hy. is k ilawa un k shehru se mehman atay jesay ap Pir sahib k mehman h yap yaha aye ya home delivery mangwa lia is se mera karobar chal raha hy warna dehat me ye kaam kaha chalta hai”

I own a fast food restaurant and you know people in villages do not prefer this food, but I am earning a good amount. My customers are obviously visitors to the Shrine, however, Pirs of Sial Sharif are my key customers. Majority of them are living or have lived in cities, so they like fast food so they order it. Those Pirs who are living in cities for study and jobs when they come to village they order home deliveries. Even when they have guests like you, a guest of Pir, they come here for burgers or juices etc. and it helps my business.

Another respondent said;

“kafi log Pir sahiban pay tanqeed b karty hy lkn mera zati tor par man’na hai ki un ka aik boht bara kirdar hy is masharay me, unhu ne yah aka mahol saaf or pur aman rakha hua hy jo ki hamaray karobar or gairelu mamlaat k liye b faidmand hai”

“many people are critical of Pirs, however, I personally think that they play a key role in society, it’s because of them we have clean and peaceful environment”

Another respondent said;

“Pirs own large tracts of agricultural land, have stables, and shops etc. where they hire local people and provide them employment.”

The kin of Sajjada Nashin are very important for the rural economy and status quo, though it has its own pros and cons. The entitlement of privilege forces them to rely on *Murids* to come and do their household chores as well as their farming activities. Thus, it becomes exploitation of free labor in the form of *Murids*. On the contrary they think otherwise, for them they are actually providing food and shelter for these poor *Murids*. The kin of Sajjada Nashin have a major role in Sial Sharif but their spiritual and religious significance cannot be compared to that of Sajjada Nashin.

5.16. Discussions

Any given armature of a society is always influenced by institutions and their interplay defines characteristics of that said society. As discussed above, how shrines have evolved as an institution and have institutions under its suzerainty. Famously, Emile Durkheim defined sociology as the “*science of institutions, their genesis and their functions*”. Similarly, Samuel P. Huntington describes Institutions as “*stable, valued and recurring patterns of behavior*”. when studying shrines in light of definitions on institutions from a sociologist and political scientist perspective. Respectively, shrines have multifaceted functions with a history and have stability of values and recurring patterns of behaviors. As discussed above, Sial Sharif is one such of institutions with a common history and functions. Which defines values and patterns of behavior that have remained an integral part for centuries. Shrines as institutions developed in a close proximity with political structures, such is the case with Sial Sharif. To understand shrines, it is important to understand local power structures and relations. Shrines are an integral part of power relations and structures, so is the case of Sial Sharif. The shrine of Sial Sharif is not only the foci of Spirituality in the region of central Punjab for *Chishtis’* but also it is the linchpin of power structures and relations, economy, politics and education.

5.16.1. Political Economy of Shrine

As the findings indicated that shrines' position is unique, it is the epicenter of entire social sphere. It controls the resources both social and economic which are required to sustain political processes. Moreover, larger economic activities generate resource which are necessary to carry out certain political activities like election campaigns etc. This is not a one-way process rather it is vice versa because the economic activities create a political constituency in itself. Sajjada Nashin and his kin directly benefits from the political economy of the shrine.

Furthermore, it is the largest public place for people of the Surroundings, then how could the leader of such a space not turn it into a political space. Sajjada Nashin, leader, is followed by both rural and urban masses. The following of *Sajjada Nashin* in rural spaces is different from that of in urban spaces. In rural areas *Sajjada Nashin* has more leverage over *murids* as compared to their urban counterparts. However, any level of political or cultural influence is stemmed from the shrine (centrality of shrine has been discussed above). Urban *murids* of Sajjada Nashin were more emancipated in terms of their electoral preferences, however, Sajjada Nashin still had a tight grip over rural *Murids*.

For instance, Jhang district where *Pir Sial* has a huge following and the shrine more or less decides winners in elections. Jhang city MPA seat for Provincial Assembly Punjab, in the general election of 2018 was won by an Independent candidate who is ideologically against *Pirs* and Shrines. A respondent said; “*I am a murid of Pir Sial and my family and entire mohallah are murids of Pir Sial but we did not vote PTI we voted Pakistan Rah e Haq Party*”, a political outlet of those affiliated with Ahle Sunnah wal Jammāt formerly Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan (a banned Deobandi outfit). They always win or get the maximum number of votes from localities of Jhang city. But, during my field work, on a Friday I observed that the majority of transporters were from Jhang district and many of them came from Jhang city. The reason is political awareness and penetration of state institutions, presence of state institutions leads people to meet their needs from them and reliance on *Pir* or shrine sunk. Though, spiritual and religious needs of *murids* are still filled by shrine and *Pir*.

Another factor which bolsters politicization of shrines is *biraderi* and *deradari* elements, rural areas are more inclined toward *biraderi* as compared to their urban counterparts. Thus they are more politically tilted towards shrines.

A factor that bolsters politicization of shrines is that how it offers its services to people of different localities. For instance, rural masses flock to shrines for almost every other need, such as health, education, institutional support, political support, employment, religious, and spiritual needs. On other hand, urban *Murids* visit shrines for more of a religious and spiritual need because they have access towards modern state and private institutions. Thus, the political role of shrines and Sajjada Nashin is differently perceived by rural and urban *murids*. The shrine of Sial Sharif is in rural locality, so, it is easy for them to have political support. In the last general election held in 2018, major candidate of Sial Sharif lost. Main reasons drawn from findings are internal political factions among Sialvis and contesting on the NA seat rather than the Provincial seat. NA constituency is vast as compared to PA seat, NA includes both urban and rural areas, but the population of urban areas is more than rural areas. Though another factor in losing election was a schism in PTI, a senior member of party brother of former MNA was also contesting election as an independent candidate and Naeem Uddin Sialvi got fewer votes from strongholds of Zafar Ahmad Quershi. Internal schism in PTI led PMLN to win the seat. Though strongholds of *Pir Sial* are Jhang, Khushab, Chiniot, and even in Faisalabad which was once an impregnable fort of PMLN, PTI won seven NA seats. *Murids* attribute these victories of PTI to Sial Sharif. Findings suggest that they *murids* of Sial Sharif do not have a political affiliation, rather *Pir Sial* alone is their political leader and party.

The economic aspect of the shrine has been briefly discussed in above sections, however, the shrine itself is an economic leverage for Sajjada Nashin and his Kin. Agricultural land, business, rented shops, and other businesses, which they own in different localities. Which stems from shrine and it is growing exponentially. Consequently, the posterity of *Pir Sham Uddin Sialvi* has evolved as feudal lords, businesspersons, politicians, religious scholars, and certainly spiritual masters. They have vast tracts of agricultural lands, they own businesses and have remained in electoral processes since the inception of Pakistan. They are religious scholars such as Sheikh Ul Islam Qamar Uddin Sialvi, and they belong to *silsillah* of Sufi tradition. Thus, Sialvis. In a nutshell, combination of all such resources and influences create hegemony over *Murids* and the masses.

