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Sufism in Medieval Sub-continent and Contribution in Human Development

Shahid Bahar Hashmi
PhD Scholar Department of Peace and Conflict Studies,
National Defence University, Islamabad.
Email: shahid.bahar123@hotmail.com

Asma Shakir Khawaja
Assistant Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies,
National Defence University, Islamabad.
Email: asma@ndu.edu.pk

Abstract:

The current study reflects upon the contribution of Sufis in human development during medieval sub-continent. Such contributions are viewed in terms of basic needs approach towards development and universality of equality of humankind. In sub-continent, though the development of Sufi style of education and training, especially their own invented mechanisms of tarīqa coupled with development of Sufi order and Sufis' role in cultural transformation played an important role in the development of society on pure humanitarian and spiritual grounds. With this development, the emergence of Sufi places of worship, mechanism of self-development, and training of disciples or devotees resulted into development of specialized form of training centers for the development of society and to articulate and spread the philosophy of Sufism regarding peace, harmony, equality and social justice. Sufis practices especially began to develop in medieval sub-continent when Sufis started practicing in the form of small groupings that then turned into their dwellings later on. These Sufi dwellings in the form of khānqāh acted as organization determined to improve the lives of the common people through humanitarian, educational, social and human rights, social safety, and for delivery of justices for poor and destitute. Because of the parallel development of Sufis and Sultanate in sub-continent India, there also developed both cordial as well as hostile relations between the two because of earlier more popularity among poor marginalized sections of society. Some Sufi orders maintained cordial relations while some others tried to distance themselves from State and Sultans because cordial relations can compromise their philosophy of social justice. In addition to that Sufis mediatory role between governed and governing elite and for interfaith dialogue can be visualized as contributing peace and harmony and to settle the egalitarian outlook of the society. Sufi viewed egalitarianism as a binding ideology to unite people and reduce the differences in the name of religion, caste and gender. The Sufi core doctrine of love, peace, social justice and equality very remarkably attracted the lower sections of society especially those who were deprived of the facilities of life in ranked society.

Keywords: Sufism, Human Development, Peace, Mediation, Equality, Social Justice

I. Introduction

In sub-continent, the contribution of Sufis is consideredas a phenomenon of articulating love towards God(Baldick, 1993, p. 3)and to spread the message of truth and mystical union with Creator (Arberry, 1966, p. 1), along with promotionof the social integrity, harmony, peace and love (Suvorova, 2004, p.105). Such mystic dimension ofIslam formally originated in the Middle East between ninth and tenth centuries and influenced the world of Islam predominantly the IndianSub-Continent (Nizami, 2002, p.246).For instance, the Sufi *sīlsīlāhs*(orders) prevalent here especially the *Qādīrīyyāh*, *Chīshtīyyāh*, *Suhārwārdīyyāh* and also *Nāqshbāndīyyāh*contributed a great deal in the literature,philosophy, theological ideas, doctrine of peace and upholding of human rights and social justice.

In context of subcontinent, peacebuilding refers to the establishment of nonviolent relationships amongst different cultural and religious communities,for instance Muslims and Hindus who after advent of Islam in India developed hostile relations often caused by political motivations (Suvorova, 2004, p.4).History has demonstrated that in sub-continent there were created and recreated various frontiers to segregate the adherents of different religious confessions (Ibid, 2004, p. 14). Sufis played their role to bridge the gaps between Hindus and Muslims and brought both communities to share common message of both religions. Sufi ideology of peace and harmony acted as binding force to unitepeople and diminish the differences in the name of religion, caste and gender (Ibid,. 2004, p. 128).

In Islam, based on the fundamental principle of the good deeds, Sufis of all *sīlsīlāhs*laid great emphasis on the unity and urged competition among individuals to exceed each other in good deeds rather than of economic and material luxuries (Shepard, 1982, p.203).The Sufi ideal of social justice and equality was very striking for the lower sections of society especially those who were deprived of the facilities of civil life in class based ranked society (Nizami, 1957, p.52). Based on Islamic principles, Sufis tried to promote universal equality of mankind and played role in socialup lift of the common man in rather dignified manner (Stoddart, 1999, p.8).

