



Knowledge, Attitude and Practices towards Sufism as Social harmony,
an inter-generational gap

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Abstract

Sufism; with its exquisite melodies, profound beliefs and ethereal practices, remains a source of intrigue across eras. The trends of Sufism have evolved ever since the Islamic traditions came into existence. In the contemporary world, which has become a global village, unity and social harmony still remain a challenge at both national and global levels. In the light of sociological perspective, the purpose of this research is to analyze the evolving trends of Sufism in different eras and to identify the inter-generational gap towards Sufism in order to explore its consequences for social harmony in a society. The study adopts a thematic design with qualitative approach, conducted in Faisalabad city where four universities are selected randomly. The target population includes the Faculty members (Gen X, Gen Y of age group 28-59) and students (Gen Z of age group 12-27) from the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Department of Humanities and Linguistics and the members of literary societies of selected universities. Eight focused group discussions, each comprising six participants, are conducted with faculty members and students to examine the knowledge, attitude and practices of two generations towards Sufism as means of fostering social harmony. Thematic analysis reveals that Gen X and Gen Y consider Sufi teachings as a means to maintain social cohesion and social justice while Gen Z largely perceives Sufism as a social phenomenon about which they possess limited knowledge and demonstrate minimal practice of its teachings. The study concludes that the weakening inter-generational transmission of Sufi values poses may pose challenge to sustaining social cohesion, highlighting the need to bridge the generational gap through educational initiatives.

Keywords: Sufism, Social Harmony, Knowledge, Attitude, Practices

Article Details:

Received on 17 July 2025

Accepted on 16 Aug 2025

Published on 23 Aug 2025

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1. Introduction

Introduction

Sufism; with its exquisite melodies, ethereal practices, rich tapestry of mystical teachings and poetic expressions, has captivated hearts and minds across centuries and continents. From Ibn Arabi's metaphysical insights to Rabia al-Basri's devotion, Sufi masters continue to inspire seekers to journey inward, discover the hidden treasures of the soul, and embody the timeless principles of love, compassion, and unity (Ghazali, 2012). That is why, a Sufi is the one who maintains his relationship with the Creator, the creation of God and also inspires people with his goodness (Schimmel, 1975). The term Sufism came from the word "SUF" which literary means "wool", it refers to the woolen cloth worn by the Sufi which depicts their interest toward God rather than world. Along with that, Sufism also nurtures our heart, mind and soul. (Lings, 1975). Mysticism can also be defined as pure form of love to Allah with the acceptance of Tawhid i.e. "Sufi prefers Allah's love over worldly pleasures and Allah prefers these pious people over others" (Fadiman, 2004). As Sufism is the soul of religion and it is as old as human existence so it has deep roots which is also found in Qur'an and Ahadith. It has been said in Qur'an that, "The sincere servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk humbly on the earth, and when ignorant people address them harshly, they respond with words of peace. They are those who dedicate a portion of the night to prostrating and standing before their Lord" (Al-Qur'an, 25:63-64). For these practitioners of Sufism; the pious people who focuses on the inward search for God and spiritual enlightenment, Allah Almighty said in Qur'an: "Certainly, the righteous will be in the gardens and springs, receiving whatever their Lord has granted them. They were indeed virtuous in their deeds before this." (Al-Qur'an, 51: 15-16)

The Sufi saints often used the term of "Ihsan" for spiritual journey. "Ihsan" is a central concept in Sufism, representing the highest level of spiritual excellence and moral virtue and it encompasses both the inward and outward dimensions of spiritual practice. The messenger of Almighty said,

"Ihsan is to worship Allah as though you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this level of devotion, then know that Allah sees you." (Bukhari, 2005)

It is written in Kashf ul Mahjub that, "Sufism is the quality of God as well as of the human himself which means its being demands the annihilation (fana) of the servant's attributes, which in turn implicit the subsistence (baqa) of God's Attributes" (Al-Hujwiri, 2001).

In the light of these mystic teachings it is true to say that just as the heart is vital for sustaining the body, Sufism is also necessary in Islam as it provides nourishment for the soul and guides Muslims on their journey towards God.

