

**SUFIS BEYOND THE SUFI ORDERS:
ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE POPULAR IN MALABAR**

A project report submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the

Summer Research Fellowship Programme 2017

Submitted by

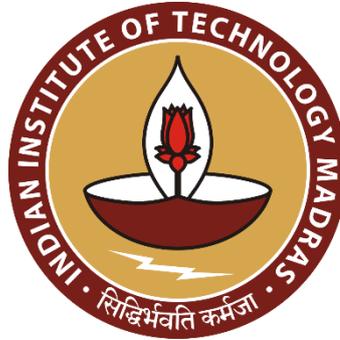
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HS17SFP0022

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JULY 2017

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Mr. **Naseem Ashiq.V** (HS17SFP0022), M.A. Medieval History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, undertook the Summer Fellowship Programme-2017 in the Department of Humanities and Social Science at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, under my guidance. This report titled “**Sufis beyond the Sufi Order; Engagements with the Popular in Malabar**” was prepared as a requirement for the completion of the programme.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude and sincere thanks to my guide Dr. Santhosh Abraham for his valuable guidance and suggestions which helped me to complete this project.

My sincere gratitude is due to Prof. Umakant Dash, Head of the Department and I would extend my sincere thanks to Prof. S.P. Dhanavel, Programme Coordinator for various assistance that he provided to me at different stages of my stay at IIT Madras, and other faculty members as well as the administrative staff of the Department for their complete support and all facilities provided to me.

A ton of thanks to my Uppa and Umma who wholeheartedly encouraged me and I register my token of gratitude to all the fellow students in the SFP-17 programme for their valuable criticism and time shared with me. I cannot thank enough Ubaidulla Konnikkuzhi, Govind Nelika, Shamseer Keloth and Said Ali for providing me with a great source of my material and support.

Finally, I would like to thank the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras, for giving me this opportunity to undertake this project titled “**Sufis Beyond the Sufi Orders; Engagements with the Popular in Malabar**”.

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ABSTRACT

This project locates the role of Sufis in the popular domain of Malabar. The project takes off from an analysis of historiography and limitations on studies in Sufism. A discussion of the arrival of different Sufi orders in Malabar and the effort they had taken to spread Islam would help to understand what is at stake. What influence does Sufis have beyond the Sufi orders? The question of how Sufis engaged with social, religious and communitarian spheres in Malabar region to become an instrumental for social and cultural change as of a devotional cult, a community leadership in anti-colonial struggles, and agents in counter reform movements throughout different period of time is dealt with in this project.

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INTRODUCTION

Sufism is the tendencies in Islam which aim at direct communion between God and man. A sphere of spiritual experience which runs parallel to the main stream of Islamic consciousness deriving from prophetic revelation and comprehended with the sharia and ideology. As it was the practice for the common folk to get introduced to many Sufi orders, exhibiting very little of their influence in daily life. Sufis constituted an important part of the Muslim society from the very inception. The Sufis were the peaceful emissaries of Islam. Many Sufis devoted much time not only to public preaching but also to helping others to work through moral problems as they came to them and to fond as pure a life as they personally are capable of. In doing so, such Sufis sometimes made little even of differences in religious allegiance. Such men won enormous popular respect. Junaid al Baghdadi, once said that, Sufis is not achieved by much praying and fasting, but it is the security of the heart and the generosity of the soul. So, over a period of time, Islamic Sufism became an important part of the Muslim devotional and social order.

Chapter one looks at how Sufism evolved and examined definitions and various scholarly notes on Sufism. It looks at how it had developed in different regions like Kashmir, Bengal and Deccan. The second chapter shifts the focus to Kerala. The historians pointed that Sufis who came along with Malik Dinar from Arabia and other central Islamic lands had been at work in Kerala during the eighth and ninth centuries onwards who spread of the basic Sufi principles in Kerala especially in Malabar region. Here, the discussion framed around the question of what influence does Sufis have beyond the Sufi orders and whether Sufis can exist without a Sufi order? This chapter also intended to rectify the misunderstanding and wrong

argument made by some scholars like I.H.Qureshi regarding the early Sufi presence in Kerala. He states that Sufi missionary activities were found seldom in Malabar. Evidently, Rolland E miller in his *Mapila Muslim of Kerala. A study in Islamic trends* quotes him that “the extensive Sufi missionary activity found elsewhere in India is not evident in south India.” So, a discussion of the arrival of different Sufi orders in Malabar and the effort they had taken to spread Islam would help to understand what is at stake. In Malabar region, the influence of Sufis were significant factor which led members of different other religions and lower classes to embrace Islam and followed the path of Sufism.

In this chapter, there are three categories I have chosen to box the wide range of Sufi engagements, firstly, the Devotion- devotion as a cult and the emergence of tombs or Dargahs has been noticed as the manifestation of the popular practices of Mapila Muslims. It can be seen as the reflection of popular culture of the Mapila. Secondly, the Dissent- it is about how Sufis are situated in anti-colonial struggle and a wide spectrum of responses from the Sufis against colonialism. Sufi bonds that helped Mapila Muslim to fight against colonial powers. Thirdly, the Discourse- it is about the politics of contemporary Sufis in Malabar and refers to their counter reform movements.

CHAPTER - 1

Sufism within the Sufi orders: Definition and Discussion

Sufism, the major mystical tradition in Islam emerged from within renunciatory modes of piety (*zuhd*) during the last decades of eighth century. Both Sufi and Sufism are terms adopted from Arabic. The term Sufi refers to devotees of a particular type of piety. This mode of pious living was most commonly referred to by ‘*tasawwuf*’, which is the Arabic equivalent of the modern English name ‘Sufism’. The word Sufi was first coined as early as the eighth century to refer to some renunciants and pietists who wore wool as opposed to other renunciants and the majority who wore wool and cotton. A special form of piety by wearing wool, hence the word ‘wool wearers’ came to carry the connotation of devoted, Sufi or mystic like that.¹

If we cast various definitions of Sufism given by the historians themselves, among them Anne Maria Schimmel in her book named ‘*Mystical Dimension of Islam*’ defined Sufism in a way that “Sufism is expressed as loving union, in which the spirit sees what is beyond all vision, surrounded by the primordial light of God; the veil that covers the essential identity of God and his creatures”². Furthermore, she elaborates Sufism meant an interiorization of Islam, a personal experience of the central mystery of Islam, that of *Tawhid*, to declare that God is one: the Sufis always remained inside the fold of Islam, and their mystical attitude was not limited by their adherence to any of the legal or theological schools. They could reach their goal from any starting point neither the difference between the legal madhabs nor theological aspects was,

¹ Ahmet T Karamustafa, *Sufism. The formative period*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, p.2, 4

² Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions of Islam*. United States of America: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p.4

basically, of interest to them³. Scholars like Professor Mir Valiudhin who specialized in Sufism described it by quoting the words of Shaikh-ul Islam Zakariya Ansari that ‘Sufism teaches how to purify one’s self, improve one’s morals and build up one’s inner and outer life in order to attain perpetual bliss. Its subject matter is purification of the soul and its end or aim is the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness’.⁴

As far as the genesis of Sufism is concerned, Syed Athar Abbas Rizvi argued that Sufism began with the Prophet Mohammed; he was a Sufi when on his way to becoming a prophet. He was indeed a Sufi throughout his whole life. Although, all sources unanimously relate that he continued to lead an exceedingly austere and ascetic life. He considered a life of poverty and resignation to God’s will.⁵ The Sufi doctrine was both generated and must be illustrated out of Prophet Muhammad’s own mysticism⁶. Even though Qur’anic verse also depicts the Prophet as he was sent to instruct mankind in scripture and wisdom and to purify them (2:129).

