

Concept Note

International Conference **Sufism in India and Central Asia**

organised by
MMAJ Academy of International Studies,
Jamia Millia Islamia,

Date: 11 – 12 February 2015

The vast regions which stretch from India (especially northern India), to Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Anatolia (Turkey) had close interaction throughout history. The people of these regions with different ethnic backgrounds, cultures and languages have been intermingling for many centuries, as seen in the cross-current exchanges of religious ideas and belief.

The word **Sufism**, popularly known as mysticism is most likely derived from the Arabic word *suf* (meaning "wool"), more specific it clarify it mean "the person wearing ascetic woollen garments". Sufism is deeply rooted with Islam and its development began in the late 7th and 8th centuries. The Sufis love their creator, cherish the desire of His closeness and follow His path. According to Islam, there are two types of service. Throughout the night, they remain in prayer, meditation and contemplation of Allah and throughout the day, they serve His creatures especially human beings.

Sufis help the people irrespective of caste, creed, religion, faith, belief and sex. They are broadminded persons having the universal vision. They follow the path of Islam, founded on divine love, universal charity and human compassion which also enshrine righteousness, piousness, truthfulness and kindness.

Sufism has been integral in defining the culture, political behaviour and economic interaction of Central Asians since its arrival in the seventh century. Hence, its resurgence is neither surprising nor unintelligible. Despite bans on unofficial religious activity, Sufism received widespread allegiance at the grassroots level during the Soviet period.

Sufism remains an important strand as a calming influence even in the context of violence and terrorism in the name of Islam. Their impact on many parts of the world is so deeply rooted that it forms a significant part of popular religious beliefs and practices.

To discuss the relevance of Sufism the concept and teaching, the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia (a Central University), is organising a two-day International Conference on *Sufism in India and Central Asia* on 11 – 12 February 2015, at Ho Chi Minh conference room, Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi India. This Seminar is an attempt to put into perspective the dynamics of Sufism in Central Asia and India and to provide a realistic assessment of its role in the region. The conference will bring together a group of distinguished scholars from India, Central Asia and other parts of the world.

Important Themes:

- (i) Survey of Sufi literature
- (ii) Sufi masters and Hagiographies
- (iii) Main features of Sufi discipline and practices
- (iv) Experiential knowledge of God
- (v) Formation of spiritual lineages (*silsilas*)
- (vi) Sufism and non-Muslim spiritual disciplines
- (vii) Regional Sufi Centres and their inter-connections
- (viii) India-Central Asia cultural exchange through the agencies of Sufis

Papers are invited on the above themes from social scientists drawn from different disciplines such as sociology, economics, history, political science, literature, anthropology, linguistics and philosophy who are interested on Sufism. We will be grateful if you could kindly participate in the conference. Please send in the title and 200-word abstract by 30 November 2014 to nrkhan@jmi.ac.in.

- **Last date for sending abstract:** 30 November, 2104
- **Abstract conformation:** 05 December, 2014
- **Last date for submission of full paper:** 10 January, 2015

(Dr. Nasir Raza Khan)
Conference Coordinator &
Assistant Professor,
Academy of International Studies
Mob.: +91-9654523786