
Politics of Sufism in Chiniot: A Case Study of Muhammadi Sharif (1947-1975)

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the politics of Sufism in District Chiniot with primary focus on the case study of Muhammadi Sharif from 1947 to 1975. It argues that Sufism in Chiniot was not confined to personal spirituality and devotional practices. It served as an important moral, social, and political force in the public sphere. The study finds the historical evolution of the spiritual lineage of Muhammadi Sharif and highlights the institutional development, moral legitimacy, symbolic authority, and public trust with religious guidance, educational services, and social reform. Muhammadi Sharif, rooted in the Suhrawardi and Chishtia traditions, extended Sufi leadership from khanqah into political life. This research primarily highlights the role of Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Zakir and other Sufi leaders of Muhammadi Sharif in challenging feudal domination in the politics of Chiniot after the creation of Pakistan. It also highlights how Muhammadi Sharif integrated ethical political engagement with educational reform, public welfare, and public service. Hence, it fostered a participatory political culture in post-Partition Punjab together with the development of democratic consciousness and broader socio-political transformation.

Key Words: Sufism, Politics, Consciousness, Transformation, Spiritual Outlook, Moral Legitimacy

Introduction

Sufism is a mystical dimension/ aspect of life. It is primarily seen as devoted to spiritual dimension of one's life. Despite its religious spiritual outlook, it is inextricably linked with politics and power. History reveals that Sufi Shaikhs were engaged with power, authority and legitimacy despite being a master of spiritual domain. They engaged themselves with caliphs, Emperor, Sultans, rulers and their subordinates who have been the custodians of political authority.

A scholar on Sufism described it in this way.

" The ethical vision of Islam . . . is no less a concern of Sufism than realization of an awareness of Divine reality. This twofold conception of truth, spiritual and ethical, gives Sufism room to maneuver vis-a-vis the world: Engaging the visible order of society and the politics governing it—whether as cooperation or challenge—may make no less sense strategically than withdrawal, depending on circumstances” (Anjum, 2016, p. 95).

Historically, the Sufis involvement into politics and their relationship with the states are quite varied and ambiguous. It is not easy to fix Sufis involvement in politics. It denies any easy generalization about Sufis involvement in politics. Multiple evidence suggests the state patronage of the Sufi establishments. Sufis acted as aides of the rulers and accepted bounties from them. Contrariwise, legendary Sufi martyrs like Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (executed 922), Ayn al-Quzat al-Hamadani (executed 1131), and Shihab al-Din Yahya al-Suhrawardi al-Maqtul (executed 1191), among others, were being put to death by the political authorities (Anjum, 2016).

In the South Asian Muslim context, the role of Sufism extended beyond purely devotional functions. Sufi shrines served as centers of learning, moral guidance, dispute settlement, and community leadership. Sajjada Nasheens and custodian of Shrines often exercised symbolic power over local public and engaged with state institutions to protect interests of local community. After the emergence of Pakistan in 1947, the relationship between religious authority and political power underwent significant change. Sufi shrines became important actors in directing public sentiments, mobilizing adherents and negotiating with the state. Existing Scholarship on Sufism in south Asia shows that Sufi shrines were not merely a religious and spiritual institution but much more than this. It served as important space where people came together, established their social relationships and engaged in political and community affairs. Gilmartin explains in the context of Punjab that hereditary religious

leadership develops their close rural social and political network. This relationship allows them to play an influential role in society that extends beyond their religious responsibilities (Gilmartin, 1979). Similarly, Katherine P. Ewing wrote that Sufi saints and Shrines remained politically active even after the creation of Pakistan. Though, the nature of relationship between shrine authorities and the state underwent significant transformation because the successive governments attempted to regulate shrine activities and reshape the authority of shrine leaders (Ewing, 1983).

