

Mystic Peace and Resistance: Evaluating the Role of Sufi Shrines in Preventing Extremism and Terrorism in Faisalabad, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT:

This study aimed at discussing the way in which the Sufi shrines in Faisalabad help to foster peace, tolerance, and opposition to extremist ideologies using ritual activities, spiritual events, and interaction with the community. This study used qualitative research design. The theoretical foundation of the shrine activities on the behaviour and emotional reactions was determined by Ritual Theory and Social Cohesion Theory. The data was gathered by field observation of one year, attending Urs, langar, qawwali, dhikr sessions, and semi-structured interview with the 40 participants, 10 participants each of the 4 shrines. Observations were recorded in the form of field notes to observe emotional responses, social bonding and patterns of behaviour in the shrines. Thematic analysis was employed in the interpretation of the collected data. The results indicate that everybody feels less angry, less stressed, creates inner peace, and constructs love-based thinking at the shrine rituals. The shared food and other practices eliminate social distance and enhance dignity among poor, women and neutral gender persons. Qawwali and dhikr are emotional curing devices which substitute frustration with composedness. The community meetings build trust and a sense of belonging and thus it is hard to manipulate local individuals by the extremist groups. The research finds that Sufi shrines serve as centers of peace where spiritual love, healing and unity undermine radical imaginaries and enhance resiliencies among communities. This study is important as it connects the culture of shrines to counter-extremism, demonstrating viable

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roles of emotional healing and social integration in Faisalabad to decrease the attraction of extremists.

Keywords: Sufi shrines, peacebuilding, extremism, qawwali, langar, social cohesion, emotional healing, tolerance, Faisalabad.

Introduction

Sufism in Pakistan is quite old and is highly embedded in everyday life of spiritual and cultural life. The reason why people visit shrines is to be blessed, comforted, and relieved emotionally and at peace. In Punjab, the community spaces are shrines where they congregate during Urs festivals, langar, qawwali, dhikr and offering of the rituals. Such activities unite people and social distance between the poor and the wealthy is minimized. A study of the Baba Lasoori Shah Shrine in Faisalabad indicates that the culture of shrines is open, welcoming, and inclusive, and individuals perform rituals in accordance with the spiritual needs and local culture (Mushtaq et al., 2019; Arshaad et al., 2024). The same results presented regarding the Baba Syed Noor Shah Wali Shrine show that musical practices, the provision of langar, and group meetings are the means of bonding and social support (Hussain et al., 2023). These shrines are used as social spaces where people exchange food, prayers, emotional narratives and their day to day challenges. This type of interaction creates trust and peaceful relationships.

They do not only agree with the previous studies; recent research in Lahore confirms that inter-sect harmony can be achieved through shrines. Mushtaq et al. (2024) demonstrate that Sunni and Shia groups in Bibi Paak Daman Shrine practice qawwali, dua, and majlis jointly, making the communities less hostile and accommodating them to coexist together. According to Quraeshi (2010), the South Asian shrines have a reflection of sacred architecture, memory, music, poetry, and love that appeal to everyone in search of hope when they are in distress. Sufism the world

over is synonymous with compassion and tolerance. Kugle (2011) demonstrates that rituals and devotion transfer ritualized energy across the body, which produces emotional transformation to believers. According to Hermansen (2012), South Asian Sufism has become internationalized and formed new spiritual groups. Sufism has also been one of the ways through which states create a soft perception of Islam and refute radical discourses (Muedini, 2015). Nonetheless, researchers also caution that Sufism funded by the government may end up being politicized and losing its spiritual chastity. Shrine culture therefore should be understood based on real life observation rather than assumptions so that they get to know how it impacts on the ordinary people.

Pakistan is still struggling with the problem of extremism, terrorism, and increasing intolerance. The situation of radicalization intensifies in the presence of frustration, inequality, and social anger (Ahmed et al., 2022; Murphy, 2012). Most researchers think that Sufi teachings may be used as a form of soft resistance calming emotions, teaching love, and bringing forgiveness (Akbar et al., 2023). Feeling of isolation may be alleviated through community welfare programs, langar and joint rituals. Carlson (2017) claims that spiritual friendship and interfaith contact lessen the hate and establish bridges between various groups, which proves the fact that shrines may establish the social understanding.

The research on the topic of Faisalabad shrines published earlier has discussed rituals, healing, music, and cultural value predominantly (Arshaad et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023). There is limited research on the question of whether shrine

experiences have a practical effect in reducing extremist thought or the reaction of visitors to violent stories. There are minimal studies on whether a practice such as langar, qawwali and dhikr can be used to influence a peaceful behaviour or prevent youths in taking radical ideas. This leaves an obvious knowledge gap in academics.

This paper will attempt to address this gap. It discusses the way the rituals in the shrines construct the peace-mindedness, the way anger can be decreased by emotional healing processes, and the way the tolerance can be fostered by the communal gatherings. This study will examine how the culture of shrines influences moral thinking and the impact of shrines as the social resistance against the extremist ideologies by using interviews and one year field observation with the four shrines in Faisalabad. The study will bring new information about the role played by love-based spirituality, music, langar, and ritual participation in helping peace at the community level.

1.1 Problem Statement

Pakistan is still facing with the menace of violent extremism and terrorism and most communities are finding it very hard to find any viable social solutions to overcome the extremist thinking. Sufi shrines in Faisalabad are described as open, inclusive and cultural services where rituals, music, langar and congregations are used to unite various people, yet how these practices actually prevent extremism and define a peaceful behaviour, remains unknown. Available literature emphasizes the culture of shrines, curing and social bonding but little research has investigated directly how the shrines succeeded in countering radical ideologies or decreasing the chances of violent behavior. The research gap of the study is that there is no clear empirical knowledge on the contribution of Sufi shrines in Faisalabad towards peace, resilience, and counter-extremism and whether their spiritual and social impact can be an effective community tool to combat terrorism.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The importance of the study is that it examines how Sufi shrines can be utilized in Faisalabad as

peaceful community places that limit extremist thinking and foster social harmonies. It also offers new knowledge regarding the way in which Urs, langar, qawwali, and daily gatherings practices in the shrines contribute to establishing trust, tolerance, and emotional support among the people. The research will assist in the realization of whether the shrine-based values of love, compassion, and coexistence can serve as a soft resistance to terrorism. It is also noteworthy to policy makers, scholars and community leaders who also want to identify local and cultural alternatives of preventing radicalization rather than security alone. Directly addressing the Faisalabad shrines provides this study with a gap in knowledge and presents some useful evidence that could inform peace-building efforts, curriculum development, religious awareness campaigns, and cultural dialogue. The research is also appropriate in creating a more inclusive perspective of religion, social cohesiveness, and the contribution of the local spiritual institutions to form the peaceful society.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do Sufi shrines in Faisalabad shape attitudes of visitors towards peace, tolerance, and coexistence?
2. In what ways do ritual practices, langar, qawwali, and communal gatherings at shrines help reduce extremist thinking and social fear among local communities?
3. How do shrine-based values of love, healing, and spiritual resistance influence community awareness and response against terrorism and radical narratives in Faisalabad?

1. Literature Review

The connection of Sufi shrines with peace and extremism is present in numerous recent researches. These readings provide great evidence to the concept of the shrines being the places of love, inclusion, and social bonding. Meanwhile, the majority of the research lacks the measurement of the direct effect on extremism within a single city. This review examines the current literature and demonstrates where the gap still exists with regards to Faisalabad.

