The present work seeks to investigate the Development of Sufism in Bengal from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. No serious attempt has so far been made to reconstruct the history of Sufism in Bengal. The attention of the most of the scholars has centred round the political history of Bengal, making occasional references to its Saints but their accounts are uncritical and generally based upon the later hagiological material.

In the present work an attempt has been made to make a fairly extensive and critical use of all sources available. Throughout the work we have attempted to justify by reasonable argument our reliance on a particular source, wherever there has been a conflict of evidence or a contradiction.

This aspect of the development of Sufism in Bengal is based on brief references found in the chronicles of Northern India and on the data collected from a study of inscriptions, coins and other archaeological evidence. There is, however, sufficient materials in these chronicles as well as in the contemporary literature both Persian
and Bengali available, with the help of which Development of Sufism in Bengal can be reconstructed.

In fact the Islamic proselytization of India did not begin with coercion and bloomed; the first conversion were made by its Saints. Bengal's contact with the Muslims, in the field of trade, colonization, and missionary work, began much earlier than its conquest in the thirteenth century. After the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal Sufism was the continuation of Sufism in Northern India. From the beginning of the thirteenth upto the end of the fourteenth centuries, the Sufis of Northern India predominated over the Sufis of Bengal. The predominance of Northern India over Bengal in the realm of Muslim thought came to an end with the close of the fifteenth century A.D. During the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a number of Sufi orders and sub-orders of Northern India were introduced into Bengal by the disciples of the Northern Indian Saints. No connected account of the activities of these deputies and their followers is available. Stray bits of information regarding different Sufis of Bengal, that we have gathered from different sources do not enable us to build a connected history of these orders. Owing to this difficulty we arranged the Development of Sufism in Bengal centurywise.
First we discussed Introduction which is divided into four sections 1) Sources, ii) Origin and Development of Sufism in Islam, iii) The Advent of Islam and Early History of Sufism in India, and iv) The Advent of Islam in Bengal.

i) **Sources**

Our source material fall into following groups:-

(a) Persian Works

(b) Inscriptions and Coins

(c) Hagiological Literature

(d) Bengali Works

(a) Persian Works:-

1. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* of Abu Minhaj al-‘Uthman bin Siraj al-Din al Juzjani is the earliest chronicle referring to Bengal.

2. *Ain-i-Akbari* of Ab’l Fadl written under the great Mughal emperor Akbar. The third volume of Ain-i-Akbari devotes one chapter on Sufism in which some of the Bengal Sufis have been included.

3. *Riyad al-Salatin* of Ghulam Husayn Salim, which was written in the year A.D. 1788, gives a connected summary account of political history of Bengal. From this chronicle, we can shift materials for our own purpose.
- Khurshid-i-Jahan Muta of Sayyid Ilahi Bakhsh, covers the political history of Bengal.

5. Amrit Kund, a translation of a Sanskrit yogic work by Rukn al-Din al-Samarqandi. The book is dealing with yogic philosophy.

(b) Inscriptions and Coins

Contemporary inscriptions and coins have been discovered in large number. Their chief importance lies in the fact that they help in building up the chronology of the sufis and sultans. The references to erection of mosques and madrasahs, the names of Sufis, Alims and the learned officers and Kings found in inscriptions indicate Sultans attitude towards the Sufi Saints of Islam, and also show, their learning and particular inclinations and sometimes dynamistic relations.

(c) Hagiologyal Literature

The Muslim hagiological literature may be divided into three parts - (i) The Biographies of the Sufis, (ii) the malfuzat or discourses of the Sufis and (iii) Maktubat or letters written by the Sufis. Bengal was the seat of a large number of Sufis, but very few of their Malfuzat or Maktabat have dome to light.
i) The biographies of the Sufis

A number of biographical dictionaries dealing with the life sketch of the Muslim Sufi Saints of Indo-Pak subcontinent have been discovered. But most of them do not refer to their activities in Bengal.


3. Wirat Al Asrar of Abdu'r Rahman Chishti, is dealing life and activities of Indian Sufi Saints.

4. Wirat-i-Adari also of Abdu'r Rahman Chishti, deals only with the life of Sadiu'd-Din-Shah-i-Adar outside Bengal.

5. Khazinat Al-Asfiya of Shula: Jarwar of Lahore which contains biographical notices of Saints

6. Gulzar-i-Abrar of Muhammad Ghausi bin Husa
was based on vast amounts of source material available at that time and contains the biographies of 595 Sufis.

Besides these, three other biographies dealing with different Sufis were written in Bengal.

ii) 1. Sekh Subhodiya dealing with the life of Shaykh Jalaluddin Tabrizi in Bengal. This is a Sanskrit work attributed to Halayudha Misra, a courtier of King Lakshmana Sena. But the book is said to be spurious and is generally dated to 16th century A.D.

2. Risalat al Shuhda, of Muhammad Shattari, dated 17th century A.D. It deals with the life of Shah Ismail Ghazi in Bengal.


The Malfuzat

The Malfuzat of Bengal Sufis have not come to light. But we have been able to lay our hands upon the following books containing the Malfuzat of some eminent Chishti Saints of Northern India.