5.16.2. Hegemony

Hegemony as defined by Italian Sociologist Antonio Gramsci as “dominant classes do not always rule through coercive means, in fact there is very low use of force, dominant classes rule through consent of subordinate population” (Gramsci, 1930). For Gramsci, Hegemony

stems from political and civil society; political society is state, which uses force through army or police to coerce its rule on population. On the other hand, civil society consists of such institutions which are private in nature, such as, religious institutions, schools, mass media, and political parties. The ruling class gets its approval or consent using civil society. Population consents for political, moral, and social values produced and imposed by the dominant class. (Elaborate who dominant discourse takes control of population in civil society)

The role of Sajjada Nashin can be better analyzed by applying Gramsci's concept of Hegemony. Data Collected for this study suggests that the shrine of Sial Sharif's rule is not validated by coercive means. Rather a consent has been generated and the *Murids* have approved the rule of Sajjada Nashin. The civil society plays a crucial role for getting the consent of the population. *Pirs* of Sial Sharif has produced a set of ideas and values on religion, spirituality, politics, culture, language, and morality. They have capitalized these ideas and have persuaded the masses (here *Murids*) to accept them and this was never done via brute force but by literary arguments using *Khanqahs*'.

To hegemonize, the *Pirs* have used Mosques, Schools, mass media, and political parties. Religiously they are leaders, they appoint their subordinates in different religious institutions. Education here is a primary factor in disseminating their ideology. As discussed in preceding sections, the *madaris* (a network of madrassas) and *Dar Ul Uloom* teaches ideology and principles of *Pir* Sial to the new generations. Those students upon graduating would return to their homes and act as recruiters for the ideology of ruling class that is *Pir*.

Moreover, the process of consent is incessant and not static in nature. Therefore, *Pir* (ruling class³⁵) is not able to completely indoctrinate the population. Hence, *Pir* needs to produce and reproduce a set of ideas and modes of production. Secondly, *Pir* needs to offer concessions to *Murids* in order to get their consent. Moreover, concessions include; health healing remedies, food (*langar*), employment, education and provide few individuals with residential and financial incentives. By doing so, *Pir* gets consent and legitimizes his rule or maintains his hegemony. Hegemony of *Pir* is more of an intellectual and moral leadership than economic. In a nutshell, the reciprocal and symbiotic relationship between *Pirs* and *murids* can be simply understood as Gramsci's hegemony and Weber legitimation.

³⁵ Here word ruling class and *Pirs* refer to those particular *Pirs* who are directly involved in politics

As discussed in findings, the shrine is the nucleus of hegemony of *Pir*, therefore as long as the shrine is there physically as well as spiritually, no counter hegemony is possible. In order to create a counter hegemony, a nucleus has to be developed by flag bearers of those advocating counter hegemony. To maintain hegemony every Sajjada Nashin enforces his notion of ideology and interpretation of religion but never deviates from the nucleus. In order to reproduce, Sajjada Nashin organizes and makes maximum usage of available superstructure. This includes politics, culture, family system, education system, etc.

5.16.3. Common Religious Spaces

Pirs and shrines played the most crucial role in proselytization of natives in South Asia, though with *Pirs* and conquerors thousands of non-natives came from western and central Asia. The spread of Islam is accredited to the Sufis. Their role as *sufis* even after their death is not over. Their shrines become a key religious site, where people come to have experience of religious practices. Every shrine has a mosque and *Madrassa*, as in the case of Sial Sharif. The rural masses who otherwise would not have access to common religious spaces, now have access to such places. Because of shrine they are part of larger discourse of Islam. Moreover, shrines are platforms, which bring people to the basic concepts of religion and spirituality. In such a case, institutions of shrines such as mosques, madrassa and literary contributions of shrines are essential. The above findings also reveal the same and *Dar Ul Uloom* and *Madrassah* is detrimental for people to know the basics of religion.

5.16.4. Agency Control

Pakistani society, primarily is agrarian and is based on rural cultures and *Pirs* are dominating these areas at the cost of will intimidation of masses. During my field work I found out that, people would come to their *Pirs* and ask for their counsel on almost every aspect of life. It appears that those *Murids*, themselves have no agency and can't think for themselves, their will is controlled by *Pirs*. Here structure (integration of various social institutions) plays a key role in controlling the agency of *murids*. The position of Sajjada Nashin is such that it alters the will and controls agency of his *murids*, though it may not be a direct exploitation because *Murids* have consent for his leadership. However, *Murids* are not independent in their decision making process.

Moreover, the role of *Sajjada Nashin* may not always be negative, there are many cases where *Pirs* become arbitrators among *biraderis* in conflict, matrimonial issues, financial and land disputes. Though such acts of *Pir* gave them more control over *murids*. Individuals' agency

control affects decision making power of *murids*. They cannot decide or choose their political preferences, consequently, *Pir* becomes their choice. While describing political role of *Pir*, a respondent said;

“We do not have any political party, our party and ideology is Pir, our vote belongs to Pir so we are”

Agency control of masses allows *Pir* to tighten his grip on his *murids* and sustain hegemony. That is why in Pakistani society rural areas and marginalized areas are more inclined toward *Pir muridi* culture.

5.16.5. Misinterpretation of Sufism

Sufism throughout the Islamic history has been known for its basic doctrines of love, peace, harmony, giving, renunciation of worldly riches, and mystical union with God. However, Sufism from being a ‘giver’ has now become ‘taker’. *Sufi* institutions have always been givers, however currently *sufi* institutions seek socio-economic support from disciples and *murids*. Earlier *sufis* would prefer seclusion, they abstain from worldly powers (both political and economic). *Sufis* who desire worldly riches and power are termed as *Mustasawuf* by Hadrat Ali Hajwari Data Ganj Baksh (Al Hujwiri, 1911), more details have been discussed in literature review. *Mustasawuf* are those Sufis who cloaked as *sufis* and seek worldly riches and power. Contemporary Sufism has become victim of *Mustasawuf* because of the powers and privileges attached to it. Moreover, such interpretations also affect Sufism because people are far away from textual religion as compared to experiential religion.

5.16.6. Ignorance and Illiteracy

Religious ignorance and illiteracy (lack of education) are parallel to each other. Illiteracy paves way for ignorance, and literacy rate of Pakistan, especially that of rural areas is very low. Therefore, people are more ignorant about religious doctrines, ethics, and Sufism itself. Thus they only see what the *Pir* wants them to see. People accept such interpretation of religion and *fiqh* which has been interpreted by *Pirs* or by those *Ulama* who are devoted to *Pir*. The knowledge and education which *murids* receive is very narrow unfortunately and they think in hell as there is no other heaven. Even what they earn by doing jobs or business is accredited to the blessings of *Pir*.

Pirs' leadership is unquestionable and whatever *Pir* does or commands is always right because he knows religion and Spirituality. A religious scholar while giving interview quoted Shahab Uddin Suhrawardi and said;

“When Pir commands something to his Murid, if Murid says ‘why’, he then becomes Murid of Satan and he can never get salvation”.

The leadership of Sajjada Nashin is absolute, he is a spiritual, religious as well as political leader. However, his political leadership resulted from his seat as custodian of the shrine and his *Murids* support him vehemently.