2.1 Conceptual Model

This study has a conceptual model which is used to explain how Sufi shrines in Faisalabad can help prevent extremism and terrorism using spiritual, social, and emotional processes. The model relates the activities of the shrines to peace. It presupposes the culture of the shrine that provides a calming atmosphere in which individuals communicate, eat communally, pray, and hear Sufi poetry and music. These exercises enhance love, unity, and acceptance. In cases when individuals are socially bound and

emotionally mended, they will become less prone to believing radical ideas. Moral lessons of compassion, tolerance, and respect are also promoted in shrines and will be effective in countering the extremist narratives. The model also views shrine spaces as the territory that diminish fear, anger and isolation. Social relationships become strong, which leads to an increase in community resilience, and extremist thinking becomes weak. These aspects will be investigated in terms of the way in which they are interconnected.



Figure 1: *Conceptual Model Flow Chart*

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The current research is grounded in the Ritual Theory and Social Cohesion Theory in order to comprehend the way the Sufi shrines in Faisalabad produce peace, emotional healing, bonding, and resistance against extremism. The two theories can be used to explain the influence of the shrine practices on shaping behaviour, social relations and collective identity.

2.2.1 Ritual Theory

The Ritual Theory describes the influence of rituals on feelings and behaviour. According to Victor Turner, rituals establish liminality and communitas, the event where individual differences diminish, and individuals believe that they are a single group (Turner, 1969; 1974; 1982). Sufi rituals like Urs, dhikr, qawwali, and langar generate collective emotive energy in the

Sufi shrines. Such shared experiences are useful to de-stress and warm hearts. The research indicates that the shrine culture in Punjab fosters love, compassion, sharing, and connection between people, and members of various social groups are engaged in the culture (Arshaad et al., 2024; Mushtaq et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2023). Ritual theory justifies this behaviour due to the fact that the collective devotion forms a secure emotional environment. Spirituality based on healing is also known to create inner peace and strength (Arshaad et al., 2023) undermining fear and hateful thoughts. This can be used to comprehend how the shrine rites in Faisalabad can curb the tendencies associated with radicalization.

2.2.2 Social Cohesion Theory

The theory of social Cohesion is concerned with trust, belonging, and unity which is formed by shared social spaces. Social solidarity as described by Émile Durkheim is the ability to unite people into a moral community (Durkheim, 1893; 1997; 2019). This is reflected in shrines, such as langar, sitting together, storytelling, and open entrance to everyone. These customs close the barrier between classes and build intimate emotional bonds. Studies demonstrate that Sufism is a subtle counter-extremism tool, the one that helps to teach tolerance, coexistence, and respect toward other religions (Raazia and Irfan, 2023; Sandano et al., 2019; Lajwani et al., 2021). Bibi Paak Daman, which is a common shrine, draws Sunni and Shia faithful members to perform concurrent rituals, diminishing sectarianism (Mushtaq et al., 2024; Arshaad, 2024). In this light, the shrines will be social bridges that disrupt identities based on hate and establish peace-based group belonging. This assists the research to analyze, whether the shrines in Faisalabad yield same results in real life community.

The Ritual Theory and Social Cohesion Theory used in this study inform the interpretation of the ways in which practice in shrines leads to the alleviation of extremist inclinations and facilitation of peace in Faisalabad. Ritual Theory aid in describing how rituals of the shrines like dhikr, qawwali, Urs, and langar provide

emotional healing and inner tranquility to visitors that facilitates peaceful thought. Social Cohesion Theory can be used to learn how communal meals, meetings and open access areas can help decrease social distance and create a cohesion between people of diverse backgrounds. Bonding, trust, and the involvement in their activities establish social networks, which make extremist recruitment more vulnerable. Sufi philosophy of love and compassion is also used as spiritual opposition to hate-driven concepts. Combining these theories together, it is possible to examine how mystic peace in the shrines evolves to social defence, emotional health, and community resiliency to extremism in Faisalabad.

2.3 Sufi Peace and Resistance

Sufi ideology considers love negatively. Sufi books and poetry oppose ego, violence, and authoritarianism by promoting the ideas of submission, equality, and sympathy (Sanjarani et al., 2024; Ramzan et al., 2024; Rasool et al., 2024). Sufi expression via music also constructs gentle identity against violent discourse even in recent versions such as Coke Studio (Mukhtar, 2015). These ideas prove the role of the shrine as an area of moral opposition, where love is in rivalry with extremist ideology. The structure is also very critical. The identity of Sufi is not always peaceful and, in a certain context, Sufi and non-Sufi have demonstrated confrontation in both cases (Woodward et al., 2013). Sufism can also serve as a political instrument supported by the state rather than an actual force in the community (Muedini, 2015; Mercier-Dalphon, 2017). This is to remind the study that the analysis of shrine behaviour must be done on the basis of field evidence, rather than the assumption.

2.4 Sufi Shrines as Secular, Inclusive and Communal Spaces

Arshaad et al. (2024) demonstrate the secular and open area of the shrine of Sain Muhammad Bakhsh (Baba Lasoori Shah) in Faisalabad. They talk of festivals, langar, and Urs as the events that unite people of different classes and backgrounds together. The shrine breaks social and economic borders and accepts various groups during the Qawwali and other rituals (Arshaad et al., 2024).

This image helps underpin the concept that the culture of shrines encourages the notion of trust, mutual respect and day to day peace.

Mushtaq et al. (2019) also research the same shrine, but pay attention to rites and festivals. They associate the practices of shrines with the broader Punjabi culture. Their writing demonstrates that individuals usually confuse the official Islamic doctrine and social requirements on the shrine with local traditions. This is useful in proving that the spaces in shrines are hybrid, in that they intersect religion and culture (Mushtaq et al., 2019). Nevertheless, both articles do not directly examine whether this encompassing culture lowers the rates of extremist attitudes. The article by Hussein et al. (2023) focuses on the Baba Syed Noor Shah Wali Shrine in Faisalabad. They draw the attention to pilgrimage, Mehfil-e-Sama, langar and milk sabeel as community building and social assistance instruments. The shrine looks like a religious experience, music, and informal welfare hub as opposed to a limited religious venue (Hussain et al., 2023). These results once again confirm that Sufi shrines develop social cohesion. However, the association with prevention of violence and terrorism remains rather implicit.

2.5 Healing, Well-being and Resilience around Shrines

Arshaad et al. (2023) explored the Sufi Barkat Ali Shrine in Faisalabad and relate the spiritual, mental, and physical healing to the practice of the shrines. They demonstrate the way, in which Dar-ul-Ehsan brings comfort, direction, and support to individuals who are stressed and sick. This shrine is neo-traditional Sufism changing according to the global and local pressure but still providing good community life (Arshaad et al., 2023). These functions are capable of aiding resilience, however, the research does not compare it to extremism or radicalization. The support and healing are also emphasized in other works on shrines. According to Quraeshi (2010), the South Asian Sufi centers are known as the sacred spaces, which accommodate memory, ritual, art, and emotional attachments. Her journey demonstrates that such places bring a

feeling of security and belonging. Kugle (2011) also takes the bodies and shrines of saints as locations of sacred power, social meaning, as well as solidarity. These readings provide an enhanced insight into the way in which the shrines create body, feelings, and society. Nevertheless, they fail to discuss the issue of Pakistani militancy or terrorism. Combined, these works indicate that shrines are used to manage the state of hardship and social change. They demonstrate great emotional and ethical resources. Nevertheless, they do not answer the question how the practices of healing and solidarity interplay with violent ideologies in Faisalabad.

