



RESEARCH PAPER

Impact of Colonialism on Sufism in South Asia: A Case Study of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop causal relationship between colonial discourse of Sufism and contemporary Islamophobic trends in Pakistan. This paper assesses the impact of colonialism on Sufi institutions and practices and the fall out on Pakistan's religious landscape. British orientalist misinterpreted the Sufi philosophy while colonial masters politicized their spirituality and traditions to pursue their political agendas and policies in South Asia. This paper provides an overview of the legacy of colonial patterns on Sufism in the postcolonial context without any specific timeframe. During precolonial era in South Asia, there was a mixed history of Sufis conflictual and collaborative role with the state while some of the Sufi groups had apathetic attitude towards the state authorities. Colonial masters found Sufi brotherhoods a formidable challenge against their agendas in South Asia and pursued a policy of co-option with Sufi hereditary leaders (*Sajjada/Gaddi Nasheens* & Pirs) to gain legitimacy and maintain order in Muslim communities. This paper concludes that in South Asia, British colonial masters and orientalist scholarship employed a strategy to produce a body of knowledge and shaped a discourse through western orientalist lens which not only delegitimized the authentic value of Sufism and its institutions but also weakened its potency to resist against the colonial masters. That legacy continued in postcolonial settings which resulted in the Islamophobic trends in Pakistan mostly peddled by the secular and modern political elite who use Islamic symbolism only in rhetoric to gain public legitimacy.

KEYWORDS

Sufism, Colonialism, Orientalism, Decoloniality, Extremism

Introduction

Sufism (al-tasawwuf) is one of the most misunderstood, misperceived, misrepresented, and misquoted dimension of Islam. In different epochs, it's been subjected to range of interpretations, by Islamic and non-Islamic scholarship. The term Sufism was exposed to the European languages by Orientalists, but it was explicitly and principally different, with the distinction which were not part of the earlier Muslim societies. For premodern Muslims, the varied activities of Islam and Sufism were not any different or separable from their religious life. According to Carl Ernst, "It would not have been possible to formulate the statement "Sufism has nothing to do with Islam" prior to the nineteenth century (Ernst, 2017).

The undertaken study builds on an argument that Britain's deliberately created fault lines between Sufism and Islam, which principally were not different, in order strengthen their control over the colonized communities living in major parts of South Asia particularly today's India and Pakistan. British strategy was to project Sufism separate from Islam as such optics will weaken the Sufi order and its potency to resist against the British government.

This aspect of the colonial history develops the core argument of this research that recent Islamophobic trends in Pakistan are mostly an outcome of those colonial agendas in South Asia which seized Islam's mystical and peaceful dimensions. As a result of colonial

patronage patterns, aspects of Sufism in Pakistan's society are still seen as alien to Islamic values, norms, laws, and principals. Furthermore, this calumny of Sufism still benefits the remnants of colonialism as it fulfils the interest of sardars, feudal and the elite of Pakistan. With this context, the study critically evaluates the failure of these beneficiaries to protect the 'peaceful image of Islam' as there is increased Islamophobic trends in Pakistani society due to the negative projection of Islam in western media which again very conveniently separated Sufism a 'spiritual and peaceful' dimension from Islam. The study argues that how by using decoloniality framework such trends could be reversed and how the Sufism can help countering Islamophobic trends in Pakistan.

Islamophobia is seen as the veiled form of racism. This epistemic racism has become a tradition and belief in which the West is seen to be the solely legitimate belief of thought able to generate knowledge and the only one reach to universality, rationality and truth (Grosfoguel, 2010). However, the Phenomenon of Islamophobia can't necessarily be seen from the single lens in every context. It functions differently in political context but this form of racism is linked to the global political perspective which is so organized and designed by the post-colonial order (Bayraklı, 2019).

For a Muslim identity to exist in today's world has become impossible due to Islamophobia and the challenge of being Muslim in today's world is that there is no identity to exist (Sayyid, 2018). The secular political elite in former colonies continued to disdain and despise the traditional value system and local culture and customs which are not in line with modernity under the definition of European imperialism. This mindset promotes islamophobia trends and creates acceptance for the discourse which automatically dismissed and reject the Islamic civilization's ideals, values, ethics and value system and regard them as non-democratic, irrational, non-universal, and particularistic.

