

Communicating Sufi Teachings in 21st Century: A Study of “Muslim Institute” Sufi Order in Pakistan

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Abstract: This paper reports on research conducted with Muslim Institute of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo order in Pakistan. Using a qualitative approach and Manuel Castells' theory of the network society, the findings illustrate that respondents recognize the role of digital media to increase the outreach of Sufi messages. The leaders of the institute realize the evils of the digital era and suggest spiritual solutions. However, although the use of the modern mode of communication increases access, live events have greater value and a strong impact.

Keywords: Modern sufism, Hadrat Sultan Bahoo, Muslim Institute, social media.

Abstrak: Artikel ini merupakan laporan penelitian yang dilakukan pada lembaga Muslim tarekat Hadrat Sultan Bahoo di Pakistan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan teori jaringan masyarakat Manuel Castells, hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa responden mengakui pentingnya peran media digital dalam upaya meningkatkan ketersebaran ajaran sufi. Namun, meski penggunaan model komunikasi modern, khususnya media sosial akan meningkatkan akses, pengajaran sufi secara langsung memiliki nilai yang lebih besar dan mempunyai dampak yang kuat.

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Introduction

Pakistan is peaceful country which possesses social and cultural values of common good. According to Iqbal and others, Islam entered in Subcontinent because of Sufis in 13th century (Iqbal & Ibrahim, 2017) and Sufism is considered as source of wisdom in Pakistan (Yousaf & Huaibin, 2014). There are four major Sufi orders (*silsilas*) in Pakistan *Qadri*, *Subrawardi*, *Naqshbandi* and *Chishti* (Sharov, 1999). This research aimed at one of the sub branch of Qadri Sufi order, *Sarwari Qadri*, initiated by Hadrat Sultan Bahoo (RahmatAllah Elehi-RE). He is a renowned Sufi Saint of Sub Continent. Bahoo tomb is in Ghermahraja, Shorkot Situated in Punjab Pakistan (Awan, 2016). Punjab is one of the first region in Pakistan where Sufism becomes popular (Iqbal & Ibrahim, 2017). Here Sufis are signs of peace, harmony, tolerance and sympathy. Thirty five major shrines from Punjab are listed in Pakistan tourism booklet however these are in hundreds. Current study investigated Mission of Unity, Stability and Leadership in Muslims Institute (Muslim Institute), a sub chapter of the network *Islahi Jamaat o Tanzeem ul Arifeen*. It is also known as *Islahi Jammat* or Edifying movement was object of study. The research in hand explored the changes brought by Muslim Institute, in term of communication methods to expand geographical outreach. Sultan Muhammad Ali son of Sultan ul Faqar Hazrati Sultan Asghar Ali (RE) established Muslim Institute in 2013.

There were a lot of researches on economic, social and political roles of Sufis and their adherents for Pakistan. However Modern Pakistani Sufism deserve more attention than it got till now. The present research will significantly contribute in studies of modern South Asian Sufism by highlighting the functions of modern Sufi institute that support them to sustain their Sufi order in current era. Ernst (2011), use of media and especially social media for publication of secret by Sufi networks increased in global world.

Ernst (2017), expressed that availability of video camera and videotapes increased access to Sufi teachings. However the launch of websites and use of social media made this access greater than before (C. W. Ernst, 2017). In Pakistan the increase in internet usage became

possible because of introduction of broadband technology (Authority, 2015). The growing popularity and cost reduction of devices and services enhance use of social media in Pakistan. Almost every organization is using social media accounts for better outreach (Authority, 2015). This new trend was followed by Sufi orders as well. It also became need of hour for sustaining Sufism as a religious phenomenon. Chih and others (2015) expressed that Sufism appears in public sphere from the religious elite' sphere (Chih, Mayeur-Jaouen, & Seesemann, 2015). The study in hand discussed the significance of modern communication methods in spreading Sufi teachings in current era. The theory of the network society proposed by Manuel Castells accompanied researcher in highlighting the use and effects of modern technology on Sufism.

