

## CHAPTER: 6

# INFLUENCE OF MOSQUES AND DARGAHS IN THE SOCIETY

**Socio-Cultural and Spiritual Influence of Mosques:** *Mosque* is a holy place where the Muslim people perform their religious prayer. It is a building designed in a unique pattern, structured with a *mihrub* facing towards the *Kabba* in Mecca. Muslim assembles in a *Mosque* to worship Almighty *Allah* in the form of prostration before Him. *Mosque* is one of the most essential requirements for Muslim communities. It is fundamental establishment that play a vital role on Islamic community development, education and exercise of knowledge. It is a place for performing religious prayer in congregation where Muslim people worship Almighty *Allah*. *Mosque* perform a vital role by imparting Islamic education among the people under its jurisdiction at the same time, it systematically imparts the basic Islamic knowledge among the Muslim children by extending services through an inter-linked institutions named *SabahiMaktab* or *Madrassa*. It is the centre hub of each and every Muslim community that controls the religious outlook, social values, moral or spiritual standpoint of the Muslim community its hold.<sup>217</sup>

The *Mosque* has got their origin from the very beginning of Islamic religion. The Prophet (S.A.W.) himself built *Mosque* when he entered in *Madina*. Afterwards, it has become an Islamic tradition for the Muslim communities and became a symbol of Islam. Islamic religion is basically established on the fundamental guidelines as ordained by Almighty

---

<sup>217</sup> Observation from field visit, Quoted in OlufadiLanre Abdul Malik & AbudllahiSaadullahiHamad, *The Impact of Mosque in Development of Islamic Education in Nigeria*, (USIM), GSE-Journal of Education, E-ISSN 2289-6889, World Conferences.net, P-93, BazlurRahman Khan, *Madrassa Education System in South Assam*, the Milli Gazette, 2012, P-04.

*Allah* in the holy *Qur'an* and as prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) in the holy *Hadith*. The *Qur'an* emphatically says various *Ayahs* (verses) that Muslim communities have to live together in a community just like one family. They should not dispute among themselves, should maintain peace within the family and reverence to Almighty *Allah*. So, they may attain His mercy. In establishing such type of idealism (as ordain by *Qur'an* and *Hadith*) in the Islamic society some sorts of institutional set up is necessary to practice the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* both in theoretical prospects as well as in practical life and as such the establishment of a *Mosque* is a must. A *Mosque* is such type of establishment that is indispensable to practicalize the *Qur'anic* guidelines in the real life situation of a Muslim community.<sup>218</sup>

A *Mosque* has a creative role in moulding and shaping the personality of an individual especially in the Islamic point of view. It has a direct influence on behavioral aspects of an individual. An individual feels accountable to Almighty *Allah* for each and every action in his earthly life. He feels repented to Almighty *Allah* for his sins and prays to Him to seek His divine mercy.<sup>219</sup>

When Muslim goes to *Mosque* for regular worship to *Allah*, they are expected to receive his mercy for blessings. Thus, the *Musallis* restrict themselves from sinous activities in life, committing sins, evil deeds and are inclined to live a pious life according to the instructions of the holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. And obviously, it enables them to come out from a sinful and chaotic life.<sup>220</sup>

The *Mosque* is the central place for a Muslim in Islamic religion. This is a place where the Muslim *Ummah* obligatory prayer five times a day in congregation. The *Mosque* is established in a Muslim community specially to discharge religious duties towards

---

<sup>218</sup> Dr. KhosroMovahed, *Mosque as a religious building for community development*, Department of Architecture, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran, PP-1-4.

<sup>219</sup>*Ibid.*, PP-6-7.

<sup>220</sup>*Ibid.*, P-7.