Fawaid al-Salikin (collection of sayings of Qutub al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki). Afdal al Fawa'id and Rahat al
Muhibbin of Amir Khusraw (Collection of Sayings of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya), Fawa'id al Fawad of Hasan Ala Sajzi (collection of sayings of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya). Khayr al-Majalis of Qalandar (collection of sayings of Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud, Chiragh-i-Delhi), these books throw some light on the life sketch of Makhdum Shaykh Jalal Tabrizi before his arrival in Bengal. Rafiq al' Arefin (Malfuzat of Shaykh Husain al-Din Manikpuri) compiled by one of his disciples Farid bin Salar have also been discovered. Prof. Hasan Askari has published the relevant extracts which throw important light on Bengal. As the Shaykh was a disciple of Shaykh Nur-Qutb-i-Alam of Pandwah, and as he himself visited Bengal, the materials derived from his malfuzat may claim authenticity and genuineness.

The Maktubat

The following eight letters of Shaykh Nur Qutb-i-Alam have come to light.

No. 1 was written to one Shaykh Qadi Asad.
No. 2 was written to one Shaykh Muiz al-Din.
No. 3 was written to one Shaykh Rukn al-Din
No. 4 was written to Rafa't Khan.
No. 5 was written to one Qadi Zahid
No. 6 was written to one anonymous person
No. 7 was written to one Qadi
No. 8 was written to some dear one.

All these letters, except the last one deal with Tasawwuf. The last one hints at the interregnum of Raja Ganesa in Bengal's politics. The letters of Mir Ashraf Jahangir Simnani are as follows:

1. One letter to Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi of Jawnpur.
2. One letter to Shaykh Nur Qutb-i-Alam.
3. One letter to Shaykh Husayn Dhukkarposh

These letters are very important as they throw light on the condition of the Muslim divines during the time of the interregnum of Raja Ganesa and the resultant invasion of Bengal by Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi of Jawnpur.

Beside the hagiological literature, a large number of traditions are current in different parts of the country about various Sufis.

(d) Bengali Works

Satnama and Hitisast-Ivarta of Hazammil deal with some popular beliefs of the Muslims in Bengal.
Maktul Hosan (correctly Maqtul Husayn), of Muhammad Khan, a seventeenth century Bengali work records the settlement of an Arab named Mahisawar in Chittagong.

**Durr-i-Muhammad Puthi** pp. 9-138, in Bengali language dealing with Fara'idi doctrines and the life and character of Faraidi leaders.

**Nazim al-Din Puthi**, pp. 1-20, in Bengali, dealing with Fara'idi doctrines.

**Muslim Ratnahar**, the authorship attributed to 'Azir Ali; being a sketch of life and career of the Fara'idi leaders from the earliest time to B.S. 3135.

**Haji Shariat Allah**, by Munshi' Abd al Halim, a manuscript biography of Haji Sharait Allah, in Bengali, 22 folios.

**Hayate Uwaysi**, by Maulana Jainul Abedin, a short biography of Jayyid Shah Sufi Fateh Ali Uwaysi (d. 1886) written in Bengali.


**Bangladeser Sufi Sadhak**, by Golam Salayen, lives and activities of the Sufi Saints of Bengal.
Hazrat Bayazid Bistami and Shah Amanat (in Bengali) by K.M.G. Rahman, it contains biographies of Hazrat Bayazid Bistami and Shah Amanat of Chattagram.

Muslim-Tirtha Furfura Sharif (in Bengali) by Mosuder Rahman, an illustrated account of Sufi Saints of Furfura Sharif.

Data Baba Pir Mahbub Shah (in Bengali) by M. Abdur Rahman, a short biography of Data Baba Pir Mahbub Shah.


Ayina-i-Uwaysi (in Urdu, pp. 1 - 570), by Prof. Motiur Rahman, which contains lives and activities of Naqshbandi Sufi Saints of India during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The book is also dealing with the life and activities of Shah Sufi Fateh Ali Uwaysi of Bengal and other Bengali Saints. Published in 1976, Patna, Bihar.

In these studies, the Development of Sufism in Bengal did not receive as much attention as it deserved in its socio-
religious aspects. The sources such as writings of contemporary Muslim Scholars, contemporary and later Bengali literature practically remained unexplored with the help of these materials it is now possible to attempt Development of Sufism in Bengal.

Origin of Sufism

The Muslim Scholars favoured its derivation from 'Ahl-us Suffa' (the ascetics who lived in the Prophet's mosque). Some of the Sufis themselves associate it with the Arabic Safa (Purity); Some derived it from 'Saff' meaning line or rank, as Sufis occupied the first rank. Some assert that Sufis is so called because he wears a woolen or rough garment was symbol of simplicity and renunciation of luxury. The Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace be on Him) and many early Muslims preferred a plain and simple dress to a gaudy one even on festive occasions. The word (Aswaf) (Pl. of Suf') has been used in the Quran also (XVI : 86) 'Sufi' is a name which is given, and has formerly given, to the perfect saints and spiritual adepts. One of the Shuykh say: Man Saffahu'l hubb fa huwa Saf-in waman saffahul habib fa huwa Sufiyyun. He that is purified by love is pure and he that is observed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else is a 'Sufi'!
Let us now turn to the word 'Wali' as the words (Sufi and Wali) are often used synonymously. 'Wali' means 'near', and 'Wila'it' signifies nearness or as generally meant, 'nearness to Allah'. 'Wala'it' has two grades: one is meant for all the believers of the Quran as the Quran says, 'God is near (or friend to) those who believe (and) brings them out from darkness to light' (11: 259) and the other is reserved for those who annihilate themselves in God. The real 'Wali', therefore is he who lives in Him and dies in Him.

