

Shrines Culture in Pakistan: Different Perspectives and Practices

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Abstract

Shrine culture is one of the important characteristic of Pakistani society. Although now a day it is faced with challenge of religious extremism, mainly because of misperception about it. Despite many dissimilarities and differences in nature of population, common feature of society is that it is highly influenced by Sufi shrines. Be it politics or any other matter of life, Sufi shrine influence cannot be ruled out. Shrine culture provides gateway to understand Sufis and Sufism. The purpose of this paper is to highlight shrine culture in Pakistan. It is based on overall assumption to share and evaluate different perspectives and practices being carried out at shrines of Pakistan. The major focus would be to present different cultural perspectives and practices being associated with shrines in Pakistan. This study is purely qualitative research; therefore secondary data, along with personal observations at urs(annual anniversary) celebration of different saints will be logically analyzed to find out common practices at major shrines in Pakistan. Dhammal, ringing bell, kissing shrine, bowing, collecting ash, and taking thread for healing are few of practices that are common. As matter of fact, whether those practices are right or wrong is not our concern. Our task is to depict true picture of shrine culture. At the same time major criticism against those practices would also be discussed in order to further clarify shrine culture. As those critics and misconceptions has put shrine culture in danger. Security of shrines has become major problem for government of Pakistan.

Keywords: Culture, Shrine, Pakistan