1.1.Sufism and Sociology

The French sociologist; Emile Durkheim perceived that "religion is about community: It holds people together (social cohesion), promotes behavior stability (social control), and provides strength during life's transitions (meaning and purpose)" (Durkheim, 1912). So, for creating a developed society, Social harmony is like the first footstep and if we go through the social harmony in the light of sociological perspective, we came to know

that order sociologists always promote social harmony which leads to social stability. Tonnies called such societies Gemeinschaft which Durkheim then interpreted a society having Mechanical Solidarity (Ritzer, 2013). The intellectuals, Sufi scholars and poets has also given the portrayal of ideal society and teach people to adopt those characteristics which makes a person ideal. One very beautiful verse of Mian Muhammad Bakhsh says,

*He that has not drowned in the river of Unity
May look human, but is not a man.
He who reaches Oneness goes beyond good and bad;
Good and bad are just ways of seeing.*

(Hashmi, 2016)

So, it is true to say that in the sub-continent and especially in Pakistan, the Sufi and Sufi doctrine has a lot of contribution in the emergence of social peace and harmony and also in the promotion of spiritual practices. If we get the overview of Sufism in Pakistan, we came to know that there are over 3047 shrines in our country out of which twelve are the most popular ones including Khawaja Ghulam Farid, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, Baba Fariduddin Masood Gunj Shakar, Baba Bulleh Shah, Data Ali Hujweri and Bahauddin Zakariya (Govt. of Punjab, 2024). They all have remarkable contributions in terms of social harmony, brotherhood, tranquility and eternal love and they continue to be a dynamic force in Pakistan, inspiring millions of people with their message of love, peace, and spiritual enlightenment.

1.2. Knowledge, Attitude and Practices towards Sufism

In this research study, KAP tool (SPRING, 2011) is used to asses or examine people's knowledge about Sufism that how they perceive it and their attitude towards Sufism as Social harmony. Afterwards, their practices to create social harmony in the light of Sufi preaching has also been examined. As Sufi poets have wide number of followers and there are millions of people who are practicing the rituals of Sufism but there is still a lot of social disturbance in our society. That's why it is a high time to get the knowledge of Sufism and be more focused on practice those teachings of Sufi saints to maintain peace in the society because by following these principles, a mystical approach can be adopted to establish a foundation for societal harmony and achieve profound spiritual truth.

1.3. Objectives

- To look into the perspective of two generations about Sufi contributions in maintaining social harmony and social cohesion.
- To observe the knowledge of the respondents towards Sufism as Social harmony.
- To check the impact of Sufi teachings on the attitudes of respondents.
- To identify the practices and teachings of two generations in educational institutions in the light of Sufi teachings.

1.4. Review of Literature

Flanagan & Jupp (2010) explored the social aspects of spirituality and its relationship to the politics, gender, identity crisis, traditional practices and education in his book "A Sociology of Spirituality". The collection of essays in this book assessed the importance of mysticism in the light of sociology of religion.

Rahman (2015) explored the use of folklore in the Sufi poetry by some of the famous Sufi poets. The researcher selected four Sufi poets from each province by using purposive sampling technique and analyzed their mystical poetry with context of folklores. These poets are, Sachal Sarmast, Baba Bulleh Shah, Rahman Baba and Mast Tawakli. The researcher concluded that the poetry of these Sufi poets resonates with themes of love, empathy, and tolerance, emphasizing the unity of all beings and the importance of transcending worldly divisions.

Manzoor et al. (2019) explored the role of Sufism in relation to global peace maintenance. For this purpose he used different qualitative techniques and developed an in-depth approach for the better understanding of people's point of view about Sufism and global peace.

Murtaza et al. (2022) viewed Sufism as a multi-dimensional phenomenon and considered Sufism, a practical form of Islam. The research work is done with qualitative approach using the semi-structured interview pattern. The data was analyzed by Grounded theory. With the historical overview of Sufism, the researcher also explored that those activities which are against Islamic law and indulged in Muslim community in the name of Sufism are not Islam. The Islamic Sufism is all about the preaching of Holy Prophet SAW and His Followers.

Ahmed et al. (2023) focused on the role of Sufism as a Bridge-builder to foster Inter-faith dialogue in perspective of Sub-continent. His basic focus was on the evolution of Sufism in the Sub-continent from 11th century to the present day. He opted qualitative approach for his research and the basic purpose of his research was to highlight the Sufi practices, traditions, its culture and evolving practices.