In sub-continent, due to parallel development of Sufis and Sultanate there also developed cordial relations between Sultans and Sufis, however Sufis of *Chīshtīyyāh*especially and *Qādīrīyyāh*to some level refrained from establishing any type of relations with state that can compromise their philosophy of social justice. Thoughsome of them had the kinship relations with kings, but never used that influence and lived their mystic life independent of royal interference (Anjum, 2011, p.3).

Similarly, the Sufi places of worship and learningcalled as *khānqāh*acted as organization trying to improve the lives of the common people through humanitarian, educational, social and human rights, social safety, and for delivery of justices for poor and destitute (Nizami, 1957, p.55).This subsequent sectionsdiscusses how Sufis *sīlsīlāhs*especially *Chīshtīyyāh* and *Qādīrīyyāh*in 11^{th} to 13^{th} centuries contributed for human development and promoting human rights in sub-continent.

II. Conceptualizing the Role of Sufis in Human Development Process

The role of Sufis in medieval sub-continent can be elucidated in terms of their servicetowards humans visiting their dwellings *khānqāh*within an extensivemodel of

"basic needs" theory. Various social thinkers including economists, philosophers, and supporters of human rights developed the conceptual frameworks and policy instruments in 1970s to adopt the universal "basic needs" approach to development (Stewart, 1989, p. 347). This ideas was in line with inferences drawn in John Rawls' theoretical system that everybody should have equal access to "basic social goods" (Rawls, 1971, p.62).

The access to basic necessities of life was already acknowledged in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and subsequently as part of the Declaration on the Right to Development (Stewart, 1989, p. 347). It was maintained that in order to achieve the prime objective of economic development, everyone should have at least access to adequate amount of basic things and services to maintain a level of living (Stewart, 1985, p. 1).Based on this assertion, there is universal agreement for a "core" needs which incorporates food, water, health, education, and shelter. In the Rawal's theory of justice, some nonmaterial aspects for instance the access to work and participation in decision making and liberty is also included in the "primary social goods" (Rawls, 1971, p.6)

Sufis of medieval adopted this approach when they along with spiritual training of their followers also strived for provision of aforementioned basic needs of people through their established centers called as *khānqāh*. Sufis trained their followers to adopt the approaches of *tawakkul (reliance on God), zuhd*(path of renunciation), *faqr*(contentment),*Jud*(bounteousness) and*ithar*(sacrifice for others) to meet their needs. They also advocated to the elite and kings to assert their virtues of being *ghina* (generosity) and bestow their contributions (*ihsan*) to meet the basic needs of downtrodden and destitute. Doing *ihsan*means proclaiming onesvirtues to harmonize the inner self into the beauties of the creation and the Creator (al-Hujwiri, 2000, p.190).

Furthermore, the mediatory role of Sufis between the state or political elites and the common people, in addition to their role to pacify the conflict and resolve differences is often referred to as their contribution as peace building in sub-continent pluralist society (Anjum, 2006, p.157). This was meant to mitigate the sufferings of the people by extending the possible help Sufi can accord from their spiritual influence that Sufis deliberate as addressing the issues of distressed and gratify the needs of the helpless (Mubarak, 1885, p.46).

Based on these endevours, in sub-continent Sufi tried to promote the concept of egalitarian communities withinalready stratified society through their crafted approach of universality, spirituality, harmony, love and peace.

