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Shrines, Drugs and Mental Health in Pakistani Culture: a Case Study of Rahman Baba Shrine, Peshawar Pakistan

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explores the traits of substance-induced mysticism at the Rehman Baba shrine in Peshawar, Pakistan. Drugs and mysticism has been explored by many researchers around the globe. Although hashish smoking is not an identification mark of the shrines in Pakistan, many hash users can be found on the 'Qalandri' shrines. The shrine of Rehman Baba, a Pakhtun poet and mystic, is frequently visited by many. Some of the *Malang* (monks) use marijuana in order to induce mystic experience. It has become a socially acceptable practice at this shrine. This study uses none-participant observation of the substance users and exploratory interviews along with focused group discussion at Rahman Baba shrine as a tool for data collection. The authors spent three Thursday nights at the shrine and committed other visits in the day time for collection of data and observation of drug users. The findings indicate that there are four different category of drug users in Rahman Baba Shrine location including occasional users, addicts, mentally retarded, and *malangs* (monks). Each of these categories has their distinctive characteristics. Only marijuana is used at the shrine as a holy or acceptable drug. They view substance use as a source of love for humanity, relaxation from social stresses, and harmony among the users. Some mentally retarded, particularly persons with down syndrome, and disserted individuals are also found within the shrine premises. It is further used to escape from the challenges of social life. Merton's 'individual's modes of adaptation' has been used to explain the data.

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Keywords: Drug Use, Mystical Substance, Shrines, Rehman Baba, Marijuana, Pakhtun.

تلخیص

یہ مقالہ پشاور، پاکستان میں رحمان بابا کے مزار پر نشہ سے متاثر تصوف کے خصائص کی کھوج کرتا ہے۔ منشیات اور تصوف پر دنیا بھر کے بہت سے محققین نے تحقیق کی ہے۔ اگرچہ چرس نوشی پاکستان میں مزارات کا شناختی نشان نہیں ہے، لیکن 'قلندری' قسم کے مزارات پر چرس استعمال کرنے والے بہت سے لوگ مل سکتے ہیں۔ ایک رحمان بابا پشتو زبان کے ایک مشہور شاعر اور صوفی ہیں جن کے مزار پر اکثر لوگ آتے ہیں۔ کچھ ملنگ صوفیانہ تجربات کو بڑھانے کے لیے چرس کا استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ اس مزار پر یہ ایک سماجی طور پر قابل قبول عمل بن گیا ہے۔ یہ مقالہ تحقیق کرنے کے لیے ہم نے مزار پر مشاہدہ کیا، انٹرویز کیے، اور فوکس گروپ ڈسکشن کی۔ مصنفین نے جمعرات کی تین راتیں مزار پر گزاریں اور دن کے وقت بھی دورے کیے تاکہ تحقیقی مواد اکٹھا کیا جا سکے۔ نتائج سے پتہ چلتا ہے کہ رحمان بابا کے مزار کے مقام پر منشیات استعمال کرنے والوں کی چار مختلف قسمیں ہیں جن میں کبھی کبھار استعمال کرنے والے، عادی، ذہنی معذور اور ملنگ شامل ہیں۔ ان زمروں میں سے ہر ایک کی اپنی مخصوص خصوصیات ہیں۔ مزار پر صرف چرس ہی ایک مقدس یا قابل قبول دوا کے طور پر استعمال ہوتی ہے۔ وہ چرس کے استعمال کو انسانیت کے لیے محبت، سماجی دباؤ سے نجات اور مخلوق کے درمیان ہم آہنگی کے طور پر دیکھتے ہیں۔ کچھ ذہنی معذور، خاص طور پر ڈاون سنڈروم والے افراد بھی مزار کے احاطے میں پائے جاتے ہیں۔ نیز یہ سماجی زندگی کے چیلنجوں سے بچنے کے لیے استعمال ہوتا ہے۔ ڈیٹا کی وضاحت کے لیے مرٹن کے 'انفرادی طور پر موافقت کے طریقوں' کا استعمال کیا گیا ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ منشیات کا استعمال، پراسرار مادہ، مزارات، رحمان بابا، چرس، پختو نخوا

Introduction

Although hashish smoking is not an identification mark of the shrines in Pakistan, many hash users can be found on the 'Qalandri' shrines. The shrine of Bari Imam in Islamabad, shrine of Shah Jamal in Lahore, and the shrine of Rehman Baba in Peshawar are famous 'Qalandri' shrines where hash usage could be commonly scene within the proximities of these shrines. This paper looks into how the hash users on shrines justify its usage and how is it linked to mysticism (*suifism*).