As Sufism is a pathway to Social harmony, the above researches highlight the role and impact of Sufism but didn't discuss the fact that despite being a huge number of followers of each Sufi saint, why there is still this much dispute in our society? Other than that, the poetry of Sufi poets have been written and discussed but how their poetry impact in one's life is still needed to discuss. Sufism is a need of humanity and it offers profound insights into spirituality, ethics, and human psychology that can enrich individuals' lives so it is a need to find out the trends of Sufi practices in educational institutions for fulfilling the research gap in social research academia.

1.5.Methodology

This research adopted a Qualitative approach (Patton, 2014) and it was supposed to be conducted in the city of Faisalabad. Four universities of Faisalabad were selected randomly. Out of all the institutes in Faisalabad, the selected institutes are as follow:

1. University of Agriculture Faisalabad
2. Government College University Faisalabad
3. Riphah International University Faisalabad
4. The University of Faisalabad

The faculty members and students from these universities were selected as the population of the study. A specific age group was selected which included faculty members (Gen X, Gen Y of age group 28-59) and students (Gen Y and Gen Z of age

group 12-43) from the department of Social Sciences, department of Humanities and Linguistics and members of Literary society from each institute, respectively. Since a qualitative approach was applied in the research study, focus group discussions (Taber, 2024) were conducted with the faculty members and students of the selected institutes to analyze the knowledge, attitude and practices of two generations towards Sufism as Social harmony. For this purpose, eight focus groups were formed. Considering that an ideal focus group consists of five to eight participants, six participants were purposively selected for each group (six faculty members and six students from each institute which means two focus groups in each institute). The study sample is presented as follow:

a. Table 1: The Study Sample

Focus Group	Study area	Sample	No. of respondents
FGD 1	GCUF	Gen X, Gen Y	6
FGD 2	GCUF	Gen Z	6
FGD 3	UAF	Gen X, Gen Y	6
FGD 4	UAF	Gen Z	6
FGD 5	Riphah Int. University	Gen X, Gen Y	6
FGD 6	Riphah Int. University	Gen Z	6
FGD 7	The University of Faisalabad	Gen X, Gen Y	6
FGD 8	The University of Faisalabad	Gen Z	6

All the participants in focus group were educated and they were well-known of research ideology which is Sufism as Social harmony.

1.6.Results and Discussions

In this research study, thematic analysis was applied to analyze the information obtained from focus group discussion. The results were derived through repetitive reading and theme coding. Data were collected with these themes in mind.

- Knowledge of the respondents about Sufism as Social harmony
- Attitude of the respondents toward Sufism as Social harmony
- Practices of the respondents regarding Sufism as Social harmony
- Perspective of two generations about Sufi contributions in maintaining Social harmony.

Table 1.1. Distribution of the respondents according to age

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Gen X	10	20.83%
Gen Y	14	29.2%
Gen Z	24	50%
Total	48	100.0%

The table 1.1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their age . Out of 48 respondents, 10 individuals belong to Gen X (age group of 44-59), representing approximate of 20.8% of the sample. 14 individuals fall into the category of Gen Y (age

group of 28-43) representing approximate of 29.2% of the sample. The Gen Z group (aged 12-27) includes 24 respondents, representing 50% of the sample.

Table 1.2. Distribution of respondents according to gender

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Male	25	52.1%
Female	23	47.9%
Total	48	100.0%

Table 1.2 presents the distribution of the respondents according to gender. Out of the total 48 respondents, 25 individuals were identified as male, representing approximate of 52.1% of the sample while on the other hand, 23 individuals were identified as female, representing 47.9% of the sample which is broadly consistent with the gender distribution of Pakistan's population (GOP, 2023).

Table 1.3. Distribution of the respondents according to field of study

Respondent	Frequency	Total
Social Sciences	37	77.1%
Humanities and Linguistics	9	18.8%
Member of Literary society	2	4.2%
Total	48	100.0%

Table 1.3. presents the distribution of the respondents according to their field of study. The respondents were selected from the Department of Social Sciences, the Department of Humanities and Linguistics and the members of Literary Society. The results indicate that the majority of respondents belong to the Department of Social sciences, representing 77.1% of the sample. 18% of the respondents were from the department of Humanities and Linguistics while 4.2% of the respondents were identified as the members of the Literary Society.

