Abstract

The main aim of the study is to analyse critically some eminent religious shrines of India and Iran, their pivotal roles, significance and importance in the society as well as concern of the people and believers. The study focuses on two Islamic shrines in India, namely Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti’s shrine in Ajmer and Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya’s shrine in Delhi and two Islamic shrines in Iran, Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani’s shrine in Ray (Tehran) and Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh’s shrine in the north of Tehran.

The study aims at analysing various aspects of the shrines such as its origin, history, its sociological contribution, rituals and ceremonies performed in the shrines, as well as recognition of religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical aspects of the shrine. It also focuses on the aspects of beliefs and attitude of the pilgrims while visiting the shrines.

Celebrations, mournings and different rituals which are held at the shrines reflect the culture of a nation. These shrines however, preserve their religious sanctity, people and the believers consider it as religious turning points and paths for connecting themselves to God. The shrines are the place for offerings, requests and resort for the sufferers, shelters for the homeless, and remedy for the ill people. These places are not only meant for worshipping and supplications, but also act as centres for social interaction and decision-making.

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. The study aims at analysing various aspects of shrines such as its origin, history and its sociological contribution.
2. To study rituals and ceremonies performed in the shrines, as well as recognition of religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical aspects.
3. To study about the beliefs, and attitude of the pilgrims while visiting the shrines. Religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical significance and contribution of the shrines, will also be taken under the study.
4. To recognize the effect on the life of the believers with relation to the role and function offered by the shrines.

5. An attempt is made to compare and contrast the above mentioned aspects of the shrines of India and Iran respectively and to trace the similarities and differences between the two.

6. An attempt is made to conclude and find out various aspects and affairs of the shrine and its functions.

The methodology of this work is primarily based on the secondary resources and observation of the physical features of the shrines. The observation is through participation. Field work includes studying the behaviours of pilgrims, as well as by the permanent and casual employees of the shrines, rituals and ceremonies performed by them and by interviewing the pilgrims, officials and descendants of the saints.

The study focuses mainly on the social contributions of religious shrines of India and Iran with respect to their rituals and ceremonies contributing religiosity and widening the horizons of social interaction. It also focuses on the primary purpose and need of pilgrim visiting the shrine since religion is essentially a social phenomenon. It occurs in a social content and when men celebrate sacred things, they unwittingly celebrate the power of their society.

The study has been divided into five chapters, with two respective chapters on four shrines including introduction, comparison and conclusion.

Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti: Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was born in Sijistan (Sistan) and brought up in Khurasan (Iran). He settled at Ajmer, genealogy of Khwaja connects to fourth Caliph of Islam Hazrat Ali. Khwaja arrived in the city of Ajmer at the age of 52. Khwaja through his impressive teaching converted many people to Islam. He died at the age of 97 in 1236. His shrine is visited by large numbers of followers.

Khadim community of the shrine runs a society named, Syed Zadgan. It has its elected representatives working on different posts. Each and every office bearer of the society are directly or indirectly associated with the functioning and management of the shrine. The society runs a senior secondary school in which
950 students are studying at present. It also runs an Islamic school, besides providing educational scholarships. It has also constructed a modern school for girls, a nursing home, three guest houses for the accommodation of pilgrims. It provides monthly fixed monetary help to widows.

Administration and control of the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti in India, is different from other shrines. The system has eight government appointed officials and twenty four members comprise from the Anjuman Syed Zadgan. These officials control the administrative system of the shrine.

Some important officials and functionaries of the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti’s shrine, their contribution and services are acknowledged and discussed in the study some of them are:

Saijada Nashins: The term is applied for a disciple, who was appointed as a successor by the spiritual mentor. At the shrine of Ajmer they are available in large numbers. Pilgrim's hold firm belief that prayer done by Saijada Nashins on their behalf would bring them easy favour and blessings of Khwaja.

Mutawallis: They are the trustee and custodian of a religious and charitable place. At Ajmer they deal with the land grants and look after the entire establishment of the shrine.