The term mysticism is derived from the Greek *mystikos*, meaning 'initiated person' (King, 2005:307). A mystic is one who actively and willfully seeks a direct relationship and union with God through prayer, devotion, and meditation. According to Encarta Dictionary (2008), it is "the belief that personal communication or union with the divine is achieved through intuition, faith, ecstasy, or sudden insight rather than through rational thought." A mystic is someone who practices or believes in mysticism. Mysticism is from "mystery" which is something that is difficult to fully understand or explain. It implies strangeness and/or secretiveness of a phenomena (Merkur, 2008), psychologists, sociologists, spiritual leaders, and scholars has described mysticism in their own

words. William Reich (1949) termed it "something unreal and beyond this world" while William James (1902) termed it "ineffable, poetic, transient, and passive experience". Otto Rank (n.d.) saw mysticism as the "foundation of the new civilization". For Louis MacNeice (n.d.) it is an "instinct". No matter what words might be used to describe this phenomena, mysticism is a historical phenomenon. Nonetheless, the ways in which to mystical insight is attained varies across religion. It is expressed in symbols, principles, ethical codes, and rituals of a particular religion.

Poetry is one way of expressing mystical insight. History has no dearth of poets expressing their mystical experiences in poetry. Jalaluddin Rumi from Turkey, commonly known as Rumi, Shams Tebrizi of Iran, Allam Iqbal from Pakistan, Hafiz Sherazi from Iran, and Rehman Baba from Pakhtun belt of Pakistan are but a few of the mystical poets known to history today.

Besides mystical expression, the ways to attain this insight considerably varies not only across religions but within religion as well. In Muslim societies, *Qawali* (mystic music), *Dhikr bil Jahr* (reciting aloud), *Zikr_e_Khafi* (reciting silently), *Dhamal* (dance), and meditation are commonly known ways of attaining mystical insight. Using drugs, such as cannabis or marijuana, however, is also not alien to Muslim mystics. Not only Muslim mystics but mystics across South Asian religions, such as Budhist, Naths, Shaivites, and Goddess Worshippers have also incorporated it into meditation practices as a means to stop the all the thoughts and achieve a state of complete stillness, called Samadhi (spark, n.d).

Sufism in Islam

Sufism in Islam is known as *Tasawwuf*. Ali bin Usman Al-Jallabi, commonly known as Data Ganj Bux, refers to Hasri that he sees*Tasawwuf* as "protecting the heart from enemity" (Jallabi, 2010:87). Quoting Muhammad bin Ali, who was the great grandson of Hazrat Ali bin Abu Talib, he mentions that "*Tasawwuf* is the name of virtue and morality. He who is more virtuous is more *Sufi*". Quoting Noori, he mentions that "a *Sufi* is someone who is not the owner of any property and he is also not the property of anyone." (Jallabi, 2010:87).

Jallabi further states that there are three types of *Tasawwuf* viz *Sufi*, *Mutasawwuf*, and *Mustasoof*. A Sufi is someone who has a complete control over his *nafs* (self) and who has achieved communion with Allah All Mighty. A *Mutasawwuf* is someone who adheres to meditation and hard-work in order to reform himself in the image of a Sufi. A *Mustasoof* is someone who gives the appearance of a *Sufi* but in reality who is a hypocrite and has adopted this way of life for worldly gains.

Junaid Bughdadi (n.d.), one of the most famous saints in Muslim history, says that *Tasawwuf* is a combination of eight (8) traits: (1) generosity, (2) content, (3) patience, (4) silence (5) seclusion, (6) wearing *Soaf* (a special dress of Sufi), (7) journey, and (8) self-imposed poverty. All these traits represent one particular trait of a prophet in history. For example, generosity is a trait of prophet Abrahim (AS), content is a trait of prophet Ismail (AS), patience is a trait of prophet Ayub (AS), silence is a trait of prophet Zakaria (AS), seclusion is a trait of prophet Yahya (AS), journey is a trait of prophet Jesus (AS), and self-imposed poverty is a trait of prophet Muhammad, PBUH.