Literature Review

Iqbal (1908) expounds the genesis and justification of Sufism from the holy scripture of Islam (Quran) in seminal work, *"The Development of Metaphysics in Persia"*. He acknowledges the historical utility of the procedure of tracing the chain of influences by the modern oriental scholarship but asserts that, "it does not make us ignore the fundamental fact, that the human mind possesses an independent individuality, and, acting on its own initiative, can gradually evolve out of itself, truth which may have been anticipated by other minds ages ago. No idea can seize a people's soul unless, in some sense, it is the people's own. External influences may wake it up from its deep unconscious slumber; but they cannot so to speak, create it out of nothing." Iqbal writes that almost all researchers in all cases exhausted their ingenuity in finding the many channels through which the basic notions of Sufism might have shifted from one place to another.

In his seminal work, *'Orientalism'* Said (1978) refers to Orientalism as a specific way of imagining, giving meaning and representing a certain world view which is in line with the western knowledge frameworks. Said criticizes the 'epistemological eccentricity' which comprises of a set of sweeping generalizations and certain assumptions. He argues that European Orientalists distorted Islam with de-historicization and essentialism by rejecting its political, socio-economic and historical transformations. Said draws on Gramsci's concept of 'cultural hegemony' by arguing that orientalism has a rich history of winning consent through institutions like think tanks, academia and policy circles. He also posits that these patterns of orientalist tropes perpetuated and still reinforced in the discussions about Islam in modern age as well.

In her seminal work, *'Sufis and Anti-Sufis'*, Sirriyeh, (1999) addresses the intellectual roots of contemporary Islam and issue of the connection of Sufism and Salafism. She provides an overview of historical developments in the Muslim world over the past 250 years. She explains how Sufism has encountered fierce and crucial challenges of its legitimacy even in Muslim world since the middle of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

In his book, '*Sufism: a global History*' Green (2012) explains the role of Muslim empires and the Wahhabi movement in critical scrutiny of Sufi practices within broader Islamic discourse. He further expounds that how western anti-Sufi narrative was constructed under western orientalist frameworks and later internalized by the Muslim declining empires and reformist leaders, who blamed Sufi networks for their unorthodox practices as a deviation from the true path of Islam and partially responsible for colonial rule while framed European invasion as a divine punishment for Muslims from straying from the teachings of Islam.

In the edited volume, '*Islamophobia in Muslim majority societies*' Bayraklı and Hafez (2019) open a debate about the unexplored and understudied dimension of Islamophobia in Muslim-majority societies and bringing together the multiple diverse perspectives to examine the prevalent Islamophobia in Muslim societies including Pakistan. The book argues that Islamophobia in Pakistan is entangled deeply with postcolonial and modern secular elite structures who were the beneficiary of colonial legacy. This seminal work represents the pioneering scholarly work which highlights the colonial implications on sociopolitical dynamics which peddle the Islamophobic tendencies.

Material and Methods

This study employs a qualitative methodology grounded in decolonial framework to understand the epistemic framing of Sufism and how the colonial impact on Sufism shapes the contemporary Islamophobic trends in Pakistan

Results and Discussion

Conceptualizing Sufism

Denoting Sufism while referring to various definitions, the foremost significance lies in defining it. Annemarie Schimmel defines this spiritual version of Islam that "Mysticism is the love of the absolute for the power that separates true mysticism from asceticism is love. For the Sufis, love is the only "legitimate way to educate the base faculties" (Schimmel, 1975). In the words of Burckhardt, Sufism is an "expression of the inward or internal (batin) and esoteric aspect of Islam, as distinguished from its outward or external and exoteric aspect". Sufism designates the "whole of the contemplative ways founded on the sacred forms of Islam" (Burckhardt, 1987). A J Arberry defines Sufism as the mystical movement within Islam. The essential practices of Sufism take a Sufi to the pinnacle of purification and then a Sufi regulates and guide the mystical lives of people (Arberry, 1966).