Agbikimi (2014) presented that emerging new religious movements brought new encounters for traditional spiritual identities and presented new opportunities to religious life (Agbikimi, 2014). People around the world do not know much about these developments in Pakistan. One of the motivations behind conducting this research was to highlight the developments in communication methods of modern Sufi networks. Chih and others (2015) mentioned that Sufism and Sufi networks survived through different challenges like criticism of Islamist and modern scholars, and modern technological explosion (Chih et al., 2015). The findings benefit modern Sufi networks to recognize their significance in sustaining Sufi teachings through the use of advanced communication.

The research is oriented contribute in developing the phenomenon of global Sufi adherence. There are several studies conducted on traditional Sufism in Pakistan. However, modern Sufism and especially modern Sufi institutes despite their extended contributions are still under researched by national and international scholars. Bearup (2017) conducted research of Sufi networks of Pakistan for their functions in England (Bearup & Rawlings, 2017). Yet, the study about modern Sufi networks at national level was missing. So the study in hand was an attempt to fill this gap.

Literature Review

The revolution in information and communication technologies is one of the factors for the shift in technological paradigm and introduces a new social structure of information and the network society. The network society is a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies (Informationalism, 2004). The process of communication and its organization in society describe power in the network society. It facilitates both user and communicator by providing facilities at cheaper prices. The current study looked at the extent of changes in outreach of Muslim Institute after introduction of modern modes of communication.

The current study highlighted the change in efficiency that occurs regarding access to message of Sufism, in accordance with use of modern communication modes. According to Castells networks became the most efficient organizational form as a result of three major features, benefited from the new technological environment: flexibility, scalability, and survivability. By adopting modern modes of communication Muslim Institute linking globally while preserving identity of their own Sufi order.

Critics opined that Castells present imprecise and variable definitions of information and unclear explanations of what brings about the transition in information age. However, the deficiencies in conceptualization do not negate practicality of theory. It is a source of inspiration for those wishing to study institutional renewal in present era (Anttiroiko, 2015). Nonetheless, Castells' work is extremely valuable for those who want to study the effects of modern mode of communication on social organizations. Even though scholars have different approaches, all of them do recognize the influence of technology and information in current era. He encourages thinkers to consider that information is of pivotal

importance in contemporary affairs. The theory of *the network society*” is utilized to assist analysing the significance of using updated technologies by modern Sufi networks and its effects.

This was multi source research and data gathered through individuals, sites and documents. Activities were also observed to get relevant information. This study will hopefully prove to be a valuable contribution on global horizon of Sufism by studying new developments in communication. Data collection was done with assistance of informant from Muslim Institute. The meeting with staff was arranged before data collection to attain formal permission. There was no need to get permission from any Government department as this is an independent institute. The universe for current research is selected districts of Punjab i.e. Jhang, Rawalpindi, Multan and Lahore.

Methodology

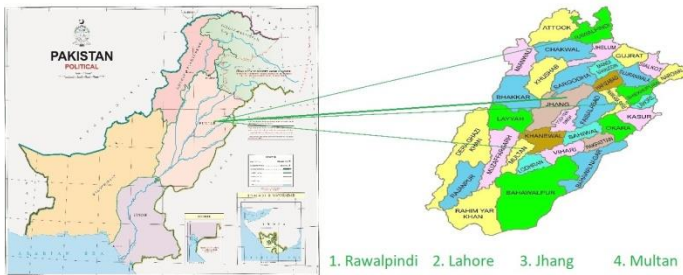


Figure 1: District Jhang, Rawalpindi, Multan and Lahore highlighted in Map of Punjab

According to Yin, (2011) ideally 25-50 units are ample for qualitative research (Yin, 2011). The data for current research was gathered through In-depth interview; by using tool of semi- structured interview guide. Three types of interview guides have been used separately for women Sufi adherents, staff of network, and Spiritual leader. Interview process was stopped on saturation of data.

The data saturation was decided on the stage when little or no new information could extract in terms of themes, insights or viewpoints (Suri, 2011).

Documents analysis helped to understand functions of Musmlim Institute as modern Sufi network through review and evaluation of documents of 2017 to 2019. The observation analysis was conducted by attending two live and two online events organized by Muslim Institute. Researcher has visited shrine once. In current research Narrative data analysis has been used to analyze data on bases of content, structure and functions. It leads to conclusions on the basis of respondents' narratives about the change in shape and significance of communication methods in Muslim Institute.