According to Satish Chandra, Mystics who are called Sufis, had arisen in Islam at a very early stage. Most of them were persons of deep devotion who were disgusted with vulgar display of wealth and it characterised the relationship of love between the mystic and God as *Ishq* or Passionate love. This love makes the seeker capable of bearing, even enjoying, all the pains and affliction that God showers up on him in order to test him and to purify his soul. This love can carry the mystic heart to the divine presence. Some of the early Sufis, such as the women mystic Rabia and Mansur Hallaj, laid great emphasis on love as the bond between god and the individual soul. But their pantheistic approach led them into conflict with orthodox Ulemas. Despite this setback, mystic ideas continued to spread among the Muslim

³ Ibid, p. 16.

⁴ Mir Valiudhin, ‘Sufi movement in India’ in Sayed Abdul Latif (ed), *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*. Hyderabad: The Institute of Indo-East Cultural Studies, p. 221

⁵ S.A.A. Rizvi, *A history of Sufism in India. Vol. 1*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978, p.20

⁶ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p.9

masses. Subsequently, he divided the Sufi orders into two: *Ba shara*- that is which followed the Islamic law (sharia) and *Be shara* that is which were not bound by it. For him, both types of Sufi orders prevailed in Indian subcontinent⁷. Similarly, the renowned historian on Islamic studies professor Marshal Hodgson in his '*ventures of Islam*' presents Islam persistently into two faces. One is, Sharia minded concerned with outward, accepted as their care by sharia Ulema, the other as mystical minded, concerned with the inward: personal life of the individual accepted as their care by the Sufi pir.⁸

Early Sufism had reached its zenith under boundless love and devotion of greatest Sufis like Hasan Basri, Abu Hashim, Rabia thu-al Misri, Sufyan Sauri, Shaiq Balkhi and Imam Gazzali. At the beginning, Mecca, Medina, Basra and Kufa were the holy centres of Islamic Sufism. Later on, it was blossomed in Iran, Khurasan and India. Malik Dinar (744 CE), who was the chief disciple of Hasan Basri, sailed to Kerala and first introduced and propagated Islam to that region of the Indian subcontinent. His efforts accelerated its growth and responsible for a systematized Sufi missionary work. So, which shows that the roots of Sufism has been prevalent in Kerala since its formative period.

By the twelfth century the reorganization of Sufism was completed with the establishment of formal Sufi brotherhood or order (*tariqah*). The formal organisation of Sufi orders seems to have appeared earliest in Khurasan, though it soon spread everywhere. The Sufis were organised into more than 12 orders like the Qadiriyya, Rifa-iyya, Suhrawardhiyya, Chisthiyya, Naqshabandhiyya, and Shadhuliyya and were formed in between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Each of them had its own character and initially associated with in a particular geographical region. A Sufi

⁷ Satish Chandra, *History of Medieval India*, New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2007, pp. 187-188

⁸ Marshal G.S. Hodgson, *The ventures of Islam*, vol.2, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p.203

order was generally led by a prominent Sufi who lived in a *khanqah* or hospice along with his disciples. The link between the teacher or *pir* or *Sheikh* and his disciples or *murid* was vital part of Sufism. The pir-murid relationship as a needed discipline and a vehicle for public outreach. Each aspirant to the Sufi ways was expected to put himself into the hands of a pir who he was to obey at all costs. The teacher undertook to guide his spiritual progress, suggesting patterns of meditations.⁹ So gradually these orders transformed into an institutional framework, where the disciple willingly spread abroad their master's message. Each *tariqa* had a distinct spiritual pedigree stretching back to the Prophet (this sequence is called *silsilah* and it's the source of legitimacy), its own devotional practices, educational philosophy and headquarters. Moreover, the fundamentals of Sufi science were often taught in local religious Sufi *madrasas* or *khanqahs*, Islamic theology and jurisprudence became the part of curricula of local Sufi *khanqahs*. In addition, Alexander Knysh rightly remarked that between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries Islamic Sufism became an important part of the Muslim devotional life and social order. Its literature and authorities, its networks of tariqa institutions became a spiritual and intellectual glue that held together the culturally and ethnically diverse societies of Islam Dom.¹⁰

Another distinctive mark of Sufism is its concentration on a formal method of mystical worship, the *dhikr*. Each *tariqa* had its own established patterns of devotional practices called *dhikr*. It is the simple form of internal remembrance of God. It is made use of forms of words or even syllable to be chanted or designed to

⁹ Ibid, p.p. 210-211

¹⁰ Alexander Knysh, 'Sufism' in Robert Irwin(Ed). *The new Cambridge History of Islam*, vol.4, p.p. 60-61

remind the devotee the presence of God. The Sufis instructed and housed their disciples held regular *dhikr* session and it attracted many laymen too.¹¹

Scholars like Muzaffar Alam, Simon Digby, Richard Eaton, Carl Ernst, Syed Athar Abbas Rizvi, Nile Green and K.A. Nizami are regarded as the experts and have contributed immensely to the study of Indian Sufism. So those who work on Sufism have to consult original sources such as the *makhdubat* (letters engaged in between saints), *mal'fuzat* (discourses of Sufis like *Dalilul Arifin*-conversations of Moinuddin Chisthi compiled by his disciple Qutubudhin Bakthiyar Kaki) and *tazkira* (biographical dictionaries). These mystical literatures, which can be said to represent the 'high tradition' of the Sufi movement in India and elsewhere.

Mysticism can be called as the great spiritual current which goes through all religions. We can see the development of Sufism roughly coincided with the development of a high love mysticism among Christians and Hindus. The mysticism like Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Islamic had some elements that lie among each other's. This growth of a mysticism of loving devotion seems to be correlated even in India with the increasing popularity of mysticism among large section of the population.