III. Sufis Contributions for Human Development in Medieval Sub-continent

Sufi orders traces its transcendent line to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) through some revered Sufi *Shāykh*, who is recognized as the initiator of the particular *sīlsīlāh* (Clarke, 2001, p.1).These Sufi order usually functions as a series of hereditary right and are recognized as a source of identity and legitimacy for the succeeding cohorts of Sufis (Trimingham, 1971, p.2).During eleventh to thirteenth centuries, Sufi orders continued to flourish especially in sub-continent India (Nizami, 1969, p.55).*Sāyyeīd Ali āl-Hujwāīrī*mentioned twelve schools of Sufis mainly including the four prominent orders such as *Qādīrīyyāh*, *Chīshtīyyāh*, *Suhārwārdīyyāh* and *Nāqshbāndīyyāh*(al-Hujwiri, 2000, p.190). The following section reflects upon the

contributions of *Chīshtīyyāh* and *Qādīrīyyāh* orders for human development in medieval sub-continent.

IV. The Contribution of *Chīshtīyyāh* Order

The *Chīshtīyyāh* ordertraces spiritualgenealogyinstitutionally to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) through the chain of Sufis such as *Hāsānāl-Bāsrī*[d.728], *IbrāhīmbīnAdhām*[d 779], and *Fuzāylībn 'Iyāz* [d. 802] (Arberry, 2003, p.33). However, the *Chīshtīyyāh* order was founded by *Abu IshāqShāmi* (Syria), who carried Sufism to *Chīsht*which was the town situated 95 miles east of *Herat* around 930 AD. Nevertheless, this Sufi order was popularized in Sub-continent by*KhāwājāMu'īnāl-DīnChīshtī* (b.1141-d.1236), who is widely recognized as an influential personality in the development of the Sufi philosophy in India (Parveen, 2014, p.43)

*KhāwājāMu'īnāl-DīnChīshtī*was loved, admired and respected by both Hindus and Muslims and due to his spiritual personality and his love and devotion for humanity many Hindus especially from low and unprivileged backgrounds converted to Islam (Ernst& Lawrence, 2002, p.4), though Sufis of Chishti *sīlsīlāh* never claimed credit of this conversion. It is however believed that, "If there is one person to whom belongs the credit for introducing Islam to India and Pakistan and he was the edifice of the largest Islamic community in the world today, it was *KhāwājāMu'īnāl-DīnChīshtī* of Ajmer" (Bano, Sohail, & Hussain, 2015, p. 193).

*KhāwājāMu'īnāl-DīnChīshtī*wrote very fine Persian poetry that usually revolves around spiritual truth and compassion (Avari, 2013, p.73).His poetry is often recited by *qāwāl*(singer of *Sāmā*) which is practice of singing of Sufi poetry that Sufi believe invokes the divine presence (Ernst& Lawrence, 2002, p.21). When *KhāwājāMu'īn*reached Hindustan, his followers soon spread over the country, north and south from Lahore [Punjab] and Ajmer [Rajasthan] (Parveen, 2014, p.43).Since his departure from this world during 1236 AD, millions of Muslims and countless non-Muslims, particularly those without children, money or robust health, continued to visit his the *dārgāh*(shrine) to seek the *Bārākā*(benefactions) from saint. In the same line, the Mughal Emperor *Akbar*was reportedly went on foot from Agra to Ajmer to pay his homage to saint in fulfilment of his vow to God on the birth of his son Jahangir in 1569 (Cahen, 1990, pp.188-233).

Chīshtīyyāh order has developed several branches since the 12th century (Rozehnal, 2007, p.21).Due to egalitarian in nature, the*Chīshtī*Sufis are best known for their welcome extended to seekers who belong to other religions (Ernst & Lawrence, 2002, p.4). By residing and travelling from one place to other, *Chīshtīyyāh* Sufis became successful in having access to very remote, urban to non-urban areas, most particularly among nomads, pastoralists, forests and deserts (Foltz, 2010, p.92).

*Chīshtī*Sufi trained their disciples and devotees within the premises of especially designed *khānqāhs*and through the spiritual method of accessing to divine and truthusually referred to as *tarīqa* by Sufi saints.*ChishtiShāykh* used to hold public assemblies, greeted visitors, provided *lāngār*to thousands of visitors daily and also provided them *fūtūh*(the unsolicited charity).