2.6 Sufism, Peace and Counter-extremism

Some of the authors explicitly relate Sufism to national levels of peace and counter-extremism. According to Raazia and Irfan (2023), Sufism can help contain violent extremism in Pakistan, since the religion instills tolerance, compassion, social inclusion, non-violence, and interfaith harmony. Their analysis of Sufi texts and policy documents is done using thematic analysis, but concludes with explicit policy recommendations. They recommend that the Sufi teachings be included in the curricula, festivals, and media to create a harmonious society (Raazia & Irfan, 2023). They are not concerned with the city or shrine of Pakistan, but rather the entire country. Sufi teachings are another solution to violence and hatred offered by Sandano et al. (2019). According to them, the Sufi enlightenment message propagates love and humanity and can bring back peace in Pakistan. They provide empirical support using their case studies in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Sandano et al., 2019). Lajwani et al. (2021) take the same step and explain mysticism as a means of ensuring peace and tolerance. They associate Sufi ethics with good morals and tender disposition towards others (Lajwani et al., 2021). These writings establish a good conceptual connection between Sufism and peace. They demonstrate that Sufi discourse may be used as a soft power asset in the fight against extremism. Nevertheless, they provide scanty micro-level data of Faisalabad shrines. Neither do they turn profoundly inquiring when Sufi language cannot prevent

violence or even be seized control over by authority.

2.7 Sacred Spaces, Tolerance and Shared Identities

The study of Lahore and Jhang shrines puts another dimension into this debate. Mushtaq et al. (2024) discuss the case of Bibi Paak Daman Shrine, which is a Sunni-Shia mixed area. They demonstrate that rituals such as dua, qawwali and majlis-e-aza with congregations change the focus on sectarian identity to common spiritual affiliation. The collaboration and tolerance are enhanced by Sunni and Shia actors, who manage the shrines (Mushtaq et al., 2024). This provides a tangible account of the way sacred spaces might lessen sectarian tension. Arshaad (2024) examines the shrine of the Syeda Ruqayyah bint Ali in Lahore. He demonstrates that the shrine is a place of worship, cultural memory and social interaction. It promotes social solidarity and a history of having a common city. Upgradation project and religious tourism are also designed to direct its image and reach by the government (Arshaad, 2024). The article by Hussain et al. (2024) discusses Mai Heer Shrine in Jhang. They point out the way in which myth, folklore, and spirituality converge and ensure that the shrine remains culturally active. They demonstrate how those who visit the shrine and caretakers perceive the location as an object of worship and amazement. According to these studies, shrines may accommodate multiple identities, and overcome differences. Tolerance is achieved through daily practice. Once again, they are not studying militancy, extremist recruitment, or the attitude to terrorism directly. The effect of peace is more presumptive than experimental.

2.8 Gender, Love and Resistance in Sufi Discourse

More recent studies and texts associate Sufism with gender and opposition as well. Sanjarani et al. (2024) apply Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the Punjabi and Urdu Sufi poetry. They demonstrate the way poets such as Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah, Amir Khusro and Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai are able to employ feminine imagery to declare perseverance, submission, and

resistance. They also encounter a more serious threat to social norms and patriarchy in Punjabis (Sanjarani et al., 2024). This implies that Sufi discourse is able to challenge power and injustice. Ramzan et al. (2024) use CDA to discuss The Forty Rules of Love by Elif Shafak. According to them, Sufism as a rebellious and reformatory religious journey is introduced in the novel. Love and spiritual power are contrary to dogmatic religious teachings and exclusivist stories (Ramzan et al., 2024). In his poem He Came to Know Himself, Sachal Sarmast, read by Rasool et al. (2024), is a discourse of Sufi and resistance. They demonstrate the way Sachal combines Wahdat-ul-Wujud, criticism of injustice, and allusions to martyrdom in a speech against social oppression. Mukhtar (2015) researches new forms of Sufi music such as Coke Studio Pakistan. He also describes how Sufi poetry in popular music could be used as a weapon to respond to both internal extremism and external Islamophobia. It is the emphasis on love, which creates a good Muslim identity that denies violence (Mukhtar, 2015). All these works prove the thought that Sufi language and art may withstand the extremist discourses. Nevertheless, they engage in poetry, fiction and media and not in life in shrines in Faisalabad.

2.9 Sufism, the State and Counter-terror Narratives

A dichotomy between Sufi and Salafi good and bad, some scholar's caution, is simply a Sufi good, Salafi bad narrative. Woodward et al. (2013) demonstrates that Sufism has no definite association with non-violence, whereas Salafism is not associated with violence. They provide examples of Sufi groups being violent, and Salafi groups that are peaceful. According to them, policy makers must not just use theology labels as the foundation of counter-terror measures (Woodward et al., 2013). This is a great caution to any research that views Sufi shrines as mere automatic instruments of peace.

Muedini (2015) and Mercier-Dalphon (2017) examine how the governments and Western actors advocate Sufism as moderate Islam, as well. They demonstrate that Sufi orders and Sufi

shrines are sponsored by states as a political initiative to resist political Islam. This buttressing belongs to a broader power politics and orientalist pictures of Sufism as apolitical and soft. The critical question about these works is the following: are state-led policies of pro-Sufi another way of control instead of actual peace work? Ahmed et al. (2022) enlarge the scope of the picture even more, as the authors examine religion, extremism and violence in South Asia. They emphasize social media, emerging movements and altered extremism. Similar arguments have been put across by Murphy (2012), who insists that terrorism in Pakistan is not based on religious notions alone but are also deeply political, social, and economic. These assertions demonstrate how the peace activities of the shrines should be interpreted within broader frameworks such as inequality, state policy and territorial conflict.

Akbar et al. (2023) target the issue of religious extremism and resilience of the community in Pakistan. They raise the issue of factors that generate the extremism and the importance of building resilience by using the imams, mosques, and fatwas. They also demand the renaissance of Sufi teachings, curriculum changes, and further inclusion (Akbar et al., 2023). However, the paper never examines shrines in Faisalabad and how exactly the network of shrines can engage with other religious players.

Altogether, the literature supports the statement that Sufi shrines in Punjab, such as Faisalabad, are inclusive, healing, and socially abundant environments (Arshaad et al., 2024; Hussain et al., 2023; Arshaad et al., 2023; Mushtaq et al., 2019). Other researchers also state that Sufism, Sufi poetry, and sacred spaces may facilitate peace, tolerance, and violence resistance on the national, regional, and worldwide scales (Raazia and Irfan, 2023; Sandano et al., 2019; Mukhtar, 2015; Sanjarani et al., 2024; Ramzan et al., 2024; Rasool et al., 2024). Ongoing work on Lahore and Jhang shrines is also a promising premise of sectarian coexistence and a similar cultural identity (Mushtaq et al., 2024; Arshaad, 2024; Hussain et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, a gap is still evident. There is very limited research that directly and empirically investigates the impact of the presence of shrines in Faisalabad on the perception of extremism, militancy or terrorism. Majority of the studies are aimed at culture, healing, music or memory instead of direct counter-extremism results. Meanwhile, the policy and theological literature urges scholars not to idealize Sufism and to consider more profound power and structural concerns (Woodward et al., 2013; Muedini, 2015; Mercier-Dalphon, 2017; Murphy, 2012; Ahmed et al., 2022). It implies that there is a necessity of a grounded study that would investigate the two aspects: the peace potential of shrines and the boundaries of using them as mere instruments against extremism.