Almighty *Allah*. Though it is established basically for religious purposes yet it has great influence in socio-cultural life of Muslim people. The holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* ordain Muslim people to perform their *Salah* in congregation being gathered in a *Mosque*. From religious point of view, to perform *Salah* in *Mosque* in congregation is twenty seven times greater than it is performed in isolation. The *Qur'an* says not only to perform the *Salah* but to establish it in real life situation and the importance of a *Mosque* lies on that point. The five time prayer or *Salah* bring out multi-dimensional effect on the life of Muslim people which have greater values in social life of Muslim communities. Muslim people stand for prayer behind an *Imam* in rows shoulder to shoulder irrespective of strong and weak, rich and poor, educated and uneducated to show their submission to Almighty *Allah*. It obviously creates a feeling of spiritual bond among the *musallis*. A sense of fellow feeling and deep concerned for other peoples automatically grow up among the *musallis* who regularly perform their *Salah* in congregation in a *Mosque*. Thus, the *Mosque* plays a vital influence in establishing unity and brotherhood among the people under its jurisdiction.<sup>221</sup>

The *Salah* in congregation is performed in a *Mosque* under a special religious guideline. The *musallis* stand in rows behind an *Imam* who must be a distinguished person in learning, character and purity both in words and deeds. He must be a towering personality in the community whom the Muslim could follow in every spheres of their life. The prayers are scheduled in specific times of the day that makes the *musallis* time bound and sincerely alert for performing *Salah* in congregation, obviously these characteristic of the *Mosque* is helpful and enough in establishing a sense of sincerity, disciplines and punctuality among each and every Muslim people

---

<sup>221</sup>IdaraIsha'at-e-Diniyat (p) Ltd., *The Masjid: Its Role and Etiquette*, New Delhi, 1997, p-10., Quoted in Imran Mahmud, ShahriarRawshon, Md. JahidurRahman, *Role of Mosque for Human Resource Development*, IIUC Studies, ISSN 1813-7733, Vol-9, 2011, pp-283-289.

irrespective of their social position and status. Thus, the *Mosque* plays a vital role in establishing discipline and punctuality in the community within its jurisdiction.<sup>222</sup>

The *Mosque* plays another noteworthy social influence under the weekly performance of Friday prayer or *Salah* of *Juma*. From religious point of view, Friday is the day of *Eid* for Muslim *ummah* whereas the Muslims are obligatory to perform a special *Salah* that cannot be performed alone in isolation, here congregation is a must. The jurisdiction of a *Juma Mosque* is wider than a small *Mosque* and as such people from wider circle or range gather in a *Juma Mosque* to perform the *Salah* in congregation. Prior to the starting of the prayer the *imam* has to deliver a speech in the form of *Khutba* that deals with the prevailing recent problems suffering by the Muslim community and their befitting solution in light of Islamic guidelines under the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. It is to be noted that listening to the *Khutba* is mandatory to each and every *musallis*. Thus, this type of performance is essentially helpful in making the society peaceful, smooth and sound by identifying various problems and measuring out their solutions in a Muslim society. In fact, the *Mosque* is equipmental in the formation of a strong harmonizing and disciplinarian community of Muslim *ummah* where the collective life of the community streamlines under a uniform pattern.<sup>223</sup>

According to Imam Bukhari the messenger of *Allah* said, “Whoever builds a *Mosque*, *Allah* will build for him a similar place in paradise.”<sup>224</sup> In the religious view of Islam, the ownership of a *Mosque* belong to Almighty *Allah* alone and each and every Muslim can perform his religious duty at any *Mosque* without any restriction.<sup>225</sup> From the very beginning of Islam the *Mosque* has been playing a unique role in the socio-cultural and

---

<sup>222</sup>Ibid, IdaraIsha'at-e-Diniyat (p) Ltd, P-10.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, P-11, Quoted in BazlurRahman Khan, *Muslims in Assam History*, Delhi, 2009, P-117., Syed Abdul Quddus, *The Challenge of Islamic Renaissance*, New Delhi, 1989, PP-79-84.