The *Chīshtī*Shāykhs have also stressed the importance of keeping a distance from worldly power, therefore they are best known for their consistent refusal to ask kings for financial support in *Hindustan* (Ernst, 1992, p.15). The Sufis of *Chīshtīyyāh*ordereven reproached the Muslim caliphs of their time to not get involve into worldly affairs while neglecting their duties towards Creator and his creatures. They always reminded them to observe justice and to fulfill their duties in providing food to hungry (Anjum, 2011, p.7) and disapprovedthe overindulgenceof rulers in worldly pleasures.

Generallythe *Ulēmā*preaching the *shārīa*served in often referred as symbiotic relationship with state especially with Kings, *Umārā* and *Sultans* of Delhi (Ibid, 2011, p. 7). In this mutual arrangements, the rulers enjoyed the highest position as chief of political and administrative authority while *Ulēmā* were entitled with official labels from Sultans such as *Sādrāl-Sādūr*, *Sādr-ī Jāhān* (responsible for religious and judicial matters), and *Qāzī-ī Māmālīk* (the head of judiciary).However, despite this political situation, early *ChīshtīShāykhs* were able to set up their independent space for them and their disciples to practice their beliefs without any influence of the state and authorities (Ibid, 2011, pp. 1-34, 93).

Sufis of *Chīshtīyyāh* maintained relations with other religions as well.*BābāFārīdāl-DīnMā'sudGānj-ī Shākār* (b. 1175-d.1265) reportedly had writtenUrdu and Punjab poetry along with Persian(Shihab 1967 as cited in Anjum, 2011, p.155) which has deep feelings and impact among the local populations. Even some of his hymns or *shloks* are also believed to be incorporated in the *Adi Grānth*, which is the sacred scripture of Sikhs by *Guru Arjan* [b 1563-d. 1606] (Singh, 1963, p. 319). In this way, the believers of *Sikhism* also keep deep accolade for *BābāFārīd*and also paid visit to his shrine.

Though*BābāFārīd 'āl-Dīn* maintained distance with *Sultans* and *Umārā*,however, in case of their perceived service and help to suffering humanity, he approached the state officials.*BābāFārīd*'s letter of recommendation on behalf of a needy to *Ulugh Khan Balban* (the then deputy Sultan), written in a very dignified language, stated:

First I refer this matter to Allah and later to you. If you bestow anything on him (the needy), the real bestower is Allah, and as His agent you will deserve gratitude for doing a favor. But if you fail to bestow anything you are helpless in the matter, as Allah may have prevented you from doing so". (Khurd, 1963, p. 72).

In the same token, BābāFārīdis reportedly saved many persecutedpoor villagers from crueltyof state officials,like in case of *amil* (revenue collector) for ignoring the aggrieved (Jamali, 1893, p.36).The admonition from Sufi were helpful in two regards, on the one hand, the officials fear that they may acquire wrath of God if they are cursed by Sufis owing to later closeness with God. On the other hand, the *Sultans* can turn to them hostile because *Sultans* wanted to have cordial relations with Sufis and displeasing Sufis was not in their favor.

BābāFārīdalways supported for women empowerment and securing gender rights. After the demise of *SultanIletmish* in 1236, the *Umārā*did not accept the will of

Sultan to allow his daughter *Raziyyah* to ascend to throne, they instead placed his son *Ruknāl-DīnFiruz*on Delhi throne (Jackson, 1998, p.183).*BābāFārīd* was in favor of *Raziyyah*who became *Sultan*later on (Ibid, 1998, p.189).Similarly, *BābāFārīd*was also reportedly not happy with his sons, therefore once he showed his desire to appoint his daughter *BibiSharifah* as his *khalifa*, if it was allowed to grant succession of spiritual affairs to women. In the *jāmā'ātkhānāh*of BābāFārīd, there was disciple of BābāFārīd named as Bibi Rani who also happened to be grandmother of Amir Khurd, used to serve its inmates (Anjum, 2011, p.158).In the *jāmā'ātkhānāh*, women were allowed to come for *bāy'āt*, guidance, and also seeking favors. *ShāykhNīzāmāl-DīnAwlīyā*is reported to have said, 'when a lion comes out of a forest, nobody asks whether the lion is male or female. A person, be a man or a women, should strive for obedience and piety' (Sijzi as cited in Anjum 2011, p. 158).