Khadims: Khadims of Khwaja's shrine are known as Syed Zadgan as they are descendents of Khwaja. Besides organizing religious rituals and ceremonies they extend their help to the pilgrims visiting the shrine, in terms of providing accommodation and guidance.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): There are number of Dua Navees present at the shrine in order to help the pilgrims, who approach them for solving their problems.

Fatiha Khwans: They are available permanently at the shrine, enjoying the privilege hereditarily. Pilgrims pay homage to Khwaja by asking these Fatiha Khwans to pray on their behalf.

Malud Khwans: Several of them can be seen, sitting in the premises of the shrine. They recite hymns in praise of Khwaja.
Qawwals: They are always present at the shrine, to sing hymn with musical instruments. Pilgrims listen with utter devotion and reverence.

Shoe keepers: There are several shoe keepers sitting at the path of market and also near to the doors of the shrine. Their work is to look after the shoes of pilgrims against the cash payment.

Beggars: Men, women, children and physically challenged are seen sitting and moving on streets near the shrine and in the market outside the shrine. Pilgrims given them money and arrange food from the hotel in order to gain favour.

Market: There are several shops selling fragrance sticks, flowers, candles, clothes, sugar plums etc to the pilgrims, which are used for praying and of flower, candles, clothes, sugar plums etc to the pilgrims, which are used for praying and offering nazar at the shrine.

Vendors: They sell shoes, decorative, baskets, candles, fragrance, sticks, bags, clothes, jewelleries, flowers etc.

Rituals and ceremonies of the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's shrine are categorically divided into, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly rituals and final day ceremonies.

Daily rituals: Everyday three important rites are performed at the shrine. Khidmat (performed twice a day it is exclusive privilege of khadims), illumination (candle lightening ceremony before evening prayer), Karka (closing of the main doors of the shrine).

Weekly rituals: On the eve of every night between Thursday and Friday a special gathering is organized in the eastern courtyard called Ahata-e-Noor.

Monthly rituals: On every sixth of the lunar month, a special gathering is arranged to mark the sad demise of Khwaja. The function and its process is slightly abridged during the month of Ramadan.

Yearly rituals: Besides all these functions a number of death anniversaries of great saints are observed throughout the year. Eid- Milad-un-Nabi is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad, Annual Urs is observed on 25th Jamadi-us-Sani, the flag hosting ceremony over the Buland Darwaza takes
place, Qul final day ceremonies is observed on the eve of 6th Rajab, the celebration attains its zenith of fervour. Packed with the pilgrims, rites and prayer is done.

Pilgrims are allowed to enter the shrine to pay homage, recite prayer (Fatiha), offer cloth sheets (chadar) and flowers. They are guided by khadims who also recite Fatiha, pray for them, place a portion of cloth on the head of the pilgrims and help in offering flowers.

Pilgrims belonging to different age, gender and class come in large numbers, among them medium and lower income classes are found in large numbers. On Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days there are approximately 50000 pilgrims, visiting the shrine. Whereas on other days there are approximately 30000 pilgrims belonging to various, countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Burma, Afghanistan, Africa and Europe come to the shrine for various purpose, mainly pilgrimage, performing Fatiha, nazar, attending functions and ceremonies and finally for praying for the fulfillment of their needs. They firmly believe in the miraculous power of Khwaja.

In order to impress upon his divine mission and himself being a spiritual mentor Khwaja performed several miracles consciously and unconsciously. Hence many pilgrims are drawn towards the shrine believing in the miraculous power of the spiritual mentor.

Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya: Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya was a great Sufi saint of the fourteenth century India. Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya was a devoted disciple and follower of Baba Farid, who gave him religious teachings. There after he gave teachings to his disciples and managed to convert several people to Islam. He died in the year of 1325. His shrine is visited by several pilgrims

Administration of the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi is distinct and unique. It is not a waqf (charity) property. The administration and functioning of the affairs of the shrine is controlled by the successor of Hazrat A. A period of one week is allotted to each successor and his family for performing the
duties. The administration changes on every Wednesday after night prayer and it is handed over to the other successor and his family for a week.