There has been variety of ways through which Sufis in Islam achieve communion with Allah All Mighty. Some trace the use of hashish by Sufi mystics in the 8th century Persia when it was a substance that would arouse and accelerate mystical consciousness along with an admiration for Allah (Spark, n.d.). It was believed that hashish stimulates the process of introspection and aknowledge of self. It was a substance that would induce happiness along with a stark reduction in anxiety. Further, hashish usage also increase music appreciation amongst the users (Spark, n.d.). One *sufi,* named Hyder of Persia, has been associated with using cannabis plants for the first time in order to experience euphoria. He showed this secrete to his disciples with the condition that the secretes of the plant would not be shared with anyone but the *Sufis*(the poor) (O'Shaugnessy, 1842). This shows a close connection between *Sufism* and substance use. The name *sufi* originated as a result of the Sufis wearing an undyed garment made from wool (*Suf*) rather than cotton.

Substance use is not alien to Sufis in Pakistan. The famous shrine of *Sufi Bari Imam Sarkar* (Shah Abdul Latif Kazmi, 1617-1705) in Islamabad is a place where hashish users can be frequently sighted (Basharat, 2008). Rahman Baba shrine in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is one of the few shrines where the followers frequently use drug for spiritual experience. Rehman Baba (1653-1711) was a *Sufi* who expressed his philosophy in the form of *Pashto* poetry. He is not only regarded as a great Sufi but also one of the greatest Pashto poets by the people of Pakhtunkhwa and Afghanistan. He expressed his love for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) through his poetry.His life was spent during Mughal era in the Sub-continent. He is loved by *Pakhtuns* of not only Pakistan but Afghanistan and around the world. His shrine is a place of historical sight, sacred space, and picnic for many. His shrine is located in *Peshawar* at *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* province of Pakistan. It is generally believed that the poetry of Rehman Baba glorifies the use of *Charas* for seeking *Saroor* (pleasure) and link between lover (man) and beloved (God). However, the reality is different as it believed that Rehman Baba has never use hashish. Those who visit his shrines normally have various socio-economic and psychological problems. The shrines provide a healing environment where they are free from competition, responsibilities and other challenges. The

poetry of Rehman Baba normally portray the deep-rooted link between "lover" and "Beloved", however, he uses these sentiment for the Holy Prophet and God while the people perceived and link his poetry with their own feelings.

Literature Review

Mysticism and religion, too, have a close link with the mental health issues. Until 19th century, religious institutions, monasteries etc., were a place where people with mental illness were frequently found. However, with the writings of Charcot (1882) and Freud (1927), psychiatrists started estranging themselves from religion as they viewed religion to be irrational and all religious experiences as psychoses (Dein, 2010). However, there has been a growing interest in mental health and mysticism in recent years. New studies have found that "religious involvement is generally conducive to better mental health" (D'Souza, 2002; Tepper, Rogers, Coleman, et al., 2001). Further, Trepper, et.al., (2011) assert that religion is frequently used by patients with psychiatric to cope with distress. Religion and spirituality are a powerful medium in counseling and/or psychotherapy. They are an important part of an individual's personal and social life. People with conscious spirituality have a sense of meaning in life along with a goal. They have a firm belief in God or themselves. These traits help in coping with stresses of life and encourage adaptation to different situations (Chaudhry, 2009).

As indicated earlier, William James was strongly influenced by mysticism and mystical experience. His two books, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* and *Understanding Mysticism*, are an indication of his interest in the subject. He terms mystical experiences as 'real experiences' (Goodman, 2017).

There is a very strong link between mental health problem and substance use. Jane-LIopis (2006) found a strong association between morbidity and severity of substance use. Hussain and Naqvi (2007) also found a close association between mental disorder and substance use. Bergin (1983) conducted a meta-analysis of 24 studies on relationship between religiosity and personality. It was found that religiosity has no relationship with psychopathology, as was previously believed. On the other hand, it was found that there is a slightly positive correlation between religiosity and personality development. Seybold and Hill (2001) criticized the previous belief that religion and spirituality has negative effect on mental health. Rather, they found that the influence of religion and spirituality is largely beneficial for mental health. Salsman and Carlson (2005) conducted a survey of 251 young adults (age 17-25) for religiosity and psychological distress and found a negative association between the two.