<sup>224</sup> Al –Imam Al Zubaydi, *Mokhtaser Sahih Al- Bukhari*, Ahmed Zidan and Dina Zidan, trans. Cairo, Islamic Inc. Publishing & Distribution, 1999., Quoted in HazratMaulana Muhammad

YousufKandhlawi, *Muntakhab Ahadith, Ahadith*, 268, New Delhi, Saeed International, 2011, P-240.

<sup>225</sup>Zakaryya Mohamed Abdel-Hady, *The Masjid, Yesterday and Today*, CIRS, Georgetown University, Qatar, No-2, 2010, P- 4.

spiritual life of Muslim people. Islam as a complete way of life is being guided by all the Islamic ideas institutionally transmitted from the *Mosque*.<sup>226</sup>

The *Mosque* is basically a place for congregational prayers five times every day and weekly prayer on Fridays and other willful prayers performed by the Muslim at their own will.<sup>227</sup> *Mosque* has some social role to play in the form of community discussion, seminars and public get together from various socio-religious and community problems. Sometimes *Mosque* provides a place for taken judgment on various disputes and issues prevailing in the community concerned.<sup>228</sup> The *Mosque* plays a vital role being an information centre for socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of the community. Moreover, the *Azan* calls that are announced from the *Mosque* five times a day help the people to maintain punctuality and discipline. It also helps people to establish and strengthen a fellow feeling and brotherhood among each and every people of the community as they stands shoulder to shoulder in rows behind the *Imam* to perform their congregational prayers.<sup>229</sup>

Muslims are entitled by the Islamic laws or *Sharia* to settle various social or community disputes concerning economic, political, environmental aspects of life.<sup>230</sup> According to Richard M. Eaton, “The Mosque is the physical embodiment of the social reality of Islam, and hence the paramount institution by which community identity and solidarity are expressed.”<sup>231</sup>

---

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. P-5., Quoted in Dr. Khosro Movahed, op. cit., PP-3-4.

<sup>227</sup> Imran Mahmud, Shahriar Rawshon, Md. Jahidur Rahman, op. cit., p-285., Quoted in Bazlur Rahman Khan, op. cit., P-117.

<sup>228</sup> Idara Isha'at-e-Diniyat (p) Ltd., op. cit., p- 7, Quoted in Imran Mahmud, Shahriar Rawshon, Md. Jahidur Rahman, PP-286-287.

<sup>229</sup> Zakaryya Mohamed Abdel- Hady, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

<sup>230</sup> Umair Uddin, Badshah Rehman, *Role of Masjid in Society: Issues and Challenges*, Proceeding of the International Conference on Masjid, Zakat and Waqf, Malaysia, 2014.p. 12.

<sup>231</sup> Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p.105.

*Mosque* plays an outstanding role in the growth and development of Islamic culture that reflects the whole Muhammadan way of life. It is the centre place from which Islamic education disseminates.<sup>232</sup> The *Mosque* performs some important religious and cultural duties. During the weekly Friday prayers, it is mandatory to all the *Musallis* to listening to the sermon delivered by the *Imam* prior to the beginning of prayer. These sermons cover the contemporary or current religious, political, social, economic, moral issues and hence it's serves as advice or measures for various burning problems.<sup>233</sup> The *Mosque* is given special importance in Islam even by the Prophet himself to ascertain the regular attendance in congregational prayer in a *Mosque*. Prophet Muhammad emphatically declared that a prayer in congregation is twenty seven times blissful than a prayer in isolation. This simple declaration by the Prophet indicates the importance of a *Mosque* in the prospect of Islam.<sup>234</sup> The *Mosque* is instrumental in establishing unity and brotherhood among the Muslims. As the Muslims gather around in a *Mosque* for congregational prayers five times a day it automatically serves as a common platform where they can share with each other the joys and sorrows of their life. It thus establishes a bond of love and brotherhood among the *Musallis*. From the very beginning of Islam to till date at least one person in every *Mosque* use to stay in the *Mosque*, preserving their fast and performing night prayers during the last ten days of the month of *Ramadan*.<sup>235</sup> The *Mosque* helps strengthening the power of faith and belief (*Imaan*). In the congregational prayers the *Musallis* usually spend times on discussing the orders of Almighty *Allah* given in the Qur'an and guidance given by the Prophet in the form of *Hadith*.<sup>236</sup>