Sufism in all its forms is conceptualized and conceived as a tremendously convincing and compelling source of spiritual legitimacy. The approach of Sufism hinges upon constant application to God's worship, ultimate devotion to divinity, shunning the worldly grandeur, pleasure and desire and position to which the masses look up to and aspire. These traits were general among the companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This approach and attitude towards Sufism was typical of the most Muslims intellectuals up through the eighteenth century (Anjum, 2006).

Role of Sufism in South Asia's Socio-political fabric

Before independence, South Asia was dotted with Sufi networks, tariqahs and spiritual lineages and Sufi shrines vary in type, status and influence. Sufi pilgrimage sites were entirely different from the conventional institutions; mosques or temples because the Sufis graves and shrines were spaces open to everyone irrespective of visitors' beliefs, religion, race, gender, and caste (Ernst, 1992). The stories, myths and miracles associated with these sites and the astonishing capabilities of Sufis make these sites more attractive, intrigued and potent, especially for non-Muslims and who take the legacies of Sufi saints as the remedy and alternatives to their own religious activities and core practices.

Sufism in South Asia has been an independent phenomenon which was intermittently used by Muslim rulers to consolidate the power and control over territory (Eaton, 1993). The different Sufi schools of thought and Saints have been patronized, persecuted in different times either by Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Before British colonialists come to the shores, the Mughal Empire was the beneficiary of her links and relationships with Sufi networks. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, under Mughal emperor Akbar (d. 1605) and Jahangir (d. 1627), Chishtiyya order was patronaged, and the respective rulers of early-modern empire made them appear as Sufis to seek messianic legitimacy over the society as well as Muslim world (Muzaffar & Rafique, 2020; Green, 2012). The close links and association of Mughals ruling class with Sufi lineages gave Sufis, their khanqahs and networks a political recognition in a wider context. It can easily be traced in the intermarriages, hiring Sufi tutors for young princes, wet-nurses and foster mothers from saints' families were employed in the harem, and Sufis descendants were hired to serve in imperial army as generals (Moin, 2012).

In South Asia, Sufism can be realized as centuries of interactions, connections, ever-changing power dynamics and relationships among Sufis, political elites and indigenous societies. The sheer importance and reputation linked to shrines and mausoleums designate that Khanqahs and dargahs have always been seen as the places of authority in terms of political, religious and cultural perspectives and Sufi shrines remained potent bases of cultural legitimacy (Gupta n.d.). Sufism in its several types, activities, and practices has been harnessed by indigenous communities and immigrants and these spiritual sites continue to serve as political and cultural spaces shared among masses.

These spiritual places are still perceived and regarded by indigenous people as the "alternate sites of judicial authority" and sovereignty and pilgrimages visit these Sufi spaces with a hope, conviction and optimism of receiving blessings (*barkat*) healing, moral and material results and answers to their supplications (Taneja, 2017). For example, Khawaja Moin-ud-din Chishti known as '*Gharib Nawaz*' (benefactor of the poor) dargah in Ajmer Sharif, India is an absolute assertion and statement of sharing the legacy of a Sufi saint rooted in the ethos of '*Gharib nawazi*' and welcoming gestures to the devotees towards each other without disclosing their religious identities. It's not only specific to one shrine, rather it can be witnessed everywhere in Indo-Pak during the *urs* (death anniversary) of Sufis where people from other religious groups and communities take part in the celebrations and seek blessings. Sufi rich pluralistic traditions and culture in South Asia have been a significant reason to make different religious communities live in a harmonious environment for centuries. It is surely the otherness of Islamic ate Saints customs and traditions that coaxed non-Muslim communities to participate in Sufi practices and incorporate some of their own customary actions into these practices (Bellamy, 2011). There is no disagreement among scholars that the notion of Sufi space is surely a shared space (Ahmed, 2011).

British patronage patterns in select Sufi circles in South Asia

Scholars of modern South Asia have stated and remarked on how British colonial administration in South Asia systematically degraded, tainted, and corrupted Muslim polities. Islam was seen as a practical challenge and viable target due to the racial thinking of colonialists (Gupta n.d.). Green argues that Sufi networks posed a formidable challenge to the imperial authorities and their domination. The primarily reason was the attraction of Sufism to all communities and strata of society in sub-continent and Sufis and these shared spaces were not ready and able to be tailored into imperial classifications of religious, ethno-linguistic, cultural and religious difference (Green, 2015).