District Chiniot presents a distinct context where religious authorities interact with emerging political structures. Muhammadi Sharif emerged as a prominent center of spiritual influence and its leadership gradually engaged with political structure, social reform initiatives and public affairs during the early decades of Pakistan. The politics of Sufism in Chiniot requires examination of the historical evolution of the mystics of Muhammadi Sharif to understand the structural basis of their later political engagement. Consolidation of spiritual influence, moral legitimacy and communal trust across generations facilitated the shrine leadership to direct political behavior in the post-Partition period. The Sufis of Muhammadi Sharif did not limit their role to ritual and devotional practices but actively participated in socio-political processes including public mobilization and moral intervention in political discourse. This study offers a fresh perspective on the complex relationship between religion, politics, and society as a whole and examines how Sufism has shaped the political landscape in District Chiniot. Special attention has been paid on the Sufis of Muhammadi Sharif from 1947 to 1975. It investigates how spiritual authority was transformed into social and political influence and how Muhammadi Sharif functioned as a site of political mediation, moral guidance and public mobilization. This research situates Muhammadi Sharif within broader debates on religion and politics and contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of Sufism in shaping local political culture in post-Partition Pakistan. Before delving into the role of Muhammadi Sharif in the understanding of politics of Sufism of the time in Chiniot, it is essential to understand the historical background of the mystics of Muhammadi Sharif.

Historical overview of the evolution of the Mystics of Jamia Muhammadi Sharif

Family environment and paternal training play a fundamental role in the formation of human personality. It shapes an individual's character, developing morals and habits and patterns of thinking. Syed Abu al Hasan Ali Nadvi mentioned the enduring influence of family background on human development. This influence has also been widely acknowledged in the disciplines

of psychology, sociology and ethics. Inheritance contributes to the formation of instincts, human tendencies and mental outlook (Sajanka et al., 2020).

Family values and beliefs remain firmly integrated in individuals and frequently passed on across generations. Departure from established family norms is commonly perceived as rebellion against inherited tradition. Ancestral traits reveal not only in behavior but also in physical and psychological characteristics. Such was the case of Sufis of Muhammadi Sharif. Hazrat Imam ud Din laid the foundation of the Muhammadi Sharif's spiritual lineage. He was the son of Allah Dad. The father of Imam ud Din was a Hafiz Quran, and he served as imam of the mosque in *Mouza Walaah* in Tehsil Chiniot (Saadullah, 2018). Hazrat Imam ud Din received his religious and spiritual education from the renowned Madrasa of Bahauddin Zakaria Multani in Multan and was granted Khilafat within the Suhrawardi order. The Khilafat was bestowed to Hazrat Imam ud Din by the Sajjada Nasheen of Hazrat Bahau- ud- Din Zikriya Multani. He settled himself at Muhammadi Sharif, known as Kurak Muhammadi. He earned social recognition through piety, discipline, and spiritual authority. To regulate communal life, he laid down clear moral and social principles for the settlement of Muhammadi Sharif. These principles emphasized honesty, discipline, and moral accountability among the residents of the village. He discouraged theft and dishonesty to preserve social harmony. He also prohibited those practices which were considered morally harmful to the community to maintain ethical conduct (Saadullah, 2018). A disciplined social environment was established by him which was grounded in religious moral values.

Hazrat Shah Muhammad emerged as the Sajjada Nasheen after the death of Hazrat Imam ud Din. He represented the third generation of this spiritual lineage. His spiritual authority and reputed miracles made him prominent in the area. He played an important role in restoring social harmony among rival tribal groups of Rajowa Sadaat and the Sials of Jhang that disturbed local life. The competition between these rival groups created instability. Adopting a conciliatory approach, Hazrat Shah Muhammad succeeded in bringing followers from different social groups under his spiritual influence (Sajanka et al., 2020). Later, Hazrat Mian Abdul Rehman appeared as a significant successor who belonged to the seventh generation of Hazrat Imam Din. He consolidated his spiritual lineage by affiliating himself with both the Suhrawardi and Chishtia Nizamiya orders (Saadullah, 2018). His son Hazrat Mian Abdul Ghafoor held an important position in the Muhammadi Sharif spiritual lineage. In his youth, he entered the Chishtia order through allegiance to the Pir of Sial Sharif. He was granted Khilafat which also confirmed his spiritual authority. According to family tradition, he was appointed as the