V. The Contribution of *Qādīrīyyāh* Order

Another important Sufi order in sub-continent was *Qādīrīyyāh*which is viewed as the first Sufi order to appear in the form *tarīqa*, which took its name from its well-known founder, the Shaykh 'Abd āl-Qādirāl-Jilānī (b.1078-d.1166) and is regarded as an off-shoot of the older Junaidī*tarīqa* which started from the Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junaid of Baghdad [d. 910] (Stoddart, 2012, p.45).His contribution in the sciences of Sufism and *shārīa*was so immense that he attained the highest position in spiritual hierarchy of Sufi positions attaining the rank of *āl-GāuthālAzām* (the Supreme Helper). His spiritual jurisdiction is said to have spread from Istanbul to Delhi. In the Punjab, celebrations are held in honor of him every month. This is in contrast to rituals at the shrines of other saints, who are honored once a year (Schimmel, 2003, p.3).

As contrast to Chīshtīyyāh Sufis, the saints of this order were generally inclined towards orthodox and exotic aspects of religion whereas some among them leaned towards its liberal and esoteric aspects (Ridgeon, 1995, p.30).The *Qādīrīyyāh*Sufis believed that the spirit of mass reforms requires increased level of improved central organization (Sirriyeh, 1999, p.12).One of the prominent Sufi saints of this order in sub-continent include *MākhdūmAbd'ārRāshidHāqqānī*(b.568-d.669/ 1173-1269) in Multan. His father *Shāykh Ahmed Ghoūth* was the brother of *Shāykh Muhammad Ghoūth*, who is the father of *Shāykh Baha āl-DīnZakariya*(b.565-d.660/ 1170-1260). In this connection, both *MākhdūmAbd'ārRāshidHāqqānī*and*ShāykhBāhāāl-DīnZākārīyā*born to same family and received early education and spiritual training from the same spiritual source.

In his *khānqāh*at Multan, MākhdūmAbd'ārRāshidremained busy with *Ulēmā*and *Shāykhs* in discussions, learning and training throughout day and nights. In 614, hagiographic accounts reveal that *MākhdūmAbd'ārRāshidHāqqānī* dreamed his father and upon instructions travelled to Medina where he served the holy tomb of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for at least three years. One night he received instruction from Prophet to travel to *Hamdan* to receive *Bārākā*from *ShāykhSāyyid Ali Hāmdānī*. After three years of training and education, the master allowed him to travel back to Multan and advised him not to indulge in worldly affairs, distribute among the destitute, adopt the course of humility, refrain from ornaments and essentially never appoint your khalifa from your own descendants and *murids*, and also never allowed to construct your *khanqah* (Sharfuddin, 1993, p. 113).

After reaching Multan, *MākhdūmAbd'ārRāshidHāqqānī*distributed among poor and destitute his complete*jagir*(property) and around ten million coins he received for his share. He also helped people of the area to dug canal for irrigation, so that they could harvest crops and get benefit out of land (Ibid, 1993, p. 25). He however set up the seminary *'MadarissaHaqania'*in the village *Rawaha* in the suburbs of Multan thatbecame a center for spreading knowledge and spirituality (Shah, 2013, p.13).After that, he became busy in meditation, training, and in prayers and shunned the worldly affairs. However, for earning livelihood, hestarted farming to run the expanses of home and *lāngār*. He forbade to all his beneficiaries from depositing one tenth of agri-culture produce (Sharfuddin, 1993, p. 118). From the *madrasa Haqania*, hundreds of spiritualists and *Ulēmā*got training on *shārīa* and*tarīqa*. The *lāngār*providedhere served the need of thousands of hungry visitors. Here is also a well of water called as '*Chasma ab-iShifa*'. This well is opened for one month during *Urs* of *MakhdumRashid* during June in every year that is believed to provide relief to all who drink water from here and take bath with the water of this well (Ibid, 1993, p.118).