This gap can be closed by the proposed research on the topic of the article: *Mystic Peace and Resistance: Evaluating the Role of Sufi Shrines in Preventing Extremism and Terrorism in Faisalabad, Pakistan*. It is able to connect the local work on Faisalabad shrines with broader discussions regarding Sufism, peace and state policy. It has the ability of testing, in narrow sense, whether or how the practice of shrines, narratives and networks in Faisalabad influence how people could think about the issue of violence, radical groups and social justice keeping in mind the warnings by critical scholarship.

2. Research Methodology

The research design employed in this study was qualitative. The objective was to discover how the Sufi shrines in Faisalabad foster peace, healing and resistance to extremist thought. This paper is based on actual experience, feelings, and social behaviour within shrines. It also enabled a close contact with individuals who have rituals, Urs, qawwali, langar, and visit as a source of spiritual relief.

3.1 Data Collection Methods

The data was gathered by semi-structured interviews, field observations, and attendance at the activities in the shrines. The researchers were spent a year in Faisalabad traveling to four shrines and prepared field notes. Urs, Langar, dhikr, and qawwali were useful towards the insight into how

collective events can alleviate anger, stress, and social distance. Interviews were conducted on the perception of visitors on the shrine, what peace messages they gain, how they perceive the visiting extremism and reasons why they believe in shrine environment. The behaviour, body language, food sharing, emotional release during Sama and informal conversations between devotees were observed.

3.2 Sampling and Participants

The participants were shrine caretakers (Sajjada Nashin or Gaddi Nasheen), frequent visitors, women, the youth, vendors, and community members who are affiliated to shrine life. The participants were selected by purposive sampling to identify that were personally familiar with the practices in the shrine. The sample was consist of 40 interviews; 10 interviews per shrine.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

Thematic analysis techniques was applied in this study. All interviews and field notes were read repeatedly to identify the repetitive meanings. Peace themes, emotional healing, langar practices, communal rituals, tolerance behaviours, and resistance to extremist ideas were prepared as codes. These codes were constitute themes that defined the construction of the soft peace by the shrine culture. Next, the themes were related to the theoretical construct of the Ritual Theory and the Social Cohesion Theory to learn about the principles of rituals to gather and the effects of bonding to diminish extremist power.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The participants were made aware of the reason of the research. Their identity was not be disclosed to anyone and no personal information publicized. Interviews and using quotes were be recorded and permission was obtained. The gathered information was utilized in this study and will be kept in a safe manner.

The methodology aided in capturing the actual voices, lived experiences and the daily practices in the shrines. It demonstrated how the ritual, spiritual gatherings, and community bonding of Sufi shrines in Faisalabad turn the shrines into

spaces of peace and how the practices decreased the extremist thinking in the grassroot level.

3. Data Analysis

In this section, the findings of the fieldwork in four shrines in Faisalabad, namely Baba Lasoori Shah Shrine, Baba Syed Noor Shah Wali Shrine, Sufi Barkat Ali Dar-ul-Ehsan, and Baba Qaim Sain Shrine are explained. The data was gathered by use of 40 semi-structured interviews (10 per shrine), 1 year field observation and active participation in Urs, Langar, Qawwali, Dhikr, Manat rituals, Dhamaal and community activities. Analysis is done to comprehend how the shrine culture brings about peace, emotional healing and opposition to extremism. Ritual practices, viewing of emotional patterns and community behaviour observed in the fieldwork were used as themes.

4.1 Baba Lasoori Shah Shrine

The interview data reveals that the Baba Lasoori Shah is associated with the devotees by kindness, openness and not judgmental demeanor. Most of the respondents indicated that shrine is a site to relieve anger and sadness. In Urs, the thousands of people sit together and eat Langar without bothering the other whether he is wealthy or not. The observation in the field observed individuals feeding birds, giving them food, and lighting lamps. Qawwali brought happiness and peace. This was the case with some of the visitors who cried through Dhikr and said that they felt light-hearted. Majority of the interviewees indicated that love, patience, and soft behaviour are taught in the shrine. People claimed that they come home after Sama and Dhamaal in peace. Such changes in emotions decrease aggression. Field notes indicate that there is no conflict and no loud arguments within shrine. Rather, laughter, praying and sharing occurred. This shrine is also utilized as emotional cooling space making less space to have the extremist anger.

4.2 Baba Syed Noor Shah Wali Shrine

On weekly Sama after Asar in Noor Shah Shrine, all income groups gather to worship. The interviews reveal that people visit to relieve themselves of the depression, stress at work,

money issues and broken relationships. It was said *sukoon milta hai, dil halka ho jata hai*. Trance-like focus is produced by music. Individuals either applaud, move around or sit and close their eyes. In Urs, Langar distribution, Milk Sabeel, and charity boxes were filled very fast, according to field notes. Rich people shared with poor visitors in the same line. There were neutral gender persons who were very comfortable. Healing with emotions was very conspicuous. Other young respondents added that music helped them to keep off the bad company as well as aggressive behaviour. The respondents associated Qawwali to soft thinking, rather than hate. This shrine creates social bonding. Individuals chat to strangers, share tea and listen to others as they share their stories. Belonging feeling comes naturally and this seals off radical recruiters.

4.3 Sufi Barkat Ali Shrine Dar-ul-Ehsan

Interviews at Dar-ul-Ehsan show visitors admire Barkat Ali's teachings on character building, self-control, honesty and service to humanity. His books like *Makshooft-e-Manazil-e-Ehsan* were seen in library corner. Many respondents said reading his lessons helped them control anger and jealousy. Spiritual training reduces ego and increases forgiveness. Zikr circles observed during fieldwork created calm environment. People repeated Allah's name in slow rhythm. Stress decreased. Some respondents said Dhikr saved them from negative thoughts and revenge feelings. Emotional healing was visible when

people cried and wiped tears with relief. Dar-ul-Ehsan also runs welfare activities like food support for needy. When people receive care, they do not feel ignored. Radicalization grows where people feel rejected, but here they feel accepted. Moral training builds peaceful attitude and reduces extremist thinking.

4.4 Baba Qaim Sain Shrine

On field notes of Qaim Sain Shrine, it is observed to have a simple yet spiritual warm environment. Individuals were seated on the floor, women were conducting rituals by oil lamps and children were playing freely. There was no division of labour, labours, shopkeepers, students, old people sat together without any order. During Urs, donation boxes were filled. Langar was continuous. The poor people stole food shamelessly. Qawwali and Dhamaal were emotive. The completion of mannat was celebrated by dancing. Worshippers claimed that shrine is home-like and provides tasalli. The telling about the miracles of Baba Qaim Sain creates spiritual power founded on love rather than fear. There are no strict rules and pressure followed. Power is pouring along the lines of memory, poetry and devotion. Qadiriyya discipline (Quran recitation, ethics) and Qalandari ecstasy (Dhamaal, trance) are mixed to balance between a cold worship and emotional behavior. Such a combination assists devotees to cope with stress. Emotional discharge helps avoid the development of frustration into violent behaviour.

