

Short Communication

Spiritualism: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the role of peers (spiritual guides) in society. Major proportion i.e. 29.0% of the respondents belonged to Nakshbandi sect, and a huge majority of the respondents 94.0% were Ahl-e-Sunnat and half of the respondents' peer provided Islamic education to their followers.

Key Words: Religion; Spiritualism; Society; Islam

INTRODUCTION

In almost all societies, people believe in one or the other religion. Believing in peers more than the permissible religious instructions is considered as a sin. Fake peers are flourishing their business in contrast to the feelings of their believers (*mureeds*). Therefore, such a fake spiritualism has not only led to extraction of cash and kind from their believers, but also has brought bad name to Islam.

There is a pervasive belief, held more widely outside Pakistan than in the country itself, that Pakistan like Israel and Iran, is one of three confessional states in the world. Moreover, like Israel, Pakistan's very origin was to fulfill a religious ideal, to create an Islamic state and Islamic society for Muslims of India. Within Pakistan itself this slogan is proclaimed by the religious parties, particularly Jamaat-e-Islami, a fundamentalist extreme right wing party, which was aided and abetted by politically bankrupt regimes, which hoped, by exploiting the good name of Islam, to gain some spurious political legitimacy (Alvi, 1988). Unfortunately, our society is morally degrading and there is a flood of "peers" and "Amils" (Nizami, 1999). These people publish their Karamats (*wonders*) in the news papers, which indicates that such spiritualism has adopted a form of industry. Likewise, to run an industry, there is a need of agents who lay down plans. In similar way, fake *peers* betray people in the name of spiritualism through their agents, and do not hesitate to even claim divinity to do every thing.

This study was conducted to (i) study the socioeconomic status of peers, (ii) study the role of *peers* in socio-economic religion development of community, and (iii) find out the religion teaching methods of *peers*.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken in Faisalabad city (Pakistan). A sample of 100 respondents was selected through simple random sampling techniques. The data were collected through well-structured interviewing schedule.

The collected data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of the respondents according to their age, education and marital status is given in Table I. Majority (46%) of the respondents were 46-60 years old, graduate and/or above (66%) and married (94%).

Data revealed that a huge majority (94%) of the respondents was Ahl-e-Sunnat; while remaining 6% were equally Dubandi, Ahl-e-Hadith and Ahl-e-Tashe.

Most of the respondents (50%) were to facilitate their *mureeds* (followers) and the others for education, personality, employment, and both education and facilitate (Table II). The duration of following the peers by the respondents ranged from one to even more than 50 years (Table III). A vast majority (98%) of the respondents were related with their peers from forefathers. Data revealed that half of the respondents' peers provided Islamic education to their followers, 26.0% provided worldly education and 24.0% of the respondents' peer provided both Islamic and worldly education to their followers.

Majority of the respondents i.e. 56.0% impressed due to their Karmat, 26.0% due to their personality, while 16.0% due to their Karmat and personality and 2.0% due to their quality. It was found that 26.0% of the respondents had upto 250 followers, 8.0% had 251-500 followers and majority (66%) of the respondents had more than 500 followers. Results revealed that at the time of Bait (an agreement for staying a follower) 62.0% respondents read the Quranic verses, 10% adopted the pattern to preach, and following the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for Bait, respectively. About 12.0% of the respondents read the Kalma at the time of Bait and only 4.0% adopted any other pattern for Bait. It was found that half of the respondents satisfied to their followers with Wazife, 26% satisfied with Durood-Sharif and 10.0% of them satisfied to their followers with Quran and Hadith.

About 4.0% adopted any other pattern for satisfaction to their followers. Data revealed that 26.0% of the *peers* solved the problems of their followers with pray and Tawiz, 20.0% with pray and Wazife. Majority (52%) of the *peers*

Table I. Distribution of the respondents according to their age, education and marital status

Age	Frequency	Percentage
30-45	24	24.0
46-60	46	46.0
61 and above	30	30.0
Total	100	100.0
Education		
Upto matric	32	32.0
Intermediate	12	12.0
Graduation and above	66	66.0
Total	100	100.0
Marital status		
Married	94	94.0
Unmarried	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Table II. Distribution of the respondents according to their specific purpose to become the Gaddi-Nasheen

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Education	8	8.0
Facilitate	50	50.0
Personality	2	2.0
Employment	10	10.0
Education and facilitate	24	24.0
Any other	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Table III. Distribution of the respondents according to the duration do they belong to their peers

Duration (years)	Frequency	Percentage
Upto 25 years	14	14.0
26-50	44	44.0
51 and above	42	42.0
Total	100	100.0

solved the problems of their followers by telling them Wazifa and only 4.0% of them solved the problem of their followers with any other pattern. Only 2% of the respondents adopt the Peeri Muridi as a profession.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that a huge majority of the respondents belonged to Ahl-e-Sunnat sect and most of the follower had low level of education. Moreover, majority of the followers was mentally satisfied after meeting their spiritual guides.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Media is some how responsible for exploiting the thought of people in this regard. Some T.V. plays are helpful for portraying, the effectiveness and perfection of pirs. The men with strange and abnormal getup are portrayed to be so effective that the hero or heroine or some other characters of the play get "Faiz" from them and then there comes a happy end of the story. In this regard the higher authorities should make a clear cut distribution between "Religion" and superstition. Religion must be presented in a highly pure form.
2. Under the supervision of government, NGOs should be activated to create awareness among the people about the bad effects of the "Fake Peers" on society.
3. Religious scholars should also create awareness among the people through their "Khutabat (sermons)".
4. Translation of Quranic verses and "Tafseer" should be the part of the course books. It will create awareness among the people about the true teachings of Islam and then people feel no need to consult "Fake Peers".

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