For example, S.A.A Rizvi argued that the monastic tradition of Buddhism and Christianity and Vedantist and yogic philosophy were all Islamized by members of Sufi orders.¹² Although, Satish Chandra had the same view that Sufism had assimilated some of Buddhist practices like monastic organization, fasting, holding breath and the sainthood of Buddha had passed into Islamic mysticism. Sufis had assimilated Buddhist Hindu practices and rituals seems to have been absorbed by

¹¹ Marshal G.S. Hodgson, *The ventures of Islam, vol.2*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p.211

¹² S.A.A. Rizvi, *A history of Sufism in India. Vol. 1*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978, p.83

Sufis even before they came to India.¹³ Interestingly, Hodgson also cited that the use of *dhikr* was similar often to the techniques of similar religious exercises found among eastern Christians, in certain Hindu and Buddhist Indic tradition.¹⁴

Anyway, after the conquest of northern India by the Muslims, various Sufi orders were established. Of the major twelve well defined Sufi orders, four have exerted great influence in India, they are: the Chithiyya, Qadiriyya, Suhrawardiyya and Naqshabandiyya. The following Sufi orders also prevailed here like Shattariyya, Kubrawiyya, Firdousiyya and Ayidrasuyya. Then in the course of their development these orders produced numerous semi Independent sub-orders also. While such orders were spread out all over the country there were also regional and localised orders and will discuss it later separately. The Chishti and Suhrawardi were the first *tariqa* to reach India.

The Chishti order

The founder of the Chishti order is Khawaja Abdul Ali Ishaq Shami Chishti. He arrived at Chisth and settle down there. Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer is the sponsor of this order in India. He is the most prominent figure in the line. He came under the influence of some of the great Sufis like Abdul Qadir Jilani, Sheikh Shihabudhin Suhrawardi and many others. It was during his pilgrimage to Medina that he received the inspiration that his field of service lay in India not in West Asia. So, there by firstly arrived at Lahore in 1190 then came to Ajmer and lived in 1226 at the age of 90. His work in India among the poor and the down trodden is so well known. He had many deputies and sent to different places with a view to spreading the values of Sufism throughout the length and breadth of India. Obviously, he was

¹³ Satish Chandra, *History of Medieval India*, New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2007, pp. 187-188

¹⁴ Marshal G.S. Hodgson, *The ventures of Islam, vol.2*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p.212

disliked by rulers like Prithiv Raj Chauhan of Ajmer and many caste Hindus. But the dwellers of Chisthi khanqahs and disciples were engaged in winning the hearts of common people. Many prominent non-believers also accepted Islam because of teachings and blessings of Sufis.¹⁵

Once Khawaja Moinuddin prescribed nine conditions of ascetic plan for his disciple Hamidudhin Nagori to follow, some of them are: one should not earn money, one should not borrow money from any one, fast during the day and spent night with prayers and so on so forth. He also advocated that most superior kind of worship was to assist the helpless and feed the hungry.¹⁶ However, then the most of the credit for the establishment of Nagori as a strong centre of Sufism goes to his disciple Hamidudhin Nagori. There he constructed a huge khanqah for the religious and spiritual education of others.¹⁷

Then under Khawaja Qutubudhin Bakthiyar Kaki (disciple of Moinuddin), Delhi became the heart of the Sufi movement. It was a Herculean task to firmly establish the order there. His chief successors are Baba Farid and Sheikh Badarudhin. For Baba Farid, Sufism was a strenuous exercise leading one to pious life within the society in which one lived. It demanded humility, modesty, patience, fortitude and a cleansing of the heart from all conceit.¹⁸

Baba Farid's most outstanding *Khalifa* (successor) was Sheikh Nizamudhin Auliya. He was to become the epitome of Baba Farid's teaching and it marked the crystallization of the ideology of the Chisthi order. He represents a great spiritual force in the history of Muslim India. He was a source of blessing to thousands who

¹⁵ Mir Valiudhin, 'Sufi movement in India' in Sayed Abdul Latif (ed), *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*. Hyderabad: The Institute of Indo-East Cultural Studies, pp.226-228

¹⁶ S.A.A Rizvi, *A history of Sufism in India. Vol. 1*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978, pp.123-124

¹⁷ Ibid, p.129

¹⁸ Ibid, p.134-135

come from far and near to seek his guidance. A large number of disciples were attracted to him. These included the powerful and the common, the rich, poor, learned and illiterate, townsfolk, villagers, freemen and slaves. Amir Khusrau and Nasiruddin Chirag are his famous followers. According to him, the first lesson of Sufism was not related to prayers or organized rituals, but began with the mastery of the maximum whatever you do not like to be done to yourself and emphasised much on renunciation. Then this order thrived under him and he who gave it all India status. His numerous disciples' setup Chisthi centres all over the country. One of his Khalifa who laid a firm foundation of this order in Bengal on 1327 was Akhi Sirajudhin Usman. Likewise, Burhanudhin Gharib and Gesu Daraz in Deccan.¹⁹ Later on, Chisthi order gained popularity during the time of Emperor Akbar. He became a devotee to this order from the time he had a son in answer to the prayers of a Chishti saint, Sheikh Salim. Subsequently, during the late seventeenth century Chisthi centres at Thaneshwar, Burhanpur, Jaunpur and Lucknow were famous.

The Suhrawardi order

The second order which exerted its influence on the Sufi movement in India is the Suhrawardiyya order. Their history begins with the arrival of some of the deputies of Shihabudhin Suhrawardi in 1262. The spread of this order in India was mainly due to Sheikh Bahahudhin Zakariyya Suhrawardi, Ahmed Mashuq, Ruknudhin and Sayed Jalaludhin. Among them, Bahahudhin Zakariyya had played a vital role. He studied under Shihabudhin Suhrawardi and settle down in Multan. There he managed to build a magnificent khanqah which eventually evolved into a major centre of Sufism in medieval India. His teachings attracted many. Historians noted that, his presence was

¹⁹ Ibid, pp.165-167

a great appeal and blessing to the people during the time of Mongol invasion. Apart from this, Sheikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi of Bengal and Nasiruddin Mubarak of Delhi were his famous Khalifas.²⁰ S.A.A. Rizvi explained that Chisthi and Suhrawardi orders turned their followers to pursue the conventional mystic path, which began with *tauba* (repentance), under the guidance of a *pir* and involved a complete submission to the divine will. The difference between the two orders lay in their distinct rituals and ceremonies.²¹

The Qadiri order

Apart from these main orders, the Qadiri order has been especially instrumental in the spread of Islam in western Africa and Central Asia. It was late in reaching India. The founder of this order is Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. Unfortunately, three hundred years after the death of the founder, this was established in India. The first to introduce this order in here were Shah Niamatullah and Makhdum Muhammed Jilani, who lived towards the mid of Fifteenth century and exerted their influence over Uch and later on their Grandsons had moved to Agra. Over a period of time, The Qadiri order found a great devotee in Prince Dara Shukoh who visited Mian Mir (1550-1635) of Lahore and impressed by his personality. Then Mian Mir was succeeded by Mulla Shah Badakshi and Dara became latter's disciple. The teaching and public preaching of these Sufis became extraordinarily popular.²²

The Naqshbandi order

This order was introduced in the sixteenth century by Khawaja Baqi Billah (1603). It reached its high watermark under his chief disciple, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (1624).