4.5 Cross-Shrine Analysis

Table 1: *Sufi Shrines Cross-Shrine Analysis*

Indicator	Lasoori Shah	Noor Shah Wali	Dar-ul-Ehsan	Qaim Sain
Emotional Healing	High through Qawwali & Urs	Strong through Sama	Deep through Dhikr	Visible in Dhamaal
Social Inclusion	Very open & equal	Mixed gathering	Structured & disciplined	Open to all including poor
Peace Messages	Love, patience	Calmness, unity	Moral self-control	Brotherhood & belonging
Radical Resistance	Soft attitude reduces anger	Music breaks frustration	Discipline controls ego	Belonging blocks hate

The researchers visited Urs at all of the four shrines throughout the year, Qawwali every week at Noor Shah Wali, Dhikr at Dar-ul-Ehsan, and usually Langar at Lasoori Shah. The atmosphere in all the shrines was calm, mellow and sentimentally warm. Individuals came in with heavy hearts and most of them came out with relaxed faces. The majority of the visitors were respectful of one another. During any visit, no aggressive behaviour or hate slogans were observed.

Courtyards in the shrines of Urs season were filled with sound and colour. Drums and harmonium reverberated in qawwali. Other followers danced with closed eyes, hands up and tears streaming Dhamaal. This was explained by young men as *dil halka ho jata hai*. In Langar lines, there was no separation between poor and rich. Eating was plain and communal and most of the times roti, rice, kadhi, or sweet kheer. Sharing food reduced ego. Individuals spoke to strangers, shared dua and some of them even gave water to others.

Dhikr circles were quiet and slow in Dar-ul-Ehsan. Individuals were sitting together in a circle and reciting the name of Allah in low tones. The researcher observed that there was profound silence following Dhikr as though minds relaxed. There were devotees wiping tears. Teaching corner used to discuss the writings of Barkat Ali where volunteers gave explanations of patience, honesty and humility. There were evident emotional changes. Individuals that went in stressed appeared to have calmed down.

Urs nights were very active at Baba Lasoori Shah. Drums continued late. Families used to make Chadar offerings. The gender neutral individuals were not afraid because they took part freely. Kids were roaming around and playing around stalls. Sellers were selling tasbeeh, roses, lamps, and sugar. Sabeel of sweet water was running to the visitors. Lovers prayed to have children and peace within the family. There was no dress/class limitation.

Sama closely followed by Asar every week at Noor Shah Wali Shrine led to unity of the devotees. The researcher sat in the midst of

Every shrine demonstrated composed behaviour, togetherness, Langar sharing, and emotional conversion. Interviews proved that peace does not just exist in the teaching of peace but also by rituals. Shrine spaces transform vicious emotions to gentleness. None of the radical slogans or hate speech observed throughout the fieldwork. Shrines serve as centers of peace, not by coercion but by changing people with their hearts. Suffering is made light by emotions. People feel valued. Charity minimizes economic anguish. Rituals bring down ego barriers. This encounter undermines the faith in extremist ideology. When society is united at the same space, there is no access point by the extremists groups.

4.6 Summary of Data Analysis

- Rituals such as Qawwali, Langar, Dhikr and Urs bring about emotional comfort and happiness.
- Social bonding develops by the common food, common sitting and mixed getting together.
- Moral teachings minimize ego, hateful and violent thoughts.
- Shrines provide a sense of belonging to poor, women, neutral gender and marginal groups.
- Emotional healing and unity is a natural defence mechanism of extremist messages.

In the results, it is indicated that there are four Faisalabad shrines that are fully involved in the formation of peace. They develop casual resistance towards terrorism by substituting anger with love and hopelessness with spiritual hope.

The researchers spent a year visiting four shrines in Faisalabad on a regular basis. Field notes were made when Urs celebrations, Dhikr circles, Qawwali mehfil, Langar arrangements, Dhamaal rituals, evening ziyarat and lamp offerings and informal courtyard interactions were taking place. The purpose of observation was to observe actual human behaviour, sounds, body language, emotions, and social practices within the interiors of shrines. Rituals were also a means of knowing both colorfully about spiritual moods, not only by words, but by personal experience.

This is tested in field practice when shrine culture does not combat violence through war, it combats it through mending hearts.

4. Discussion

The findings clearly indicate that Sufi shrines in Faisalabad influence the development of the peaceful thinking by the means of the ritual experience, emotional healing, and collective space. The visitors acquire positive attitudes not because the person lectures them, but because when visiting the shrine it is natural that the visitor is influenced by the environment, his/her emotions, behaviour, and social relations are changed. Field notes, one-year observations, and interviews prove that the shrine culture imparts peace, not just by words, but through practices.

There was also a presence of sukoon, tasalli and inner calmness that the visitors described in all the four shrines. In the interviews of Baba Lasoori Shah, most respondents indicated that they visit when they are angry or sad and leave feeling better. Observations made at Urs revealed that Qawwali and Dhamaal made people shed off frustration. At Noor Shah Wali shrine, one of the men informed the researcher that mehnat kay baad dimagh bhaari hota hai, yahan sama sun k halki saans aati hai (after labor my mind feels heavy, Sama makes me relax). The tension is substituted by softness with emotional release. A tender heart seldom takes hate messages or violent calls. This observation validates the theme of analysis that shrine rituals lessen emotional heat and establish cool behaviour. Peace grows when anger falls. The negative emotions are managed with the aid of Shrines by Dhikr, music, prayer, and spiritual remembrance. This healing of the emotions is initial step of peaceful thought.

Such observation in the field indicates that shrines are social places of equality. At Langar lines in Lasoori Shah Shrine there were no judgments of poor and rich. Ego is lowered when people share same food on same plate. In Qaim Sain shrine, the gender neutral individuals were allowed to freely attend Urs. No one stopped them. Women put on lamps and gave chadar without hesitating. This experience disintegrates social inequality. Social divisions are overcome

visitors and observed head movements in accordance with rhythm. One man replied that he comes here after the work stress and relieves. The discussions occurred in a natural manner. Individuals exchanged and requested dua to one another. Others discussed joblessness or sickness back at home. Qawwali made them release sadness emotionally. Individuals that cried were supported by their peers sitting beside them.

At Baba Qaim Sain Shrine, the evenings were not complicated and spiritual. Oil lamps spread warm glow. Women strung red strings on net-work and prayed. Men sat quietly near grave. One of them remarked, this place will relieve the heart. Unity was enhanced by dhamaal during Urs. There were no one looking different and unwanted. All mingled together in their piety.

The researcher noted that, in all the shrines:

- People shake hands with strangers Salam, smile and share space.
- No inequality was observed in terms of wealth, language or caste.
- Shrine environment resulted in feeling of equality and emotional safety.
- People are emotional and cries here show release of feelings and faith in space.
- After Qawwali or Dhikr, the mood was felt to have calmed down.
- Feeling of belonging and social care was achieved through Langar and charity.

The researcher himself experienced lessening of noise of mind in Qawwali and Dhikr. Silences of the moment were therapeutic. The involvement enabled personal comprehension of the way rituals move the heart. Most followers claimed that they come back every week since it provides restorative power rather than treatment or prescriptions. This demonstrates shrines as emotional support systems in day to day lives.