Thus the doctrine of Sufism and the derivation of the word 'Sufi' whether it is derived from 'Ahl-us-Suffa', or from 'Safa' (Purity) or from 'Saf' (rank) or from 'Suf' (wool); in all cases it leads one to conclude that it has its origin and basic root in Islam and a Sufi is one who leads a purely religious life and devotes his time for the attainment of Allah's pleasure.

Development of Sufism

When after the period of four orthodox caliphs there started political turmoil and civil wars among the Muslims and they were divided into various political and religious groups, a group of pious Muslims separated themselves
from this political controversy and devoted their times to prayers and religious duties and remained in isolation. These spiritual Muslims were, to all intents and purposes, obviously Sufis, whether they were then called by that name or not. In this context Imam Hasan al Basri (d. A.H. 110/A.D. 728) is generally regarded as the first Sufi. Abu Hashim (d. A.D. 797-78) was an Arab of Kufa, who settled in Syria. Jami considers him the first devotee who was given the title of Sufi. In the beginning of Islamic history the holy Prophet was the formation of all religious knowledge. But in the course of time various religious sections i.e. Fiqh, Hadith, Tafsir, developed and took an independent shape. In the same way the Sufi way of life which took an independent shape after the Holy Prophet in course of time is an independent science.

Thus all the three stages of Sufism i.e. ascetic, theosophical and pantheistic evolved from purely Islamic elements.

The decline of Sufism began when the two halves (external and internal) of Islam were separated. This decay was complete when Saints began to constitute themselves into a separate body, with its branches spread all over the world this body in course of time split into a large
number of schools, each having its own monastery and code of laws. The four principal schools of Sufism, named after their leaders, from which many sub schools have emerged are:

(1) Qadiriyyah (after Abdul Qadir Jilani, d. A.H.552/A.D.1168)
(2) Suhrawardiyah (after Shihab-ud-Din Suhrawardy d. A.H.632)
(3) Chishtiyah (after Abdu Ishaq Shami and Khwaja Mu'in-Chisht); and
(4) Naqshbandiyah (after Bahau'd-Din Naqshband d. A.H.781)

The Advent of Islam in India

The Muslims arrived in India in three distinct movements, first as traders and missionaries to India's Southern coasts; then in the expanding wave of the Umayyad conquests which carried them to the Rhone, the Syr Darya and the Indus; and finally like the Greeks, the Sakas and the Hans, is more organised conquests cum-immigration movement of the central Asian Turks and Afghans.

Muslim Arabs arrived on India's coast in the wake of their Pagan ancestors who had carried on tradition of maritime trade across the Arabian sea since nearly the dawn of history.
These Arab Traders who settled down in India's coasts between the seventh and ninth century were treated with tolerance by Hindu rulers and the legend conversion of Cheaman Perumal raja shows that they were allowed to propagate Islam, they intermarried with indigenous women; some of them joined service under Hindu temple. Several Muslim communities like the Labbes, the Mapillas (Moplahs) and the Nawait thrived in the South and their descendants still survive.

Early History of Sufism in India

Muslim saints reached India in the very early parts of history. They followed the Muslim conquerors and merchants and started their missionary work of propagating Islam among the Indian masses. In the beginning these saints had their individual identities and were not organised into various Sufistic orders. They were responsible for converting a large number of Indian to Islam.

The Advent of Islam in Bengal

Some Scholars are of the opinion, that a small Arab Kingdom was established in Chittagong during the early centuries of the Hijrah. But so far no authentic record
has been found to establish their early settlement here. In course of their eastern trade, the Arabs appear to have visited the Bengal coast, but how far they penetrated inland is not definitely known.

Evidences of the preponderence of the Arabic word in the Chittagong dialect and special resemblance of the Chittagonian people with the Arabs have been produced to claim early Arab colonisation, but these influences could as well as the result of slightly later contact when Muslims had become predominant in Bengal and carried on trade with the Arab world through the Chittagong port. The existence of the commercial contact with the Abbasides is indicated by the discovery of a few coins of the Khalifah. One thing is certain that these businessmen created by their honesty a favourable atmosphere for the reception of Islam in Bengal as is traditionally known about ship wrecked Muslims who found shelter in Arakan, coming by sea route, are widespread in the country, but we are not able to examine their veracity or fix them to any definite chronology.