Results and Discussion

Mobilization

A respondent said that Muslim Institute address and educate people in modern way. They understand people needs of modern era and address it through motivational speeches on social media. These speeches evolve people in spirituality that helps them to full fill their worldly responsibilities with better approach. Muslim Institute is skillfully doing this sensitive process. Engineer (2012) said that Sufi orders gaining more wealth and political impact but their spirituality level decrease (Engineer, 2012). Here in case of Muslim Institute researcher observed that Muslim Institute is maintaining its spiritual strength along with other advancement. According to another adherent Muslim Institute deliver information in very interesting and effective manner that make it easy to understand.

Previously one has to go physically to shrine to attend events. But now they modified their means of communication like gatherings and speeches of Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali and Sahibzada Sultan Muhammad Ali are available online. Lectures and seminars are aired on YouTube channel and Facebook page. Muslim Institute is using different tools for

mobilization like Social Media, electronic and print media, university lectures and Web Channels. Muslim Institute mobilizes and remains in contact with people through social media with the help of expert media teams. Live debates and webinars are being conducted on social media. Muslim Institute chairman participates on many TV channels and suggest spiritual solution to religious problems of the era. Besides this event reports are telecasted on news channels. Muslim Institute utilize its monthly Urdu magazine *Miraat tul Arifeen* to disseminate its message to masses .It's hundred thousand plus copies are distributed on monthly basis. It reach in every nook of the world.

A Staff member shared there is change in membership of order because of Muslim Institute. Many people approach order through Hadrat Sultan Bahoo (RE) research desk. It connected many people from all around the world, from east and west. So definitely, Muslim Institute work has output and results. At the same time another staff member shared that number of members increased since last few years. Many students take part in it. This approach by Muslim Institute encourages students to discuss about Sufism openly. Secondly the acceptance and discussion of secular topics separate Sufi ideology from orthodox Scholl of thought.

Chih (2012) stated that modern Sufi networks are adopting new method of recruiting adherents that also include engagement with universities (Chih, 2012). Muslim Institute chairman visit to different universities voluntarily in annual lecture series. Senior staff members and researchers also visit the universities, colleges and different academic institutes. It includes regular conferences with Punjab University. Muslim Institute is guiding youth to live a motivated and balanced life that is spiritually, ideologically, educationally, and religiously active. Besides religious guidance Muslim Institute facilitate researchers, university graduates and other scholars from different districts. Wahyuni (2017) also found this fact that Sufism, progressed out of the mosque, to Islamic universities and even beyond in secular universities (Wahyuni, 2017). A respondent shared that she was introduced to the order and Muslim Institute by one of their staff member who was her student. She expressed "Muslim Institute is

genuinely facilitating people for getting spiritual awareness”. After close observation she feels people need such institute in this age for awareness. The more she knew about Muslim Institute the more she gets attracted towards it. According to her there is people to people contact in start but later other tools are being used. Wahyuni (2017) mentioned that in current era old style of Sufism is facing challenges so, they prefer to modify the means of mobilization (Wahyuni, 2017). This change in means of mobilization increase number of adherents by improving institute outreach.

Besides lecture series there is media talk by chairman and other senior members of Muslim Institute. Their activities can be found on YouTube as integral part of message dissemination. Institute use platform of web channels and web pages to publish reports, short video clips, lectures, research papers and thesis. It also conveys content through mobile text and posts. Institute have data bank of twenty five thousand email addresses. That includes worldwide university students, professors, research institutes and other expert people. Publications, newsletters, and event reports are sent to them.

One of staff member shared that there is no criteria for adherence. Muslim Institute welcomes every one with respect and dignity. They never exclude anyone or use derogatory remarks. As Ologunagba (2017) narrates that Sufis are welcoming to everyone without any discrimination (C. W. Ernst, 2017). Another staff member shared that Muslim Institute does not count members but its vision is to increase well-wishers and like-minded people. Most of the team engaged with them consists of volunteers. Here it is worth mentioning that purity of hearts matter for Sufis. The importance is not lie in numbers but quality of thoughts and intentions that counts. So, Muslim Institute is still maintaining Sufi legacy in this era.