5.16.7. Political Supremacy

Religious ignorance, illiteracy and lack of political ideology plays a key role in persistence of authority of the *Pirs*. They are the monarchs of their own spiritual (pseudo) kingdoms. They think that it's their right as well as duty to lead these masses. Since they are more enlightened in religious as well as political affairs thus they have to lead. A myth among people as well as *Pirs* of Sial Sharif exists that they are serving people not just the leaders. It is a divine duty which they are sincerely fulfilling. Participating in the electoral process has been defined by kin of Sajjada Nashin as way to serve people, one of the kin of Sajjada Nashin said;

Being a politician does not mean that we are exploiting anything rather we serve people, not only our murids rather everyone. Serving people is an inheritance for us and if we deviate it means we are deviating from basic principles of our creed.

In maintaining the political hegemony over local political institutions, *Pirs* role as intercession is essential, which could get him support for political as well as religious following. *Pirs* politics are not limited to provincial or national level but they are active in the local body elections as well. Their immediate family members, *khulfa*, and *Murids* take a keen interest and actively participate in those elections and dominate the political sphere.

5.16.8. Violence and Conflict

Violence and conflict has been an integral part of sociological theory; no theory is complete without addressing it. And sociological theory aims to explain a social phenomenon. Thus violence and conflict are social realities, which generally exists universally and particularly in patriarchal societies. Shrines as part of the public sphere are more prone to violence and conflict. Conflict sometimes emerges among internal groups. Another type of conflict which is

more prominent in case of Sial Sharif is with members of other sects. The most common cause of conflict is sectarianism. Sectarian issues and its historical links with Sial Sharif has been discussed in literature review. However, strict adherence to one's own sectarian principles leads to fundamentalism and grows contravention toward other sects. Shi'a Sunni hatred is a common phenomenon in Muslim world and is one of key cause of conflict and violence in Sargodha and Jhang districts.

Sial Sharif is well known for its opposition to the Shi'a sect, even the fourth Sajjada Nashin *Pir Qamar Uddin Sialvi* wrote a book Named *Mazhab-e Shia* which is famous for its anti-Shi'a propagation. Politically Sial Sharif never allied with any political party or group which tilts or has Shi'a elements in its cadre. Findings of this study also revealed that whenever a Shi'a candidate of any political party shows strong position then *Pir Hameed Uddin Sialvi* would himself interfere in campaigns. In the neighboring Jhang district *Pir* advises his followers to never vote Shi'a candidates. Other religious groups which are at odds with Sufis in general and Sialvis in particular are Deobandis and Wahabis.

They label each other with different names having negative connotations. Shi'as are called *Rafidhis* (someone who are against companions of Prophet), Shi'a label others as *Nasbis* (someone against Hadrat Ali), Deobandis and Wahabis are called *munkar* (one who denies) and Deobandis and Wahabis called *sufis* (*Barelvis*) as *Mushrik* (polytheists). These labels are common in discourse of these respective sects and their hatred toward each other exponentially grows because of such words dominating discourse. Apart from religious intolerance and violence, *biraderi* based and group based conflict and violence emerges too. People are at odds due to their opposition to certain rituals and practices at shrines. A minor critique on *sajjada nashin* could result in ablaze.

5.17. Other Institutions of shrines

As discussed in previous chapter that shrines are not a mere architectural and religious site, rather, shrines as a space imbued with meanings and produces and reproduces Islam in a certain manner (Strothmann, 2016). Shrine itself as an institution has been discussed in the last section, however there are other institutions which exist in shrines' vicinity. Such institutions may exist in any other places but when they are attached to shrines their significance augments. There are many institutions affiliated to the shrine of Sial Sharif, among them few are more important to mention here. Library, Madrassah, *Dar Ul Uloom*, *Langar*, Shams o Qamar foundation and *saraye*. These institutions are directly linked with people, they employ a large number of *Murids* of *Pir* and are part of Political Economy. In this section, I will discuss their importance for shrine, *Muridain*, and Sufism. Though, it is important here to mention that role of shrine is central no matter how much important and resourceful the aforementioned institutions are.

5.17.1. Madrassah

A central institution in any Islamic space such as Mosque or shrine is Madrassah, religious school. Madrassah and *Khanqah* have always been part and parcel to each other. When *khanqah* restructures itself in to a shrine many outward changes appear, however, madrassah persists. After 9/11, when war on terror started, western discourse and media were critical of Madrassahs', a criticism filled with cynicism. However, according to (Clarke, 2007) madrassas play a crucial role in educating a large number of children who otherwise would have been neglected by state institutions. There are madrassas which have higher resource concentration and go further and provide accommodation and food for the poor.

Pakistani media and its leaders tried to convince the world about the importance of madaris in Pakistani society. Even president at that time, General Pervez Musharraf tried to highlight the importance of madaris, that too in western media by writing at New York times. However, in the same article he tried to assure western governments that his government is working to tighten its control over madaris. He wrote;

He saw these as excellent forms of social welfare setups, where hundreds of students get free education, food, and accommodation. For him, no other NGO could match their welfare activities. He said; I know some madaris have been used for politico-religious aims. But, how can we forget teachings of great personalities of Islam like Hadrat Data Ganj Baksh, Hadrat Lal Shehbaz Qalandar, Bahauddin Zakariya, Fareed Uddin Ganj Shakar, etc. Did these great

personalities spread Islam by force? So how can we forget their teachings? We have to restore the image and status of madaris as it was (New York Times 2007), (Tavernise, 2010).

Musharraf here emphasized that Sufi Islam is true color of Pakistani Islam. When he mentioned great Sufis of Pakistan with madaris his intention was to reinvent *Khanqahi nizam* (khanqahi system). Similarly, Madrassa in the Shrine Complex of Sial Sharif is what Musharraf was referring to and there are hundreds of them in Pakistan.

Madrasa of Sial Sharif exists in the shrine complex is for boys only, where they study Quran and *Hifz Quran (memorization of Quran)*. For girls, madrasa for memorization of the Quran is in the main building of *Dar Ul Uloom*. There are 300 boys and 450 girls performing *Hifz* in the madrasa. Most of students came from rural areas, especially from Jhang, Khushab, and Faisalabad. They are provided food and accommodations in the shrine complex and many of students live with *Pirs* of Sial Sharif. They do little household chores and study.

Organizationally Madrassah comes under authority of *Dar Ul Uloom*. The reason to write here separately that madrassah for boys which exists in the shrine complex is much older than *Dar Ul Uloom*. For visitor's impact of *madrasa* in shrine is unmatched than that of *Dar Ul Uloom*. Madrassah is visible and gives religiosity to shrine and that attracts religious class.

5.17.2. Dar Ul Uloom

Dar Ul Uloom Zia Shams ul Islam Sial Sharif was established in 1964. To understand the context of building *Dar Ul Uloom*, we need to get into some details. As has been discussed above, strict *shari'a* adherence of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi has shaped ideas of his latter successors. One of the successor, grandson of Shams Uddin Sialvi was Zia Uddin Sialvi, he was used to invite *ulama* frequently to the shrine to lecture his students. Among such *ulama* was Moin-ud-din Ajmeri (authority over fiqh, hadith and logic) (Kamran & Shahid, 2014). According to Tahir Kamran this process not only had an ideological impact on the successors of *Pir* Sialvi but also on his *Khulfa* such as *Pir* Meher Ali Shah Golravi. Who is very famous for his *Takfeeri fatwa*³⁶ against the Ahmadiyya community. His *fatwa* was unprecedented among Chishti but was extraordinary as well because later it had repercussions for society.