The *Mosque* is essentially helpful in character formation for the Muslim people. To attend the congregational prayer on a specific scheduled time for five times a day

---

<sup>232</sup> IdaraIsha'at-e-Diniyat (p) Ltd., op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>233</sup> ZaKaryya Mohamed Abdel-Hady, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>234</sup> Al- Zubaydi, *Mokhtaser Sahih Al- Bukhari*, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>235</sup> Zakaryya Mohamed Abdel- Hady, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>236</sup> IdaraIsha'at-e- Diniyat (p) Ltd., op. cit., pp. 3-5.

naturally establish a sense of discipline and punctuality and enhance the quality of tolerance, unity and cooperation among the *Musallis*.<sup>237</sup>

The congregational prayers in a *Mosque* helps the Muslim people grow some specific qualities like cleanliness, self-order, self-constraints, patience and devotion to Almighty Creator. Prior to every prayer and to recite the holy Qur'an, ablution for a *Musalli* is a must. To attend the Morning Prayer they awake from sleep before Sunrise. A *Musalli* is bound to leave his comfortable bed and to perform ablution even in the bitter cold nights of winter season which enhances the capacity of self-restraint among the *Musallis*.<sup>238</sup>

The *Mosque* serves as an Islamic academic institution where besides the congregational prayers all sorts of transition of Islamic knowledge and ideologies take place. And surprisingly, for that purpose no money or fees is required, all these things are done on charity.<sup>239</sup> Over the centuries, *Mosque* has been playing a significant role in disseminating Islamic education. Almost all the *Mosques* in Assam as well as in Barak Valley have been maintaining some rental houses and a *SabahiMaktab* within its campus area. The rental houses provide a helpful shelter for Muslim scholars and students while the inter-linked *SabahiMaktab*s are instrumental in imparting basic Islamic knowledge and education to the children of the Muslim community within their respective jurisdictions. It is from that centre the Muslim children both male and female acquire Islamic knowledge even prior to admission to Schools.<sup>240</sup> Moreover, the *TablighiJammat* that provides a regular mission for preaching Islam in its right forms among Muslim communities of various localities runs their mission centering round the *Mosque*. In some of the *Mosque* the programmes like *Haz* training, *Imam*

---

<sup>237</sup> Imran Mahmud, ShahriarRawshon, Md. JahidurRahman, op. cit., p-286.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, PP- 286-287.

<sup>239</sup> UmairUddin, BadshahRehman, op. cit., p- 13.

<sup>240</sup> BazlurRahman Khan, *Madrassa Education System in South Assam*, the Milli Gazette, 2012, P-04.

training, *Qur'an* reciting training etc. are regularly launched for educating the Muslim *ummah*.<sup>241</sup>

***Socio-Cultural and Spiritual Influence of Dargahs:*** Before going into influence played by *Dargahs* in the socio-cultural and spiritual life of the peoples in Barak Valley, researcher would like to define the word '*Dargah*'. After the demise of the Sufi or *Pir*, he is generally buried in tomb within an enclosing known as a *Dargah* in India as well as in Barak Valley. The Arabic word '*qubah*' (a *Dargah* surmounted by a dome) refers throughout the Muslim world to saints' *Dargahs* and place of special spiritual significance the word '*Dargah*' meaning 'box' was originally used for container, made of precious materials, used especially for relics or a cult image. By extension, it has come to mean a holy place containing the reliquary or tomb dedicated to a peer, saint, or similar figure of honor and respect. The word 'grave' in Urdu (*qabr*) is used for burial place of a common person. When a dead man begins to be admired as a saint, a common grave becomes a *Dargah* (*Rowza, Ziyaratgah*). Moreover, if the visitation is increased to thousands, many new components related to the *Dargah* or to facilitate the visitors, are added. In contemporary context, the whole unit is called *Dargah Complex*.<sup>242</sup> In Persian and Arabic languages, many words have been used to explain the *Dargah* or burial place. These terms were adopted in Urdu language, '*marqad*' is another same word used for '*khwabgah*' meaning 'place of sleep or rest.'<sup>243</sup> According to S.L. Baruah, "*Dargah* means the burial place of a *Peer*, considered sacred by both Hindus and Muslims."<sup>244</sup> The Sufi movement is a junction to Islam and Hinduism. The main focus of this movement is to idealize humanism being behind the barriers of religion. The Sufi saints tried to cultivate or awake