Many studies indicate that mental health issues are escalating in Pakistan since last few decades (David, *et al.*, 2007; Gadit*et al.*, 2005). Studies, such as, Khalily (2011), link these problems owing to current violence in Pakistani society, and some to the disruption of social structure (Gadit, 1999). Imagine everyone in Greece, Sweden, and Hungary getting a mental illness. That is how many people in Pakistan are reported to be experiencing mental illness (Mian, 2016, Oct 9). It is reported that mental illness afflicts 15 to 35 million adults, almost equal to the population of Greece, Sweden, and Hungary together (Mian, 2016, Oct 9). This is equal to approximately 10 to 20 per cent of the population (Mian, 2016, Oct 9). In view of this, there is a dearth of mental health services in the country along with mental health professionals (Afridi, *et al*., 2010).

Some reports estimate that there are 6.7 million illicit substance users in Pakistan (UNODC, 2013). That is almost equal to the entire population of Lebanon. Studies, such as Henkel (2011) and Javidi (2012), found a strong link between substance use and unemployment and post-traumatic stress disorders. Availability of drugs and cultural support for some of the drugs are additional factors that increases the vulnerability of many sections, both from urban and urban set-up, to drug use (WHO, n.d).For those who are dependent, there is an overwhelming need for drug dependence treatment and care interventions including low-threshold services, both of which need to be up scaled (UNODC, 2013). However, there is a general deficiency of such services for rehabilitation and recovery of drug users.

Pakistan is predominantly Muslim state with high level of religiosity. According to Gallop Poll 2009, 92% of people in Pakistan responded that religion is an important part in their life. Estonia is ranked as the least religious nation with 16% importance to religion while Bangladesh is the most religious nation with 99+% religiosity.

Within Pakistan, 97% population is Muslim while 3% are Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, and others. Opinions vary over the use of drugs amongst Muslims. There are religious groups who claim that all kind of narcotics are banned in Islam while others claim that there is permission, though. As for the use of marijuana or chars, the users believe that there is permission of chars within religion. They believe that although alcohol was clearly and strictly prohibited, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not prohibit the use of the hemp (cannabis/marijuana) directly. Nonetheless, many groups within Muslims prohibit its usage on religious grounds (Fuller & Robert, 2000). But still there is 6.5 million drug users in the country.

The most commonly used drug in Pakistan is *Hashish* and its derivatives. It is a compressed form of cannabis (Asghar, 2016). It is known as *charas, ganja* or *garda,* while cannabis is known as *bhang.*It has a calming effect and it is being used by many to calm their nerves. It is also a relaxant that is why the working class, particularly the labour class, use it in order to get a relaxation (Asghar, 2016). It is a common knowledge in Peshawar that the labour class use to go to Barha (Khyber Agency) to get a cup of tea in a very famous tea café. The café owner would put a bit of cannabis plant in the tea pot. Therefore, besides being tasty, the tea would also get them relaxed.

The use of some substances, such as *chars* and *bhang*, is normally allowed on some shrines, e.g. Bari Imam Sarkar in Islamabad, Rahman Baba in Peshawar.

Objectives of the Study

1. Explore the substance use at Rehman Baba Shrine in Peshawar;
2. Describe the categories of substance users at Rehman Baba Shrine;
3. Explore the rationale for substance use at the shrine of Rehman Baba; and
4. Find association between Mental Health and substance use at the Rehman Baba Shrine.

Methodology

Locale of the Study

Rehman Baba shrine was purposely selected as Rehman Baba is a famous *sufi* poet of Pashto language and highly revered in Pashto speaking population across borders. Furthermore, it is an open secret here in Peshawar that there are substance users who regularly use drugs to induce mystic experience in the vicinity of Rehman Baba. Such people are generally known as *Malangan* (heretic). A video clip of one of the interviews of Yousaf Jan Utmanzai, a famous Pashto language TV reporter in Peshawar, was circulated on Youtube where he interviewed a *Malang* in Rehman Baba shrine who was providing rationale for using drugs to induce mystic experience (Utmanzai, 2018). It generated the interest of the researchers to conduct a deeper study on the subject. Hence, the selection of the Rehman Baba shrine was made.

Study Design & Method

This is a case study research that aims to explore the connection between substance use, religious mysticism, and mental health. A case study research 'aims to explore and depict a setting with a view to advancing understanding' (Cousin, 2005:421). Within the case study methods, a phenomenological method

was carried out at *Rehman Baba* shrine. Using interview guide, the data for the study was collected from five Individual Interviews and one Focus Group Discussion. Moreover, for understanding the sociocultural and psychological reason of such use, one anthropologist/sociologist and psychiatrist each was also interviewed. Moreover, audio-video devices were also used for recording the views of the substance users. However, ethical protocols were strictly followed and after transcription and interpretation, thematic analysis was drawn based on collected data (See Table 01 for details).