Table 1.4. Coding of the themes according to the objectives of the study

Objectives	Theme	Theme Coding
To observe the knowledge of the respondents towards Sufism as Social harmony.	Knowledge and Perception of the respondent about Sufism as Social harmony	Sufism as a unifying force Sufism as a social phenomenon Sufism as a purification of soul
To look into the perspective of two generations about Sufi contributions in maintaining social harmony and social cohesion.	Key Principle of Sufism which leads to social cohesion	1. Sufism teaches love, compassion, tolerance and patience Sufism promotes social bond
To check the impact of Sufi teachings on the attitudes of respondents.	Attitude of the respondent toward Sufism as Social harmony	Sufism has influenced personal beliefs: 3.1. To greater extent 3.2. To some extent 3.3. Not at all

To identify the practices and teachings of two generations in educational institutions in the light of Sufi teachings.	Practices of the respondents toward Sufism as Social harmony	Practicing Sufi teachings in daily life: 4.1. To greater extent 4.2. To some extent 4.3. Not at all
To suggest the guidelines for promoting the strings of classic literature in digital world.	Suggestions and Recommendations	

The research presents the analysis of collected data in accordance with these above mentioned themes which were designed according to the analysis process of qualitative research by (Bran and Clark, 2006).

Theme 1: Knowledge of the respondents about “Sufism as Social harmony”

To prob the knowledge of the respondents regarding Sufism as Social harmony, the responses were coded into the following themes:

- **Theme 1.1.** Sufism as a unifying force
- **Theme 1.2.** Sufism as a social phenomenon
- **Theme 1.3.** Sufism as a purification of soul

Table 1.5. Sufism as a unifying force (according to Theme 1.1)

Perceive Sufism as a unifying force	GEN X & Y	GEN Z
Yes	58.3%	75.0%
No	41.7%	25.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1.5 presents the distribution of the respondents according to their perception of Sufism as a unifying force. The result shows that 58% of respondents of Gen X and Gen Y perceived Sufism as a unifying force while 75% of respondents from Gen Z expressed the same view. As one respondent stated,

“Sufism acts a unifying force that transcends social, cultural and religious boundaries, fostering connections among individuals and communities.”

Another respondent added,

“Sufism gives purpose of life and fosters one’s connection with humanity.”

Sufism works as a unifying force is such a way that it unites people and communities. At first, it fosters your belief on “Oneness of God” and then this belief forces you to unite people as one binding force. As Allah said in Qur’an,

“And unite steadfastly to the guidance of Allah, and do not be divided.”

(Al-Qur’an, 3:103)

Thus, it can be said that Sufism’s emphasis on spirituality, love and compassion has served as a unifying force within Islam and has facilitated bridges between different cultures and faiths to promote peace and interfaith harmony.

Table 1.6. Sufism as a social phenomenon (according to Theme 1.2)



Perceives Sufism as a social phenomenon	GEN X & Y	GEN Z
Yes	33.3%	87.5%
No	66.7%	12.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1.6 presents the distribution of the respondents according to their perception of Sufism as a social phenomenon. Out of the whole sample, 33% of the respondents from Gen X and Y perceived Sufism as a social phenomenon while the other 66% perceived it as a religious or holistic approach. In contrast, 87.5% of respondent from Gen Z perceived Sufism as a Social phenomenon. Supporting this view, one respondent said, "Sufis are those who connect people, provide facilities to them, heals their pain and they are more social than religious."

Another respondent believed that, "Sufis are those who have firm belief on God and they have strong communication with God as well. They do not emphasize on religious practices but on the welfare of humanity." Likewise, (Khan, 2023) also believed that Sufis are those who are more concerned about social welfare than rights of Allah and for that purpose they provide food and shelter to the devotees in their khānqāh.

A respondent further added, "Sufism is not a religious phenomenon but a social one as any person from any sect or religion who have strong connection with God, can be a Sufi."

For Gen Z, the idea that Sufism transcends religious boundaries and is accessible to seekers of diverse backgrounds underscores its inclusive and universal nature. As a respondent from Gen Z stated that,

"Sufism is a phenomenon which connects people and it helps in creating social bond." (Bashir and Batool, 2018) also believed that Sufism serves as a catalyst for building social bonds by nurturing a culture of love, compassion, and service that transcends barriers and unites people in a shared quest for spiritual fulfillment and social justice."

This practical manifestation of social welfare has had a great impact on local communities and in the heart of the people as well.