---

<sup>241</sup> Observation from field visit, Quoted in Syed Abdul Quddus, op. cit., P-84., Imran Mahmud, ShahriarRawshon, Md. JahidurRahman, op. cit., pp- 288-287., HosseinJavanArasteh, *Masjid and its Management: Issues and Challenges*, Proceeding of the International Conference on Masjid, Zakat and Waqf, 2014, P-61.

<sup>242</sup> Rahmatullah, *Muslim Shrines and Multi-Religious Visitations as a Symbol of Peaceful Co-existence: A study of three Prominent Sufi Shrines*, Islam and Muslim Societies: A Social Science Journal, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2014, p-52

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p-52

<sup>244</sup> S.L. Baruah, *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, New Delhi, 2015, p-678



the inner self of human being following some metaphysical ideologies. They are free from lust, pride and not inclined to any earthly possession.<sup>245</sup>

It is observed that though there is no provision of Saint Hood and Sufistic ideologies in Islam yet almost in all places in the world as well as in Barak Valley Sufistic dogma or culture is a common phenomenon among the Muslim people which exists almost parallel to the main basic of Islam. The only exception which often found is that the Hindu people are equally devoted to the Muslims Sufis or Saints hood in Barak Valley as well as in other places of the world. Though in Islam there is no provision of Sufi worship and any other theories other than the *Quran* and *Hadith* are strictly prohibited yet some Sufis through their supernatural power have attained a position next to the Prophet and among the Hindu people those Sufis or *Pirs* or Saints are none but the direct representative or *Avatar* of God himself.<sup>246</sup>

The *Dargahs* in Barak Valley have been playing an important influence in keeping communal harmony with the people of other faiths. The effort of Sufi saints, while spreading the Islamic message among the people of all religions, to keep the society intact with unity was continued by the *Dargahs* where they were buried. It is the local leaders or philanthropists of both Muslim and Hindu people who consider the *Dargahs* of each other as a mark of social and religious unity. The role of Sufi Saints during their life time is to establish a communal harmony as an inter-religious act depending upon their social attitude towards the local environment. Their attempts to remove social inequality among oppressed and mass people made them feel that the Sufis were the actual leaders to harmonize with each other. Their service to the society is even admired by the local leaders who did not resist them to carry out the enthusiastic work in the fields of social and religious development.<sup>247</sup> The *Pirs* and Sufi saints were trusted to occupy supernatural might, to give release to the poor, miserable and patients, to be present at several places at the same time, to rejuvenate the lifeless or kill people and to foretell the future. Supporting

---

<sup>245</sup> Malik Mohamed, *The Foundations of the Composite Culture in India*, Delhi, 2016, p-230

<sup>246</sup> Mohd. Assad Uz Zaman. *Sufi Tradition And Culture: A study of Sufi Saints and Growth of Syncretic Shrines in India Medieval North East India*, Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Dept. of History, Assam University, Silchar, 2006, pp-143-44