Dar Ul Uloom is believed to have been built by Shams Uddin Sialvi himself in 1843 but modern institution was set up in 1964. It teaches both fields of education, *deeni* syllabus and modern

³⁶ Takfeeri Fatwa is a verdict of declaring Apostasy and for *Pir* Meher Ali Shah's Fatwa, Visit: Shorish Kashmiri, *Tarikh-i Khatam-i Nubuwwat* (Lahore, 1972)

education. The name of the institution includes the names of *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi* and his grandson *Zia Uddin Sialvi*. The name means Light of Islam, and here light means *Ilm*. *Dar Ul Uloom* has three main schools along with other departments. Shoba-e Hifz, Shoba-e Darse Nizami, and Modern Education, are schools. And Hifz-ul Quran, Qirat, Dars-e Nizami, School, and College are the main departments.

- I. Shoba-e Hifz:** Shoba-e Hifz has been discussed above as a madrassa, wherein students memorize Quran and learn Arabic pronunciation or Tajweed. Headed by Hafiz Allah Baksh.
- II. Shoba-e Dars-e Nizami: (Foot Note)** Department for traditional Islamic Syllabus teaches conventional subjects. Students are awarded highest degree of Shadat ul Almia by Tanzeem ul Madaris³⁷. The degree is equal to M.A or M.Ed. Arabic or Islamiat. So far, this department has produced some renowned scholars, which will be discuss later. Currently Dars-e Nizami has enrolled 100 boys. The department is headed by Hafiz Muhammad Nasrullah.
- III. School and College:** School and college education is for those students who do not opt Shoba-e Dars-e Nizami. They follow syllabus provided by Sargodha secondary and higher secondary boards. Arts and humanities subjects are currently taught in this department.

Dar Ul Uloom is a charity organization, primarily funded by *Murids* of *Pir* through Sajjada Nashin. It charges no fee at all, all students are accommodated in hostel on campus with food three-times a day. *Dar Ul Uloom* has its *langar khana* for staff and students. Students are provided with books, stationary, uniform, and clothes as gifts from Sajjada Nashin (mainly on Eid and other occasions). Teachers and other administrative staff are paid with handsome salaries, residence, and bills, they also have guest rooms. During the tenure of PMLN students of *Dar Ul Uloom* had been given laptops but female students were instead provided with scholarships. Even girls did not have computer lab while boys campus had it.

Students upon graduating from Dars-e Nizami would go to their native villages and cities and take up jobs like *khateeb*s and Imams in their local Mosques. With time their influence starts growing. This is how *Dar Ul Uloom* and Shrine reaches out to far-flung rural areas indirectly.

³⁷ Tanzeem ul Madaris Ahl-e Sunnah wal Jammāt is a private regulatory body of Madaris in Pakistan of Barelvi Jammāt. Founded in 1959 and currently exists across Pakistan. For more details; <https://tanzeemulmadaris.com/> Accessed: 11/03/2022

And when they start teaching in Madaris and preach in Mosques ideas multiply exponentially and the *Pirs* message those areas.

Library of *Dar Ul Uloom* is not as big as any other public library, however, it has a rich collection of books and are used by teachers and students. Majority of books are about Islam. Sahibzada Asad Sailvi is Librarian, and under him there are staff who managed the library. Library consisted of seventeen sections; starting with; Hadith, Arabic language, Arabic Literature, Arabic grammar, Persian Language, Persian Literature, Philosophy, Logic, *Aqaid* (belief), *Fiqh*, *Usool e Fiqh* (Principles of Jurisprudence), Hadith (another section), *Seerat Un Nabi*, *Tasawuf*, General books, and *Tafasir* and *Usool e Tafasir*. Majority of books are in Urdu language apart from Arabic and Persian, few books are in English as well.

Another important department of *Dar Ul Uloom* is *Dar ul Ifta*. A department of *Dar Ul Uloom* which hands down decrees on issues faced by individuals and groups according to teachings of Islam. People from all walks of life come to *Dar ul Ifta* to ask for solutions and decrees on various issues. Mufti Abu Bakr heads a panel that decides according to *Shari'a*. During ordinary days around 20 to 25 people come to ask for decrees. prominent issues for which they seek guidance and *fatwa* are faith and worship related, society, family, marriage and divorce, financial, ethics, culture and customs, medical issues, etc.

fatwa issued by *Dar ul Ifta* of *Dar Ul Uloom* Sial has never been challenged in any other forum, it is free of cost and they charge no fee at all. *Fatwa* is not just a single process rather involves, *a mustafti*, *istifta*, *mufti*, and finally *fatwa*. It is based on structure, instructions, and discussions thus it develops a discourse that becomes part of literature. It has a significant affect unto the minds of Muslims specifically those belonging to traditional Muslim societies. *Fatwa* of *Dar ul Ifta* of Sial Sharif produces, reproduces and reinforces *taqlid* of *Pir* and his doctrines. It is not limited to *Pir* but reinforces principles of *Fiqh* and *madhab*.

5.17.2.1. Alumni

Dar Ul Uloom Zia Shams ul Islam Sial Sharif has produced some of the finest scholars, *Khateeb*'s and other Academicians. Allama Ramzan Sialvi, he is managing three *madaris*, he is currently *Khateeb* in the shrine of Data Ganj Baksh Lahore. Another such a bright name is Mufti Shoukat Sialvi, who is *Khateeb* of Friday prayers in Mosque of Shrine of Sial Sharif. *Dar Ul Uloom* is accredited to have produced academicians which include; Dr. Khaliq Dad Malik Head of department (HOD), Islamic Studies Punjab University. Dr. Muhammad Sadeeq,

HOD Arabic Bahauiddin Zakriya University Multan. Dr. Manzoor Hussain Sialvi, HOD Islamic Studies Gomal University. *Mufti Sheikh ul Hadith wa Tafsir*, Muhammad Mazhar Ullah Sialvi, he is accredited to start girls section of *Dar Ul Uloom* in 2007. He teaches Hadith in both girls and boys sections.

These are few scholars mentioned among thousands who have been trained by Sial Sharif, they preach teachings of Sialvis' and also preach their interpretation of religion and Spiritual ity. Education according to a functionalist perspective reinforces existing ideology and values. Ideology with support of social institutions dominates society by capturing marginalized segments of society. It is indeed the hegemony of ideology which Gramsci (1930) has elaborated in his prison notebooks. Educational Institutions play a key role in the socialization process. Such institutions construct and perpetuate certain ideologies which serve the benefits of dominant groups. *Dar Ul Uloom* is one such institution, it constructs, reconstructs and perpetuates ideology which serves the interests of Sialvis.