In Eastern Bengal Islam spread mostly in the villages. H.M. Ruseley held that the converts were recruited from the aborigines, for their manners and
customs, physical appearance and retained caste distinctions are similar, various political, social and religious causes accounted for the progress of Islam in Bengal. The immigrant foreign Muslims who flocked to Bengal for various reasons, political, social and personal, introduced new elements in society. They married Hindu wives and there were children of mixed marriages. Another factor was the conversions of the Hindus mainly among the lower classes, which sometimes took place, as a result of social causes. Bengal was struck by Islam at a period of transition from a debased but popular form of Hinduized Budhism to a various attempt at cultural domination by Brahmanical Hinduism under the Sena Kings. By the tenth century the Bengal mind had already started a campaign against Brahmanism and all that it stood for. The time was thus opportune for Islam to cut the sheet anchor of Hindu ascendancy by converting the sturdy lower classes and fanning the neophytes fanatism against the higher classes. Those who embraced Islam came from different ranks in society, mainly the lower classes and occasionally from the higher. The lower classes adopted Islam to escape from social injustice or secure social status. To the poor aborigines of eastern and deltaic Bengal, fishermen, hunters, pirates and peasants, the impure
or unclean out castes, popularly called the untouchables, spurned and neglected by the caste proud Brahmanical Hindu society, Islam came as revolution with its message monotheism and social equality and offered 'full franchise', an escape from the social disabilities and humiliations and opened avenues of progress. So they readily responded to the preachings of Islam.

Islam, which completely changed the socio-religious pattern of Bengal, came in the wake of Turkish conquest towards the beginning of the 13th century A.D. Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad ibn Bakhtiyar's surprise sack of Nadia (c. 1203 - 4) and occupation of Lakhnauti - Gaur, the capital of the Senas of Bengal, ten years after Muhammad rule Ghuri's establishment of Muslim rule in Northern India (A.D. 1193) was just a beginning, not the culmination. Dr. J.N. Sarkar has correctly observed, politically it planted the seeds of Muslim rule there. Socially it opened her gates to immigrant foreigners from the entire Muslim world and thereby affected her society and culture.

This was the formative period of the Muslim society in Bengal. On the foundations laid in these few years depended the future edifice of Islam in Bengal.
The first chapter of the thesis is Early History of Sufism in Bengal. Some Sufis are believed to have come to Bengal before the Turkish conquest of India. Itinerant Sufis, generally known as darvishes of Bukhara, Samarkand, Iran, Arabia and Syria turned their attention to India to preach the true faith among those who were outside it and to dedicate their lives to the service of humanity. Inspired with those ideas they crossed the western boundaries of India, which were known to them as early as the eighth century A.D. Their attempts at proselytism were probably merely sporadic ones and their advent to this land was really occasional. Names of these Sufis are available in comparatively reliable sources like inscriptions and biographical works. Even than, our sources about them are meagre and knowledge scanty. But as far as can be gathered, they exerted great influence in the spread of Islam; some of them even interfered in the politics of the country. Maulana Obaidul Haq author of Bangladeser Awliyagan has given the following four names of early Sufi saints of Bengal who propagated Islam there before the Turkish conquest:

1. Hazrat Shaykh Abbas bin Hamza Kishapuri (d. A.D. 900)
2. Hazrat Shaykh Ahmad bin Muhammad (d. A.D. 952)
3. Hazrat Shaykh Ismail bin Najd Kishapuri (d. A.D. 975)
4. Shaykh Ibrahim Turki of Murshidabad (d. A.D. 1169)
Other important early Sufi Saints of Bengal are as follows:

1. **Shah Sultan Balkhi** the dargah of this Saint is in Mahasthan in Bogra district, Bangladesh. The dargah was an old one, but its actual dates could not be ascertained because the earlier sanads referred to by Aurangzeb have not come down to us.

2. **Sultan Bayazid Bistami** (Shah Sultan Balkhi ?), There is an old dargah in the village of Nasirabad, five miles north of Chittagong town. Everyone admits that the Saint Sultan Bayazid did not die here. There is no convincing proof of the fact that there had been any Arab relations with Chittagong before the tenth century A.D. Dr. Enamul Haq is of the opinion that in reality it is the Dargah of Shah Sultan Balkhi who came from Sandwip to Nasirabad.

3. **Shah Mumammad Sultan Rumi**. The tomb of the Saint is in Madapur in the Netrokona subdivision of Mymensing. He came to Bengal in A.D. 1053.

4. **Baba Adam Shahid**: The tomb of this saint is found in the village of Abdullahpur in Bikrampur, Dacca. Baba was alive in A.D. 1119.

5. **Makhdum Shah Dawlah Shahid**: The dargah of this Saint is in Shahzadpur district of Pabna. Makhdum Shah Dawlah was probably alive in the latter part of the thirteenth century.
6. Makhdum Shah Mahmud Ghaznavi alias Rahi Pir:

The tomb of this saint exists in Mangalkot in Burdwan district. The conquest of Mangalkot by Rahi Pir may have been taken place during the early years of Turkish conquest.

7. Makhdum Shah or Shah Makhdum:

The shrine of this saint is at Dargahpara a locality named after the Saint's Shrine in the district of Rajshahi. He was alive in A.D. 1184.