Table 1.7. Sufism as a purification of soul (according to Theme 1.3)

Perceives Sufism as a purification of soul	GEN X & Y	GEN Z
Yes	87.5%	58.3%
No	12.5%	41.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1.7 presents the distribution of respondents according to their perception of Sufism as the purification of the soul. Out of the total sample of Gen X and Gen Y, 87.5% of the respondents perceived Sufism as a source to purify the soul while 58% of respondents from Gen Z also perceived Sufism it in the same way and 41% interpreted it differently. When discussing the purification of the soul, one respondent stated, "Sufism is a spiritual knowledge which teaches you to negotiate with your desires and purify your soul. It is necessary because the Creator you have to deal with, said in Qur'an: *"Indeed, sincere devotion is due 'only' to Allah."*

(Al-Qur'an, 39: 3)

Just as external ablution is necessary for prayer, inner ablution is required to purify one's inner self, and Sufi is the one who is more concerned with the soul and the inner guiding force of each person. As one respondent stated, "Sufism is a connection to one's soul and spirituality which then connects you with your Creator." As *Baba Bulleh Shah* expressed,

*He who studied extensively to become learned,
Yet neglected to study his own self.
He who visited mosques and temples,
But failed to explore his own inner being.*

(Sufinama, 2024)

Thus, it can be concluded that the purification of soul is the central concept in Sufism, and it begins with cultivating self-awareness through introspection and reflection. This process involves seeking forgiveness from God and making a sincere commitment to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Theme 2. Key principles of Sufism according to Gen X and Gen Y

Sufism encompasses a set of key principles that guides people on the path towards self realization and closeness to the Divine. For better understanding of Sufism, we asked key principles of Sufism from the respondents and their major responses were:

- **Theme 2.1:** Sufism teaches love, compassion, tolerance and patience
 - **Theme 2.2:** Sufism promotes social bond
- Table 1.8. Sufism teaches love and compassion (according to Theme 2.1)**

Sufism teaches Love and Compassion	GEN X & Y	GEN Z
Yes	70.8%	70.8%
No	29.2%	29.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1.8 presents the distribution of respondents according to their perception that Love and Compassion are the core principles of Sufism. One respondent stated, "Love for creation and spreading that love in the universe is the key of principle of Sufism, which teaches that there is no difference among people and that everyone should be treated with love." Another respondent added,

"Sufism simply gives the message of peace and conflict resolution which is very important for cohesion."

Sufism offers a holistic framework for promoting love and compassion, both at the individual and societal levels. By cultivating inner peace, practicing tolerance, and advocating non-violence, Sufis contribute to the creation of cohesive and harmonious communities grounded in the values of love, compassion and mutual respect (Ameen, 2019).

Likewise, one respondent stated,

"The key principle of Sufism are humbleness, inter-faith harmony, and patience. Sufism encourages individuals to cultivate a deep awareness of their inner selves, to strive for moral excellence, and to express compassion and kindness towards all beings."

Another respondent remarked,

"Sufis are tolerant, humble, and forgiving by nature. If these qualities are applied in society as well, they can help to improve it." People who spread love and compassion with their kind acts are also praised by Sufi saints. As Mian Muhammad Baksh says about such a person,

*The words of the sorrowful, O' Muhammad, reveals their state of being
Whoever has wrapped flowers, his handkerchiefs emits a delightful fragrance*

(Hashmi, 2016)

Thus, it can be concluded that the contribution of Sufism to social cohesion lies in promoting tolerance, empathy and respect for diversity. It always emphasizes on love and compassion and fosters a sense of unity among people of different castes and creed.

Table 1.9. Sufism promotes social bond (according to Theme 2.2)

Sufism promotes social bond	GEN X & Y	GEN Z
Yes	62.5%	83.3%
No	37.5%	16.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1.9 presents the distribution of the respondents according to their perception that Sufism promotes social bond. Out of the whole sample, 62% of the respondents from Gen Y, while 83% of the respondents from Gen Z agreed that social cohesion can be maintained by following the teachings of Sufism.

As one respondent from Gen Z stated,

"The major principle of Sufism is that it serves as a symbol of networks. Its social networks promote activities that people are eager to learn, which is why Sufis are always surrounded by the people. I believe, this is what promotes social networking, and the cohesion they build among people plays a crucial role in community building."

Another respondent added,

"The major principle of Sufism is that it is not only religious, but also a social phenomenon that covers all aspects of life. You find Sufism in every doctrine and in each religion, and when you studied it deeply, you better understand Sufism and its

philosophies. It teaches that good, evil, profit and loss are equal and inseparable realities, and accepting them is the essence of spirituality.”