successor of the chain in Muhammadi Sharif. He remained deeply committed to worship discipline, spiritual practice, and promoted Qawwali as a means of spiritual instruction. Qawwali at Muhammadi Sharif was conducted without musical instruments and unethical practices (Sajanka et al., 2020). The historical overview of the evolution of the mystic unveils that Muhammadi Sharif had evolved into a well-established institution especially during the time of Hazrat Mian Abdul Rehman and Hazrat Mian Abdul Ghafoor. It had built its spiritual affiliations with the Suhrawardi and Chishtia Nizamiya orders. These affiliations increased its spiritual network and consolidated its social capital. Mian Abdul Ghafoor further contributed to the institutionalization of this authority through religious education, mosque leadership and controlled devotional practices. The promotion of Qawwali as a disciplined spiritual activity without musical excess and unethical practices strengthens moral boundaries in the community. He also guided people over religious issues. Many people come to Mian Abdul Ghafoor for Fiqh-related matters. Either he himself solved and debated it or he transferred it to other scholars in Chiniot. These religious services at Muhammadi Sharif increase its public trust and ethical standardization (Saadullah, 2018). It cultivated obedience, loyalty, and collective identity among followers. Later, it became crucial for political mobilization. In this way, it operated as a moral institution which shaped public behaviour and guided social norms.

The Transformation from Spiritual Leadership to Political Mobilization (1947-75)

The period following the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 brought significant change in the relationship between religious authority and political power especially in Punjab. The colonial collapse and uncertainty in the newly established state created a political space for non-state actors. The Sufis played a significant role to fill this gap. The shrines possessed moral legitimacy, symbolic capital, and extensive networks of disciples due to the historical embeddedness of Sufism in the local community. It enabled them to act as intermediaries between the state and society (Gilmartin, 1992). In District Chiniot, Muhammadi Sharif appeared as a key site where spiritual leadership was translated into political mobilization. The relevance of Sufi institutions within the political domain was not accidental or new. Colonial masters had already acknowledged the political utility of shrine custodians, particularly Sajjada Nashins because of considerable influence over rural populations. British authorities gave patronage to Sufi Shrines and instrumentalized it for administrative stability (Chaudhry, 2013). However, this relationship underwent a substantial change after the partition of India. Sufi leadership actively shaped political consciousness and political participation of masses after the independence of Pakistan. Though rooted in historical continuity, this transition from

spiritual guidance to political engagement was driven by new socio-political realities. The leadership of Jamia Muhammadi Sharif was an ideal example of this transformation. The Sufis of Muhammadi Sharif worked within a localized moral economy. Their authority relied on their moral conduct, social service, and continuous involvement with everyday concerns of the population. This moral legitimacy proved essential in the early decades of Pakistan.

Between 1947-1975, Moulana Muhammad Zakir and his brother Moulana Muhammad Nafeh became active members in Muhammadi Sharif. Both emerged as a respected religious figure in District Chiniot because of their association with Muhammadi Sharif. Their authority developed through continuous spiritual guidance, social service, and moral leadership. Their role as Sufi created a strong bond between Muhammadi Sharif and the local population. This trust later became the foundation of public influence. All the activities of the institution were run by both brothers. Moulana Nafeh remained active members in guiding public about the religious affairs. He actively participated in "Khatam e Nabuwat movement"(Saadullah, 2010). He also participated in the election campaign of Muhammad Zakir in 1950-51 which has been discussed below. Moulana Zakir participated actively in both religious and political activities since his educational career. He devoted his whole life for public welfare which made him a charismatic personality around Chiniot. He was born in Muhammadi sharif, Tehsil Chiniot (later, it became District in 2010) in 1903. He received his early education from various institutions of Chiniot, Multan, Bahawalpur and Sargodha (Jappa, 1997).

He participated in Khilafat Movement during his student time when he was enrolled in Dar ul Ulum Shams ul Islam in a village at Sial Sharif Sargodha when he was 18 or 19-year-old. He served as head of "Jamiat ul Ahrar" which was an organization of students in favor of Khilafat movement (Saadullah, 2010). He was arrested in 1922 because of his participation in the movement (Jappa, 1997). He also participated in Kashmir Movement and was also arrested on 6th December 1931 (Saadullah, 2010).

