



An Overview of Sufism in Karnataka

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Introduction:

Islam entered India in the early 8th century A.D. under the Arab commander Muhammad-bin Qasim by conquering the regions of Sindh and Multan. Simultaneously, Arab Muslims came to Seaports of India for trade and business ventures. Sufi preachers, merchants and missionaries also settled in coastal Gujarat through maritime voyages and trade. Sufi mystic traditions became more visible during the 10th and 11th centuries of the Delhi Sultanate and after it to the rest of India. In the medieval Indian environment Sufism was the most interesting aspect of Islam. It came to India before the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi, but after the foundation of the Turkish rule, a large group of sufi's from different Islamic countries migrated to India and established themselves in many parts of Hindustan.

Sufism known as 'taswwuf' in Arabic, is a form of Islamic mysticism. Sufism, mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslim seeks to find the Truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. They accepted the Prophet hood of Mohammed and the authority of the Quran, but in course of time they absorbed a variety of ideas and practices from different sources, such as, Hindu philosophical system etc. Sufi mysticism sprang from the doctrine of Wahadatul wujud or the unity of being, which identified the Haq (the creator) and Khalq (the creating). This doctrine means that God is the unity behind all plurality and the reality behind all phenomenal appearances. The sufi's were organised into orders or silsilahs named after the name or surname of the founder of the particular order, such as Chisti, Suhrawardi, Firdousi, Qadriya, Shattari and Naqshaband etc. Sufi's have professional pursuits such as Farmers, warriors, weavers, and etc.

Sufi Thought, beliefs and traditions:

- To faith in Allah, Quran, Hadis and Prophet Mohammad
- To stress on the principles of tauba (repentance) and tawakkal (trust in God)
- To pass through ten stages such as, tauba (repentance), wara (abstinence) zuhd (peity), fagr (poverty) Sabr (Patience), shukr (gratitude), Khauf (fear), raja (hope), tawakkul (contentment) and riza (submission)
- To faith in sufi order such as, shariyat, tarikat, marifat and haqiqat
- To give importance for earning
- To emphasize the doctrine of Wahadatul wujud or the unity of being
- To adopt Sama and Raqs (audition and dancing as mode of invocation to God)
- To encourage Sama (music)
- Showing great interest in learning Yoga

Sufi chain link: peer (teacher), murid (disciple), wali (protector) Mahdi, and Dargha (the tomb of Sufi)

Sufi's called as: peer, peer muridi, wali, baba, aulia, khalander, fakir, darvesh and etc.



Rituals: One of the most popular rituals in Sufism is the visiting of grave-tombs of Sufi saints. These have evolved into Sufi shrines and are seen among cultural and religious landscape of India. The ritual of visiting any place of significance is called ziyarat.

Sufi Khanqah: A Khanqah is commonly defined as hospice, lodge, community center, or dormitory ran by Sufi's. Khanqahs were also known as Jammāt Khana, large gathering halls. Structurally, a Khanqah could be one large room or have additional dwelling space. Although some Khanqah establishments were independent of royal funding or patronage, many received fiscal grants (waqf) and donations, from benefactors for continuing services. Initially, the Sufi Khanqah life emphasized a close and fruitful relationship between the master-teacher (scheikh) and their students.

Karnataka is known as the land of Sharanas and Sufi's, Sufism was entered in west Coast of Karnataka along with Arab merchants, who have been mentioned to inscriptions as Tadjikas, (Shrinivas, 2008, 08) The Sufi's came to Karnataka, from North India as well as from Persia, Central Asia and other parts. The rulers and people had supported Sufism. The Bahamani's and later Adil Shahi's of Bijapur, Baridshahi's of Bidar, Nawabs of Savanur, Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan patronized etc Sufism. The earliest reference to a Sufi saint in Karnataka can be traced back to 1301 A.D. Hazrat Sayyid Shah Hisamud-din-Teighbarana was the first Sufi to come to Gulbarga. (Munshi, 1997:349) Another reference is, Noorulla Qadri, belong to Vijayanagar period, his tomb is located at Kaddi Rampura in Hospet Taluk and District.