5.17.3. Library of Shrine

The shrine of Sial Sharif has a Library vast collection of books, some ancient and classical books. The library contains books about Islam, *fiqh*, *hadith*, philosophy, Sufism, poetry, Persian language books, etc. However, few years ago, the library was shifted from the shrine complex to a newly built library in the terrace of Bungalow³⁸ of Sajjada Nashin. This was ordered by previous Sajjada Nashin *Pir* Hameed Uddin Sialvi. The reason was that previous library was old, so books

The library is at the terrace of the bungalow of Sajjada Nashin, so it is inaccessible to the public. Because a custom comes between library and public, in Sial Sharif when a person other than progeny of *Pir* Shams Uddin Sialvi cannot go to the terrace of nearby houses. Because of *Pardah*, and if one desires to go or has any work to do then an announcement has to be made thrice from the mosque of the shrine. S that the women of *Pirs* family would go inside their houses and thus allowing one to go to the terrace. But this is impossible and rarely happens. Thus, the library is currently inaccessible to general public and visitors. During my fieldwork I could not visit the library and the reason was the same as mentioned previously. Sajjada Nashin seeks to save a precious collection of books, this act of saving literary works is applaud

³⁸ The Bungalow of Pir of Sial Sharif is located right in front of the Shrine, Pir Sial make his public appearance here. Men make long ques to have a sight of their Pir. Just for 3 to 4 seconds they got a chance to inside and pay their regards. While women stay outside and seek visitation from ornamented window.

able, but there are other ways too, like printing new copies and preserving older ones and giving library access to people.

5.17.4. Langar

Langar khana of the Sial Sharif is as old as *Khanqah*. It is said that *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi* himself started *langar*. *Langar* is a communal distribution of food for visitors not merely just *Murids*. *Langar khana* of Sial Sharif is the second most populated space after the shrine itself. *Langar* for female devotees is in house of *Sajjada Nashin* and for male devotees it is near the shrine at end of *bazar* just before main gate.

Langar-e Sial is open for twenty-four hours and three-time food is offered to everyone. Breakfast is given at 6:00 am in the morning and people can eat till 11:30 am. At 12:00 pm lunch is announced, this time *langar* receives most of people because the day time is the peak time for visitors to visit shrine. Since the shrine is in a rural locality that is why most people visit during the day. Lunch continues till 5:30 pm and after *Adhan* (Islamic call for prayers) of *Maghrib* dinner is served.

An interesting announcement is made from Mosque of Shrine; “*Pir Bhaio, Mehmano, Darvesho, musafiro khana kahye*”

It is believed that this specific announcement was commanded to *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi* by his *murshid Pir Suleiman Taunsavi*. Majority of visitors prefer to visit the shrine on Fridays and I also witnessed that on Friday the number was more than any other day. Similarly, *Langar* is thronged on Fridays. The schedule remains same all year even during *Urs* festivities, though different dishes are served in different occasions. On Friday when I was in *langar* sitting next to Mr. Naeem who was Assistant *langari*, he was a graduate of History from Punjab University Lahore said; “*Khana nahee pohchta hai balki sawb pohnchta hy*”. For him voluntary work which *sajjada Nashin* does is of great significance, since, *Langar* is open for twenty-four hours so people come and eat, this way every one receives *barakaat* of Sial Sharif.

However, staff who work in *Langar* get paid, cooks, helpers, Bread makers, drivers, and guards are paid according to their service and hierarchy. To all *Khadimeen Sajjada Nashin* pays for dowry and marriage expenses. According to Mr. Naeem who does voluntary work at *langar*, *Pir Hameed Uddin Sialvi* has strictly ordered all workers to pay so that they would maintain their worldly life and provide for their family. Those employees who are not locals are provided residence and sent food from *langar* to their homes. Though the entire expense is paid by

Sajjada Nashin, people donate generously, they give cash amount, flour, pulses, lentils and animals. Many people when making *manat* they would donate something to *langar*. Many people donate goats, or sheep then we distribute that among students of *Dar Ul Uloom*, especially to those who are doing *Hifz*.

Distribution of *langar* in Sial Sharif is more civilized where people are seated and workers and volunteers distribute them food in big round trays. If there is only one person in entire hall, then or if there is no place around round tray then he is served food in separate plate or tray. Visitors are encouraged to eat together as it would increase *barakaah*. Though *barakaah* element is more religious but it has a cultural aspect too. It is an old strategy to maintain and increase social cohesion among people of different classes, tribes and race. Eating together mitigates dynamics of conflicts, people respect and revere saint so they agree to eat with anyone.

Langar is distributed in two different locations, for males it is distributed in the main complex of *langar khana* and for females in the Bungalow of Sajjada Nashin. But during *Urs* festivities *langar* is distributed in seven different locations. *langar* have twenty *Tandoors*³⁹, used according to the number of visitors expected. There are two *chakis*⁴⁰ for flour crushing, and two Sheller machines for wheat and one for rice. Cooking food in Punjab is incomplete without Chili pepper and spices, so they have one chili and spice grinding machine installed in *langar*. To store wheat, rice and pulses there are seven, four and two stores/silos respectively.

5.17.5. Saraye

The Saraye means a palace of shelter; many shrines do not officially own a Saraye. However, Saraye of Sial Sharif is so big and welcoming that there is no hotel or guest house in the vicinity. There are twenty rooms for guests, each room has five to ten charpoys attached to it, depending on size. Every room is furnished with carpet because during *Urs* festivities thousands of devotees flocked and they needed space to sleep. Moreover, it is not possible to give a Charpoy to every devotee, that is why they have stocked 2000 beddings reserved. During *Urs*, they install Marquees in the main lawn of Saraye.

During *Urs*, special guests such as, Khadims, Khulfa, Sada'at are allotted rooms and ordinary devotees sleep on Marquees installed in the lawn and veranda. There are around 300 carpets to

³⁹ A Tandoor is a clay made cylindrical oven, heated by wood, charcoal, or natural gas is used to bake the bread and cook food. Primarily used in South Asia, Middle East and Central Asia.

⁴⁰ A machine use to crush and grind Wheat

be used in an emergency. CNICs are collected at the gate and upon leaving are given back. There are two special guest rooms for khulfa one is in *saraye* and other is behind Bungalow sharif of Sajjada Nashin. All employees of *Saraye* are paid a salary and non-locals are provided residence too. During my field work luckily, I met Haji Aziz ur Rehman (also known as Chacha Raseedhi) who built *Saraye* and handed it over to Sajjada Nashin. He is among Khulafa of *Pir Sial*, he originally belonged to Mianwali but nowadays he is settled in Faisalabad. There is a room reserved for him, and his name is written on the door.

Saraye of Sial Sharif plays an important in managing shrine. Usually those who come from far areas would stay at *Saraye*, because there is no hotel or other lodging services in vicinity. During my field work, it was revealed that other than *Urs* guards in *Saraye* or in the shrine do not allow people to stay for more than two days (special cases may be there). But for ordinary visitors it's like an unwritten rule. There may be many reasons for this one among them may be rural locality and rural people are more conservative when it comes to outsiders, though some people like myself can stay as much they want but with notice of *Pirs* or other staff at the shrine. The purpose is to encourage people to participate in in day to day activities and do not renounce worldly affairs. As *Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi* quotes Rumi in his book *Mira'at ul Ashiqain* “*Domestic affairs, earning livelihood, and family is not world but engaging in worldly activities in such a way that you forget the Allah (SWT)*”. Thus, for Chishti Nizamis’ engaging day to day activities is not prohibited and they even prefer their *Muridain* to indulge into such activities. Anything which stops an individual from *Zikr* is prohibited but performing a tasks with *zikr e ilahi* is of high reverence. Thus, it allows Sialvi Sheikhs to perform political and business activities and their followers and *Murids* do not demurrals over such activities.