The years-long observations confirm that shrines are more than historical monuments. They have been employed as live social worlds. Peace and unity are naturally generated through worship, food, music, storytelling and ritual movement. The practices make anger and isolation weak and this minimizes the chances of extremist thinking.

The milk sabeel, langar and charity were repeated throughout the shrines. Free food has social meaning. It welcomes visitors saying that you are welcome here. Even the homeless people ate without any hesitation according to field notes. Feeling of neglect is minimized when food is provided by society, care and attention is given. Such an attitude results in frustration and anger that are used by extremist groups. This pathway is blocked by shrine culture which produces belonging and support. The visit to Qaim Sain during the interview showed that one vendor comes once a week not necessarily with religious intent. He told me that he prefers sitting indoors as it is where he feels alive; *yahan insan zinda mehsoos hota hai*. Sense of being alive and appreciated helps towards peaceful state of mind.

Shrines do not preach directly that one should not be an extremist. Rather they make the environments in which extremism is no longer appealing. Peace is realized in the process of internal change, rather than external teaching. Individuals get relaxed, integrated, treasured and emotionally together. An individual who is complete will not seek violent identity. Shrine environment is also a learning environment that teaches tolerance because diversity is normalized. Culture is not theory but coexistence. Nevertheless, it is also observed that the work of peace is slow and emotional. It transforms hearts and not politics. At micro level, anger can be reduced by accepting the state of shrines, but sustained peace also requires fair economy and social justice. Shrine soft power is powerful, but not sufficient. Nevertheless, it is the initial line of defence by ensuring minds remain soft and shun hatred.

Interviews and a one-year field observation indicate that ritual activities in shrines suppress the extremist tendencies as they heal emotional traumas, alleviate stress, instill a sense of belonging, and foster trust between individuals. Rituals never struggle with extremism in argument. Rituals, on the contrary, bring peace to the heart. When an individual is emotionally stable and accepted by a society, then the extremist messages are rendered powerless. Shrines are social therapeutic practices whereby

when individuals sit, eat and pray together. The data obtained in the interview indicates that visitors frequently stated: *yahan farq mehsoos nahi hota* (we do not experience differences here). It is living together, and not theory. Tolerance is made to be everyday behaviour. Shrine areas provide the same visibility to those who are overlooked outside: labourers, poor, women, and jobless young people. Having a sense of respect, cultivates healthy attitude to the society, rather than bitterness. Extremism flourishes under the feeling of rejection. Shrines do just the converse they yield and honour.

The interviews conducted at Dar-ul-Ehsan indicated high emphasis upon moral discipline, honesty, patience and character control in the writings of Barkat Ali. One of the devotees reported about changing his habit of responding in an angry state of mind, having been attending Dhikr sessions. Removal of ego and hatred is taught in the books such as *Makshoofat-e-Manazil-e-Ehsan*. Peace is enhanced when the ego is minimized. This ethical training makes the visitors more tolerant individuals. Shrine poetry teaches, anger burns soul, pride leads to sin and love is path to God. These moral messages go directly against the violence-based thinking. Tourists do not get to learn peace as a lesson, but as a virtue associated with God and humanity.

The most apparent means of emotional attachment was music. In Noor Shah Wali Sama, individuals of various ages were sitting beside each other. Same heartbeat like motion was provided by rhythm. The researcher witnessed tears, smiles, slow breathings, and relaxed faces. Emotional energy transformed personal suffering to a collective one. Empathy is created with shared experience. Empathy reduces hate. People used to dance in one circle during Dhamaal at Urs. Nobody was concerned with clothes and status. One of the young devotees said: *yahan sab barabar hain, na koi bara na koi chota* (here everybody is equal, there is no big and little). This solidarity is the opposite of the extremist identity thinking which polarizes the us vs them. Shrine rituals constitute us together.

Qawwali removes remoteness as bodies and hearts are connected.

Extremist groups enlist in areas where the young feel isolated. Shrines do opposite. They form fraternity and friendship. According to field notes, men give tea to strangers, make old persons sit, direct first-timers. In Urs at Lasoori Shah People had to share mats with strangers. No one refused space. Such a minor gesture minimizes otherness. When one male forms Langar queue among strangers and another person in front of him provides water, there is just a mere social bridge. Bridges reduce fear. Extremists are less accepted when there is fear reduction. A shopkeeper interviewed at Qaim Sain reported that he comes every week because it is the place where he feels he is back at home because it feels like *kyun ke yahan apnapan milta hai* (because it is home). Radical ideology is mentally repelled by family-feeling.

Visits to shrines do not happen in a one-time situation. Many come weekly or monthly. Character is created through repetition. Bad habit breeds violence, as peaceful habit breeds tolerance. A year of observation can be used to prove that more soft speech and calm behaviour are developed by regular visitors as compared to first-time visitors. A field note on the 8th month at Dar-ul-Ehsan indicated, the same boys who were shouting some time ago are sitting quietly and are taking part in Dhikr in a focused manner. This behavioral change depicts ritual slowness training of peace.

Shrine rituals are healing, and they bring people together, however, the healing cannot be a panacea to heal the societal issues. There is economic injustice, political outburst and social inequality that should be addressed. Nevertheless, the shrine culture offers emotional and relational foundation on which peace can be cultivated. It does not drive the extremism away overnight. Rather, it desiccates the soil of hatred, and so the extremism cannot be easily developed. Violence is indirectly changed by rituals not by argument. One can also claim that rituals will soothe only in the short term. However, field notes over one year reveal more. Most visitors

music, food, prayer and group meetings turn negative into a peaceful state.

Tourists usually come with their stressors of either unemployment, family pressure, sickness or failure. On the gatherings of Noor Shah Wali Sama, it was observed that people closed their eyes, inhaled rhythmically and slowly. Some cried quietly. At the end of the session, faces were more relaxed. According to one of the young interviewees, there was a saying that goes, *gussa nikal jata hai, dil halka hota hai* (anger goes away, heart feels light). Frustration is weaker through emotional release that is mostly exploited by extremists. Dhamaal in Lasoori Shah Urs enabled individuals to be able to feel pain through motion. No one mocked anyone. According to a middle-aged man, who narrated to the researcher about his anger problems, Dhamaal allowed him the space to get the energy out without causing harm to anybody. This emotional subversion will lessen violence within mind. This removes shame. In regular society, poor are neglected and become frustrated with system. Shrines break this feeling. A destitute woman in Qaim Sain indicated that she comes because here nobody treats us like low. This affiliation lowers hate and revenge sentiments that breed extremism. With an appeased hunger and a dignified height, anger is gentle. One of the causes of radicalization is social inequality. The root of that is the direct attack in giving food, respect, and presence by Langar. Extremist groups are unable to manipulate people when they feel that they are taken care of.