Moulana Zakir realized the importance of education and laid the foundation of "Mudrassa Arabia Muhammadia" which became Dar ul Ulum after the creation of Pakistan. Besides this, he also established a primary school in his area which progressed from lower middle to high school. Later, it became intermediate college. There was no possibility of college education for most of the people of Chiniot and Jhang when he laid the foundation of this institution. He focused on both modern and traditional education (Jappa, 1997). He also started a teaching of Quran and Tafseer after Fajr prayer in the Mosque (Jappa, 1997).

Moulana Zakir joined Muslim league 1944 at a time when Feudal lords of Chiniot were not ready to offer their services. Rai Sultan Bhatti became president of Muslim league Jhang. Moulana became member of the general body in 1946. Karnal Abid Hussain and Mian Habib also became members of the working committee (Saadullah, 2010). Moulana entry into Muslim League was not the outcome his political interest. He joined Muslim league because he considered it as a platform through which Muslims of sub-continent could get independence from foreign domination. He considered British as anti-group against Muslim. It is visible through his Pan-Islamist attitude when he joined Khilafat movement. He tantamount Muslim's freedom from British equal to Muslim religious, political and economic freedom. Unlike secular nationalists and those who draw their national basis from Indus Sage as enunciated by Aitzaz Ahsan (Javid, 2001). Moulana Zakir demonstrated himself as Muslim nationalist. He rejected all other basis of nationhood unworthy and threatening to Muslim identity. The joining and association of Zakir with Muslim League did not weaken the religious identity of Muhammadi Sharif. Rather, it allowed him to represent community interests within formal political structures. After the partition of Pakistan, the representation of Muslim came in the hands of Feudal lords of Sadat family in the district. They mostly belong to Shia sect and started promoting sectarianism in the District Jhang to accumulate vote of Shia community. Even, they brought Shia emigrants to make it Shia dominated area. Later, disorder prevailed in Muslim league and feudal lords dominated this party in the District Jhang. Due to sectarian tension and political domination of feudal lord over District Jhang, Moulana Zakir separated himself from the political activities and kept himself busy in the organizational activities of Muhammadi Sharif (Saadullah, 2010).

Feudal Dominance and Political Mobilization of Muhammadi Sharif in the District Chiniot

Setting the context: Feudal dominance and restriction of popular political participation

This feudal dominance restricted political participation of the public because of weak democratic institutions. Tehsil Chiniot (District now) reflected the political dominance of Feudal Lords and restriction of public participation into political sphere of life. In Chiniot, people were kept as subjects. Resultantly, it made people unfamiliar with their political rights. Nawab and sardars had usurped these rights due to their unchecked authority granted by the British rules.

In 20th century, common people of District Jhang had no interest in political activities. Two families (Syed and Silas) were enjoying the unrivaled power of leadership. Only these feudal families participated in the election of Punjab Legislative Councils. Their victory was not attributed to their social or political services, but rather to their entrenched political lineage. Their main objective of contesting election was to gain power and develop relations with the British and the local administration. Syed families had fully dominated the politics of the district. Rojaya Sadat was represented by Hussain shah. Their influence and control over population of Chiniot and their bargaining power made them unbeatable in the political scenario of 1940s Jhang (Jappa, 1997).