Chapter 6

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

Pirs, Shrines and *Sajjada Nashins* are an integral part of South Asian Islam. Muslim invaders and sultans led the construction of *Sufi khanqahs* (hospices) in first place and then Sufi shrines underlined local cultures. These *khanqahs* and shrines became a source of proselytization of masses, from here rulers bring in saints into political and state orbit. Despite having similar origins, every shrine in south Asia is unique; in terms of rituals, practices, religious orientation, history and architecture. Though there are shrines whose significance is of universal qualities; such as Shrine of Data Ganj Baksh, Shrine of Baba Farid etc. Likewise, there are shrines which have a significance that is more localized. They may be associated with a particular sect, village, tribe, and are distinguished for certain physical, spiritual and health needs such as curing diseases, employment, and driving out *jinn* from a possessed body usually from a woman. These traditions attract thousands of visitors and they offer tangible and intangible resources, which became a source of income for shrines. Thus causing internecine disputes and conflicts with other stakeholders. However, since Auqaf's takeover of famous shrines things have changed. For Instance, famous Sufi Shrines of Data darbar in Lahore, Bari Imam Sarkar in Islamabad and others, Auqaf department is accused of using shrines as a money making machine. The practices in these shrines are also different as compared to those Sufi Shrines which are still under control of Sajjada Nashins. Nonetheless, these shrines became center and everything around it befitted as its periphery. custodians of Shrines soon start exerting influence upon society and institutions, power stems from the shrine itself. The study has demonstrated that *Pirs* accumulate wealth, land, and popular support. However, they are able to do so because of the shrine, without a shrine *Pirs* (*Sajjada Nashins*) could not achieve their current position. *Pirs* are key stakeholders in a post-colonial state which follows structural patterns of the former colonial state. Shrines dominate rural society and those who capitalize shrines vis-à-vis capitalizes politics, economy, and landholdings thus they accumulate power over others.

Hegemony of shrines and *Pirs* (Hegemony is one of the key findings of this study) over agency of *Murids* and structure always draws criticism from their opponents such as reformists like Deobandis and Wahabis (Ahl-e Hadith). Though this opposition and criticism is a challenge for Shrine culture, it is also strengthening it, because it enables *Pirs* to ignite emotions of

Murids which helps *Pirs* to develop a discourse against narrative built by aforementioned reformists. Such ideological warfare between reformists and Sufis help Sufis to maintain their hegemony.

Democratic practices in Pakistan have not been democratic in its true essence, here electoral support is based upon tribal, sectarian, regional, linguistic, and nationalist affiliations. However, only the elite class or those which control flow of production (of both goods and ideas) are able to have control. *Pirs* are part of this system, they draw their support from their *Murids* usually from *Murids* based in rural areas. Findings of the study indicate that Shrine of Sial Sharif is no different, its power and hegemony is based on rural areas that is why it has more popular support in Jhang and compared to Sargodha itself. The former is more underdeveloped and has lower literacy while the latter is developing and has more literacy.

To conclude, traditional power houses which control politics, economy, and society are impeding the structural development of the country. Because existing patterns suit them and obstructs development, *Pirs* are part of such elite classes. The study has shown that *Pirs* have more control over institutions and over individuals. In order to achieve development; both at the individual level as well as institutional level elite class has to be in shambles. So that an organic leadership would evolve, though change should be organic because abrupt changes only change faces not systems. On the other hand, Sufi shrines have to follow its core principles and revive or reform the *Khanqahi* system.

6.2. Recommendations

6.2.1. Institutional Reforms

As discussed in findings that *Pir* and Shrines political economy is intact because of their control over institutions, John Hicks has famously said “Every economic reform inflicts a loss upon some people.” So in light of John Hicks saying, why would the elite itself drive the institution reform movement. If they do so, they would protect their interests at any cost. So reforms ought to be organically developed rather than an abrupt change where the current system is thwarted. An abrupt change would harshly affect lower classes as they are not ready to benefit in the new system both in terms of mental and skills.

An inclusive reforms are the dire need of our society. Institutions which are captured by the elite, therefore two objectives which should be the agenda of the reforms are inclusivity and efficiency because our institutions fundamentally lack aforementioned aspects. A post-colonial

state must have post-colonial institutions, even former colonial states which colonized South Asia have gone through vicious reform to make their institutions more inclusive and efficient. Another important factor is 'missing institutions'. Important state institutions have no reach in providing services to masses therefore masses seek alternatives to meet their needs. For instance, as findings showed that people visit shrines to seek health; one of the reasons was unavailability of hospitals and other health services in rural areas. Secondly, judiciary and police institutions should increase their domain to these areas which usually are considered as something outside their domain. Unavailability of such institutions make these people more superstitious and firm believers of *Pirs* and Shrines.

6.2.2. Political Reforms

Political and electoral reforms are imperative for more service delivery and inclusivity. Full-fledged reforms would allow alternate leadership to participate in politics and the electoral system. The system should be designed keeping in view of material conditions. The current system impedes participation of those who do not control an ethnic group, a pressure group, a sectarian or a linguistic group. *Pirs* and Shrines hold their control over their *Murids* which are based in rural areas.

There have been many attempts to reform Shrine culture in Pakistan by Ayub Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia Ul Haque just to avail nothing. Though, those attempts to reform were politically stirred and for personal gains. On the other hand, current mainstream political parties have their upper ranks full of *Pirs* and *Sajjada Nashins* whose political power is based around a one or more shrine(s). Ruling party PTI has nominated five *Pirs* as federal ministers which includes; Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Makhdoom Khusro Baktiar, *Pir* Noor ul Haq Qadri, Syed Fakhir Imam. These ministers have been elected MNAs and MPAs then served as ministers in almost every government, they switch their political loyalties by analyzing the political trend of which party is likely to win elections. Sial Sharif has been giving MNAs, MPAs, Senators, Tehsil Nazims, and UC chairman from its voters and in last elections the candidate of Sial Sharif lost. Similarly, PMLN and PPP have also included *Pirs* into their party ranks as well. Political reforms should devolve power to basic political units, and focus on reform methods of delimitations of political constituencies.

6.2.3. Educational Reforms

Awareness always stems from education; awareness for rights and duties. Similarly, those who lack education do not have the awareness of one's rights. Education has been proven key to

barriers which kept people locked in shackles of suppression. In countries like Pakistan where state has not been helpful for the marginalized segments of society, here dominant classes rule them using religion, religious and economic dominancy. However, with education change occurs in societies. By looking at case of Sial Sharif, study has showed that since, village Sial Sharif in particular and Tehsil Sahiwal in general has higher literacy rates. On the contrary District Jhang has a lower literacy rate, khadims and household employs and *Pirs* houses are from Jhang, even visitors from Jhang dominated numbers in shrines. However, our education system does incorporate state of art pedagogy techniques and curriculums. Therefore, large scale reforms should be introduced in the education sector and marginalized segments and areas should be prioritized.