Qawwali does not preach politics. It gives spiritual joy. Joy is opposite of fear. Fear-based extremist propaganda is low when mind is laden with hope. It was observed that at Sama at Noor Shah Wali that people were smiling at strangers, singing along in low tones and tapping their hands. This involvement together stems out loneliness with group energy. Dhikr circles at Dar-ul-Ehsan were peaceful. Breath slowed. Voices became soft. One of the respondents remarked that *Zikr se gussa kam hota hai* (Dhikr lessens anger). Extremist calls are not appealing due to emotional balance. Fear grows in isolation.

anguish is minimized by the shrine healing rituals. Dhikr lowers stress. Qawwali is a discharge of frustration. Langar removes hunger. Being in a silent place beside grave of shrine turns one into peaceful. Once healed, one will not be attracted to violent ideologies. A young visitor to Noor Shah Wali stated that he had been angry with the society before, but having been familiar with Sama gatherings regularly he came to know how to be patient and now fights never. Field notes taken by researcher in the fourth month: A man cried in the Qawwali later on claiming that he felt like a burden that has been taken off his chest. He replied that he would react promptly when angry, whereas now he makes an attempt to remain calm. This emotional outburst acts as gentle spiritual push in the hate discourse.

Propaganda of extremists is covert. But shrines make open room of talk, of conversation and mutual learning. At Urs, the people share the stories of saints who defended poor people, forgave the enemies and brought mercy. Such narratives bring alternative narrative as opposed to extremism. Rather than revenge, they are told of forgiveness. What they look at is charity rather than destruction. In Lasoori Shah Shrine, the old told miracles and doctrines to the young. One of the devotees told me that, Yahan buzurg batatay hain ke pyar hi asli jeet hai. (Love is the real victory). This influences awareness on the mental and emotional levels. The shrines become school of peace, in the neighborhood.

Extremist groups attempt to fill the hearts with terror and rage. They are full of hope and trust in shrines. Recent observations indicate that believers claim that saints lead them, guard them and hear their prayers. Spiritual safety diminishes the threat anxiety. On the reduction of fear, there is also a reduction in manipulation. Terror discourses require fear to manage individuals. Fear is driven away by shrine culture through faith and love. A woman visiting Qaim Sain shrine stated to the researcher that she visits there every Friday since dil ko himmat milti hai (it gives strength to the heart). Power prevents radicalization. Weak minds follow fear. Strong minds follow peace.

altered patterns, communication and fighting reactions. This goes to show that peace can be introduced in culture and not just policy.

Ritual activities, Langar, Qawwali and communal events lessen the extremists thinking by restoring emotional trauma, erasing social embarrassment, establishing trust and a sense of belonging. Food togetherness brings in equality, spiritual music lowers stress and Dhikr hardens ego. Extremist ideology would be deprived of emotional support when the heart is calm and when the society is perceived to be supportive. It is the joy, love, meal and communal worship that makes the shrines encourage coexistence not by coercive force to join but by the natural fear and hatred that people have in each other.

The information on all four shrines indicates that the values of the shrines which include love, forgiveness, compassion, service, and emotional healing are very strong in influencing the development of awareness against terrorism. The culture of shrines does not combat extremism via debate and argument. Rather, it provides an emotional environment of peace in which hatred will not develop easily. As individuals get to feel loved and nurtured within shrine space, they begin to reject violent messages in a natural way. This is transformation occurring gradually, in the heart.

The writings of Barkat Ali and poems found on shrines are repetitive when it comes to love to Allah, and love to human beings. This is what one interviewee at Dar-ul-Ehsan said, Agar insan Allah se pyar kare, to kisi ko dukh nahi de sakta. This indicates that love turns into inner law that determines behaviour. The terrorism needs hate, anger and revenge. Love based thinking does the contrary. It discourages injury and promotes sympathy. According to field notes, hugging and handshaking and praying strangers without information about their caste and background is common. The extreme calls to violence that are practiced in this way make all of the calls sound morally wrong and emotionally distasteful. The shrine does not enforce but leads by example.

The terrorist discourses tend to address disenchanted or despairing psyche. Emotional

The results indicate that the Sufi shrines in Faisalabad are highly involved in the creation of the peaceful perception and weakened the extremist tendencies in the society. The four shrines Baba Lasoori Shah, Baba Syed Noor Shah Wali, Sufi Barkat Ali Dar-ul-Ehsan, and Baba Qaim Sain are functioning as social and spiritual areas that individuals heal, connect, and belong. Rituals, langar, qawwali, dhikr meetings, Urs festivals, and charity activities assist in shaping emotional calmness and tolerance to the visitors.

Teachings at the shrines, which were grounded on love, patience, humility and forgiveness made the visitors think softly according to their reports. The works by Barkat Ali taught about good behavior and anger management. Individuals indicated that they are slow to react and more tolerant having attended dhikr. Peace is cultivated and is internalized first before it is externalized through behaviour. Qawwali and dhikr were identified to be emotional therapy. Observations indicate that people were crying when Sama came out and smiling thereafter. Dhamaal assisted most in setting aside the heavy load of feelings without violence. Heart of peace declines hate-coded bells. By healing the emotions, they become natural resistance to the extremist thought. The langar of food sharing eliminated the class differences. Poor and rich sat together. Without being judged, neutral gender persons could eat freely. Equality lessened shame and indignation. Individuals had a sense of respect and belongingness. Extremist groups do not find attractive frustrated individuals in the society where they are allowed to exist. Natural community bonding was achieved through urs meetings and sitting on the courtyard daily. Individuals prayed, spoke, served water and assisted elders. The building of trust allowed the environment where fear decreased, and cooperation rose. The community is more united and it is difficult to divide that community by the use of radical messages.

Individuals came to shrines to get sukoon (inner peace), mannat (hope), healing or to share the pain. Loneliness was minimized by safe emotional space. The interviewees indicated that shrine is like a family. When the individuals feel

Splintered communities tend to increase extremism. Communities are formed through shrines. Langar, milk sabeel, Urs meetings and Dhamaal bring people together under a similar identity. People build trust. Outsiders cannot form suspicions easily when trust is disseminated. Urs took field note in Noor Shah Wali:

“Thousands moved in harmony. No pushing, no fights. Individuals gave one another water and made room to the elders. The atmosphere was that of family.

A community that is united will not succumb to hate messaging since rumors do not work where individuals are well acquainted. In places where empathy and connection exist a weak ideology will collapse, radical ideology. The influence of the shrines is sluggish and profound. It shifts the mind but most importantly through the heart. It is not necessarily in contention with the extremists. It eliminates the emotional fertile ground of extremism. The problem is that the resistance of the shrine is soft power and not physical defence. It is not able to prevent radical groups on its own. Still it can undermine their emotional recruiting base. This kind of soft resistance is potent in the long term since it creates identity founded on love as opposed to fear. Other spiritual identity is also provided by the shrine culture. Fight for religion is replaced by shrine teachings of love of creation. And instead of purity by exclusion, shrine preaches purity by pity. This change alters the way individuals react to the religious messages.

The values of love, healing and spiritual resistance found in the shrines make people more aware of the community and lessen the support of terrorism through heart softening, elimination of emotional pains, encouraging forgiveness, unity, and providing spiritual power. People feel united, cherished and optimistic instead of frustrated and lonely through curing ceremonies, Langar, Dhikr and Qawwali. This social and emotional connection is a natural defense on radical narratives. Extremism becomes unattractive when a community is not rejected but rather accepted by the society.

5. Findings of the Study

shrines in Faisalabad facilitates peace, love, emotion healing and unity among communities. Such findings are consistent with numerous previous research studies that also point to the fact that the curtain space of shrines alleviates social tension, contributes to tolerance, and develops a shared identity among individuals.