Table 01: Sampling Method and Sample Size

Types of Participant	Interview	FGD
Substance Users at Rehman Baba Shrine	05	01
Psychiatrist	01	
Anthropologist/Sociologist	01	
G.TOTAL	07	01

Sampling Technique

Sampling was carried out through purposeful selection of participants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique. In this method, the researcher has a 'something in mind and select the participant that suites his/her purpose' (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016:1). For this study, since the researchers were interested in connection between substance use in the premises of certain religious sites (shrines) and their rationale and implications for mental health, therefore, the researchers selected only those participants who were visitors of the shrine and who were using the substance. Further, only male participants were found and included in this study.

Tools for Data Collection

The data was collected by using the following three data collection methods:

1. Individual Interviews
2. Focused Group Discussions

3. Observations

Interviews and FGD were conducted with substance users and *Malangan* at the Rahman Baba Shrine. Interview, FGD, and observation are considered the most useful tool for data collection in studies that involve field work and ethnographic data (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Since the study aimed at exploration, therefore, interview and FGD was considered the most useful method of collection of data that goes deeper into investigation of a phenomena.

Observation played a key role in distinguishing/categorization of the participants in this study. It also provided ethnographic data.

Results And Discussions

The following themes resulted from data analysis:

1. Types of Substance Used: Only *Charas* is used at the shrine of Rehman Baba;
2. Marijuana is viewed as holy and mystic substance;
3. Categories of Substance Users: There are four categories of substance users;
4. Shrine's location usually provides an environment to use *chars* without social, legal and religious intervention; and
5. Shrines like Rehman Baba are substitute for Mental Health Institutions and Services in Pakistan.

1. Types of Substance Used: Only *Charas* is used at the shrine of Rehman Baba

The observation revealed that not all forms of drug users can be found on the shrine of Rehman Baba. The only drug of use at the shrine is *Charas* (Marijuana). There are no alcoholics, heroin users, or users of any other drug. The only drug allowed for use at the shrine is *Charas*. A *Malang* said,

We are monks and *charsi*. We are not *nashai*. Here you can only inhale *charas*. Using other drug will be a sin (Field Reflection).

Although *charas* is also categorized by the law as illicit substance, however, the question arises here, why only *charas* is allowed while other drugs are considered as sin? This begs our next theme.

2. Marijuana (*Chars*) is viewed as Holy and Mystic Substance

Some of the monks who use *charas* terms it *Malangi booty* (mystic plant). In other words, a holy substance. Most of them have a perception about the saints that they were substance user. Hence, it is mystically allowed. It is provided as a strong justification for their behavior.

There are two school of thoughts about the use or prohibition of substance. One school of thought poses that *charas* or marijuana is not banned in Islam. Islam banned those drugs like wine which creates *khumar* or hallucinogen. Hence, they believe that cannabis does not cause any hallucination like wine. However, other believed that substance use is forbidden in light of *Ahadees* and *Quranic* injunction. It is called *khimar* which means veil or *purda* on the brain, which means it shut downs the logical sense of the brain. Even, provide *parda* on the problems and miseries of person (Interview with Ayub, 2016)

As for the use of Marijuana or *chars* is concerned, the users believe that there is permission of *chars*. They believe that the hemp (cannabis/marijuana) was not directly prohibited by the Holy Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). It seems to have been utilized chiefly as a medicine for, among other disorders, dandruff, diarrhea, earache, gonorrhea and worms (Fuller, 2000). However, the use of alcohol was strictly prohibited. Despite that the Prophet (PBUH) did not disallow cannabis. Orthodox groups of Muslims today consider cannabis to be forbidden (Fuller, Robert, 2000). Muslim sects, such as some of the Sufis, continued to take it in traditional shamanist ways.

However, a Muslim Sociologists share his view during an Individual Interview about the use of substance at Shrines and its provision in Islam;

Though, the use of *charas* is banned in Islam and social culture of this society, however, the users at shrine believe that the use of *charas* is permissible. Usually, the users are free from all other sort of evils. They are usually innocent and Allah will forbid them without accountability. Similarly, Rehman Baba used these words i.e. *Ze da janan paa gham kee Lapi Lapi bung khrum*, (I am using hemp in commemoration to my Beloved). But this is called *thashbeeh* (Imagery) in *Pashto* poetry which does not mean that he was *chars* users (Field Reflections).