Similarly, Hussain Ahmed Khan contends that the British colonialists in sub-continent largely viewed Sufi saints, shrines and their networks as symbols and codes of Muslim architecture and rule or sources of superstitious knowledge, practices and traditions that had to be managed and manipulated for exertion of political control (Khan, 2020). The British patronization of Sufism by allocating and providing the decedents and families with the lands

and other perks started taken its toll. Colonial powers in South Asia were the beneficiaries of this support base and following the debacle of Mughal dynasty, they started to corrupt the Sufi orders by including them in the power structure and contaminated the original spirit of this mystic dimension of Islam. Imperial forces tried to use and exploit Sufi saints and popularity of their networks and reputation to not only consolidate power but exploited the links of Sufis with indigenous people especially with rural and agricultural communities to tighten their administrative grip (Khan, 2020).

In Sub-continent, religion was not treated and seen as an irritant or a divisive factor, rather different religious communities have been part of religious traditions beyond the boundaries of their faith. Hindus and Sikhs used to visit Sufi saints' tombs and shrines for blessings and healing. That religious harmony was damaged by politicization of religion and institutionalization of Muslim indigenous communities during British colonialism in Indian South Asia after 18th century (Malik, 2008). One such example of it is quoted by Hussain Ahmed Khan in his book "Artisans, Sufis, Shrines: Colonial Architecture in Nineteenth Century Punjab" that before 1857 revolt, in 1849, British administration and the Chishtiyya Sufis of the Punjab made an alliance against the Sikhs. Sufis acclaimed the British colonialists for helping Sufis against marauding Sikhs attacks in protection of Sufis Shrines and tombs. Chishti Sufis also trained and tutored British officers in learning Persian and Arabic (Khan. 2020).

The variants of Islam and their phobias - Discussion

The discourse of the west and the Muslim world regarding diverse dimensions of Islam have selectively been essentialized during colonial and postcolonial periods. Historical and contemporary perspectives suggest that Islamophobia is not a singular phenomenon but a cluster of epistemic anxieties that were created and mirrored through power relations.

West sees Islam through a fragmented lens as orientalist assumed multiple variants of Islam and never viewed Muslim faith in a holistic way. A variant of 'political Islam' started from Egypt in 1928 but was more pronounced in postcolonial era and gained momentum in Egypt and Pakistan during cold war era. The adherents of political Islam views Islam as a political force and the revivalist movements across Muslim world and Iranian revolution in 1979 triggered the phobia against active political dimension of Islam in the west. The political Islam was perceived and described by the western political and media circles as a global and monolithic threat to Western civilization and it was called a 'green menace' which was a stereotypical expression and an analogous to the 'Red Menace' that was once seen as a threat of communism during the cold war era. The green color is culturally and historically associated with Islam. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in early 1990s, political Islam was framed as a global bogeyman to justify western foreign policy goals.

After 9/11, the pejorative terms like 'radical Islam', 'militant Islam' and 'Islamic fundamentalism' were regurgitated by the western particularly U.S. policy circles as a potent threat to the West. American leading think tank RAND Corporation published multiple reports in 2003 (Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies), 2004 (The Muslim World After 9/11), and in 2007 (Building Moderate Muslim Networks) to amplify the agenda of 'moderate Islam'. PEW Research Center also published multiple reports to peddle the similar discourse and the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' was framed as the new ideological opponent. The old orientalist tropes which were constructed in colonial era were peddled again systematically by the western neo-orientalists in the war on terror and Sufi Islam without its historical political agency was seen and instrumentalized as a pacifist Islam and a panacea to counter extremism and political Islam.

Another phobia against Islam was witnessed in colonized Muslim societies like Pakistan, a Muslim majority country, where modernist and secular elite who managed the political and economic order deliberately undermined the Islamic revival movements. They labelled Islamic political forces as irrelevant and not modern and educated enough to run the

state of affairs. That secular modern elite have been the beneficiary of the colonial legacy and enjoyed the privileged positions. At public level, these secular forces used Islamic symbols and slogans only as a rhetoric in elections campaigns to earn vote and public legitimacy. The concept of Islamic social justice and welfare state of Islam with its true spirit was never implemented. Even Sufi Islam was seen through a piecemeal approach and not as a holistic way.