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 193-201

²¹ Ibid, p.216

²²Yusuf Hussain, *Glimpses of Medieval Culture*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1957, pp.53-54

The followers of this order reached every town and city in India. For about two centuries the most influential and popular tariqa in India was this. It had produced most eminent Sufi figures like Shah Walliullah, Mirza Mazhar Jani Janam, Shah Ghulam Ali, Ahmed Barelwi and many other.²³

If we look at regional wise, Kashmir was the principal centre of the Kubrawiyya. This order was founded by Sheikh Najmudhin Kubra. A galaxy of Sufi disciples surrounded him and a number of branches of Kubrawiyya order spread to Baghdad, Khurasan and India. During the late Fourteenth century, the order was introduced and flourished in Kashmir by Mir Sayed Al Hamadani. Since, it was under Mir Shamsudhin Iraqi (1469-1506) many sultan's leading nobles became his disciples. With the annexation of Kashmir by Akbar in 1580, the Suhrawardiyya order established under Shaikh Hamza Makhdum. Their impact was so striking as far as Kashmir is concerned. The Sufi who converted the king Ranchana to Islam was Sayed Sharafudhin Suhrawardi. The rulers granted lands to the Sufis to establish khanqahs and public kitchen.²⁴

The Bengal region attracted numerous distinguished Sufis, during the late fourteenth century onwards, places like Laknauti, Pandu, Sanargaon, and Mandau became the centres of Muslim spiritual life. The Chisthi and Suhrawardi orders had already established there. Meantime, the Shattariyya was also introduced by Shah Abdallah (1485) and under his disciples this tariqa spread from Bengal to other areas. On the other side, Gujarat became the centre of activity for Makhdum Jahaniya Suhrawardi and his grandson. And Firdousiyya order introduced in India by Shaykh

²³ Alexander Knysh, 'Sufism' in Robert Irwin(Ed). *The new Cambridge History of Islam*, vol.4, p.102

²⁴ S.A.A. Rizvi, *A history of Sufism in India. Vol. 1*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978, pp.290-291

Badar al Din Samarqand, initially its leaders were based in Delhi, but later moved to Bihar. There the order enjoyed great popularity under Sharif Al Din Yahya Maneri.²⁵

Sufism was a thriving concern in the Mughal heyday of Deccan. The Chisthiyya and Naqshabandhiyya Sufis were gathered in considerable number there. Although Qadiri Sufis also enjoyed a considerable importance in medieval Deccan. Many other Sufi groups enjoyed considerable success in different parts of these regions and interacted with the rulers, merchants, soldiers and many others. The literary evidences reveal that these Sufis were involved in curing the sick, praying for rain or unveiling brigands. There were four main Sufi saints who were transformed into prominent Sufi cult- they are Shah Nur, the Naqshabandhi Shah Palangposh and Shah Musafir and the Chisthi Nizamaldin. The lives of these Sufis demonstrate the different aspects and practices within the broader rhetoric of Sufism. Most importantly, the Sufis in this region were primarily immigrants from Central Asia and North India as well.²⁶

Nile Green throughout his work on Sufism in Deccan explicitly casted the Sufis as high-minded teachers of scripture and pioneers of social welfare. On one hand the Sufis protected their followers and on the other hand paved a way to a transcendent personal salvation. Furthermore, Sufism fulfilled an essential social function in providing the hope and possibility of protection against sickness, drought, and violence. So, despite the differences, rulers, elites, warriors, peasants shared a common dependence upon the Sufi saints. The roles that saints have played as axing lending structures to the historical memory of Indian Islam are quite remarkable. Even after their death, the shrines of Sufi formed a means of bridging the gap between past

²⁵ Ibid, pp.257-260

²⁶ Nile Green, *Indian Sufism since Seventeenth century. Saints, book and empires in the Muslim Deccan*. London: Routledge, 2006, pp.4-6

and present. He adds, it is here (shrines) that the tradition of the Sufis finds their proper humanity and their home in the cultural history of Islam.²⁷

R. A. Nicholson in his '*Studies in Islamic Mysticism*' noted, that "Sufism is at once the religious philosophy and the popular religion Islam," The link between the two has not been clearly established, at least as far as concerns Indian Islam.²⁸ Though, Richard Eaton has taken this question and based on his research on the medieval Deccan city state of Bijapur (1490-1680) opined that, a link such was supplied in at least one sector of the subcontinent by the folk literature of certain local Sufis. Consisting of a number of short poems written in one of the vernacular languages of medieval Bijapur, Deccani, this literature employed indigenous themes and imagery for the propagation of mystical dimensions and also for a simpler level of Sufi and of Islamic percepts. Written mainly in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries by Bijapur Sufis belonging to different orders or by their descendants scattered elsewhere in Deccan. This literature has been preserved in the oral tradition of Dakhani speaking villagers thorough the plateau. This folk poetry of Sufi origin had occupied a dominant position in the folk culture of Deccan villages. The bulk of folk poetry written by Sufis was sung by village women while engaged in various household chores. It was the efforts by Sufis to expand their teachings among unlettered folk of the plateau. These can be found today in both written and oral traditions. These folk literatures represent one's devotion to god and respect for one's pir. The common types were called as *Chakki nama* (sung while grinding food grains), *Charkha nama* (while spinning) and *Suhaila nama* (eulogistic song). Then for instance, *Chakki nama* attributed to the famous Gesu Daraz of Gulbarga. Eaton says that, if one analyzes the content of the *Chakki nama* or the *Charkha nama*, three

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 158-160

²⁸ Nicholson, R. A. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. Cambridge, 1967, pp.65

interwoven themes can be found: (1) an ontological link established between God, the prophet Muhammad, one's own pir, and the reciter herself; (2) the use of the grindstone or the spinning wheel, or the mechanical parts thereof, to illustrate the above; and (3) the use of the mystics' zikr, or spiritual exercise, to accompany and even to regulate the various phases of the woman's work.²⁹ This kinds of Sufi Folk literature can be seen among Muslims in Kerala for praising their Sufis and a number of such devotional songs called *Malas*- which piously praise the admirable events from a Sufi or holy men. So, this shows the deep influence exerted by Sufis on Mappila life and will see this in next chapter.