Message Dissemination

Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali said in his interview that “I do not solely claim myself to be the beneficiary of the favors of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo (RE). Everyone who loves Sultan Bahoo (RE) teachings has the same claim. So people try to spread his teachings out of love but it is

recommended that they must follow the discipline properly. They must perform obligations of Allah upon us; must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) with love and care and perform *Zikar*-contemplation as directed by the Sufis which enables a man to grow better spiritually.” He emphasized that it is compulsory for them to have some more and better understanding of the order of Sultan Bahoo (RE). They should also possess the skills of explaining it to others. His comments clearly depicts that dissemination of effective message is core aim of Muslim Institute. One of staff member shared when practicing Sufism is about personal experience it is not as challenging. Whereas when someone want to promote and disseminate it to other people it become demanding. It needs extra effort by coming out of comfort zone.

A senior staff member shared that presentations and messages by scholars and policy makers are delivered to public by Muslim Institute. The reports present research findings and crux of matters very openly. Information on public interest matters is disseminated to them through the platform of *Mirat ul Arfeen* in Urdu. It is also disseminated to universities and libraries (Abenante & Vicini, 2017), also highlighted this temperament of modern Sufi institute that they disseminate messages to general public to improve mass awareness (Abenante & Vicini, 2017). With addition of each new project, new strategies are being used. Electronic modes are being used for message dissemination at international level. Muslim Institute name and fame is more in religious sphere internationally. More than twenty thousand academicians, scholars, diplomats and policy makers who are sitting in different corners of the world are being engaged through newsletter. Chairman Muslim Institute and team visit different countries and institute host delegations too before Covid 19. Muslim Institute team gets energy from these delegates. Due to Covid 19 things are bits restricted, but they try to maintain online access internationally. Webinars were organized with Ukraine and Turkey.

Message for international audience mainly delivered through research dialogues and lectures. Muslim Institute also organizes expert lectures in which international experts deliver lectures online or they

came to Pakistan for lectures. On research side Institute exchange publications with international universities and think tanks. A senior staff member shared the message is almost same for all audience. The focus is topic or issue not the audience. There is multidimensional issues that Muslim Institute present to international audience. Such messages are delivered to international public that help to develop positive image of Pakistan. Muslim Institute deliver message of peace that is promoted in Islamic teachings. Besides this it raise its concerns regarding international community point of view about Muslims. Institute address it in their language and convey it with logic that why these misunderstandings need to be addressed. Institute logically presents the concerns in such words that west can understand it. Whether it is about Pakistan international relations or Kashmir and Palestine issues.

There are different events from time to time in which Muslim Institute get very good response internationally. Such as after Christ church event Muslim Institute made “Human Christ church” mosque where core message was delivered that Islam is peace. This message get coverage throughout the world for which institute get feedback from people across the world. Muslim Institute present true image of Islam and address the conflicts through research and dialogue. Islamophobia, is addressed by conveying the message that Islam is actually the religion of peace. Drage (2015), opined that modern Sufi organizations are highlighting compassionate image of Islam (Drage, 2015).

Another staff member shared that the type of message depends on event. It is about peace, love and coexistence mostly as per Sufi teachings. The dialogue on misunderstandings among various communities focus on presenting solutions. Umashankar (2012) expressed that Sufism is philosophy of plurality (Umashankar, 2012). One of senior staff member shared that religious harmony, interfaith harmony, multi culturalism and co-existence are the core areas of institute internationally.

Media and Muslim Institute

Drage (2015) opined that in Pakistan media amplified their coverage of Sufism. This include activities of government officials at Sufi shrines, Death anniversaries of prominent Sufi saints, Sufi conferences, seminars and Sufi Music (Drage, 2015). There are two main categories of media, traditional media and digital media. The traditional media predate “Information Age” and message disseminated through off line modes. The second category Digital media is any form of media comprise of electronic devices for distribution and use online modes. This form of media created, viewed, modified and distributed via electronic devices. Muslim Institute is using both types of Medias to disseminate their message. A respondent shared that as far as it is concerned with spiritual needs media is playing great role. Many religious programs and positive messages are being broadcasted by television. Social media like Facebook, twitter and instagram is also used for disseminating spiritual messages. Chih (2015) narrated even when Sufi orders are using modern technologies for message disseminations they are conscious about essence of message by their original spiritual leader (Chih et al., 2015). A staff member shared that the use of digital era support in promotion of philosophy of Muslim Institute. There is no change in philosophy because of digital media.