After 9/11, Pakistani governments of Musharraf and Zardari focused on the cultural aspects of Sufi Islam to earn the political legitimacy at home and shaped a certain narrative which was in line with the western discourse during the war on terror. Ironically, some hand-picked Sufi families co-opted with the colonial authorities and helped them to pursue their goals in occupied territories secured political positions, privileges and land during colonial period, also created nexus with the modern and secular elite and have been and still are the beneficiary of the status quo. They see Salafi Islam as an anathema in Pakistan and beyond.

Cascading Effect of Colonial legacy on Contemporary Islamophobic Trends in Pakistan

British colonization of South Asia employed religion as the leading identity marker and a leading rallying point, initially to struggle for an independent homeland and later for Islamization in the newly born state as nation-building. At the outset, Pakistani movement was initiated by western educated secular Muslim elites who employed religious identity to grab support of Muslim communities out of the fear of Hindu dominance. Therefore, Pakistan's nationalist ideology was derived from religious character rather than geographical basis. The pre- and post-independence ideological narrative envisioned and projected Pakistan as an Islamic country. The whole discourse and the partition's bloody aftermath empowered the radical mind in the absence of structures of nation-state and weak state enforcement institutions. Later, state changed the course and moved from religionization of politics to politicization of Islam which has contracted the social space for a discourse about the role of religion and Islam and this has made secularists and conservatives prone to radicalism (Hakeem, 2019).

In Pakistan, Islamophobic tendencies of political elite can easily be traced out and we can find the commonalities between western Islamophobia and homegrown Islamophobia in Pakistan. A dominant political elite group with a captive mind has systematically excluded the large factions of Muslim society who are very sensitive towards their religious identity from the rights and resources. Islamophobia in Pakistani context, can be traced out as a cognitive expression of pessimism, biases and emotive prejudices towards Islam as a discredited belief system and practicing Muslims are stereotyped and labelled. This kind of specific group-focused enmity is a particular aspect of "respectable and enlightened Islamophobia (Shah, 2018). Through this certain trajectory, secular elite groups in Pakistan equate religion as a principal driver of fanaticism, extremism, fundamentalism, and terrorism.

In Pakistani context, religion has always been a matter of concern, not only for people but for state and the political elite. As regulating the predominant religion, Islam is like regulating an identity which was usually considered as a threat to the western concept of secular nation-state. Fear-mongering about sharia law, depiction of halal slaughter of animals as cruel, manifestations of Islamic symbols and signs in the public spaces' such as mosques, shrines, perceiving headscarves burkinis, and beard as civilizational backwardness and awkwardness, workplace discrimination, employment prejudices against practicing and conservatives Muslims can be witnessed and observed in a Muslim majority country like Pakistan as well. On social media, in the name of freedom of expression, humiliating and targeting the Muslim life style or Muslim attire has also become a constant and a visible thing.

If we decode Islam in Pakistani context, we recognize that this Muslim majority land is a deeply divided along on the religious lines because of various internal and external factors. While its plummeting post-colonial history, implications of colonialism, religionization of

political discourse, and revival of Islamism in the region following the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan, BJP's Islamophobic policies against Muslims, and chaotic situation in Kashmir has created division within the polity while instigating extremism, sectarianism, fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism. Ninety seven percent of Pakistani population practices Islam as religion and it's being witnessed as a hazard by a handful minority of westernized secular elites who manifest currents of 'respectable' and 'enlightened' and 'implicit' Islamophobia. (Hakeem, 2019).

The western secular elite of Pakistan view religion as an anti-modern, undemocratic and illogical, and share similar anti- Islam thoughts and this attitude is entrenched in traditional European discourses of modernity and secular ideas. In their view, if Pakistani society is to be modernized, then religion needs to be gotten rid from. These power elites are part of different societal organizations and their qualifications, academic credentials, social status and economic class absorbed into the power strata. On societal level, we see synchronization of these elites' secular groups who are structurally differentiated and vigorously active in society and are able to create a social space for public demands, interest articulation, and confront the state's monopoly of power (Hakeem, 2019). Western secular elite has always been under the influence of colonial legacies of western imperialism which has explicitly developed fissures between local organizational devices, value system, morality standards and societal institutions and benefited from and took advantage of these differentiations. On the other hand, fundamentalists have also strengthened the arguments of secular elite networks with their violent tendencies. The revival of political Islamism and its convergence with the notion of violence also undermines and smears the spirit of religion which is rooted in indigenous cultures and societal norms.