Table: 1

Composition of District Council Jhang (Chiniot Area) (1949) and Dominance of Feudal families of Sadat

Designation	Name	Group / Biradari
Chairman	Saiyyid Abid Hussain	Shah Jewna
Vice-Chairman	Saiyyid Ahmed Shah	Rajoa
Junior Vice-Chairman	Saiyyid Zawar Hussain Shah	Rajoa
Member	Saiyyid Ghulam Muhammad Shah	Rajoa
Member	Saiyyid Sultan Shah	Rajoa
Member	Saiyyid Ghulam Abbas Shah	Rajoa
Member	Saiyyid Hassan Shah	Rajoa
Member	Saiyyid Mubarak Shah	Shah Jewna
Member	Saiyyid Masood Ali Shah	Shah Jewna
Member	Saiyyid Raza Ali Shah	Shah Jewna
Member	Saiyyid Ali Hussain Shah	Shah Jewna
Member	Saiyyid Akhter Hussain Shah	Shah Jewna
Member	Mehr Arif Khan Sial	Shah Jewna
Member	Khan Inayat Ullah Khan	Shah Jewna
Member	Mehr Abbas Khan	Shah Jewna

Note: District Council Jhang (Chiniot Area) (1949)

Around 95 percent of population of District Jhang (including Tehsil Chiniot) was completely ignored in political representation. Majority of the members of District Jhang who contested in election belonged to Syed family. Only three members belonged to other castes but, they were the choice of Syed group of Shah Jewana. Mehr Talib Hussain sial and Mehr Arif Khan Sial belonged to this category of politicians. They were elected representatives from Tehsil Shorkot of District Jhang (Sadiq, 2005). Even, these feudal families did not consider common public eligible for public representation and proudly ignored them as incapable for contesting the election. Following incidents unveils the negative mindset of these feudal lords toward entry of common public into politics. The reason of Moulana Zakir entry into politics was the negative thinking of Feudal Lords towards public representation. It is obvious through various incidents. Few of the incidence are given below. It has been taken from the memory of Moulana Abd ul Haq who was close member of Moulana Zakir. He mentioned that Hakim Atta Muhammad who was a famous physician and an active member of Muslim league during competition between Muslim league and Unionist party in Sargodha in 1946. He was with Karnal Abid Hussain and Muhammad Arif Sial during their visit for the reorganization of Muslims League. A debate occurred over the representation of common Public in the coming election. Arif Sial mentioned that there is no other eligible member among common people who could represent public except Sadat and their nominated person. Hakim tolerates this with great difficulty. He kept these remarks in his heart to unveil it at moment. It reflects the mindset of such Feudal Lords (Jappa, 1997).

Moreover, the same group came to Muhammadi Sharif for their connection campaign. A public gathering was held in which Karnal Abid Hussain was president. After the general meeting, Moulana Shah Muhammad asked that the majority of Public belonged to Sunni sect. All the representative positions are controlled by Sadaat of Rajoya and Shah Jewna and their blue-eyed member. Why is it that Sunni population does not have their representation and authority in government and district level? Karnal Abid Hussain replied, "The issue is not linked with majority and minority. It is linked with capability and eligibility. If the public of Sunni sect have the ability, they must bring their candidate in the field. The pride of these families veiled their mind about the eligibility of the common public in the political sphere of Chiniot. This also reflects the negative mindset of feudal lords toward public participation. Proud was fixed in their mind that no one can participate in the election as public representative except for these few families of feudal lords (Syed families and their chosen one) (Saadullah, 2010). Another event was recorded when a meeting was held in the Rajoya house Jhang. It was narrated by

Noor Muhammad Sipra of Chack no. 198. The respectable members from various areas were also called by the Sadat family. Few peasants were also there at the meeting. The center of discussion was the election of 1950. Sardar Hussain Shah of Rajoya was proposing the names of candidates in various constituencies of Chiniot. He himself proposed the names and then selected those names by himself. No one was allowed to criticize his decision. Noor Muhammad Sipra stood and said to Hussain Shah. If you had to nominate your candidates by yourself, then why did you call us here? You can inform us about this at our home. Sardar Hussain Shah responded proudly, "Is there anyone eligible among you who have the ability of public representation? Representation demands a higher mindset and greater eligibility. When Noor Muhammad left for his home, the Sardar asked about the reason of his departure from the meeting. Noor Muhammad replied, "I am going to find an eligible man for this position". These events reflect the negative mindset of feudal lords towards public participation in politics (Jappa, 1997). It showed their non-acceptance of the common public within their definition of eligibility and capability.