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Appendix 1

Images from the Field Work

Image I: Shrine of Sial Sharif

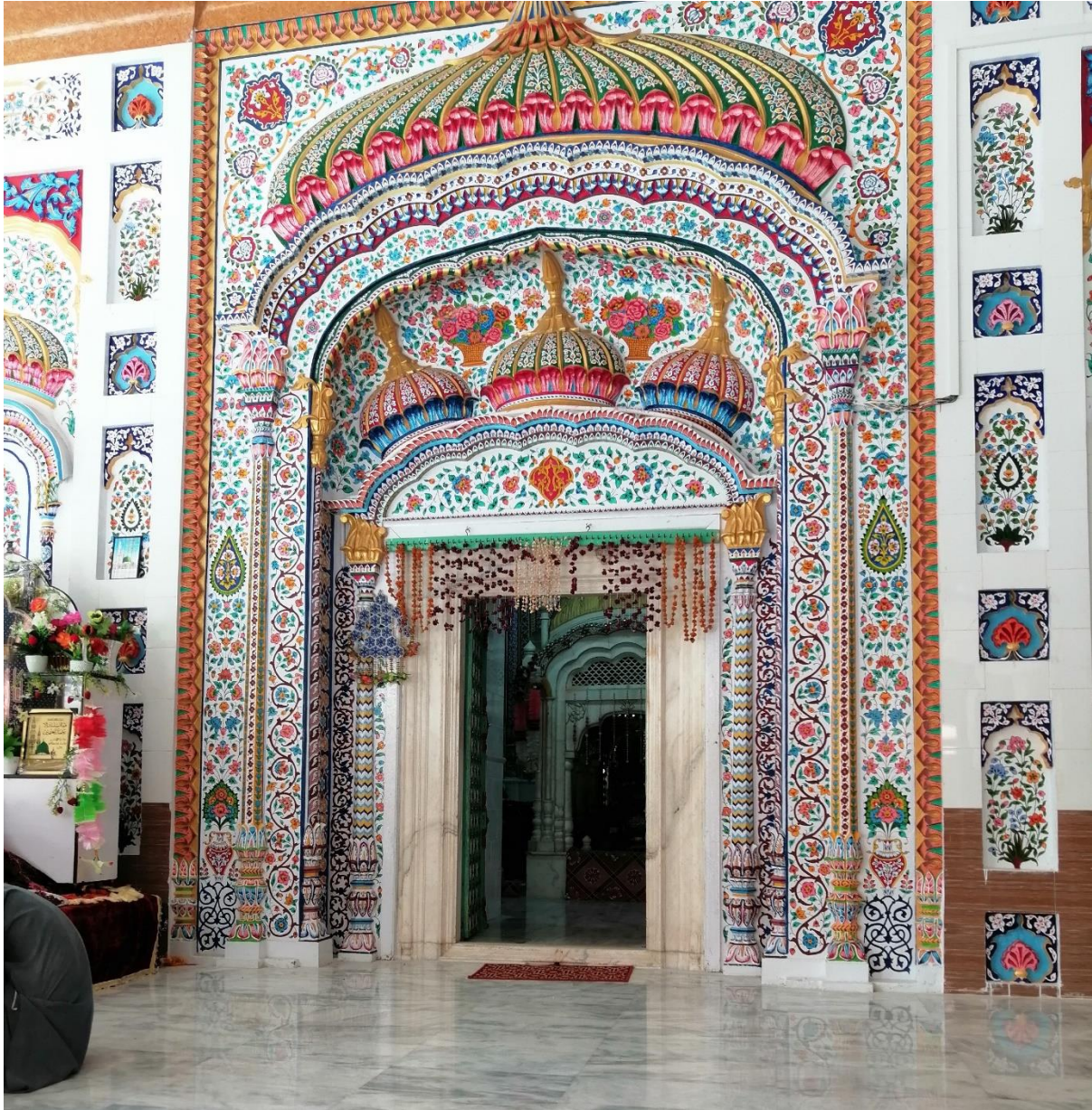
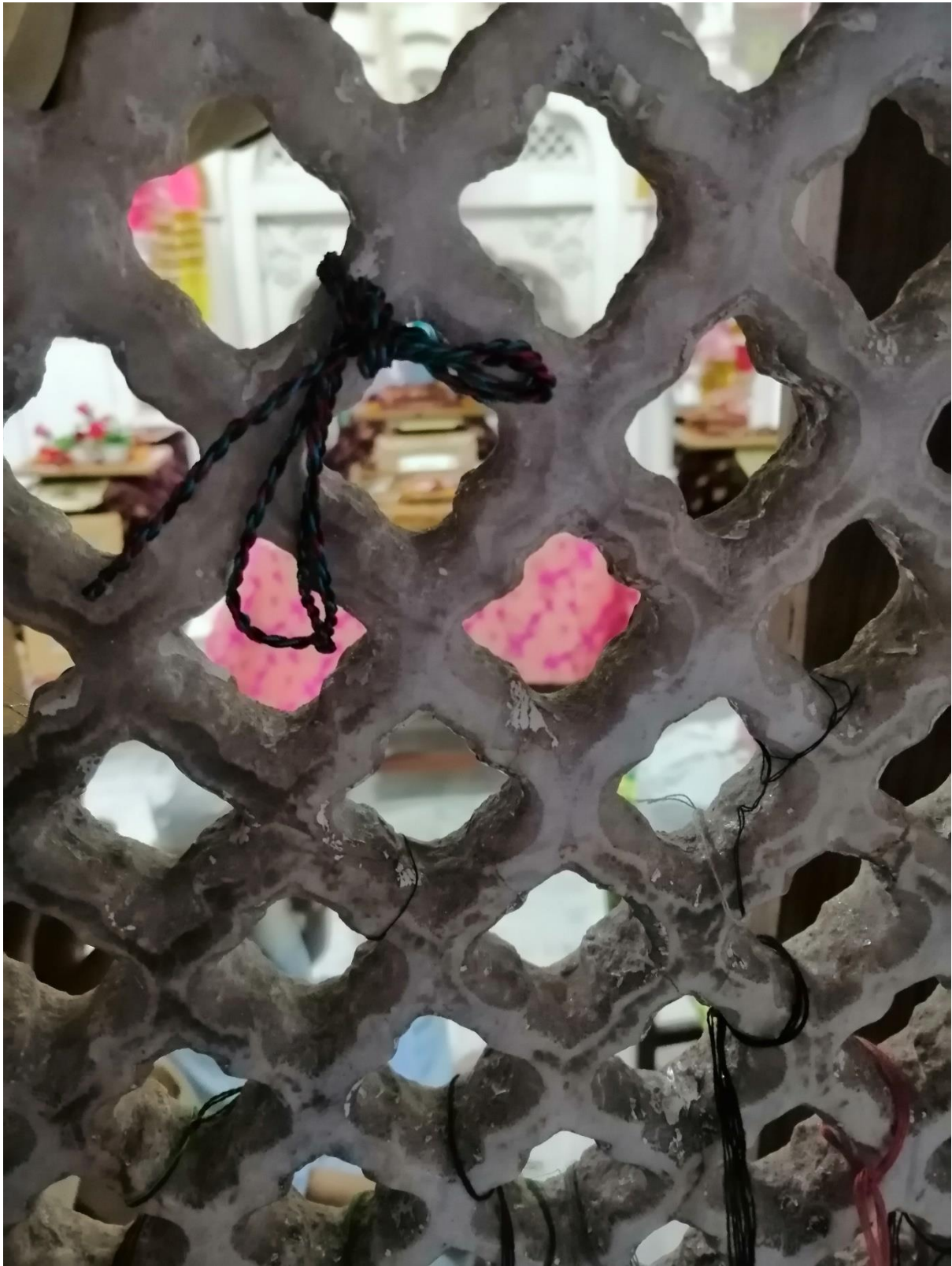


Image II: Image of Shrine



Image III: Through this window also known as Jafferi, women look into the Hujra or Tomb. In the window women devotees usually tie threads also known *Dagha Bandhna*⁴¹.