Back to Sufis, Shah Nur was the earliest of the Sufis before the arrival of the other three. He arrived in Aurangabad by 1660 and established his khanqah. He was managed to attract considerable number of devotees. Then the Naqshbandi Sufis-Shah Palangposh (1699) was the eldest of the pair and Shah Musafir's spiritual director. Both of them had migrated from Central Asia and practiced Sufism in Deccan and helped to introduce the religious foundations into the Indian South. More than that, these Sufis paid special attention to widows and orphans and were also given education.³⁰

Thomas Sydenham as the English resident in Hyderabad from 1805-1810 compiled a report on the Deccan's Sufi institutions. He found that Muslims and Hindus prostrate themselves at Gesu Darz's shrine, who was disciple of Nasiruddin Chirag. Gesu Daraz moved to South at the insistence of Nasiruddin Chirag. Sydenham further elaborates that Deccan's Hindus invoked the name of Gesu Daraz before taking their food in each evening. So, this shows the importance of Sufis over there.

²⁹ Richard M. Eaton, *Sufi Folk Literature and the Expansion of Indian Islam*. University of Chicago Press Journal, 1974, pp.117-127

³⁰ Nile Green, *Indian Sufism since Seventeenth century. Saints, book and empires in the Muslim Deccan*. London: Routledge, 2006, pp.10-14

Similarly, the role of other Chisthi Sufi like Nizamal Din Aurangabad can be seen. He came to be celebrated in many of the most important north Indian Sufi and other Muslim commemorative works of the age, like *Asaru Sanadid* of Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan (1898).³¹ Nile Green argued that, the Deccani Sufis were involved for their part in a process of the spiritual conquest of an earlier Muslim sacred geography. As the culture of the Deccan slowly changed after the era of the Mughal conquests, people of the region came to address their prayers to the new Sufi saints.³²

There were several arguments about Sufism among historians. Some of them sidelined Sufism as an islamized version of the Buddhist and Indic Advaita philosophy as Sufi concept of *Wahdathul wujud* (unity in being). But both the doctrines of Advaita and *Wahdathul Wujud* are comparatively different. However, most of the historians confined Sufism in the medieval time frame stretching from Thirteenth century to Eighteenth century. Scholars like K.A Nizami and Rizvi who studied Sufism as a religious movement of the past ignoring its existence and influence in the modern period. One of the main drawbacks of their works was that it focused mainly on the North Indian Sufism and the older Sufi tradition of South India was largely ignored. Even Rizvi in his book glosses over the entire South Indian Sufism in mere two pages. Although, their discussions were confined only to different Sufi orders over North India and its successions and its spread into different regions but failed to give due importance to their social and economic role in that society. Like, in many towns or small towns or villages the weavers and various categories of artisans and workers used to link themselves with the Sufi spaces to detach themselves from the evils of caste and other problems. Here, Sufi movement evolved as a cultural motor of urbanism through multiple platforms, ideologies, practices, they

³¹ Ibid, p.86

³² Ibid, p.31

provided a certain amount of cohesion, meaning and a new type of identity. So many people accepted this new ideology. By this time Sufi movement evolved as a religious movement of towns and villages, catering to spiritual, social and psychological issues. Both the North and South Indian Sufism are similar in essence and not that much different. However, over the time some Sufi orders have become more influential and widespread in some parts of India that's all. There are very few historians who have worked on South Indian Sufism like Nile Green, Richard Eaton and Muhammed Suleiman Siddiqi. Among them, only Richard Eaton in his *Sufis of Bijapur* just mentioned Annmarie Schimmel's description in the Sufic poems of 'some' Zainudhin (Maqdhum of Ponnani). These historian completely ignored Sufism in Kerala. But the comprehensive work on Sufism as far as Kerala is concerned is that of Dr. Kunhali's *Sufism in Kerala*. In which he opined that Sufism contributed greatly to the formation of the present Mappila community.³³ I think, the prime factors for the reason behind the negligence and lack of historical attention are due to the source materials, these source materials are widely available in Arabic and Arabi-Malayalam script.³⁴ Unfortunately, the main works on Sufism in other parts of India are mainly in Persian and that attracted the historians. Secondly, these source materials are largely scattered in different areas under private hands or in mosques. No authorities till now attempted to collect these materials for the purpose of research. A.J. Arberry in his book *Sufism an account of the mystics of Islam* on Decay of Sufism, he argued that 'the renaissance of learning in Islam should have been accompanied by a reaction against Superstition in which rightly regarded as important causes of the backwardness of Muslims. Sufism was now increasingly the prime target of attack for

³³ Kunhali V, *Sufism in Kerala*. Calicut University Press, 2004, p.11

³⁴ Arabi Malayalam is a writing system for writing Mappila Malayalam. It uses a variant form of the Arabic script. Mappila Malayalam uses the grammar and syntax of Malayalam, vocabulary from Malayalam.

those who wrathful intellectuals who desired to free from spiritual enslavement. No man of education would care to speak in Sufi's favour.³⁵ Here elaborates the effects of superstition allied to mystification. Simply, in his views Sufism was subjected to attack from Islamic reformers and as a result of modernization Sufism had to face crisis and decline in the contemporary society.

³⁵ A.J Arberry, *Sufism an account of the mystics of Islam on Decay of Sufism*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1950, p.122

CHAPTER -2

Sufis beyond the Sufi orders; The Devotion

Richard Eaton's definition for Sufi, the word denotes any person integrated in to the organizational structure of Islamic mystical tradition. This involved a person's taking a vow of spiritual allegiance (*Bai'at*) from another so that an institutionalized spiritual chain linked any Sufi with some earlier master who in turn very probably claimed spiritual lineage extending from the Prophet himself.³⁶ Sufis had a remarkable role in the propagation and spread of Islam in Kerala especially in Malabar region. As we know, a Sufi named Malik Dinar and a group of 44 members had reached and introduced Islam in there. They constructed several mosques throughout different parts of Kerala like Chaliyam, Calicut, Ponnani, Kochi, Mangalore, Dharmadam etc... And paved the way for the Sufi missionary work in these regions. In its formative period, the Sufi movement was active around the mosques. Interestingly, apart from the other centers of Indian Sufism, instead of Sufi khanqahs, mosques become the Sufi centers in Kerala. No Sufi khanqahs established over there. Here Sufi hospice called khanqahs have been transformed into *palli dars* or *srambias* conveying the same functions as the earlier ones. The best example of a khanqahs at present was the Ponnani *Palli dars*- here large number of *murids* were resided under a *pir* and *palli dars* like these laid stress on knowledge acquiring and pious way of life. A title of *musliyar* given to them and sacred vows had to be made to the Sufi Sheikh. This resembles a *Bai'ath* in Sufism.³⁷ In the seventh century, a Sufi named Olakkal Abdu Latheef was engaged in the missionary activities in Ezhimala region. Malik ibn