Apart from their public perception about participatory politics, these feudal lords were so powerful in the District Jhang that they controlled the leadership of Muslim League after partition of India. It is visible through their distribution of tickets in the general election in Punjab in 1951. They mostly belong to Shia sect and promoted sectarianism in the District Jhang. Even, they brought Shia emigrants to make it Shia dominated area (Saadullah, 2010). Moreover, seven out of nine tickets of Muslim League were distributed among Shia feudal lords and their partners. Only two tickets were given to Sunni sect in District Jhang. Moulana Zakir who was the deputy president of Muslim was also deprived of ticket (Saadullah, 2010).

Moreover, these feudal lords did not want political representation of the public from a public point of view. When the feudal candidate of Rajoya Sadat realized the popularity of Moulana Zakir. They tried another pretext to prevent Moulana Zakir from political representation of common public. The Sardar came to Muhammadi Sharif and asked Moulana, "You are a Faqir. What is your connection with politics? You should run your Mudrassa. The political membership of the constituency is temporary. He offered that I would bear the expenses of Jamia for three years. He offered two lack rupees on his withdrawal from election. Moulana simply replied, "I am not participating in election on the basis of my personal whims and wishes. The responsibility has been given by the public. Now, withdrawing from election is not my capacity. The affairs of Jamia would be run with the help of God, not of me. I am serving it as

a simple member". This shows Moulana Zakir's integrity and moral standard which he adopted to serve public at political level.

Muhammadi Sharif as a site of Political Mobilization and Challenge to Feudal Dominance

In this clime of restricted public participation in political affairs, the site of Muhammadi Sharif emerged as a dominant force for political mobilization. It rested on its moral authority which proved crucial in the early decade of Pakistan. Muhammdi Sharif functioned as an alternative public sphere. It cultivated political awareness through religious discourse, moral guidance and collective formation of identity. The Sufis of Muhammadi Sharif gradually moved beyond traditional khankahi functions between 1947 and 1975. They actively involved themselves in social reform and electoral politics along with devotional practices such as zikr, Sama 'and Urs rituals. Scholars of Pakistani politics identified this evolution as reflection of broader pattern. They often relate it as pragmatic strategy of religious leaders who blend cooperation with challenge based on political circumstances (Ewing, 1983). Political engagement of Muhammadi Sharif did not emerge as a rejection of spirituality but as its extension into the public domain. Unlike feudal lords whose families inherited political control, and their leadership was determined by wealth, Muhammadi Sharif emerged as a center of change. Its leadership was not based on wealth but on spiritual and moral authority.

In this controlled environment and feudal domination of the politics of Chiniot, Moulana Zakir's reentry into political sphere of life marked a major rapture. It contributed a lot to the ending of feudal supremacy. Much evidence reveal that Moulana reentry into politics was not his volunteer choice. His reentry into politics was the choice of the public. It is mentioned that Sardar Ghulam Muhammad Shah was contesting the election in the constituency No 9. of District Jhang. This constituency includes the villages of Rajoya and Bhuwana (now Tehsil od District Chiniot) Sardar Ghulam Muhammad Shah was the only son of Sardar Hussain Shah. There was no person in the area who could contest election against him. Noor Muhammad Sipra said," only Moulana Muhammad Zakir had the capacity to contest election against him". He has reputation among public due to his educational, welfare and reformative services among public. He went to Moulana with the deputation of respected members of the area. They urged Moulana to contest elections from the area of District Chiniot. He refused and said, " I have higher and collective mission before me. Politics will become hurdle in front of the educational scheme of Muhammadi Sharif." He also mentioned that people will blame my participation in politics simply because of gaining political authority. His brother Saleh Muhammad was more

reluctant in his political participation. Noor Muhammad Sipra went to Sial Sharif (Murshid) and requested for Moulana's political entry. He said, "he knew that Moulana and his brother would not refuse the order of Sial Sharif". Noor Muhammad also told to Sajjada Nasheen of Sial Sharif that there is no other person in the area who had the power and influence on to contest election against these feudal lords. Finally, they convinced Moulana for his re-entry into the political sphere of Chiniot (Saadullah, 2010).