As for the *malangs* are concerned, they believe that *bung* (hemp) or *charas* has been used by Rehman Baba. One of the monks shared his view during an Individual Interview that,

"*Da Kho Da Malangai Nasha Da* [It is rather drug of monks]. I am using *chars* for the last 40 years. Because Rehman Baba was also using it. As he mentioned in his poetry in *Pashto*:

Sheen luge me pa sar chatar duwaa thakht dee,

(blue smoke is coming out of my head)

Gardghubar da khpal amaal laka malang khrum

(dust of my behaviour made me a monk)

Laka sook che da dunya khuree naemathoona,

(there are those who are enjoying worldly blessings)

ze da yaar da kusee khawre pa da rang khrum,

(I am enjoying the dust of the street of my beloved)

Hum da pa che khudei k sham bi khudaa,

(I lose my senses in my consciousness)

Za hijraan pa gham ke lapi lapi bang khuram

(distance from my beloved made me take hemp)

Ze Rehman ba so Juwandy pa dunya payam

(for how long I, Rehman, will be alive in this world)

Che Da balo lambo sar laka pathang khuram"

(when I am playing with fire like a moss)

Similarly another *Malang* said during a Group Discussion that

"The use of *charas* creates truthfulness and develop a sense of humanity. The use of *chars* is not sinful rather it is *makrooh* (an Arabic word meaning disliked). We usually uses *charas* after *Aishaa* prayers (late night prayers), when the malang recites his poetry, the followers uses *charas* in a congregation" (Field Reflections).

In a group discussion, a *Malang* shared that,

"*Charas* is a mean for suppressing the '*nafas*' (the dark self) the psychic forces that makes us ambitious for gratification of lust. The use of *charas* is *haram* (forbidden) outside the shrine. However, it is permissible within the shrine as it suppresses *nafas* and creates a sense of peace and love for humanity"

Another participant said,

"The use of *charas* is not addiction rather it is a '*suroor'* (Urdu word meaning joy/pleasure). Similarly, *charsyan* (the Marijuana users) are mostly *sakhyaan* (generous). It is better than other substance such as alcohol, heroine etc."

The observation revealed that during the day time, majority of the substance users would use *charas* in isolation while during the night, after the late night prayers, there would be a collective use of *charas* along with recitation of Rehman Baba mystic poetry.

3. Categories of Substance Users: There are four categories of substance users

It was observed during a visit on one of the Thursday nights that:

There are four (4) category of drug users in the *langar-khana* (a place where free food is distributed and consumed to everyone): (1) those who are substance users and easily identifiable through their slow motor activity, poor and filthy appearance, and deranged talking style; (2) those who are drug users but are monks, they speak normally, dress gracefully, and their motor activity is normal, along with that they frequently recite poetry during conversation; (3) the lunatics; and (4) occasional visitors.

The users in the first category, we call *Nashayan* (plural of *Nashai* meaning addict) can be clearly marked as a group of regular drug addicts. These are people who come to the shrine in order to fulfill their needs of addiction without restriction and insult. No one looks at them with an insulting eye in the shrine premises. There is no restriction over drug use. Further, breakfast, lunch, dinner and tea is also served to everyone in the *langar-khana* irrespective of his/her appearance. The drug addicts enjoy drug use along with free meal and tea etc (of course without getting insult). *Nashyan* would sit in seclusion or in groups, around a fire, and use drugs along with coughing, in complete silence.

The users in the second category, we call *Malangan* (plural of *Malang* meaning monk), are those who use drugs in order to enter into a state meditation. They also use it for defeating their *nafs* (the dark self) and calming down all the worldly desires. *Malangan* would use *charas* and recite poetry at the same time.

The users in the third category, we call *Lewani* (plural of *Lewany* meaning lunatic) are those who are lunatic, mentally deficient, or intellectually disabled. During one visit, it was observed that a person of 16 with down-syndrome was also using *charas*. Regarding this group, it is not clear why they come here to use

drugs as they were unable to respond to questions asked. However, it is assumed that this category of people use drug in order to escape from mental distress.

The users in the fourth category, we call occasional visitors, are those who occasionally visit the shrine and use drugs casually in order to get a general relief from stress and anxieties of the worldly affairs. This category involves people who have jobs, dress gracefully, are normal in appearance, have no clear sign of deviancy or drug use, and are usually educated.