Traditional Media

Traditional media further divided in print and broadcast media. Print media is in form of newspapers, journals, magazines, pamphlets, brochures and reports. Broadcast media include TV and radio. One of staff member shared that Muslim Institute receive coverage of its events on electronic and print media. As this is a research-based institute their researchers and Chairman of Muslim Institute are usually invited on these channels for expert opinion. Mostly it is about Sufism but sometimes it is about social issues like education, social issues and freedom movements like Kashmir and Jonagarh. Another staff member shared that Institute presence on TV talk shows is not very significant. However, the steps to increase presentation on Radio and TV are still under discussion.

Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali shared the example of music which is promoted through media. An orthodox school of thought does not support music but Sufis support it. The Sufi music is in vogue among masses which make Sufi teachings memorable. He continued that there are great writers in Pakistan who were influenced by Sufism like Ashfaq Ahmed, Bano Qudsia, Qudratullah Shahab, and in the present era Umaira Ahmed. They wrote sensational dramas in this respect. People are learning through this.

Ernst (2009) mentioned that messages of Sufism are published through print media periodicals (C. Ernst & Lawrence, 2016). The Quarterly Journal “Muslim Perspective” is independently published by Muslim Institute. Dallh (2010) also mentioned that there are publishers in modern era that are affiliated with specific Sufi orders (Dallh, 2010). The books are being published jointly with *Al-Arifeen* publications another sub institute of *Islahi Jammah*. These books included translations of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo (RE) work from Persian and Punjabi to English and Urdu. The data of research shows that Hadrat Sultan Muhammad Asghar Ali Sarwari Qadri (R.A) took the initiative of translating these books in Urdu for people understanding. English translations of these books were done under supervisions of his sons’ Hadrat Sultan Mohammad Ali and Sultan Ahmad Ali. Awan (2016) also give credit to both in his book for their efforts regarding English translation of Bahoo (RE) work (Awan, 2016). Urdu and English translations of these books are published by Muslim Institute. So, the actual philosophy of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo (RE) can be in front of people. There were 140 books of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo (RE). There are only 26 to 28 manuscripts are available in Persian. A lot of hard work and research has been conducted and Muslim Institute gathered sufficient manuscripts to disseminate Sultan Bahoo (RE) ideology.

Digital Era and Muslim Institute

Another respondent said previously they disseminate message in written media but now they take it online. This online contact is through newsletter, emails correspondence, webinars and other online sources. Messages that were available to few people are now

approachable for mass population. The developments of mass media are really beneficial and helpful. They have live streaming of various events.

A staff member shared that message dissemination strategy changed according to need of hour. In 2012-13 it was limited and specific but now it is modernizing with passage of time. It is digital era and online access increase a lot through social media. Muslim Institute use available modern tools and people also contact them through these channels. During the Covid 19 the importance of online tools increased more as system of business, education and health shifted to it. Muslim Institute also evolved to meet the demand of era.

According to a respondent Muslim Institute is using digital equipment of modern era for communication in their events. Hermansen (2000) said Sufi orders use websites for publishing newsletter (Hermansen, 2000). Muslim Institute newsletter “Muslim Perspective” and other publications are also available on website. The Muslim Institute share their message virtually by using multiple tolls like website, online channels, videos, email, telephonic contacts where it is not possible for them to reach physically. Drage (2015), shared that by producing digital material modern Sufis want to disseminate message of spirituality which is need of hour (Drage, 2015).

A staff member shared that it is easy to use as compare to people to people contact. Previously it was very difficult to disseminate the message to public. In digital era all sources and data are available for free and anyone can access it. One of staff member shared that they are delivering relevant one line message to people from different books in short form on Facebook posts. Because of this the essences of the message reach to people at various level. Ernst (2016) call this process of dissemination of Sufism messages through media “the publication of the secret” (C. Ernst & Lawrence, 2016). Another respondent shared the same point with example that small messages like couple of lines or one sentence are shard on social media. A famous Persian line like *الله بو ما سوا الله بوس* (Allah is sufficient, everything other than Him is greed) can be found at many places in Persian books. This talks about whole philosophy of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo (RE) which relates around

it. Same like that other message of Sufism like *Ism e Allah Zat* (The personal name of Allah). These both messages and messages by spiritual leader are shared on social media. Even activities of spiritual leaders are shared to motivate people.