³⁶ Kunhali V, *Sufism in Kerala*. Calicut University Press, 2004, pp.58-59

³⁷ Ibid, pp.62

Abdurrahman of Madayi, Sayyid Maula of Kannur and Sheikh Nurudhin of Chaliyam are some of the early Sufi missionaries of Malabar. The Famous traveler Ibn Battuta in his *Rehla* listed some names of the important Sufis like Sheikh Shihabudhin Gazeruni of Calicut, Qazi Qazvini and Muhammed Shah Bandhar and Faqrudhin of Kollam who took the lead in the religious activities of Malabar.³⁸

By twelfth century, the major tariqa orders had established its influence in different parts of the region. The Sufi orders traced in Kerala are: Qadiri, Rifai, Chisthi, Zuhrawardhi, Naqshabandi, Kazeruni, Ba-alawi, Aydarus and Ba-faqih. Sufism in Malabar in its formative stage was accelerated by the migration of Sufis from central Islamic lands. The Qadiriyya tariqa flourished under Maqdhum family who came from Hadramaut of South Arabia during Fifteenth century and settled in Ponnani. So their missionary activities were centered on the Juma masjid in Ponnani and it came to be called as little mecca of Malabar. It is believed that the mosque was built in twelfth century by Sheikh Faridudhin Abdul Qadir Khurasani, a well-known disciple of Abdul Qadir Jilani. Anyway, with the coming of Maqdhums Ponnani became the main core area of religious, social and cultural life of Mappila. This order had a branch called Ba-alawi, it was introduced by Sheikh Jifri Hadramauti in 1748. Jifri and his relative Sayyid Abdurrahman Aydarus had influenced the mass people, especially lower caste people who were suffering from the rigidity of the Hindu four fold caste system and there by embraced Islam. Later on, this order was continued by Sayyid Alawi Mamburam (1844) who established his center near Thirurangadi.³⁹

Early decades of fifteenth century witnessed the growth of Naqshabandi order at Valappatanm under Sayyid Ahmed Jalaludhin of Bukhara (1480) and it was succeeded by Sayyid Ahmed who settled in Chavakkad and constructed a mosque for

³⁸ Hussain Randathani, *Mappila Muslims. A study on society and anti-colonial struggles*. Other books, 2006, p.37

³⁹ Ibid, pp.38

the propagation of his order. Sayyid Muhammed, Sayyid Ibrahim Mastan, Mustafa Kochukoya and Sheikh Abdurrahman Tanur were the successors of this order.⁴⁰

Suhrawardi was next in importance in Malabar, mostly in Northern Malabar. The tariqa once had a large following under Al Sheikh Wajihudhin Abdurrahman Al Ummani, one of the Maqdhums of Ponnani and his son Kamaludhin later became a well-known Sufi as Kallayi Sheikh. Then, Sheikh Nurudhin Hamadani was his son and settled in Chaliyam where his tomb stands now as a center of pilgrimage.⁴¹

On contrary, Professor Kunhali in his work argued that, Sufism in Kerala betrays all characteristics of the Taifa or devotional cult stage of Sufism. Here the saint cult developed into an institution unknown in other parts of India namely the cult of martyr saints.⁴² Of course there are martyr cult, but the difference lies where he denied the complete existence of devotional cult. For hundreds of years, Mappila had been practicing the veneration of the saint cult other than that of martyr cult and paying offerings to them and it had become a part of religious life among them. The depth of veneration and devotion in which these Sufis were held varied according to their *karamat*. Sufis occupied an intermediary position between the masses and God in Popular mindset. The popular were informally associated with the Sufis and their order as their devotees. This practice started slowly in engaging to popular folk. These Sufis were acted as imams and judges and at the same time they offered spiritual comfort and bliss to the common people for both Muslims and non-Muslims. The above said Sufis were acted as patron saints many professionals like fisherman, merchants, boatmen, travelers and many of them invoked for getting things done. Finally, the existence of Arabi-Malayalm literature that praises the love towards Sufis, their missionary activities, legends and miracles. Like *farid mala*, *Mamburam mala*,

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp.39

⁴¹ V, Kunhali. *Sufism in Kerala*. Calicut University Press, 2004, pp.78-79

⁴² Ibid, pp.61

Muhyudhin mala and these *malas*⁴³ have been recited till now. Although these saints became a factor of *tawassul* and *istighasa* (habitude of Supplications) throughout the prayers of the masses. It is a significant phenomenon among the Mappila community. The popular were not actually connected to any Sufi order but in another way they were actively close with Sufis. But, these can be defined as popular devotion. This proves Sufis can exist without a Sufi order.

Sufis beyond the Sufi orders; The Dissent

Colonialism had firstly come into Malabar. Obviously, several resistance have made from this region. So the leadership of Mappila community was under the Sufis and Ulemas. The religious and social background of the Mappila had changed due to the religious leadership of different Sufis and their followers. The popular form of Sufism became deep rooted in the community and it brought among them solidarity and social unity. This caused mass mobilization against colonialism. Many saints themselves led many armed struggles and took part in battles. It helped to accomplish its present position in the society. Zainudhin Maqdhum I (1521) was the first known Muslim scholar in India to declare war against the Europeans and wrote a treatise against them as named *Incitement for believers on fight against the worshippers of the cross*.⁴⁴ When the Portuguese had a policy to destroy Malabar, they allied with Zamorin. In that, Sheikh Abdul Aziz the Maqdhum of Ponnani (son of Maqdhum I) fought with the Nair contingents of Zamorin. He was also the author of many works thus keeping the tradition of the Maqdhums. He wrote letters to various Muslim rulers of the world to help the Mappila and the zamorin in their fight against the Portuguese. He personally led the Muslim army in the historic battle of Chaliyam in 1571.

⁴³ Eulogies.

⁴⁴ Hussain Randathani, *Mappila Muslims. A study on society and anti-colonial struggles*. Other books, 2006, p.98

Although, this legacy was continued by Zainudhin Maqdhum II (1581) throughout his *tuhfathul mujahidin* which inspired the Muslims.⁴⁵ Furthermore, in his *fathuhul mubin* says that: ‘if the un believers enter the country with the intention of war, fight becomes compulsory upon all male citizens and every one should defend the country by all means’.⁴⁶ The great four Kunhali Marakkars who fought vehemently against the Portuguese were the disciples of Ponnani Maqdhums. The Mappila fought for more than four centuries ending the struggle with the Rebellion in 1921. In fact, by the nineteenth century it was against the landed properties who oppressed the Mappila tenants. Many Sufi saints had to move to the remote locale and extended their influence among peasant and the oppressed. Likely, Sayyid Alawi Mamburam well known as Mamburam Thangal motivated his *murids* and common masses for the protest against the British Regime. His movement was assisted by his *murids* like Umar Qazi of Veliyancod and Avukkoya Musliyar of Parappannagadi. Then it was continued by his son Sayyid Fazal Thangal (1900). They had an important role Mappila outbreaks of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *saiifa al batta* of Mamburam Thangal, distinctly declared *jihad* against the British who had usurped the power. When Mappila planned an attack either on British or Landlords they would often spend much of their time in mosques or masjids and seek the blessings of Sufi Saints. Their contact with the Sufis had created a sense of strong will. They would wait for the arrival of the British to fight and die as a sacrifice for the community. This is termed as *shahid* (martyr) was an integral part of Mappila from the days of their fight against the Europeans as Sufis and Ulemas preached. The intentional concept of *shahid* during this period of Mappila revolts gave rise to adoration of martyr saints and moreover their tombs are held in high respect and devotion.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.82

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.100

People believed in their miracles or *karamat*. Later on, Fazal Thangal and Sayyid Hussain Thangal of Panakkadu continued their anti-British campaigns. For this purpose Fazal Thangal's *fatwa* called '*Uddat al Umara*'⁴⁷ reveals their conspiracies. Hence these Sufis had given the ideals of religion and leadership to get rid of oppression.