On every Thursday, there is a mass gathering after *Aisha* prayers (late night prayers). When the dinner is served, a fire is set in an open space in *langar-khana*. All the monks along with occasional visitors sit around the fire. One *Khakrob* (sweepers) takes out a Rabab and Mangy (musical instruments) and starts playing them. Another sings the songs of Rehman Baba while a few others start dancing in trans state. The mass listen to the music, pass on applause to the singer, and smoke *charas.*

4. Shrine's location usually provides an environment to use *charas* without social, legal and religious intervention

There are thousands of shrines in Pakistan about which one thing is common that all of them are located either in hilly areas or in the most secluded places. For instance, the shrine of Pir Baba in Buner, Khybr Pakhtunkhwa is located in lush green hilly area on a mountain top. The shrine of Kaka Sahib, Nowshera, KhyberPakhtunkhwa is also located in a mountainous area on a mountain top. The shrine of Yousaf Baba, Mohmand Agency, is also located on a hill top from where one can see the entire Peshawar valley from above. Shrines of Sanan-bin Salama (known as As-hab Baba) and shrine of Sharshamo Baba, located in north of Peshawar, are situated in a greener and secluded belt of Peshawar. It is believed that *Sufis*used to have such places where they could meditate and commune with Allah.

Rehman Baba shrine, although located in Peshawar, has a very peaceful environment within the hustling and bustling environment of Peshawar. An expert in Substance use prevention and control experts shared his view about the use of chars on shrines during an In-depth Interview that,

"As far the use of cannabis on shrines are concerned, it provides safe place for drugs uses which is also considered as secluded and utopian world where people considered them self-disconnected from the social responsibility" (Field Reflections).

Similarly, shrines are normally located in places which are secluded places such as hilly areas, grave yards etc. Users find a peaceful environment without the fear of police or public. Rehman Baba shrine is located at the outskirts of Peshawar city in the major graveyard of the city near Hazarkhwani. The shrine has a beautifully constructed tomb decorated with marble works. It is accompanied by a masque built in similar structure, a public library, and a *langar-khana* (a place for free food and shelter to the needy). *Langar-khana* has compounds for visitors. All the walls of the *langar-khana* are decorated with beautiful poetry from Rehman Baba. It is pertinent to note that a large number of pigeons are also present in *langar-khana*. These pigeons are uncaged and provided food and water by the monks. The chirping of birds and an overall silence and tranquility can be felt in the entire shrine complex. It is in *langar-khana* that the followers use drugs in order to experience euphoria. No drug is used inside the shrine tomb or in the mosque.

5. Shrines like Rehman Baba are Substitute for Formal Mental Health Institutions and Services in Pakistan

There is an alarming increase in mental illness owing to various socio-economic, political, geographical upheaval in the country (WHO, 2001 & 2005). As a result, mental health issues, such as depression, substance and alcohol misuse, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder, frequently emerge (Gadit, 2007). However, there is no institutional or legal intervention for overcoming the problem. As a result, people use various means for overcoming their problems such as tending towards shrines and use of substance.

In this regard, a Social Anthropologist shared his views during In-depth Interview that substances are used on shrines:

In the sub-culture of shrines, there is no competition, discrimination which provides a peaceful environment. Shrines are visited by people who have either break up, failure, defeats in social life. They find it places for mental satisfaction and relaxation. There is no formal support system, consequently, it is considered as informal institution for psychotherapy which provides relief from stress and miseries (Field Reflections).

While discussing the same phenomenon with a Sociologist in Pakistan who explained the phenomena in the following words during an Interview;

Recreational activities and facilities have been shrinking in Pakistan in general and in Pakhtunkhwa in particular. In Pakhtunkhwa, there is a general lack of means of entertainment. There is suffocation due to extremism, insecurity, cultural taboos and poverty. People look for places and opportunities to relief

their suffering. Hence, shrines like Rehman Baba is place where people can have place and environment where they can release their frustration through substance use, free food, spirituality etc. (Field Reflection).

In this connection, a young *Malang* who called himself *Khakroob* (urdu word for sweeper of the shrine) shared the following;

I had been in love with someone. But I got disappointment. Afterwards, I used to visit Rehman Baba shrine, sit with the monks, listen to his poetry and spend almost all my off days here. My past experience led me exploring love with Allah. "Love" came to me and asked me "what else do you need?"I said, "is there anything beyond you?" It said, "No". I said "I don't want anything then. "Love with Allah 'have no limits. I personally came to know that love with a 'person' is superficial and temporary. 'Love with Allah' is the ultimate and durable love. As far the use of *charas* is concerned, during this stay at this place, sometimes, I also use to take *charas* which provide me relaxation and *suroor*(euphoria) (Field Reflections).