A staff member shared that in Muslim Institute debate project access the world through digital mode of communication via email or website. Muslim Institute publish event reports, videos, video links, Muslim debate forum, press releases and other material about institute on websites. Ernst shared that websites of Modern Sufi network are interactive which launch discussions, share lecture, links of audio and video clips, messages by order and online links of other sources on Sufism (C. Ernst & Lawrence, 2016). During Covid19, as trend change internationally, Muslim Institute also shift to webinars and conducted many events. There are big numbers of participants in the webinars. Muslim Institute core purpose is research based dialogue so the proceeding is not public. Muslim Institute always invites selected audience so the quality of discussion not compromised. Around sixty participants take part in each webinar. Although Covid effected communication but events attendance of participants do not decrease in number because of online access.

Dallh (2010) wrote in his research of Australian Sufis that use of modern communication technologies, easiness in travel and more engagement with global associations have impacted Sufism (Dallh, 2010). Muslim Institute is connected to scholars and researchers around the globe through internet, whether it is through social media or other means of digital media. Another staff member shared that Muslim Institute is digitalizing itself. Meeting and researches is being conducted online. Even committee meetings to plan future events held online.

Social Media

One staff member shared that the Muslim Institute has same effect of digital media as other. The connectivity is shifted from physical to digital mode. People are connected through online modes and arranging sessions online. A research participant said Muslim

Institute used tools of YouTube, twitter and Facebook. If Muslim Institute do not go with flow it might lose its space. These tools will increase followers. Social media is such an effective tool that it decrease cost of travel and reduce consumption of other resource like multimedia. Sessions are easily being delivered from home or any other place via zoom.

A staff member shared that Jonagarh issue was recently highlighted by print media but it was already highlighted by Muslim Institute through Social Media. There is a big change in subscription and viewership of Muslim Institute social medial pages. The community of adherents is increasing. The message is same but easy use of social media made it comparatively easy to access. Chih (2012) narrated that Sufis are creating alternative modernity in Pakistan by using modern technology to extend their distinctiveness and philosophy in the twenty-first century (Chih, 2012).

Another staff member said that every Pakistani has interest in policy making but very less institutes has research work on it. They produce material for problems and challenges of Muslims in specific; and problems of world in general. Muslim Institute also suggests solutions and way forward to these issues. This not only disseminates awareness to them but there are guidance for them of practical steps they can take, at their level. It can be either through social media or through discussions in their circles. This is a big change what we felt in adherents who are attached to order.

A respondent narrated that presently Sultan Ahmad Ali is one of the top ten most influencing personality of the Muslim World by Institute of Peace and development (INSPAD). This becomes possible because the message of Muslim Institute reach around the globe through digital media. Muslim Institute preached peace and Islam in their premises. Now it is getting access to the world by using social media. Sometime governments cannot raise the issues due to political and strategic liabilities and restrictions but forums like Muslim Institute talk about Muslim issues significantly.

One of staff member shared that the traditional media have to follow trends of digital media for their survival. When Muslim

Institute start talking about Kashmir cause, it was quite difficult to get place on traditional media. Muslim Institute ran campaign on social media and get public acceptability. These trends started following by print and electronic media respectively. He continued that traditional media is promoting the trend of spirituality and Sufism in response to the public demand on digital media. In the global network society social forces modify the structure and presentation style of media. Digital media enable people to manage long-distance social bonding through using electronic devices (Dallh, 2010). Respondent said that certainly if something published it is for increasing public access. Now teachings are more accessible because of digital media. People can ask their queries which are responded online. So obviously it gets promotion by getting trans-local now. Someone sitting in London can get benefit from a message delivered in Shorkot, Punjab.

Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali said it is evident that people are facing spiritual problems in digital era. They have experienced fraudulent cases in their personal, social and business life. These problems are shared by people who came to Muslim Institute for trainings. People are either themselves returning to Sufis or psychiatrist suggests them to join Sufi meditation session or Sufis therapy. There is much anti-spiritual trend. Another problem of digital era is the spread of disinformation about Sufism. People who are not research oriented believe it without certifying it. Furthermore, there were many states who are working against Sufism and its ideology. A lot of anti-Sufi material was shared through digital technology. Sufis view point was not heard or paid attention, during the last seven to eight decades. These circumstances compel Muslim Institute to use digital mode of communication for improving Sufi image.