Studies carried out in the past including Arshaad et al. (2024) and Mushtaq et al. (2019) detail the manner in which Sufi shrines such as Baba Lasoori Shah promote cultural unity and secular transparency. This has been supported in the current study whereby it is established that things like the Langar and Urs rituals within the Shrines bring together people of all kinds. The two studies point out that shrines minimize discrimination and equality. For example, the current research is more interested in the way unity decreases the opportunities of the extremist influence that previous studies addressed indirectly. Sufi traditions that aid in tolerance that are present in Mushtaq et al. (2024) and Arshaad (2024) are also present in the study. In their work, they demonstrate the Sunni and Shia worshipping side by side in Bibi Pak Daman Shrine. The researcher also noticed that in Faisalabad shrines, there was an inclusive behaviour in which poor individuals, women, along with neutral gender persons were included without the fear of intimidation. The previous research has also focused on sacred coexistence and the current discoveries put a spin on this, inclusion being a defense mechanism against radical stories.

A study conducted by Hussain et al. (2023) of Noor Shah Wali Shrine revealed that mehfil-e-sama and langar construct support in the community. In the current work, the same effects were also obtained, however, the authors also show that emotional comfort also lowers anger and makes extremism unappealing. Thus, other past researches had been on culture and healing and this research describes how the same practices themselves become a peace defence mechanism. Other works were conducted by Sanjarani et al. (2024) and Ramzan et al. (2024), who studied the topic of gender representation and Sufi love stories. The current research gives credit to their perception that Sufism is the

appreciated and related they do not engage in violent behaviour. Positive worldview was formed by stories of saints, moral poetry and rituals founded on love to Allah and people. Devotees were reduced to people in whom violence was morally wrong. Mending the hearts undermine the extremist appeal since there will be no interior cavity through which revenge and hate can develop. Tourists learned that the Islam religion preaches mercy and coexistence. A large number of people dismissed extremist concepts transparently during interviews. They associated the teachings of the shrines with the peace not with war. Shrines are the soft education areas where tolerance will be the daily routine. Shrines were open to all, poor, women, labourers, young and neutral gender persons. Acceptance and visibility enhanced self-esteem. Radical networks are not as susceptible to empowered people. Inclusion develops resilience in the community.

The results reveal that individuals learn peace by listening, sharing, emotions, and rituals and not by formal lectures. Environment and behaviour are sources of peace. This is gradual but incisive, and protracted. The research findings also indicate that Sufi shrines decrease extremist thought and social fear by:

- Love and spiritual healing with hearts.
- Relaxation of emotions by using dhikr, qawwali and dhamaal.
- Designing equality and dignity by the means of langar and common space.
- Developing communal trust by organizing Urs and making frequent visits.
- Emotional protection of stress, grief and loneliness.
- Tolerance, empathy and coexistence values should be encouraged.
- Diluting extremist ideology by eliminating anger and isolation.

All, Sufi shrines serve as a peace center and a community support system in Faisalabad that enhance non-violence, social unity and resistance to radicalization. This study reveals that Sufi

contexts. Real behaviour within the shrines validates theoretical frameworks and conceptual model. The research reveals how peace is not only preached in the shrines but it is acted, shared and lived.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed at learning the benefits of the Sufi shrines in Faisalabad in the establishment of peace, tolerance and resistance to extremist thinking. The findings of 1-year field observation and interviews conducted at four shrines, namely Baba Lasoori Shah, Baba Syed Noor Shah Wali, Dar-ul-Ehsan Sufi Barkat Ali and Baba Qaim Sain reveal that shrines are not purely religious places. They are places of comfort and unity, emotional shelters, social places and cultural centres where people can be found comfortable, united, and belong.

The research concludes that Urs congregations, Qawwali, Dhikr, Langar, Dhamaal, and daily interaction in the courtyard are some of the activities practiced in the shrine that develop peaceful attitudes among the visitors. Such practices will decrease anger, stress and frustration which are better used by extremist groups to manipulate individuals. Hate messages no longer have power when the hearts conquer the softness and the minds the calmness. The quality of Sufism the major values in love, compassion, forgiveness, and patience serve as an inner opposition to violence.

Langar is also important as it eliminates the social classes' disparity. Without segregation poor and rich eat. Women, young people, workers, and gender impartial individuals are welcome. Diversity enhances respect. Dignity reduces bitterness. A society that feels honored will be more resistant to radical discourses. Dhikr and music also aid in healing the emotions. Individuals shed tears, pray, exchange issues and walk back with light hearts. Healing is a break in the cycle of anger which brings about extremism. The results support the theoretical framework that the rituals of the shrines result in the emotional tranquility, which cultivates peace values, and ultimately lowers the attraction of extremist rituals. The soft power employed in

doctrine of emotional tenderness and divine affection. The present research, however, unlike their literature focus takes the form of real time observations and interviews of the shrines to demonstrate how these values modify the community behaviour in their day-to-day life.

Sufism was proposed by scholars, such as Raazia and Irfan (2023) and Sandano et al. (2019) as counter-extremism tool. This argument is strengthened by the current research, but with more pragmatic data of field research- presenting peace as an experience, not the theory alone. Previous researchers prescribed Sufi revival as a policy. The present research demonstrates the way this has already been practiced in shrines.

Ritual Theory and Social Cohesion Theory have similar analysis. The research established that Qawwali, Dhikr, Dhamaal and Urs events produce emotional discharge and community identity. This conforms to the concept of ritual liminality by Turner that suggests the ego diminishes and unity grows. Ritual transformation has been evidenced by field notes of men crying or dancing in Sama. This demonstrates that ritual is emotional education of peace. Sharing of spaces, sitting together and equal participation with the other enhanced bonding. Individuals were incorporated and appreciated. This supports the fact that repeated social interaction develops trust as brought forth by Coleman and Putnam. This trust is protective against the extremist ideology, which the study demonstrates as an extension of the traditional cohesion theory. Theoretical frameworks clarify why the practices of the shrines work whereas the field results clarify the way they work in life. This flow is confirmed by the findings. It is shown that emotional healing will decrease anger and peace values will substitute hate. Tourists were taught to have tolerance and empathy reducing the influence of extremists. Resiliency was enhanced by community togetherness in the form of langar and meetings. Thus, the theoretical construct is justified in practice in shrines. The existing research has a close connection with previous studies and enriches them by demonstrating how shrine culture can change hearts, form unity, and diminish the extremist mentality in real-life

purpose of shrines is purgatory but profound. It starts within the heart and trickles into the society. A society that is healed is less afraid, less enraged and less aggressive. Finally, Faisalabad has Sufi shrines which are living peace centers. They lead the thoughts off hate and into love. They offer individuals room to bond, share feelings, feel appreciated and gain trust. Terrorism has no room to flourish when the communities share a meal, pray and also celebrate. This study demonstrates that spiritual and cultural traditions continue to have a solid prospect of establishing peace in Pakistan.

shrines to achieve peace is not political power. They do not struggle with violence using violence. They fight it with love. They establish the environment in which co-existence becomes the ordinary behaviour and togetherness becomes the daily routine.

This paper contributes to the past studies by providing actual examples of fieldwork in Faisalabad. The previous literature emphasized the theme of tolerance and cultural harmony in shrines, and this paper builds up on the theme by demonstrating that the culture of the shrines also safeguard society against radicalization. The

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