The Sufi's of Karnataka have been discussed as under:

Sufi's of Bahamani period, Gulbarga: The Bahamani's ruled Gulbarga from 1347 to 1424 A.D. and Bidar from 1424 to 1538 A.D. The Bahamani Sultan's and Nobility had patronized Sufism. Gulbarga became one of the centres of Sufism in Deccan. The notable Sufi's are:

Shaik Siraj-ud-din Junaidi: He came to Gulbarga in 1347. The Bahamani Sultan Alluddin Hasan Bahaman Shah nominated him as a royal preceptor. He was patronized by Sultan Mohammed-I, and his son Mujahid, His tomb is called as Shaik Roza Darga, is located at Shah Bazar, Gulbarga.

Syed Muhammed Gesu Daraz (Hazrat Khwaja Bande Nawaz):

The most of prominent figures of Sufism in Gulbarga was Syed Muhammed Gesu Daraz. He came to Delhi from Daulatabad to complete his education and was a disciple and then became successor of Nasiruddin Chirag Dehlavi, when he moved to Daulatabad around 1400 A.D, to the attack of Timor on Delhi, he took the Chisti order to South India. He finally settled down to Gulbarga, at the invitation of Bahamani Sultan, Tajuddin Firuz Shah. He stayed in Gulbarga for many years and propagated the Chisti mysticism. His love for the poor and the needy and his defence of the rights of man earned him the title of Bandanawaz (benefactor of God's creatures). He was patronized by Bahamani Sultan Firuz Shah and Ahmed Shah-I. Syed Gesu Daraz was a prolific writer of over thirty books on Tasawwuf (mysticism). He was one of the early poets and writers in Urdu Language. His famous couplet, that reflected the credo of the mysticism and bhakti, was one of the first specimens of Urdu poetry. He had studied Hindu mythology and was conversant with the Sanskrit Language also. He has written a commentary on the Quran and on Mashraiq-Amar (a famous collection of the traditions of the Prophet). He wrote many treatises on the works of Iban Arabi and Suhrawardi, which made the works of these scholars accessible to Indian scholars and



played a major role in influencing later mystical thought. Other books authored are Qaseeda Amali and Adaab-al-Mureedein. After his death Sultan Ahmed Shah-I, constructed dargah in Gulbarga to commemorate of Gesu Daraz. The Dargah is known as KBN and even now regarded with great esteem and veneration by the people of Karnataka and beyond. The Dargah is known for Urus, Sama and Qawalli.

Other Sufi's of Gulbarga Are:

- Hazrat Shah Bahauddin Langot Band Rahamthullah Aulia (Shah Bazar)
- Hazrat Moulana Hafeez (near the tomb of shaik ziyauddin qatal,)
- Moulana Iftiqaruddin (Shahbzar, Gulbarga)
- Moulana Kamal Girayan (Sultanpur, Gulbarga)
- Hazrat Peer Bangdhi (dargah is located fort road, Gulbarga)
- Bahaman Shah Sahib (dargah is located near Ganjiriyani Mazhar, Gulbarga)

Sufi's of Bidar during Bahamani period: Sultan Ahmed Shah-I, shifted his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar, in 1424 A.D. Sufi's of Bidar belong to various silsilahs such as Chisti and Qadri, and they were patronised by Sultan's. Nobility and others. The notable Sufi's of Bidar are:

- Syed Tajuddin: He was born in Khorasan, a city of Iran and came to Kalyana (Bidar Dist) in 1387 A.D. He was popularly known as 'Raja Bagh Sawar' of Kalyana and was also one of the prominent followers of Gesu Daraz of Gulbarga and on the instructions of his master he started Sufi activities (Kulkarni, 1977: 295). He was respected by Bahamani Sultan Alauddin-II. After his death, dargah was constructed near inspection Bungalow, Bidar. Today, the dargah as Syed Tajuddin has a unique reputation in society and became a centre of pilgrimage for the Muslims and the Hindus. (Kulkarni, 1977:298-299)
- Syed Ismail Qadri: He came to Bidar from Bagdad and he was patronised by Sultan Alauddin-II. He had cordial relationship with Brahmins. The dargah of Syed Ismail Qadri is located at Ghorwad, near Bhalki, Bidar Dist.