The second chapter discusses the Development of various Sufi Orders in Bengal. After the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal Sufism was the continuation of Sufism in Northern India. From the beginning of the thirteenth up to the end of the fourteenth centuries, the Sufis of Northern India predominated over the Sufis of Bengal. The predominance of Northern India over Bengal in the realm of Muslim thought came to an end with the close of the fifteenth century A.D. During the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a number of Sufi Orders and Sub-Orders of Northern India were introduced into Bengal by the Khalifahs of the Northern Indian Saints. No connected account of the activities of these deputies and their followers is now available. Stray bits of information regarding different Sufis of Bengal, that we have gathered from different sources do not enable us to build up a connected history of these orders. Owing
to this difficulty, we are constrained to give here only a brief account of them.

**The Suhrawardy Order**

Among the well known orders the first to be introduced in Bengal in the early fourteenth century was the Suhrawardy Order. Makhdum Shah Jalalu'd-Din Tabrizi, a disciple of Shaikh Shihabu'd-Din Suhrawardy was the first to introduce Suhrawardy order into Bengal.

Sayyid Jalalu'd-Din Surkposh's grandson Sayyid Jalal bin Ahmed Kabir, known as Makhdum Jahaniyah (A.D. 1307-A.D. 1383) was the second man to visit Bengal of this Order. A large number of Hindus of Bengal were converted to Islam by Jalalu'd-Din and Sayyid Jalal bin Ahmad Kabir.

The other eminent Sufi Saint of Suhrawardy Order in Bengal was Shah-Jalal Mujarrad Kunyayi. He had settled in Sylhet and died there in the year A.D. 1346.

The above Saints and their disciples propagated Suhrawardy Order.

**The Chishti Order**

Sayyid Shah Abdullah Kirmani (R), a disciple and a Khalifah of Khwaja Muin'ud-Din Chishti, was the founder of Chishti order in Bengal. Shah Abdullah (alive in
A.D. 1236) was one of the early Saints of India and his tomb is at Khustigiri, P.O. Batikar, Distt. Birbhum, West Bengal.

The next eminent Sufi Saint was Shaikh Akhi Siraju'd-Din Uthman, a disciple and a Khalifah of Hazrat Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya. Shaikh Akhi Siraj settled in Bengal sometime after A.D. 1325. He died in A.D. 1356. He was succeeded by his Khalifah Shaikh 'Alau'l Haq bin Asad Lahori Bengali. His Khanqah was at Pandua, Distt. Malda, West Bengal. He died in A.D. 1389. His disciples became famous in various parts of Northern India. His Khalifah in Bengal was his son, Shaikh Nuru'l-Haqq, popularly known as Shaikh Nur Qutub-i-Alam. To him the highest form of asceticism was to perform tasks for God's servants. He was buried near his father's grave at Pandua.

Shaikh Anwar, son of Nur Qutub-i-Alam was also a Sufi Saint, who propagated Chishti Order in Bengal.

Dr. Kizvi writes, among the disciples of Shaikh 'Ala'u'l-Haq and Shaikh Qutub-i-Alam who established Khanqahs throughout Bengal, the most prominent was Shaikh Husain Dhukarposh (Dust-ridden) of Purnea.

The Qalandari Order

Shah Jafiu'd-Din Shahid of Pandua in Hooghly introduced Qalandariyah order into Bengal. He was a
disciple of Bu-Ali Shah Qalandar. He came to Bengal from Delhi in the last part of the thirteenth century A.D. He fought with the then King of Pandua and died between the year A.D. 1290 - 1295.

The Madari Order

Shah Ala, a Bengali disciple and a deputy of Shah-i-Madar, who made this order popular in Bengal. He was stationed at Gaur in the district of 2aldah. Another important Sufi of this order was Shah Sultan Husayn Muriyah Barhina, who had a living influence on the Muslims of Bengal and Bihar.

The Adhami Order

The founder of this order was Ibrahim ibn-Adham (d. A.D. 743). Those who belonged to this order were known as 'Khidriyah'. Some Indian Sufis who believed in the legendary Arabian Saint Khidr. Almost all the inhabitants of the districts situated on the banks of large rivers of Bengal, pay annual homage to Khidr by the celebration of a festival called 'Bera Bhasan' or the floating of rafts. The history of this festival can be traced as early as the fifteenth century....

The Shattariya Order

The founder of this Order in India during the fifteenth century was Shah Abdullah of Bukhara. He was also the founder of this order into Bengal. His Bengali Khalifah was
was Shaikh Muhammad 'Ala'. Shaikh 'Ala' proved to be an enthusiastic exponent of the Shattariyya Silsila in Bengal. Dr. Rizvi says, his disciple and Khalifah Shaikh Zuhur Baba Haji Hamid, was a most loyal disciple and deeply devoted to the interests of his pir's family. After the death of Shaikh 'Ala' he cared for the Shaikh's son Abu'l-Fath Hidayatulla Sarmast, training him in the Shattariyya path. Shaikh Ruknu'd-Din was the son and successor of Shaikh Abu'l Fath. He was an alim and a leading Shattari Saint.