On his political return, Moulana Muhammad Zakir organize public against the unjust distribution of party tickets of Muslim League and develop consciousness against these Shia feudal mindset in the District Jhang. He made people aware of the negative consequences of their winning. Despite this, Moulana developed a political platform called "Awami Mutihida Mahaz" against these Feudal lords. This emerged as a powerful political platform in the District Jhang (Saadullah, 2010).

Moulana Zakir set a new pattern in the electoral history of politics. In Pakistan, politicians mostly make incorrect promises to obtain votes from the public. They also invest money and buy the votes of people. They dream of the untrue and blackmail people for their success (Sajanka et al., 2022). Moulana chose moral strategy and acts of public welfare over immoral stance of politicians of the time. Moulana Zakir never participated in his election campaign. It is illustrated through the expression and instruction to Noor Muhammad Sipra which he made despite his reentry into politics on his return from Sial Sharif. Moulana told Noor Muhammad Sipra that I would not participate in the election campaign because it would distract him from the educational and welfare activities of Muhammadi Sharif. He also mentioned that no member and student from Muhammadi Sharif will participate in the election campaign (Saadullah, 2010). He asked his brother Moulana Nafeh to help Noor Muhammad in election campaign. Noor Muhammad also received permission of a member of Khanqah named as Moulana Muhammad Khan for election campaign (Jappa, 1997). A story is narrated by a respectable Zamindar Mian Allah Yar Hanjra who belonged to Shia sect. He came to Moulana with the message of the Sadat of Mouza Dapran. These Sadat was political rival of the Sardar of Rajoya Sadat. They tried political bargain with Moulana Zakir with the vision that they will cast almost 3000 votes in favor of Moulana if he gives his words that he will support them in the coming election. Moulana refused this offer with the saying " I cannot make promise about future whose fulfilment is uncertain. The messenger asked Moulana if they were political rivals of Rojaya Sadat. Come with me to ask them for vote. I will convince them of unconditional support. Moulana replied, "Mian Shahib, I will represent the people of Ahl e Sunnat. How can

I ask for vote to these wealthy Shia Sadat? My self-will condemns me if I will become greedy today”.

Another story is quoted by Mian Muhammad Mukhtar. He said that almost some influential persons of almost 12 villages demanded Noor Muhammad Sipra for the arrival of Moulana Zakir for demand of votes. They would cast their vote in favor of Moulana. Noor Muhammad convinced them to see Moulana because he is unable to visit them because of his bodily weakness. When these people came to see him, he was preparing for prayer. When Moulana got free from ablution, they offered their demand. Moulana said, "go to Eid-gah and see Moulana Nafeh if you would like to talk about electoral votes. Saying this, Moulana went to mosque and these people saw each other's faces on this reply and returned in wonder (Saadullah, 2010).

He demonstrated his principled political stance and his great indifference from votes when a delegation of Qadiani's group (Jammat e Ahmadiya) offered him almost ten thousand votes in 1971 election if he pleases. However, Moulana Zakir said, "I am sorry, but I could not speak for you in the National Assembly". Workers fought back and Moulana asked, " Should I get their votes and become their representative? Everyone told him that it is the need of the hour. But he considered it an unethical break of the trust of even a small group of people (Sajanka et al., 2022). This Qadiani' group knows that Muhammadi Sharif was actively involved against their doctrine. Even, Moulana Zakir and his brother were arrested during campaign against Qadiani' group in 1953 (Saadullah, 2018). It illustrates the demonstration of a higher standard of morality in the political sphere of Chiniot and the country. The above-mentioned events demonstrated his moral stance in the political sphere of life. His moral integrity and spiritual power led to his victory in the election.

In 1950 provincial elections, Muslim league was running the governmental affairs of the state. Despite governmental support, political, economic and social pressure of feudal lords on public and election rigging, Moulana Muhammad Zakir won the election with the lead of 530 votes (Jappa, 1997).

Table: 2

The official election results of constituency No. 9 of District Jhang are given below in the Chart

Member Name	Acquired Votes
Moulana Muhammad Zakir	17567
Syed Ghulam Shah	17037
Syed Ahmed Shah	310

Note: Author collected results from District Jhang election office.