VI. The Emergence of Sufis Tarīqa and Development of Society

The virtuous considerations in the development of society owes much significance in Islam. Donaldson argues that when the ethics and conduct in the society are under consideration, the Sufi character of Muslim ethical thinking and practices becomes evident (Donaldson, 1953, p.110).The conduct and ethical principles of Sufis are contrary to what the orthodox Muslim *Ulēmā*usually projects that are merely concerned with legal and juristic aspects of Islam and society (Anjum, 2011, p.63).The emergence of *sīlsīlāhs* or *tārīqā* orders has much significance in development of Sufi Islam, knowledge, belief and practices. In the more traditional sense, the tarīqa promoted the Sufi brotherhood which was an important customary milieu of the relationship bond that facilitated the cooperation and a network for its implementation by means of the gaining knowledge, spiritual advancement, and cohesive social bonds (Salvator, 2016, p.64).

In sub-continent, the Sufi style of education and training through *tarīqa* and Sufis' role in cultural transformation and islamization, along with counterfeiting communities played an important role in the development of society on pure humanitarian and spiritual grounds.Such traditions of *dervish*seriously challenged the paradoxical splits into elite in competition with popular religion (Karamustafa, 1994, p.3).The Sufi material and immaterial culture, the gender dimension of Sufism, and Sufism as a living tradition remained significant in development of society (Malamud, 1996, p. 89).

Sufis being organized around spiritual lines, connected with some particular school or *tarīqa* often housed in Sufi lodges (*khānqāh, rībāt, jāmā'ātkhānāh*) by setting up as charitable endowments for Sufis and associated communities, assumed new coherence, connection, and complexity. These Sufi lodges were the typical Sufi center of authority and the resident seat of a *pīr*, combined the functions of mosque, *madrasa* and recreation center.These Sufi places also served as extraterritorial sites for the negotiations, mediations, and settlements among various conflicting parties (Levtzion, 2002, p.110). Most of the *pīr*s were *Shārīah*-minded persons of great learning, but they differed from the traditional *Ulēmā*in that they combined traditional theology with mysticism and mystic insights (Lazard, 1975, pp.595-657).

Sufi used various concepts for the spiritual training of individuals in society. These include*ma'arifah or hikma* [wisdom seeking truth and understanding God]; *fana*[individuals' spiritual merger with God diminishing the dichotomy of 'I and Thou'] (Anjum, 2011, p.65);*baqa* [the divine restoration or permanence of seekers access to Real] (Hamidudin, n.d, p.320);*khawf* [the fear of God's wrath due to His strict mechanism of accountability of persons on the day of judgement] (Schimmel, 2003, p.30) ;*tawakkul*[denoting to only trust or reliance on God] (Anjum, 2006, p.256);*faqr* (full exaltation of poverty as it was treated as celebrated virtue practiced by Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] (Melchert, 1996, p.51);*ghina*[alms to poor] (Dar, n.d, p. 339), *dhikr*[the practice of collective recalling of the Creator and His names] (Murata & Chittick, 1994, p.265);*ihsan* [doing what is beautiful](Ibid, 1994),*ikhlas*[the sincerity is primarily related with devotees' only love and obedience with God] (Anjum, 2011, p.67); and *Taubah*[repentance from God from all sin and negligence of forgetting God and concentrated piety] (Schimmel, 2003, p.100)