Sufi's of Adil Shahi period, in and around Bijapur: During the Adil Shahi period, Sufi's migrated to Bijapur from various places like Baghdad, Persia, Sindh, and other places of India, such as Daulatabad, Ahmedabad, Broach, Bidar and Gulbarga. About 27 Sufi's were existed during the period of Sultan Ibrahim II, 11 were during the period of Sultan Muhammad and 4 were in the period of Sultan Ali II. A number of tombs and dargahs of Sufi's were built in Bijapur. The notable Sufi's were:

- Sayyid Chanda Husaini: He migrated from Arabia to Bidar in the late 15th century and joined the cavalry of Sultan Yusuf Adil Shah and accompanied him to Gogi, near Shahpur of Gulbarga Dist. His tomb is located in Gogi.
- Shaik Shamsal-din zinda dil
- Shah Miranji Shamsal-Ushashaq
- Shah Noor at-din Safawai
- Shah Abul-Hasan Qadiri
- Shah Sibghat Allah
- Shah Hashim Alawai,
- Abul Hasan, Shah Mustafa Qadiri, And Shah Qasim Aqdiri
- Shaik Abdulla adidarus etc.



Other Sufi's of Karnataka:

Baba Budan: Baba Budangiri Range is a range mountain in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. The Baba Budangiri range includes the highest peaks of Karnataka. The range, originally known as Chandra Drona Paravatha, takes its current name from the Dattapeeta cave and Baba Budangiri in the name of 16th century Sufi Baba Budan. Baba Budan, whose history is usually traced to Baghdad, reached Chickamagalur via Malabar and Mangalore. Sufi Bab Budan, said to have brought coffee to hilly region, Chickamagalur from Mocha in the west Asia. His shrine located amongst three caves on the Baba Budangiri, served as a pilgrimage centre for both Hindus and Muslims. A large number of stories have been constructed around Dada's dargah. These stories pertaining to the spiritual and healing powers including the power to bestow children, relief of physical disorders, property disputes etc.

Hazrat Tawakkal Mastan Dargha, Bangalore:

It is Sufi shrine of Islam with a history of about 200 years located at Cottonpet of Bangalore City. In the mid-18th century A.D. Bangalore was ruled by Hyder Ali. On the request of three sufi's of Kumbarpet mosque, such as Hazrat Tawakkal Baba, Hazrat Tipu Mastan, and Manik Mastan, Hyder Ali agrees to build a mosque. The construction of the mosque which was begun by Hyder Ali in 1777 A.D. was completed by his son Tipu Sultan in 1783 A.D. Tawakkal Baba, died in the mosque in 1777 A.D. and this information comes from the inscription at the top of the tomb which is located inside the building. The special feature and symbol of integration is when the famous Bangalore Karaga come to this Dargah, receive dhuparati and then leave for the circumnavigation of the city. The dargah is visited not only by Muslim but also by other religion.

Amma Jan and Bawa Jan Dargah of Murugamalla, Chintamani:

It is said that Hazrat AmmaJan and Bawa Jan came to Murugamalla and use to fast a lot and did strong Ibadath (worship). They were blessed by a great son who later became a jalali buzurg known as Hazrat Syed Jalal Khaki Shah Moula, whose Dargah is a few kilometres in Nimkanpalli, Chintamani Taluk, Chickaballpur District. The Dargah of Murugamalla is famous for Hazri of Jinnats. This dargah shareef attracts a large number of people from different places like, Kolar, Mulabagal, Bangalore and other places. The Urs-e-shareef of Amma Jan and Bawa Jan is celebrated on 12th holy and sacred month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