The Naqshbandi Order

The Naqshbandi order was introduced into Bengal by Shaykh Hamid Danishmand Bengali who was a disciple and a Khalifah of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. He was born in Mangalkot, Distt. Burdwan, got his formal education from Lahore. He met the Mujaddid at Agra. Having completed one year's of mystical training under the Mujaddid, Shaikh Hamid was permitted to return to Bengal to train disciples.

Hamid Bengali and his disciples were instrumental in spreading Naqshbandi Sufi Order in Bengal and reforming the religious and spiritual life of its people.
The Qadiri Order

Hadrat Shah Qamis was the founder of this order into Bengal. He was one of the descendants of Abdul Qadir of Jilan, the founder of the Qadiri Order. He had settled in Salar (Salurah) in the district of Murshidabad, Bengal. Sayyid Abdur Razzaq was his spiritual successor to propagate Islam in Bengal.

Dr. Rizvi writes, the disciples of Dinan 'Abdur-Rashid of Jaunpur also established Qadiriyya centres in Bengal. During the seventeenth century the most prominent Qadiriyya in Bengal was 'All Sayyid Muhammad Qadiri of Rajmahal, who was succeeded by Shah Niamatullah (d. A.D. 1666-67). He had a large number of disciples who propagated the Qadiriyya mystical practices in Bengal.

Hazrat Zakir Ali son of Sayyid Abdul Qadir Abdullah al Jili, the 29th direct descendent of Hadrat Abdul Qadir Jilani came to Bengal in the year A.H. 1180. Hadrat Zakir Ali and his father were settled at Mangalkot in the district of Burdwan. Hadrat Abdullah al Jili, came to Bengal with his four sons namely Hadrat Zakir Ali, Hadrat Haushan Ali, Hadrat Gulam Husain, and Hadrat Majid Ali al Qadiri and their family members. Hadrat Haushan al Qadiri settled at Shahidganj in the district of Purnea. Tufail Ali al Qadiri son of Haushan Ali became Sajjadansin. He was buried in
was Shaikh Muhammad 'Ala'. Shaikh 'Ala' proved to be an enthusiastic exponent of the Shattariyya Silsila in Bengal. Dr. Rizvi says, his disciple and Khalifah Shaikh Zuhur Baba Haji Hamid, was a most loyal disciple and deeply devoted to the interests of his pir's family. After the death of Shaikh 'Ala' he cared for the Shaikh's son Abu'l-Fath Hidayatulla Sarmast, training him in the Shattariyya path. Shaikh Ruknu'd-Din was the son and successor of Shaikh Abu'l Fath. He was an alim and a leading Shattari Saint.

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Hamid Bengali and his disciples were instrumental in spreading Naqshbandi Sufi Order in Bengal and reforming the religious and spiritual life of its people.
Mangalkot. Sayyid Shah Meher Ali-al Qadiri became Sajjadanashsheen at the death of his father. He was born in the year A.H. 1223 and died in A.H. 1285. The tomb of this Saint is in Midnapur. Hazrat Murshed Ali al-Qadiri became Sajjadanashin at the death of his father. He was an eminent Sufi Saint and a scholar. He had established a rich library and Khanqah at Calcutta. The dargah of this saint is in Midnapur. Sayyid Shah Ershad Ali al-Qadiri son of Hazrat Murshed became Sajjadanashin. He was Known as Ghaute Thani. He was born in A.H. 1301 in Calcutta. He died in A.D. 1953 and was buried in Midnapur.

The Third Chapter discussed the life and activities of Sufi Saints of Bengal during the thirteenth century. The actual Sufi Missionary work in India (including Bengal) began from the closing years of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries. Hence forward Sufi Saints of outstanding personality began to come to India one after another in quick succession. Hearty responses from all quarters of India came forth and Sufis soon found themselves amidst large number of disciples. With in a few centuries, they, their disciples, the disciples of their disciples, were able to capture the imagination of large masses of people and propagated Islam. In this way, through the agency of both Indian and extra-Indian Sufis, Sufism was established in Bengal and other parts of India on a firm footing.
The thirteenth century Sufi Saints of Bengal are as follows:

1. Hazrath Jalalu'd-Din Tabrizi
2. Shah Safiu'd-Din Shahid (d. A.D. 1230 - 1295)
4. Baba Farid (d.

Chapter Fourth discusses the life and activities of Sufi Saints of Bengal during the fourteenth century.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century up to the end of the fourteenth century A.D. Sufis from Northern India and other parts of the country, began to flock to Bengal. During this century, a number of Sufi orders and sub-orders of Northern India were introduced into Bengal by the deputies of the Northern Indian Saints. Incessant influx of the Sufis and their continual missionary propaganda produced the expected result of popularising Islam among the indigenous people who ultimately embraced it in large numbers. It is quite apparent that one of the causes of overwhelming majority of Muslim population in East Bengal (present Bangladesh) is this incessant Sufi propaganda among the masses.