<sup>247</sup> [Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/139559/10/10\\_chapter4.pdf](http://Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/139559/10/10_chapter4.pdf)

and endowing *Dargahs* was calculated to be a sacred act by the rich aristocracy of the land. The Muslim visited to the *Dargahs*, for religious merit or fulfillment of vows or of worldly desires.<sup>248</sup> Some Hindu shows a firm faith that the *Pirs* at rest in *Dargahs* possess supernatural powers and can guard against bad luck. Some of them light candles in *Dargahs* and use charms containing a slight soil from the *Dargahs* of *Pirs* for fate.<sup>249</sup>

Both the Hindus and Muslims, there are various reasons for visiting the *Dargahs*, to pray or wish for something, for mental relief or meditation, for better economy, for marriage, for convenience, to remove problems, to cure mental illness, to get worldly things. Pray for being able to do hajj, to cure physical illness, to find work, to read fatwa, to sell flowers and to do ceremony.<sup>250</sup>

The Muslim Sufis preached unity of God and Fraternity of man when they entered the Indian public prospect. They trust that all humanity was originally one and humanism and charity became important. The Sufis strengthen the importance of man and refused all caste taboos and paved the way for a common ground of religious and moral effort for all socio-cultural classes of India.<sup>251</sup> The *Dargahs* are centre of Hindus and Muslims and there is a feeling of inclusion today since both Hindus and Muslims look over the same graves of the Saints. This heritage can be traced back to the Mughal great emperor Akbar and it is known that he visited the graves of Hindu saints. There are also many Sufi's *Dargahs* where Hindus go. Muslims believe that Sufi saints do not die; they do not become god, but come very intimate to *Allah* or God. The Sufi saints act like a link between man and Creator.<sup>252</sup> The crowd at the *Dargahs* is a mixture of

very diverse class of people. Adults, children and elders are there, as well as both men and women, Hindus and Muslims. There are people who are uneducated, as well as those with

---

<sup>248</sup> Narendra Krishna Sinha. (*The History of Bengal (1757-1905)*), (edited) Calcutta, 1996, pp-575-76

<sup>249</sup> Dr. Mohini Kumar Saikia, *Assam Muslim Relation & Its Cultural Significance*, Luit Printers, Naharani, Golaghat, 1978, p. 250.

<sup>250</sup> Katarina Lindahl, *Is the Mazar a Meeting Place for Multi-culture?, A Study of Yakub Shahid Mazar*. 2011, p-21

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p-12

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p-14

several university degrees, both high and low castes are mixed. Even some parents bring their children and this seems to be a cause why many visitors go to the tombs or *Dargahs*, several of the visitors said that their parents used to take them there from when they were baby.<sup>253</sup>

MaulanaFazalRehmanGanj, things that Sufi is not actually a person excluding in *Shariah* and Islam rather he is a person who have excelled in *Shariah* and devotion to Almighty *Allah* within boundaries of *Quran* and *Hadith* and has achieved some extra ordinary spiritual powers. He is always helpful to the common people in every spheres of their life. He himself lives a very common life and often mistakenly over estimated by the common people.<sup>254</sup> *Dargahs* of Barak Valley were a symbol of humanism, because Sufis were famous for their multifaceted personalities, as social reformers, leaders of Muslims and above all they were advocates for social harmony. They can also be called as ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity because of their love for all the class of people in Barak Valley. They composed –“*Hindu kiMussalman, eke Allarfaman. Amarmonotbhedbhabnai.*” It means Hindu and Muslims are the creations of one God/*Allah* and there is no discrimination in our mind. Even today the Sufis in Barak Valley are regularly visited by the devotees from all sections of all the communities irrespective of caste, creed and religions. In this respect, the Sufis *Dargahs* play an important role in establishing and promoting social and communal harmony. The visitors to those *Dargahs* have the scope of sharing their own feeling and thoughts coming out from their religious barriers and this to establish a sense of fellow feeling and brotherhood with people from others castes, communities and religions.<sup>255</sup>

The *Dargahs* or tombs in Indian subcontinent have developed some characteristics that defined its particular role in various communities. Firstly, its appeal is that transcended the boundaries of communities, castes and attracted people from various segments of the