Decoloniality to decenter the Colonial Matrix of Power in Pakistan's Context

Decoloniality tries to understand why coloniality still exists, not just in the remnants of imperialism but in the structure of the world itself. It fights back against the colonial instrumentalization of reason (Grosfoguel, 2009). The goal of decoloniality is to degrade the colonial power structure in order to achieve emancipation. It comprises a method of criticism that fights coloniality's and its related systems' supposed universalism. Pakistan, a former British colony with the second largest- Muslim majority population in the world where political elite have not only earned their higher education from higher academic institutions of the western world but also have properties in global north. Many among these have the same westernized thought patterns as white men. The West-obsessed post-colonial political and cultural elite in Muslim majority countries operate and work within the sphere of secular nation-state, epistemological framework and racial formation.

This cycle of intellectual dependency is obvious for those political elites who earned their academic credentials and were educated from global north and not in their native lands (Alatas, 2008). The clash of world views during the process of modernization and particularly westernization also undermined the contribution and role of Islamic normative standpoints in favour of the nation-state perspective which resulted in the conflicts, confrontations and disorder and disturbance in the former colonies (Mignolo, 2012).

Disconnecting Sufism with Islamic faith is not a past phenomenon. It still exists in present times. In the case of Pakistan, the western oriented mindset and thought patterns subscribed the narrative legacy of colonialism towards Sufism in Pakistan. The secular elite, however, recognized the humanism in the context of Sufism, they participate in the Sufi festivals, and Sufi rituals and appreciate the Dhamal (a style of dance or whirling for Sufis to go to trance to commune with God) culture associated with Sufism and listen Qawali music in public and private gatherings. They consider these traditions in the cultural context but like their western counterparts don't acknowledge the Islamic dimension of Sufism. Resurgence of true Sufism is possible through the decolonial framework which could bring out the actual and

organic understanding of this Sufism and highlight its entrenched Islamic dimension which has been robbed by the colonial project and now by the western secular elite and fanatics.

These corrupted and ill practices and activities have contributed to blur the true face of Sufism and provide excuses and reasons to the secular elite and extreme elements of the society. While the dormant and complacent role of Sufis descendants and "*Gaddi nasheens*" has been so crucial to bring Sufism to this compromising situation. These Sufi families have previously been the stooge and cronies of colonial enterprises while securing lands, ranks, administrative and political roles and financial benefits and are the beneficiary of the colonial legacy. Many of whom are the lynchpins of leading political parties and rubbing shoulders with secular elites while consolidating power in the name of their ancestors while their lifestyle and manners are contrary to the spirit of Sufism, and they run Shrines as a business enterprise for their political and economic motives and create room for criticism against the Sufism and its relevancy and relatability with Islam.

Sufism a Panacea to Counter Islamophobia

In South Asia, there have been potent local traditions and heritages of pluralism, diversity and cosmopolitanism echoed in folktales, folk wisdom, art, culture, literature. These rich legacies are connected with mysticism and Sufism in South Asia. Over the centuries, in the multi-religious South Asia, Sufi saints and Sufi poets; Datta Ali Hajveri, Moin-ud-din Chisti, Baba Farid, Sultan Baho, Baba Bhulley Shah, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, Lal Shahbaz Qalender, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Waris Shah fostered and promoted tolerance, benevolence, tranquility, tolerance, togetherness, harmony, inclusivity and universalists Islamic religious heritage and traditions in the South Asia (Hermansen, 2012).