In the 1970 election, Moulana was not ready to participate because of his weakness and disability. He was order by the Sial Sharif to contest election from the platform of Jamiat Ulema e Pakistan. His opponent from Rajoya Sadat Sardar Muhammad Ali Shah was contesting election from the platform of Pakistan People Party. There was huge popularity of PPP at that time. Despite populism of Z.A Bhutto based on his manifest Roti, Kapra and Makan, Moulana Zakir won this election with the lead of 5000 votes and became member of the National Assembly of Pakistan. This win in the election was the outcome of public trust due to his spiritual, social and political services (Jappa, 1997).

The election win was the outcome of spiritual training and social services of Muhammadi Sharif in the public sphere and public trust over Muhammadi Sharif. It reflected the fusion of socio-religious services with political engagement as one of his noteworthy accomplishments of Muhammadi Sharif. Moulana Zakir translated his political influence and political representation for the sake of the general welfare of the common public. He did not use political platforms to satisfy his personal interest. Before him, feudal mindset and political prejudices of feudal lords did not allow them to work for the general welfare of the District Chiniot. Instead of planning welfare activities of the district, they spent money on personal exhibitions of their houses, their-selves and personal dairy forms. They had no concern for the education of the common public. Even, they did not allow to build a school at Rajoya Sadat because of the fear of the education of the children of peasants. Their own children were studying in higher institutions like Aitchison Colleges. They did not allow the construction of Jhang Chiniot Road for years. They transported electricity to those areas where they have their luxurious houses. They paid no attention to the department of information. They did not pay heed to protect

people from natural calamities such as floods which destroyed public houses and agriculture. They kept people away from modern facilities and fixed them in the circle of hunger and poverty. They facilitated the public in fighting and theft and protected their own groups with prejudices. They kept public away from high moral values and consider every facility as their personal right (Jappa, 1997). But Muhammdi Sharif's social and political contributions are undeniable in the field of education and other welfare activities of the Chiniot. Through the platform of Muhammadi Sharif various schools were opened in many villages of the Chiniot. The construction of a paved road which connects Chiniot with the District Jhang was the major achievement of Moulana Zakir. The medical facilities were provided in the rural areas of Chiniot. Many hospitals were open. Many Schools were opened during the tenor of Moulana Zakir. He used his authority in the transportation of electricity and installation of tube well in rural areas. Chiniot City got the facility of Gas due to the effort of Moulana Zakir. He also proposed a telephone exchange at Bhuwana, but it was completed after his death (Sajanka et al., 2023).

Muhammadi Sharif worked for education, training, and care for children. An orphanage house named Dar ur Rahmat was constructed to protect the orphan children. To integrate knowledge with practical abilities, an industrial community was constructed in the Jamiabad. By the launch of Jamat e Zimindaran, Muhammadi Sharif has fought for the rights of farmer of the Chiniot (Saadullah, 2010).

Conclusion

This study examines that Sufism was not limited to spiritual and personal piety in Chiniot. Muhammadi Sharif emerged as a strong moral institution which shaped public sphere. Sufi leadership gained public trust later the basis of educational and ethical services. later, this trust became the basis of political influences and Muhammadi Sharif functioned as a bridge between ordinary people and political structure. It offered an alternative space for political participation in a region dominated by the feudal lords. The Sufi of Muhammadi sharif Moulana Zakir played a crucial role in this transformation. He rejected wealth-oriented politics, and his political engagement was driven by the public demand. He rejected trading his principles for votes and establishing a new political culture. It gave him vast public support, and his victory reflected a shift from feudal domination to popular mobilization. It unveils that political mobilization at Muhammadi Sharif related to spiritual training, moral discipline and religious guidance. Instead of rejection, Muhammadi sharif redefined politics as moral responsibility. The welfare

activities show that political power could serve public interest. It contrasted with feudal political structure. The success of Muhammadi Sharif illustrates how Sufi institution contributed to democratic consciousness at local level.

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