---

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., p-18

<sup>254</sup> MeenaBhargava, *Exploring Medieval India II, Sixteenth To Eighteenth Centuries, Culture, Gender, Regional Patterns*, Delhi, 2010, P-552.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, pp-186-87, Quoted in Rahmatullah, op. cit., pp-51-61., Malik Mohamed, op. cit., PP-201-204, Dr. Syed SamsuzZaman, *Azan Fakir and his contribution to Assamese Society-a glimpse*, Luit, pp-49-50, Guwahati, Assam: Ajmal Foundation (MarkazulMa'arif),2013.

society. Secondly, the influence of the tombs or *Dargahs* to act as a means of integrating local cultural system into a larger one associated with the leaders, though remaining nevertheless a local manifestation. Thirdly, the tombs or *Dargahs* has owned and controlled considerable economic resources in the form of property, land and cash income. Fourthly, the tombs or *Dargahs* became symbol of power, both spiritual and secular. Spiritual in the sense of association with God/ *Allah* and fulfillment of earthly desires through acceptance of prayer (*du'a*) and secular in the sense that economic wealth and social status could be transmitted to the personal concerned with its administration.<sup>256</sup> *Dargahs* of Sufi saints continue to send out information on spirituality, unity and similarity. At present, it is a citadel where people from all profession, irrespective of religion, caste and creed come to pay honor and find tranquility around them.<sup>257</sup>

It is seen that people both Hindus and Muslims, visit the *Dargahs* or tombs with various kinds of motivations, including recovery from their pains such as sickness and insanity, to overcome the frustration in life, fulfillment of high ambitions seeking success in examination,

and barren women with the hope of offspring. All aims and expectations are placed before the saint of the *Dargahs* for their blessings.<sup>258</sup> It is already cleared that Sufi's *Dargahs* made social service part of their responsibilities towards God or *Allah*. It is broadly known that Hindus respected Sufis *Dargahs* with great admiration. Still Hindu offer '*shinni*' and light candles for the well-being of their families, a custom which is popular among the Muslims of Barak Valley also. Though due to opposition of *Ulemas* influenced by Deobandi schools it is gradually decreasing. But even then some Muslim go to tombs or *Dargahs* with *shinni* and pray to *Allah*

through the *usila* (reference) of concerned Sufi for the fulfillment of their wish. People of this region preferred the *Dargahs* of the disciples of Shah Jalal *Mujarrad* among all Sufi *Dargahs* existed in the region. Hindus and Muslims visiting the *Dargahs*, is a very common

---

<sup>256</sup> Islam Uddin Barbhuiya & Dr. AbdulKhalique Laskar, *Role of Sufis in Assam to Spread Communal Harmony and Brotherhood amongst the Populace of Assam: A bond of Fraternity*, (edited), Silchar, Assam, Natun Diganta Prakashani, 2017, p-170

<sup>257</sup> Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>07\_chapter4.pdf

<sup>258</sup> Malik Mohamed, op. cit., p-228

prospect in Barak Valley. The life and activities of the Sufis' and their Dargahs left so much deep an influence in the society of Barak Valley that people even made it their icon of worship.<sup>259</sup>

*Urs* is the death anniversary of a departed *Pir* or Sufi. The word *urs* literally means 'bride's day'; but it is used in a rhetoric sense. The death of a *Pir* is actually his union with God or *Allah*. A lover meets his beloved where the *Pir* or Sufi is the beloved and God or *Allah* is the lover. With this idea in mind the practice of *urs* ceremony was started within a saint's *Dargahs* in India and as well as in Barak Valley. It is held in the *Dargahs* on the fixed date, which is attended by his disciples, associates and some important dignitaries as guests. The successor of *Dargahs* called *Sajjada*. The period of *urs* varies from place to place and the programme goes on for generally one day in Barak Valley. On the occasion of *urs* a sort of fair is held, in which all the stall holders including both Hindus and Muslims participate in selling their goods.<sup>260</sup> In the view of Dr. Kamaluddin Ahmed, *Dargahs* which are the memory of Shah Jalal's disciples in Barak Valley are the symbols of communal unity as both Hindus and Muslims revere there.<sup>261</sup>