A respondent shared an insightful experience of spiritual gathering in the light of social cohesion:

“From social perspective, the major key principle of Sufism is that it has given a strong foundation to society. People associated with Sufism, by any means, experience strong social cohesion because they are socially integrated with each other. Lets say, when people from different regions and places come together at a Sufi monastery, a special kind of divine love is formed among them. This bond is not limited to shrine; rather, those who gather there often establish strong professional and economic relationships with each other, which then has a very positive impact on society.”

In favor of Sufism as a hallmark of social cohesion, another respondent said,

“The major principle of Sufism is that the Sufi saints had a firm belief in the oneness of God, and this unification ultimately led to social cohesion. In ancient times, people believed that religion played an important role in binding people together, as Ibn E Khaldun in *Al-Muqaddimah* also said that,

“In today’s era, if there is anything that can hold a society together, it is economic and social justice. Sufis also talked about it, about the equality.”

(Khuldun, 1904)

Thus, we can conclude that Sufism promotes social cohesion by emphasizing universal love, unity, service to humanity, spiritual practices, ethical conduct, and cultural expression.

Theme 3. Attitude of the respondent towards Sufism

To examine the impact of Sufi teachings on the attitude of the respondents, the responses were categorized in three ways: whether they were influenced, not influenced or influenced to some extent.

Table 1.10. Attitude of the respondents towards Sufism

Attitude of the respondent towards Sufism		
Sufism has influenced personal beliefs	GEN X & Y	GEN Z
To greater extent	75.0%	29.2%
To some extent	20.8%	41.7%
Not at all	4.2%	29.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1.10 presents the attitude of the respondent towards Sufism as Social harmony. Out of the whole sample, 75% of the respondent from Gen Y reported that their personal beliefs were highly influenced by Sufism while 29% of the respondent from Gen Z stated that they were also influenced by Sufi teachings. Additionally 41% indicated that they were influenced by Sufi teachings to some extent whereas 29% of the respondents from Gen Z stated that they only had knowledge of Sufism but were not personally influenced by its teachings.

When asked about the influence of Sufi teachings on personal beliefs, the respondent told us,

"As a literature student, the Sufi thought and its key principles have influenced me in many positive ways, as I started believing in social order and social harmony after being influenced by Sufi teachings."

Another respondent, while sharing her experience, said,

"The important Sufi practise is to understand actions."

She further added, "There is a need to understand the universe rather than doing corrections in everything. We cannot always be the teacher. We can be wrong, and other people can be right so Sufism has taught me flexibility and acceptance towards other people's beliefs."

A respondent shared a brief note on how Sufism has influenced his personal belief,

"If we look at the current scenario, we may come up to the conclusion that we do not pay attention toward our obligations and responsibilities regarding our duties. This is why, there is split and narcissism in our society. We have created conflict in every matter, but the idea of equality that Sufism teaches us, can save us and our society from disintegration. (Khuldun, 1904 ; Durkheim, 1912) also emphasized that social cohesion can only be maintained when social justice is implemented in society, and this is what religion also teaches us. Basically this is how the universe works.

Another respondent explained,

"Sufism has influenced me in so many mysterious ways. From personal experience, when a person gets distracted, Sufi saints helps him to find the right path. When a person examines the life of the Sufis in the midst of suffering and distress, he realizes that his own suffering is nothing compared to what they endured. So when they could remain patient and grateful in their suffering, why not I? This thought provides emotional strength and makes one more grateful and contented in life."

When asked about the influence of Sufi teachings from Gen Z, many of them said, "We haven't thought about it much. May be yes, may be not." However the least they reported learning from Sufi teachings was "Social harmony and Humanism".

As one respondent explained, "Sufism has influenced my personal beliefs in a way that I believe, Sufism is not a religious orthodox but actually relates to existentialism. It teaches me unity of being and I have learned that God is within man, so we need to find Him within ourselves and not outside." As Baba Bulleh Shah said,

*Bulleh Shah you try grabbing that which is in the sky
But you never get hold of What sits inside you*

(Sufinama, 2024)

It is therefore valid to conclude that Sufism, with its emphasis on mysticism, spirituality, and the pursuit of divine love, has influenced many respondents across different educational and cultural backgrounds.

Theme 4. Practices of the respondents towards Sufism

To identify the practices and teachings of two generations in the light of Sufi teachings, the responses were coded in a way that whether the respondents followed the practices of Sufism in their daily life or are they just influenced by the Sufism.