⁴¹ Devotees tie the thread for the fulfilment of their *Mannat*(wish)

Image IV: Mosque in the Shrine Complex



Image V: Image of Mosque



Image VI: One of the Gates of the Mosque



Image VII: Author Interviewing a Shopkeeper



Image VIII: A shop in the market around the shrine

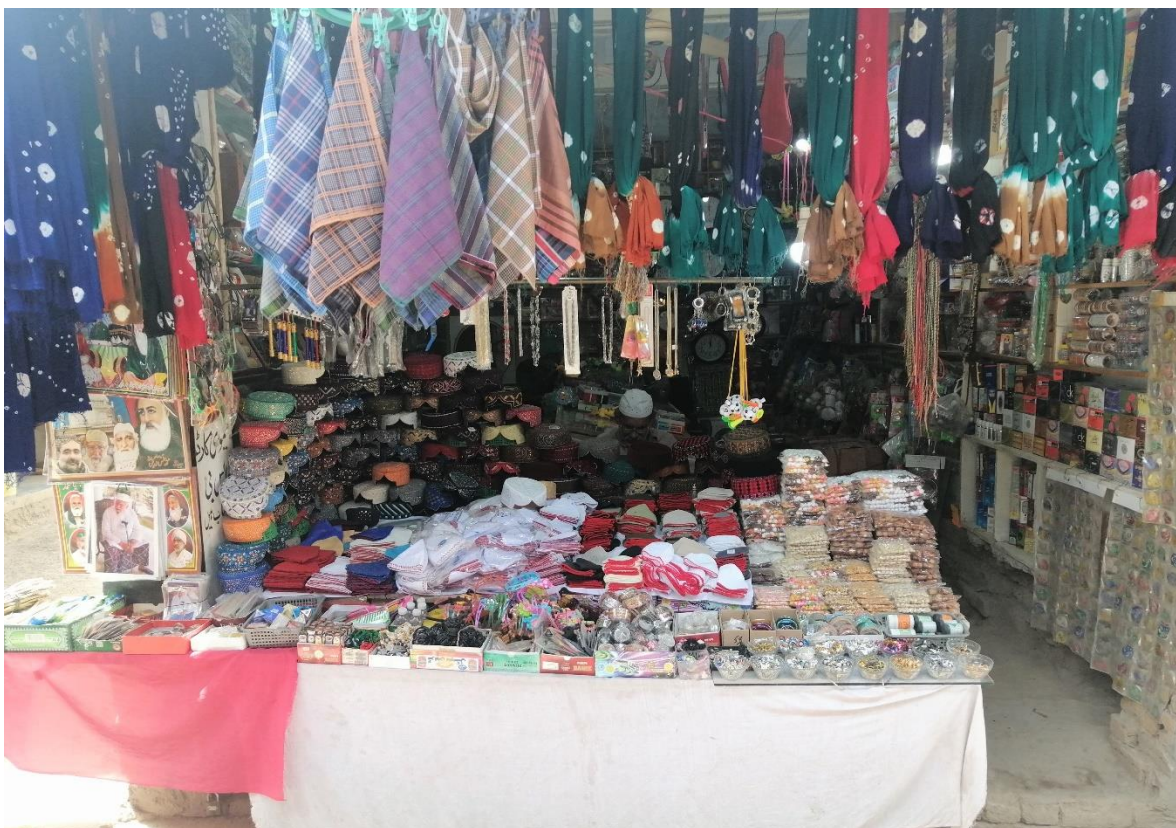


Image IX: Image of shrine of Hazrat Sher karam Ali Shah in Dada Bagh



Image X: Image of the shrine of Father of Pir Shams Uddin Sialvi in Dada Bagh



Image xi: Image of an old companion of Pir Qamar Uddin Sialvi



Image XII: An old Artisan working on the interior details of Shrine



Appindix 2

Interview Questions

Question for Visitors of Shrine:

Name: -----, Age: -----, Gender: -----

Education: -----, Occupation: -----

Residential: -----, Time and Date -----.

1. How often do you visit the shrine of Sial Sharif?
2. Do you come alone or with your family or acquaintances?
3. What is the influence of the Shrine of Sial Sharif in your Pakistan (Political, social, economic, spiritual , religious)?
4. Do you and your *Biraderi* support the political role of Sajjada Nashin?
5. How do you see the leadership of Sajjada Nashin?
6. How the leadership of Sajjada Nashin benefits the locals? If issues, please elaborate?
7. To whom you had cast vote in the General Election of 2018?
8. Do you have any electoral preferences for the next elections?
9. Do visit the shrine during *Urs*? And why?
10. How *Urs* reconnects murids with *murshid* and what is the role of *Urs* in portraying the leadership of Sajjada Nashins?
11. What is the form of the devotion you offered to the shrine of Sial Sharif?
12. What mode of transport you usually use to visit the shrine?

Appendix 3

Shop Owners and Transporters

Name: -----, Age: -----, Gender: -----

Education: -----, Occupation: -----

Residential: -----, Time and Date -----.

1. What is the importance of the shrine for your business?
2. What are commodities that visitors buy from your shops?

Or

What is the transportation means visitors use and how it affects your business?

3. How *Urs* is important to your business?
4. Are you a murid of Pir e Sial or an ordinary businessman?
5. Are satisfied with your business at the shrine?
6. If you get any opportunities to shift to a larger urban center will you leave this business?
7. Are there any other events that boost business? If yes please explain
8. How do you relate your business to daily visitors of the shrine?

Appendix 4
Local Politicians

Name: -----, Age: -----, Gender: -----

Education: -----, Type of Constituency: -----

Political Affiliation: -----, Time and Date -----

1. How do you see the leadership of sajjada nashin?
2. What are the contributions of sajjada nashins to his murids and the general public?
3. In the General elections of 2018 did you vote for the candidate who had the support of Pir of Sial Sharif? If Yes, Why
4. Would you support the candidate of Sial Sharif in the next elections? Please specify the reason. And what are your expectations for the next elections?
5. Who won the previous general elections of 2018?
6. What are the reasons that the public supports the candidate of Sial Sharif in the election?
7. Are you satisfied with the political leadership of the Pir of sajjada nashin?
8. Do you think that the leadership of sajjada nashin has any negative impact on the public as well as politics?

Appendix 5

Chief Disciples and Kin of Sajjada Nashin

Name: -----, Age: -----, Gender: -----

Education: -----, Occupation: -----

Relationship to Pir: -----, Time and Date -----.

1. How do you see the leadership of sajjada nashin?
2. Are you satisfied with the leadership of the sajjada nashin? If yes or No then why?
3. Sial Sharif has been one of the key religious sites and has been influencing politics would you please elaborate on your role in the process?
4. What is the role of the shrine and sajjada nashin in the socio-political affairs of society?
5. Do you think any negative impact on the people caused by the leadership of sajjada nashin or shrine?

Would you support the candidate of Sial Sharif in the next election? Please specify the reason.