Difference in One on One Meeting and Digital Mode

A respondent shared that one on one meeting and digital meeting cannot have same effect. The significance of interpersonal communication could not be grasped in online meeting. The discussion can go in different space in interpersonal communication by capturing spontaneity, body language and face expressions. While in

digital its pre done, recorded and more structured. But digital, electronic and print media are good for introduction of order as it increased access of the adherents.

Another respondent opined that message can be spread through online channel easily. But there are spiritual waves of personalities which cannot be passed in online message. Their pictures are no doubt their impression but their attitude and *Nazar* (rays of blessing passed through eyes of spiritual leader) can only be avail in one on one meeting. Dallh, (2010) expressed that adherents strongly believe that they can absorb some spirituality just because of the presence of spiritual leader (Dallh, 2010). One respondent shared that she has seen pictures of Sultan Ahmad Ali and Sultan Muhammad Ali but there is different impression of meeting. Spiritual connections and its effects are only possible through one on one meeting. A different respondent said that online is important but the effect of personality and one on one meeting is different. Adherent *Zahir*- outlook and *batin*- inner self, both get affected by it. In spirituality personalities has its own vibes. When people have one on one meeting with personality their vibes and effects are directly transmitted to other people.

According to Castells (1996) theory mode of communication matter a lot for bringing change in people. One of staff member shared that online dissemination could not have depth of one on one meetings. It is quite scientific and well settled that the communication decreases its strength with every lower step (decreasing order). The first is live meeting, the second is video call, third is audio call and the last is through text message. When people are talking by sitting in front of each other and looking at each other face their positive or negative expressions, gestures and personality vibes have different impact. When there is chance one on one meeting it should be preferred as this is the strongest way of communication.

Due to pandemic Muslim Institute activities get effected, it gets limited. Due to physical distance public interaction was less, that decrease people to people interaction and networking that is one of the strength of events. In events of modern Sufi institutes people consider each other as source of knowledge and learn from each other (Ahmadi,

2016). The webinars are not that effective as physical presence. Whether it is from participants' side or from researcher side. Publish reports definitely have achieved similar impact but participation and discussion was not as healthy as it was in physical presence.

Digital mode increased message outreach definitely. Adherence increase because increased access to the whole world. As far as it is about connectivity and strong bond in digital mode it is not as strong as it is in physical connection. Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali expressed that there are five senses namely seeing, hearing, taste, smell and touch. In digital media only two senses are at work, that is seeing (eyes) and hearing (ears). Through digital media one can only listen to the message of a person and watch him sitting or standing on the stage. One cannot learn as a whole because three senses are not involved in it. Presence of anybody has its own value. The personality vibes can be received by sitting in company of spiritual leader. The same vibes cannot be transmitted through digital media. After giving all these arguments he highlighted very interesting phenomenon of belief that is "If Allah Almighty wishes so, the same can happened in digital mode too". So, this is because some Sufis claim that it is beyond time and space. The blessings come with the will and order of Allah, the Almighty.

A different perspective about effects was shared by a respondent. She shared that truth and intention of given message matter a lot. If spiritual leaders delivering message by sitting in front of adherents and the intention is not good. The intention is to receive appreciation only or to promote the order or any other political gain. There will be no effect on spirituality of listener. On the other hand there will be different impact if the intention is to guide Ummah honestly as moral duty assigned by Allah. If the intention is noble then whether one conduct it one to one or on social media, the energy reach there. So, it can be inferred here that in spirituality the level of purification of spiritual leader matter more than media.

Conclusion

Muslim Institute is mobilizing people through using different modes of communication. The mobilization becomes successful because of effective messages and active agendas. The hallmark of Muslim Institute being a modern institute is that it is using all modern modes to convey its messages to keep pace with time. Muslim Institute is up to date on the criteria of theory of “The network society” as they are use cost effective modern modes of communication to be more efficient. Although use of modern mode of communication increase access but live event has greater value and strong impact. Respondent also believed that in spirituality the intention behind conveying message is as important as the mode and content. However all of respondents recognize the role of digital media to increase outreach of Sufi message. Leaders of institute use their far sightedness to realize evils of the digital era and suggesting spiritual solutions.

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