Sufis beyond the Sufi orders; The Discourse

This is the study of a group of Sufis of Malabar in the twentieth century. Their role and activities which laid the bedrock for a movement for the protection of *Ahle sunnath wal jama'at* (the devotees of the prophet's practices and the broad community) for that they instituted an organizational framework called *Samastha Kerala Jammiyathul Ulema*. This movement was a Counter Reformation movement against many blameworthy innovations in Islam (*bida'*)⁴⁸ that have emerged in Colonial Malabar. It has been a missionary one with emphasis on principles of *Ahle sunnath wal jama'at*. Today, this movement has a large followers in Malabar.

Samastha Kerala Jammiyathul Ulema was founded in 1926 June 26 at Town hall, Kozhikode. It was presided by the most celebrated Sufi of the age and of Ba-alawi tariqa named Sayyid Abdurrahman Ba alawi Varakkal Mullakoya Thangal (1840-1932). The core group of Sufis consisted of Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar, Maulana Abdul Bari Musliyar, Puthyapla Abdurrahman Musliyar and K.P. Muhammed Miran Musliyar and so on and so forth. Here, Sufism was more Sharia oriented. So Sufis

⁴⁷ Fazal Thangal declares that it was no sin but a merit to kill a landholder who evicted a peasant from his land. And says that that fight against us and destroy our wealth, children, women and conquest of holy places.

⁴⁸ Like the Wahabi and Ahmadiyya movements as what Usha Sanyal calls in her, *Ahmed Riza Khan Barelwi in the path of the prophet*. One World Publications, 2005, pp.21-22

were both Ulema⁴⁹ (scholar of Islamic law) and *pir* or mystic seeker of a tariqa simultaneously. Their scholarly output as an Ulema and their high spiritual attainment as a Sufi are quite exceptional. Like Imam Gazzali, Ahmed Sirhindi and Ahmed Riza Khan Bareilwi. “Individual with a deep personal commitment to the legal sciences and to the philosophies based knowledge could still feel an instinctive aversion to mysticism and a decision to embrace mystical path continued to be described as a kind of conversion”.⁵⁰

Sufis affiliated of *Samastha* are within the major Sufi orders in Kerala like Qadiri, Ba alawi, Naqshabandi etc.... as most of the Muslims in Malabar believed that, these Sufis can be the leaders of *Ahle sunnath wal jama'at* movement. Its main objectives are; Propagation of Islam, Defend *Ahle sunnath wal jama'at* from *bida'* and strengthen Muslim community by giving them knowledge of their faith by promoting education.⁵¹

The Wahhabi movements which occurred in late eighteenth century. The founder was Muhammed Ibn Wahab (1703-1787). He propagated the unity of God (*tawhid*), which meant that all forms of veneration of Sufi saints, holy objects are prohibited. This group was against the excessive cult of Muhammed as perfect man and intercessor with God and rejected the development of Sufism.⁵² Vakkam Abdul Qadir Maulavi and K.M. Maulavi were the preceptors of Wahhabism in South Kerala and Malabar respectively. They contradict all forms of rituals, *urs* of Sufi saints and so on so forth.

⁴⁹ It is the plural of *alim* and means knowledgeable; a Muslim who has studied subjects like qur'anic exegesis, Hadith, Fiqh (jurisprudence) and theology.

⁵⁰ Kenneth Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, p.231

⁵¹ P.A. Sadiq Faizi, *Samastha Charithrathinte Naalvazhikal* (Malayalam). Islamic Sahithya Academy, 2016, p.128

⁵² Usha Sanyal, *Ahmed Riza Khan Bareilwi in the path of the prophet*. One World Publications, 2005, pp.21-22

Ahmadiyya or Qadiyani movement was founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Sufis and Ulemas disclosed their disagreement with Ahmadiyya over Ghulam's claim of *mujaddid* or Renewer of the fourteenth century Islam. He declared himself as *muhaddath* (a person directly spoken to by Allah or one of his angels), *mahdi*, *messiah* and finally prophet hood.⁵³ Later on, twentieth century Malabar witnessed the rise of Ahmadiyya, especially in Pazhayangadi areas of Kannur district under Muhiyudhin B. Kunjumammed. By 1913 itself, a Sufi endowed with knowledge in Islamic sciences and philosophies named Chalilakath Kunjahammed Haji Musliyar wrote a counter work known as *Raddhul Qadiyani* which explicitly unfolds the anti-Islamic ideas of Ahmadiyya.⁵⁴

We have already witnessed the strong ties between Sufis and Mappila community in Malabar, so the intellectual positions taken by the former often marked themselves undeniably the minds of the latter. They opposed these kinds of 'reform' movements because of the denial of the essentials of the faith. In fact, oral debates were common to all reform movements of twentieth century Malabar. It was the most effective form of contestation between both reform and counter reform movements. The most learned mystics like Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar (1889-1946)⁵⁵, Abdul Bari Musliyar (1881-1965)⁵⁶, Sheikh Ahmed koya Shaliyathi (1885-1960)⁵⁷, Kanniyath Ahmed Musliyar (1900-1993)⁵⁸, Shamsul Ulema E.K. Aboobakkar

⁵³ Ibid, p.45

⁵⁴ P.A. Sadiq Faizi, *Samastha Charithrathinte Naalvazhikal* (Malayalam). Islamic Sahithya Academy, 2016, p.306

⁵⁵ A saint of Qadiri order and the disciple of Sheikh Ahmed who is well known as Koyamukutty Musliyar from A.P. Muhammed Ali's. *Malayalathhile Maharathanmar* (Malayalam). Irshad Publications, 1997. P.112

⁵⁶ He wrote *Sihahu sheikhani, al maulidul manqoos and al vaseelathul ulema*. He had a significant role in the growth and development of Samastha. A Sufi saint of Qadiriyya and disciple of Parappangadi Auwwukoya Musliyar. Ibid, p.126-127

⁵⁷ He was a murid of Sayyid Ahmed Riza Khan Barelwi and Sheikh of Naqshabandi and Qadiri orders.