Female Sufi's: From 14th centuries onwards, references are found about female sufis' in Karnataka. The earliest happens to be of Hazrat Masaheba Ashrafe Dojahan (Kamath, 1987:912) who came from Baghdad about 800 years ago to Kudchi, Raybag Taluk, Belgaum District, Kunja Maa Bee, the daughter of Sultan Muhammad Shah-I (Munshi, 1977:356-365) The other female sufi's are, Hazrata Amina Bibi Dadi Ma Sahiba and Mastana Bibi (dargahs at City Market, Bangalore) Syedani Bibi (dargah & Mosque, Mamulpet, Chickpet, Bangalore) Tawakkal Mastan Bibi (dargah at Richmond circle, Bangalore) Hazrat Saiyida Amma Jan (Mandya) Saidani Bibi (Mangalore) (Katpadi, 2010:7 & 78). Bibi Fatima (Gulbarga). Niyamath Bi (Gowribidanur) Zarinabi (Kadur) etc.



Contribution of Sufism to Karnataka:

- Influence on society: Their traditions of devotional practices and modest living attracted all people. Their teachings of humanity, love for God and prophet continue to be surrounded by mystical tales and folk songs today, sufi's were firm in abstaining from religious and communal conflict and strived to be peaceful elements of civil society.
- Importance to language of the masses: They spoke the language of the masses and gave impetus to linguistic assimilation and to a cultural synthesis. Besides preaching major cities and centres of intellectual thought, Sufi's reached out to poor and marginalized rural communities and preached in local dialects such as Urdu, Kannada, Punjabi, Hindi etc.
- Influence on Rulers, Aristocrats etc: They exercised considerable influence on kings, officials and nobles for the good of the people.
- Sufi's stressed the importance of earning. Religious literature tells us about many saintly people who earned their livelihood by their professional pursuits and recognised the dignity of labour.
- Sufi's imparted education and emphasised the need of acquiring it. Some of the Sufi's were scholars and men of vast erudition and acted as teachers. Khanqah became Jamat Khana, large gathering halls. Sufi Khanqah emphasized a close and fruitful relationship between the master teacher (sheikh) and fruitful relationship between the master teacher (sheikh) and their students. For example, students in Khanqahs would pray, worship, study, and read works together. Sufi's also studied various other manuals describing code of conduct, adab (Islam). The other major function of a khanqah was of a community shelter.
- Sufi's won the hearts of the; people by their love and liberalism, sincerity of purpose, charity, piety and social service
- Dargah culture: One of the most popular rituals in Sufism is visiting of grave tombs of Sufi's, also known as dargahs. The ritual of visiting any place of significance is called ziyarat. In order to show reverence to Sufi's sultans and nobles provided large donations or waqt to preserve the tombs and renovate them architecturally. In Sufism, Music is called as 'Sama' Sufi gatherings today are known as Qawwali. Sufi's adopted Sama and Raqs (audition and dancing) as a mode of invocation to God. The dargahs also famous for Art & architecture and Urus programmes.
- The Sufi's were broad-minded people, who recognised the truth in other faiths. In extending their help to others they made no distinction on the basis of caste or creed.
- Literature: Sufi's wrote books in Urdu, Arabic, Persian and other vernacular languages. Urdu became the language of the masses. The patronized the lyrics like Shayari, Ghazal, Qawwali etc.
- Sufinization: The influence of Sufism is not only confined to religious harmony but it has also affected on Kannada Language and Literature, Folk songs, name of the places, name of the persons, and formation of Tatwapadas.

Conclusion: Sufism emerged as a moral and comprehensive socio-religious force, that was influenced from other religious traditions such as Hinduism. Their traditions of devotional practices and modest living attracted all people. Sufis were firm in abstaining from religious and communal conflict and strived to be peaceful elements of civic society. The sufi's tried



to remove fanaticism between the Hindus and the Muslims and enhanced the feelings like humanity, love, tolerance and equality.

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