Sufi Saints of the fourteenth century who propagated Islam in Bengal are given below:

1. Pir Badr Alam (alive in A.D. 1340)
2. Qattal Pir (contemporary)
3. Shah Jalal Mujarrid bin Muhammad Kunyayi (d.A.D.1346)
4. Shayk Rida Biyabani (d. A.D. 1353)
5. Shaykh Akhi Siraju'd-Din Uthman (d. A.D. 1357)
6. Hazrat Shah Anwar Quli Halbi (d. A.D. 1375)
7. Shah Muhsin Awliya (d. A.D. 1397)
8. Sayyedul Arifin (d. later part of the 14th century)
9. Shaykh Alau'd-Din 'Alau'l Haq (d. A.D. 1398)

Chapter Fifth discusses the life and activities of the Sufi Saints of Bengal during the fifteenth century.

The predominence of Northern India over Bengal in the realm of Muslim thought came to an end with the close of the fifteenth century A.D. after which Bengal completely freed herself from the thraldom of Northern Indian Sufi thought. In the history of Indian thought, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries may be characterised as the time, when two different sets of ideas and separate systems of thought - Indian as well as Islamic were fused into one. From the middle of the fourteenth century signs were not wanting which prognosticated an age of complete fusion within a very short time. It was however not completed until after the completion of the sixteenth century A.D.

The closest spiritual bond of unity between India and Persia is another factor which led to the ultimate fusion of Islamic and Indian thought. When Islam,
strong and austere religion of the Semites, extended itself towards the east, it first absorbed the Persian culture of Aryan and thereby admitted silently a part of the Aryan culture within its fold. It was becoming the inheritor of the culture of the Greeks, another Aryan speaking race. When Islam entered India along with the advent of the Sufis, it was not the pristine, strong and austere religion of the Semites. The minds of India and Islam came closer and was attracted to each other, ultimately resulting on a fusion of the two.

In the history of fusion of Indian and Islamic thought Kabir's is an outstanding personality during the fifteenth century. His birth took place in the year A.D. 1398 and death in A.D. 1448.

Sufi Saints of Bengal during the fifteenth century were as follows:

1. Hazrat Nur Qutb i-Alam (d. A.D. 1415)
2. Pir Badr al-Islam (d. A.D. contemporary)
3. Shaykh Husayn Dhukkarposh
4. Shah Gada
5. Shah Ismail Ghazi (d. c. 1455)
6. Shaykh Husamuddin Manipuri (c. 1477)
7. Shah Ali Zaghdadi (d. A.D. 1480)
8. Shah Langar (d. later part of the 15th century)
9. Makhudm Shah Abdullah Gujrati (d. before A.D. 1500)
Chapter Sixth discusses the life and activities of the Sufi Saints of Bengal during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries.

In the later part of the sixteenth century, signs of reformation among the Muslims were visible. The idea that the Muslims of India (including Bengal) were, day by day, degrading themselves by being Hinduised, was entertained by a section of the Muslims who apprehended a great danger for their brethren, of being slowly merged among the Hindu population. This idea was rapidly developing with the march of time, it was enhanced by the liberal movement of Akbar and his learned followers. All these, however, came to be regarded by orthodox Sufi reformers to be abuses or 'innovations in religion and the mode of performing religious duty and worship', which must be shunned by every true Muhammadan because they constituted aberrations from orthodox Islam. Thus, the Naqshbandi Sufi Order, closer to orthodoxy than any other Sufi School was sponsored by Khwaja Baqi Billah and reached its culmination in the life and work of his most distinguished disciple, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi who was 'the first to raise the banner of reformation and revivalism in India.' Sirhindi and his followers, laid emphasis on Sunni separatism and opposed all attempts to evolve a composite culture. Imam Aubbani Lahbub-i-Subhani Shaykh Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi is generally known by his title Niaddid-i-Alfi-i-Thani or the reformer.
of the second Millennium of the Hijera. He chiefly belonged to the Naqshbandi School of mystic thought, but he reformed all schools including his own. Every one going through his 'Maktubat' or Epistles' can easily imagine, how he grappled with the situation. Shaykh Ahmad died in the year A.D. 1624.

The two other men who carried on the reform of Shaykh Ahmad were Shaykh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith of Delhi (d. A.D. 1641) and the emperor Aurangzeb, whose administrative measures forecast intellectual scheme of reforms advocated by Shah Wali-Allah (d. A.D. 1703-62) a generation later. The reform movement of Shaykh Ahmad was introduced into Bengal by Shaikh Hamid Danishmand, a disciple and a khalifah of Aujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani.

The other Sufi Saints during the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are as follows:

1. Shaykh Khalil (d. A.D. 1539).
2. Haji Bahram Seqqa (d. A.D. 1562).
3. Wakhdum Shah Zahiruddin (d. 16th Century).
7. Sayyid Shah Ni'matullah (d. A.D. 1664).
10. Shah Sufi Amanatullah (d. A.D. second half of the eighteenth century).
Chapter Seventh discusses, 'Popular Islam' in Bengal (un-Islamic beliefs and practices among the Muslims of Bengal).