The main tenet of Sufism is a belief and devotion to one mighty Creator who has created all the people and the Universe. As there is no separate Creator or God, so people from all the religion are equal to Him. He equally loves all His creation. From that point of view, the Sufis give importance to please the creator not specifically by following religious rituals but by sincere devotion to Him.<sup>262</sup>

It is due to Sufis magnetic personality, exemplary character, principles of equality and brotherhood, their linguistic attainments and their magical charms and incarnation that the mystic saints win the hearts of the people. These factors caused the peaceful infiltration of Islam.<sup>263</sup> The Muslim Sufi saints were, in general, highly respected by the non-Muslim people, often treated them with a deep sense of trust and veneration. Some of the Muslim Sufis had acquainted themselves with Hindu religious thought and mystical ideas and

<sup>259</sup> BazlurRahman Khan, op. cit., pp-138-39

<sup>260</sup> Mohammad YahyaTamizi, *Sufi Movements in Eastern India*, Delhi, 1992, p-153 (Appendix-D)

<sup>261</sup> Kamaluddin Ahmed, *The Art and Architecture of Assam*, Guwahati, Delhi, 1994, p-168

<sup>262</sup> B. N. Luniya, *Evolution of Indian Culture*, Agra, Lakshmi NarainAgarwal, 1997, pp-350-51

<sup>263</sup> Malik Mohammed. op .cit., p-236

attracted large numbers of Hindus to their *Dargahs*.<sup>264</sup> It could be said generally for every *Dargahs* in Barak Valley that even in the evil days a man who waited long enough is sure to get some kind of food and with fate, a share of goods or money distributed as donation that would tide him over the next juncture. The poor, the miserable and the socially diverse people of the community might find the *Dargahs* an accurate space to remain in, in order to synthesize to their social cause. Some *Dargahs* maintain public Kitchens which distribute free meal (*shnni*) to the needy and to *Musafirs*. The meal (*shnni*) is also an essential feature of the annual *urs*celebration. The duration of the service and the amount of *shnni*cooked depends upon the amount of money donated by persons of this particular purpose. For example, in the *Dargahs* of Barak Valley like Langar Shah*Dargah* at Fulertal in Cachar, Adam Khaki *Dargah* at Bodarpur in Karimganj, and Mir-UI- AreefinMukam at Panchgram in Hailakandi, there are two big *deghs*(cauldrons) in each of which *shnni* is cooked whenever some visitor to the *Dargahs* volunteers to pay the expenditure. Though this kind of mass cooking is mainly an affair of the pilgrims, it does have generally some side benefits for the local community. In our society of Barak Valley, it is seen that, when the social well-being of a family is endangered or disturbed, they might decide to go to a *Dargahs* in order to re-establish equanimity under the guidance of one of the assistants, who mediates the blessings of the *Pir*.<sup>265</sup>

Islamic education is another influence of most of the *Dargahs* in Barak Valley. *ShabahiMaktabs* (Islamic primary educational institutions) are attached to *Dargahs* where Quran

recitation, reading and writing of Arabic as well as Urdu texts is taught, especially to children of neighborhood in the morning and particularly in the evening during Ramadan month.<sup>266</sup>

---

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p-77

<sup>265</sup> Information collected during field visit.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

It may therefore, be concluded that the *Mosques* occupied a unique position in the Muslim society for its socio- cultural and spiritual influences and *Sufis Dargahs* is indeed are meeting places of many cultures, exchange of mystical experiences, ideas in Barak Valley's multi-cultural society and thus essential in building a communal harmony and peaceful bondage among diverse people.