The Sufi saints declined not only the company of kings and government officials but they also refused to receive endowments from them. They already understood that rulers had a method of trying to influence religious figures through the allocation of *jagirs* (land, money, and gifts) in exchange for their loyalty and support. However, the acceptance of these gifts would make them obedient to the wishes of kings and nobles, and would impede their independence and pursuit of union with God (Nizami, 2002, p.259).Nizam āl-DīnAwliya resolutely inculcated his disciples, "Do not accept any village or stipend or favour [sic] from kings and officials. It is not permitted to a dervish."(Siyar-u j-Auliya, 295, as cited in Nizami, 2002, p. 260). Chishti saint used to say, "The king gives a village and holds us under an obligation; our Providence gives us our daily bread without placing any such obligation." (Nizami, 2002, p.259)

The role of the originators of Hindu–Muslim cultural dialogue became the sole responsibility of Sufi preachers and missionaries of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, who, in order to introduce Islam to the broad masses of the urban population actively made use of the concepts, images and legends of local religions and cultural traditions. Indian Sufis adopted many customs that were a part of the Indian culture (Sarkar, 1912, p.14).Sufis from the Chishti *sīlsīlāh*would honor a *Shāykh*by bowing before him and kissing his feet.Despite a decree by the *Ulēmā*that prohibit the practice, the *Chīshtīsīlsīlāh*continued to do it.

In this background, the Sufi model and doctrine of social justice and equality was very attractive especially for the down trodden lower sections of society and to those who were deprived of the comforts of civil life. As the Indian society was governed by the caste system which shaped an atmosphere of estrangement and isolation, especially between those in higher and lower castes. The Sufi Shāykhsfascinated directly to the Hindu lower class. For them, they presented the true Islamic model that provides an opportunity for release from their own inferior social group. Most members of the lower castes were generally the lower Dalit castes who were not allowed to sleep in cities overnight, and they were barred from access to temples and even sacred texts.

However, Sufis provided openings for social mobility. Shaikh Nizam-āl-Dīn had "opened wide the doors of his discipleship . . . and admitted nobles and plebeians, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, townsmen and villagers, soldiers and warriors, freemen

and slaves, men and women, young and old, shopkeepers and servants." (Barani, p. 343 as cited in Srivastva, p.83). Similarly, the concepts of non-violence and forgiveness already ingrained in Hindu culture and religion were reinforced by these Sufis. The Sufi movement encouraged equality and brotherhood. What was important for the Sufis and their followers was not the external ritual of the mosque or temple, but simply to understand that divinity can best be reached through the gateway of the heart (Schimmel, 2003, p.345).Such spirit of tolerance and acceptance to diversity adopted by various Sufi sīlsīlāhs was very attractive to Hindus (Sarkar, 1912, p.15).Chishti Sufis welcomed Hindu worshippers to the *khānqāhs,* and hosted visits from *yogis* (Hindu wise men),and participated in *Sāmā* parties that were strictly forbidden but had a rich tradition in Indian culture.

VII. Conclusion

In the sub-continent the emergence of Sufis and Sufi doctrine contributed in the development of society especially in promoting the spiritual training, peace and harmony, social justice and equality for all regardless of differences based on class, caste, religion and gender. Their contribution was twofold; on the one hand, they were directly involved through their specialized mechanism of tarīqa practiced and preached through their dwellings called khānqāh for the training and education of devotes, provision of basic food and health relief from their lāngār and spiritual healing, and promotion of peace, equality, and love in the society.

These Sufi places of worship and trainings called *khānqāh* acted as place of civil society organizations that were determined to develop the lives of the common people through humanitarian, educational, social and human rights, social safety, and for delivery of justices. On the other side, because of their mediatory role Sufi strived to bridge the gap between common people and ruling elite and for promotion of interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Hindus especially after advent of the Islam in Sub-continent that resulted into inter-communal violence and hatred. Sufi promoted the idea of egalitarianism as a necessaryphilosophy to bring people together on universal principles of equality and social justice and to reduce the differences in the name of religion, caste and gender. In sub-continent India which was already a socially ranked society, this doctrine of love, peace, social justice and equality was very attractive for downtrodden Hindus who widely acknowledged the message and increased popularity of Sufism in India. This ever increasing following of Sufis gave mandate to Sufis to negotiate with State to provide basic needs of the poor and destitute.

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