With regards to justification for using *charas*, he replied;

Look dear, we just take *charas* here and do nothing bad afterwards. The people, who criticize us, on the other hand, do every bad act and commit every sin but do not take *charas*. Compared to their bad behaviours, using *charas* stops us from committing other sins.

When a permanent disciple or *Khakroob* of the shrine was consulted for what kinds of people usually visit the shrine, he informed in the following words;

The Shrine of Rehman Baba is usually visited by two type of people; those who just pay visit to the shrine, take snaps and have fun here; and while the others are those who visited for relieving their tension and stress. Hence, they enter the part of shrine where all the monks along with mentally disturbed or intellectual disable also stay.

A visitor to the shrine was contacted on the spot. He was asked about his visit. He shared that

I am Government servant. I come to this shrine for peace of mind. The settings and service in the area creates a sense of peace and love.

As indicated earlier, many studies indicate that mental health issues are escalating in Pakistan since last few decades (David, *et al.*, 2007; Gadit*et al.*, 2005). Studies, such as, Khalily (2011), link these problems owing to current

violence in Pakistani society, and some to the disruption of social structure (Gadit, 1999). Compared to the enormity of the problem, the number of psychiatrists and psychiatric beds per head of population is much smaller. Majority cannot afford the treatment expenses owing to a low level of annual income (if we call it annual) (Khalily, 2011). Primary health care system in Pakistan mostly caters to the physical aspect of health while the mental health is mostly neglected (Irfan, 2013:349). Gadit (2007) argue that Pakistan, with its huge population and diverse settings, becomes more prone to have even greater burden of mental disorders.

Hence, in the absence of recreational facilities and lack of mental health service provider institutions, shrines become a place for entertainment and relaxation. Moreover, substance users need a conducive environment. Shrine provides them a peaceful environment that is usually hidden from the public eye. They use substance without disturbances. They have food, water, shelter and substance in free.

Discussion

Substance use on shrines as Deviancy

Substance induced mysticism has close link with mental health problems, as discussed earlier. In Merton's (1957) 'modes of individual adaptation to stress' imposed upon a person by culturally defined goals and socially approved means, it would be the 'retreatists' who would usually visit the shrines of Rehman Baba for drug use. Retreatists, according to Merton's theory of anomie, are those who rejects the society's goals and institutional means to achieve them.

Mostly people who are disappointed from the external world, they used to spent time there and they get relax when they listen to the poetry of the Baba (Shrine Resident).

In this connection, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Peshawar said,

Economically defeated segment of society, they unable to get education, jobs and even marriages, hence, they adopt refuge in such places where they have all amenities without any struggle (Prof. Johar)

However, we deviate from the theory by arguing that not all, who visit and/or use drugs at the shrine of Rehman Baba, are retreatists in Mertons' sense. Some of the visitors come here for a temporary retreat. Once they get a peaceful and homeostatic state, they go back to the world of storm, stress, and competition. This retreat is rather a refuge.

Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to explore substances use at Rehman Baba shrine in Peshawar. It was observed that only *charas* is used. Further, it is not used as a substance of addiction rather as a substance of mysticism.

The second objective of the study was to describe the categories of substance user. It is concluded that there were four categories of substance users at the shrine including addicts, monks, lunatics, and occasional visitors.

The third objective was to explore the rationale for substance use. It was found that *Charas* is considered a holy drug but still it is not used inside the tomb or mosque of Rehman Baba.

The last objective was to find association between mental health and substance use at shrines. It was found that shrines are located in a calm and natural environment, a place conducive to substance use. Further, shrines are informal mental health institutions. The visitors experience a sense of calm and peace at the shrine. Shrines provide a cathartic experience.

Robert K. Meton's taxonomy provides an insight into substance on shrines and mental health. The users could be categorized as 'retreatists'.

Recommendations

We recommend further case studies over the visitors who visit the shrine in order to find out their life routine outside the shrine and on which occasions they visit the shrine. Are there any specific triggering events that compel someone to visit the shrine? We further recommend case studies on monks (*Malangan*) in order to find out their experience of drugs and mysticism.

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