In Pakistan, true Sufism is less in practice but more in Sufis teachings and poetry. There is no doubt that Sufism is a beacon of hope and a source of fulfillment, solace and well-being for large sections of Pakistani society. A country having youth bulge of sixty three percent of total population is struggling its image abroad as a state. While the youth has been striving for their true identity, the western secular elite could only offer them western culture to adjust with if they are to survive their futures. This west-toxification of Pakistani society and xenocentric approach can make religion irrelevant in people's lives. It is the new form of colonialism which can again conquer this former colony and rob her from its religious identity. Contemporary Sufism need not only reforms but renaissance too. There is no doubt that non-Muslims pilgrimages to shrines and tombs in sub-continent contributed and influenced some rituals which are not part of traditional Islam. There are many scholars in the west who uncritically embrace the fundamentalists as the true representatives of Islam and tacitly acknowledge the denunciations of Sufism by the fundamentalists as fringe phenomenon to Islamic faith. While the secular western elite come up with such approach towards which their colonial masters are happy with. Pakistan's military dictator's policy of "enlightened moderation" was an example of it during the period of war on terror in first decade of twenty first century.

Sufism can play a critical role in countering the extreme and violent religious patterns in Pakistani society which has got nothing to do with Islam and work as a soft power. It has a definite answer to the confused Pakistani youth about their Muslim identity. Sufism can defend the true Islamic values and beliefs, while responding to the local Islamophobic currents infused by the secular elite networks and seize the flawed and faulty narrative and hysteria against Islam as a peaceful faith. For many Pakistanis, Sufi shrines a home away from home and that home needs to be protected from the burglars.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that in South Asia, British colonial masters along with those orientalist scholars employed a western knowledge framework that shaped a discourse which

not only compromised the credible value of Sufism and its institutions and that legacy perpetuated in the postcolonial era. Interestingly, colonial masters, British orientalists, Islamic reformists, and even Muslim literalists shared the same and popular view about the genesis of Sufism which they don't find Islamic at all and its beliefs and practices are still considered contradictory to the basic tenets of Islam and it is portrayed as a separate phenomenon. The convergence of these similar narratives made it easy for colonial policies to manipulate the situation and ironically, the ammunition was provided by the lineal descendants of deceased Sufis who were also the custodians of shrines. Through the colonialist policies of co-option, custodians of Sufi shrines benefited but simultaneously discredited the spirit of that Sufism which their ancestors once promoted, practiced and fought for.

The western attempt to perceive and understand Islam continuously in partial terms and in fragmented categories which create a severe problem. Islam needs to be seen in its totality, entirety and perceived as an inclusive, whole and a holistic manner. A conscious effort on academic and political front needs to be carried by Pakistan, a Muslim majority country who has long been kept under oppression for almost three centuries to understand the remnants of this colonial legacy while viewing Islam. Islam needs to be seen in its totality, entirety and perceived as an inclusive, whole and a holistic manner. A decolonial critique of orientalist construction of Islam need to be not only countered with reflexivity in discourse and scholarship. Pakistani think tanks and academia can find out indigenous credible knowledge and pluralistic Sufi culture which was compromised, deflected debased and undermined during colonial project. It's also the time to seize the hegemony and monopoly of '*sajjada nasheens*' on shrines whose vested interests have contributed a lot to question this mythical dimension of Islam and who seem to be more interested not in the spiritual dimension of Sufism but the economic and political clouts.

Debunking false narratives, myths and negative stereotyping of Sufism is possible if the Sufism in Pakistan is institutionalized and projection of Sufism is carried out on legitimate forums. Any attempt to regulate Sufism by secular western elite led governments will be more destructive. In the past, Pakistani governments use religion as an instrument to pursue their ulterior motives and later society had to bear the brunt. Islamization of Zia and later politicization of religion has lost an ounce of trust on government in this regard. Sufism can also be used as an instrument to attain certain goals in the short term.

Academic field is the best legitimate forum to begin with. Academic institutions especially public sector universities need to incorporate Sufi teachings, Sufis poetry into the curricula, and should offer courses to make students understand the potent and pure understanding of the philosophy of Sufism which spreads nothing but the message of peace, compassion, tranquility, and contentment. Syllabus can cover the lives of great Sufi saints to get students sensitized with this mystic version of Islam and its relevancy and significance to their practical lives. A careful and authentic translation of the poetry of the indigenous and Sufis around the Muslim world could only be possible under a competent religious authority. This subject deserves attention at scholar level and government need to establish a research center and offers funds to research this unattended topic.

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