Table 1.11. Practices of the respondents towards Sufism

Practices of the respondent towards Sufism		
Practicing Sufi teachings in daily life	GEN X & Y	GEN Z
To greater extent	75.0%	29.2%
To some extent	20.8%	45.8%
Not at all	4.2%	25.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1.10 shows that 75% of the respondent from Gen Y reported that they practiced Sufi teaching in their daily lives more often, while 20% stated they thy practice Sufi teachings to some extent. On the other hand, 29% of the respondent from Gen Z reported practicing Sufi teachings, 45% mentioned that they practiced to some extent and 25% indicated that they did not practice Sufi teachings in their daily lives. When asked about spiritual practices and experiences in daily life, one of the respondent told us,

"From Sufi teachings, I learn to be patient in every situation and I try to accept the individual differences because being a teacher, people from different areas and different strata came here and work together so I learn to accept everyone as they are and to treat them equally."

Another respondent stated, "From old times until now, the Mullahs, politicians and bureaucrats have been working for cultists in our country. These people have always been on their pay rolls but in contrast, Sufis have always work for the humanity."

If we analyze the lifestyles of Sufi saints, we come to know that they have never amassed heaps of wealth nor they worked for worldly glory. Their sole purpose has always been to serve humanity selflessly (Ghazali, 2012). Likewise, the lives of order sociologists (Ritzer, 2013), were also similar. Thus, in conclusion, Sufi teachings always make a person more grounded, selfless and humble.

A respondent told us,

"I often do practice mediation in the night. When a person realize in the solitude of the night that now there is only him and his Lord, then after knowing this fact, that person finds the best opportunities for his reformation." As Sultan Bahu said,

*Some awaken, while others remain unaware
Only a few awakenings lead to true union*

(Bahu,2016)

Likewise, a respondent remarked,

"Earlier, I used to find pleasure in music now after experiencing some spiritual happenings in my life, I have replaced my activities and connected myself with Qur'an. Now, whenever I feel down, I do chanting and pray to Almighty to give me the calmness of soul." As Allah said in Qur'an,

"Certainly, the hearts finds tranquility in the remembrance of Allah."

(Qur'an, 13:28)

A sociologist told us that how spiritual practices helped him in daily life,

"I deal with the social problems and tries to resolve the social issues too. I not only help the people but motivate others to do so. I also give favors to the people within my limits. I have also done many projects on the humanitarian ground. Sufis also do the same.

A respondent from Gen Z stated,

"We are not at that level yet, but I am definitely trying to handle people more carefully and I have built a more good relation with other people."

Another Gen Z respondent added,

"I do not break anyone's heart, holds no grudges, and easily forgives people. If anything bad happens, I never feel bad in apologizing from the other person."

In contrast, most of the respondents from Gen Z stated that they had never practiced any Sufi teaching in their lives because they never felt they need of such practices and for some respondents, Sufi practices contradicted their religious practices, so they chose not to follow them.

1.7. Conclusion and Suggestions

The greatest religion is the religion of humanity. Sufism, first and foremost, teaches us how to contribute positively to society. Therefore, to improve the society, it is necessary to prioritize the well-being of others and serve the community in the best possible ways, which will ultimately led to collective improvement. Since a gap has been observed between the knowledge and practices of Sufi teachings among Gen Z, certain suggestions can be followed to promote social harmony through Sufi preaching and to bridge the inter-generational gap.

- At first, we can conduct seminars, awareness sessions, and TED Talks to highlight the social contributions of Sufi saints. Instead of imposing Sufi teachings on the younger generation, we should introduce them gradually through modern approaches to develop their interest and ensure better understanding.
- Social harmony should also be promoted by developing websites and utilizing media to spread Sufi concepts and revive their traditions, as media is one of the most effective means of engaging with young people.
- Moreover, we should adopt humility and compassion toward others, as this is the fundamental way to cultivate social harmony.
- As classical sociologists argued, social stability is possible when all social institutions perform their roles effectively. Institutions create harmony by fulfilling the needs, and when the needs are met, social cohesion is naturally established. Lastly, promoting equality and justice for all is essential to creating peace and harmony in society.

By following these suggestions, we can promote Sufi teachings in today's society as being humble, caring toward others, showing kindness, thinking of others before ourselves, and upholding social order and justice are the core principles of Sufism. By practicing these values in our daily lives, we can make our society more harmonious in the best possible way.

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