The new culture introduced by the Muslims did not however, remain purely Islamic in its new geographical set up. Through the centuries of intermixing with the local populace various cults, customs and ceremonies crept into the Muslim way of life and gradually acquired an Islamic orientation.

Chapter Eighth discusses, Sufi Saints and their reform movements in Bengal during the nineteenth century.

The most important of these movements which aimed at political change along with social, moral and spiritual revivalism was the Tariqah-i-Khawammadi, led by the great Sufi disciple of Shah Abd al-Aziz, named Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareli (A.D. 1786 - A.D. 1831) which was actively supported by two learned scions of the Shah Wali Allah's family viz. Shah Ismail (A.D. 1773 - A.D. 1831) and Shah Abdul Hayy (d. A.D. 1828), the former one nephew and the latter son in law of Shah Abd al’Aziz.

In the army of Syed Ahmad Shahid which fought battles against the Sikhs various Sufis from Bengal took part. Among them the prominent figures were: Maulana Imamuddin Bengali, Maulana Sufi Noor Muhammad, Maulana Waris Ali,
Maulana Zanoorullah, Talibullah, Qazi Madani, Modad Qadir, Haji Chand and Maulana Abdul Hakim. Among the Bengali Sufis who lost their lives in the battle field were Faizuddin, Aleemuddin, Lutfullah, Sharfuqin, Sayyid Muzaffar Husain, Unshi Muhammad Ansari, Shaikh Sarkerullah and Fazlur Rahman Burdwani.

Among the important personalities who were inspired by the ideas of Sayyid Ahmad's movement were: Nasir Ali alias Tutu Mir, Maulana Karamat Ali Jaunpuir, Haji Shariatullah, Sufi Nur Muhammad, Maulana Imamuddin Bengali, Maulana Sayyid Waris Ali Bengali and Nazir Husain of Monghyr.

The other important Sufi Saints of Bengal during the nineteenth century are as follows: Shah Sufi Fateh Ali and Data Mahbub Shah.

Chapter ninth discusses lives and activities of Sufi Saints of Bengal during the twentieth century.

Sufi Saints of Bengal during the twentieth century are as follows:

1. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Abu Bakr Siddiqi (d. A.D. 1939)
3. Maulana Muhammad Abu-Jafir Siddiqi
4. Makhdum Maulana Muhammad Abdul Qadir Siddiqi
Chapter tenth discusses the life and activities of more than two hundred Sufi Saints of unknown dates. This is very difficult to produce all the names here.
Chapter eleventh discusses the impact of Sufism in Bengal. The impact of Sufism on the growth of the Muslim Society in Bengal may be grouped under the following heads:

i) The Influence of the Sufis over the society and missionary activities.

ii) Sufi Saints and their relation with the State

iii) Contributions of Sufi Saints towards educating the people.

i) The influence of the Sufis over the society and missionary activities:

The earliest Sufi attempts of proselytism began under very unfavourable circumstances but their subsequent attempts were quite successful. The causes of the success of the Sufi mission are as follows:

a) Indomitable zeal, uncommon piety and widely believed miracles possessed by the Sufis of the thirteenth unto the sixteenth century A.D. were the main causes of success of Sufi mission in Bengal.

b) Permanent establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal, and the liberal and munificent patronage to the darwishes by the Sultans, their grandees, nobles and officers, were the other causes that contributed to the success of the Sufi proselytising propaganda in Bengal.
c) Existing religious and social condition of the country was an excellent helping factor to the Sufi propaganda in Bengal.

When by the continuous activities of the Sufis, these inherent qualities of Islam were once made familiar with the masses, who were already groaning under social tyranny and suffering from the agony of spiritual yearnings of soul, they gathered around the saintly preachers known as the Sufis and readily changed their old faith to the new one. The dargahs of the Sufis were considered to be, 'rest giving building on earth, where people attain there wishes.

ii) Sufi Saints and their relation with the State:

Sufi Saints of Bengal also interfered in the internal politics of the country and sometimes tried to influence the Sultans in moulding their State politics. Almost all the Sultans of Bengal and their nobles and soldiers were devoted to one or other of the darwishes of their time and thought it to be their proud privilege to become their disciples. The darwishes, therefore, exercised a tremendous influence over them through their pontifical power and due to this influence, they could easily get all possible help from their royal followers.

The above discussion leads one to conclude that the Sufis were neither pro-government nor anti-government. They were generally indifferent to Kings and princes, State or politics.
iii) Contributions of Sufi Saints towards educating the people:

Beginning from the second half of the thirteenth century till about the end of the sixteenth century Sufis kept on coming and settling in their Khanqahs which became centres for educating the people, and for meditation and training for the initiates, solace and consolation for those who visited them for blessing and food and shelter for those wayfarers, mendicants and beggars who benefitted from the langarkhanas attached to them.

The early Sufis of Bengal who were scholars of Arabic and Persian, were authors of valuable treatises on Sufism.

The importance of the teaching of the Bengal Sufis is borne out by the fact that a number of Muslim divines received training under them. It appears, therefore, that Sufi Saints of Bengal paid their attention towards educating the people along with the spread of Islam in Bengal.