⁵⁸ Sufi saint of Rifai order.

Musliyar (1914-1996)⁵⁹, Kalmbadi Muhammed Musliyar (1934-2012)⁶⁰ and Koyakutty Musliyar (1937-2016)⁶¹ and many others within the shades of *Samastha* seriously made several attempts to put an end to the Wahabi and Ahmadi movements by organizing meetings, debates and speeches. The disputation was a public event which occurred in Kozhikode, Nadapuram, Karyavattom, Feroke, Malappuram etc. which is observed by large number of people. Through oral debates, writings and fatwas they convinced the Mappila Muslims about the blameworthy innovations of these movements. Many of the above said Sufis outstripped the 'reformers' in knowledge by answering many criticism from them and clarified doubts of the popular on the basis of exegesis of Quran, hadith, jurisprudence and many other Islamic texts. There by thousands of Mappila had embraced them.

The early decades of twentieth century endorsed with coming of many fabricated Sufi tariqa like Korur⁶², Chettoor⁶³, Shamsiyya⁶⁴ and Noorisha⁶⁵. The analysis begin with a discussion of the scroll in their claim, Sufi pir, legitimacy and veracity of their order. Sufis affiliated to Samastha appealed that these tariqas don't have a proper chain of Sufic transmission. Although, these Sufis expressed their dissent in both verbally and in print through their monthly publication called *Al Bayan* starting in 1929 from Calicut. Which brought together anti-Wahhabi, anti- Qadiyani

⁵⁹ Sufi saint of Chisthi order and disciple of Ayilakodu Siraj Auwliya. Ibid, p.200

⁶⁰ Sufi saint of Qadiri and disciple of Hamid Koyamma Thangal. He took great effort to start madrassas in local area of Areekode. P.A. Sadiq Faizi, *Samastha Charithrathinte Naalvazhikal* (Malayalam). Islamic Sahithya Academy, 2016, p.903

⁶¹ He accepted the oath of loyalty (Bai'ath) from Kanniyath Ahmed Musliyar and a good orator. Saint of Rifai order. Ibid, p.929

⁶² They claimed the descendants from Naqshabandi tariqa under Puthiya veetil Mammad. Sufis like Ahmed Shaliyathi studied about it and exposed its worthless claim. Ibid, p.372

⁶³ They claimed the descendants from Qadiriyya and widespread in areas of Puthanathani and Kalapakancherry. Ibid, p.373

⁶⁴ By 1962 onwards, claimed Qadiriyya descendants but Shamsul Ulema, Kanniyath Ahmed musliyar and Kottumala Aboobakker Musliyar declared it as the worshippers of sun. Ibid, p.374

⁶⁵ Ahmed Muhiyudhin Noorisha from Hyderabad was its chief, he claimed the descendants from Qadiriyya and Chisthiyya. By 1955 itself Qutbi Muhammed musliyar and Pathi Abdul Qadir Musliyar criticized it and further Samastha appointed a committee consist of Shamsul Ulema and K.t. Manu Musliyar. They studied their writings such as *silsila Nooriyya niyamnagalum chattankalum* and discarded it as against Sharia. Ibid, p, 375

and anti-‘tariqa’ articles and reports on its decision and fatwas. It was published in Arabi-Malayalam. Pangil Ahmed Kutty musliyar was its first chief editor.⁶⁶

After all, Sufis in Samastha initiated a new system of Madrasas. Actually the example of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani in combing the life of madrassas with that of khanqahs influenced the Mappila Muslims to establish the unique palli dars and then it evolved into madrasa system. Madrasas for strengthening Muslim community by giving them education of their faith. For this Vazhakkadu Darul Uloom, Tanur Islahul Uloom, Thirurangadi Noorul Islam, Tirur Sirajul Uloom and Thrissur Al Bakhiyathul Swalihath were established within 1945. As of now it has 9595 madrasas all over Kerala.⁶⁷

So we can easily connect this Sufi movement with the Barelwi movement of Sheikh Sayyid Ahmed Riza khan. His writings and the interpretation of Islam they espouse laid the foundation for a movement known to its followers as Barelwi movement. He had to counter the Deobandi, the Ahle-e Hadith, the Wahhabi, the Qadiyani and others who rejected the practices of *Ahle sunnath wal jama’at* and Sufism.⁶⁸ Shortly after Ahmad Riza became Sayyid Shah Al-e Rasul’s disciple in the ritual known as *Bai’at*, Riza khan became a Sufi saint of Qadiriyya order.⁶⁹ Usha Sanyal calls him as the as the *mujaddid* of the fourteenth Islamic century. The *Ahl-e Sunnat* (or “Barelwi”) movement began to take shape in the 1880s, and came into its own in the 1890s in the context of its anti-Nadwa campaign. Thereafter it grew steadily in different parts of the country, as Ahmad Riza’s followers themselves began schools, published journals, held oral disputations, and organized around specific issues in different parts of the country. The organizational features of the movement

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.746

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.782

⁶⁸ Usha Sanyal, *Ahmed Riza Khan Barelwi in the path of the prophet*. One World Publications, 2005, pp.01

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.61

like madrasas and printing press. Ahmad Riza's nephew Hasnain Riza owned a printing press which later published many of Ahmad Riza's writings.⁷⁰ Sufis have found new spirit, during the twentieth and twenty-first century Sufism has extended transregionally, thanks to charismatic Sufis like Varakkal Mullakoya Thangal and Riza Khan Bareilwi and to encounter with Islamic reforms. So, this is how Sufis engaged in public discourse.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.53

CONCLUSION

This thesis is on the influence and engagements of Sufis beyond the Sufi order.

There are three important ways of engagements with the popular in Malabar, which are the devotion, the dissent and the discourse. The revitalisation of Sufism and Sufis in contemporary societies makes a renewed interest in spirituality in multiple, social, cultural and ethnic context. Sufism is a very complex phenomenon, it took root in both the rural and urban areas of Malabar. The deep impact of Sufis and their popularity among the popular transformed rural regions of Malabar. The reliance of Sufis on God, particularly for material needs, attracted many of deprived classes and the oppressed, gave them a feeling of hope, and it was transformed into a devotional cult. The communitarian leadership of Sufis gave a new dimension to Sufism and caused in mobilising people in anti-colonial struggle. There are mainly two movements, namely *Barelwi* and *Samastha*, which manifests the political and popular engagements of the Sufis since 1915.

So, A Sufi can exist without a Sufi order and each Sufi have a wide range of influence beyond the Sufi orders. They can be situated in public discourses. Owing to the limitations of time and resources this project would only be a beginning and I wished to continue on this topic in future.

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