Some officials and functionaries of the shrine are studied, such as:

**Saijada Nashins**: They play major role in functioning the affairs of the shrine smoothly. Their first duty is to guide the pilgrims. Needy pilgrims come to them and kiss their hands and tell their problems and needs. Pilgrims pay cash money or gifts after been guided by them.

**Khadims**: Khadims give their valuable services to the shrine in return pilgrims give them offerings and cash money. They are responsible for arranging and managing the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine.

**Dua Navees (writer of prayer)**: They are several in numbers and are always present at the shrine. Pilgrims visit them personally and tell their problems, these Dua Navees provide remedy for the problems. Pilgrims request them for a written Dua against cash payment.

**Qawwals**: Several Qawwals can be found at the shrine. They sing hymns in praise of Hazrat Nizamuddin. Pilgrims pay money to these Qawwals.

**Shoe keepers**: Several shoe keepers are present at the gate of the shrine. Since pilgrims are suppose to put off their shoes before entering the shrine, they give their shoes to these shoe keepers who look after it, against cash payment.

**Beggars**: They can be seen in huge numbers at the shrine. Usually at the way and path which goes to the shrine. The pilgrims have been encourage these beggars by giving money, thus they have become hyperactive.

**Markets**: Shop keepers draw maximum benefit from the pilgrims placed around the shrine. They sell items for the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine. In these shops items used for rituals are sold, such as, candles, fragrance sticks, prayer sheets, flowers, sugar plums and religious books. They also sell general items such as clothes, sweets, Jewelleries etc

**Vendors**: There are several vendors around the shrine. They sell items for offerings and rituals. They also sell general items such as luxuries, cosmetics, candles, fragrance sticks and cloth for offering.
Rituals and ceremonies of the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya are categorically divided into, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rituals.

**Daily Rituals:** Every morning one of the Mutawalli, gives call of prayer (Azan) and opens the door of the shrine. The pilgrims and needy gather in large number, the premises as well as the grave is cleaned by the Khadims.

**Weekly rituals:** On Thursday special programmes are organized. The ceremony begins with the recitation of the holy verses of Quran and cover *naat khwani, manqabat khwani, halqa-e-zikr, muraqabat, salatwasalam* in the praise of Prophet Mohammad, and ends with Dua. Friday prayer is held in the Khaliji mosque every week.

**Monthly rituals:** On the 18th of every Qamari month Fatiha of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is performed. The function ends with Dua (prayer) at 11.30 A.M, *tabarruk* in form of sweets are distributed. On the 20th of every Qamari month, prayer (Fatiha) of Hazrat Ali is performed between evening and night prayer. Similarly the 5th of every Qamri month, Fatiha of Baba Farid Ganj Shakar is performed at the evening. Similarly on the 11th of every Qamri month the prayer (Fatiha) of Hazrat Ghous Pak is performed.

**Yearly rituals:** *Urs* is celebrated to mark the sad demise of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya on 18th of Rabi-us-Sani. Pilgrims and followers of Hazrat come from all over the country and out side the country to pay tribute. Certain political leaders including Prime Minister, President have come to the shrine and have attended the celebrations out of faith or to gain political mileage. Besides all these, renowned Ulemas (spiritual leaders), orators are also invited at the *Urs*. Women are not allowed to attend the function. Some special programmes are organized on *Urs* such as, all India *mushaira*, all India spiritual *tableeghi ijtema, jolous chader, Urs mahal* upto Dargah Hazrat Peer Zamin Nizami. On the closing ceremony of *Urs* on 20th Rabi-us-Sani. Prayer of Hazrat Ali is held. *Urs* of Hazrat Ameer Khusro the first disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is celebrated every year from 16th to 20th of Shawwal. He was a great poet of Urdu and Persian language. Every year at the end of the month of Safar special programme is organized on the occasion of *yaum-e-wiladat* (birth) of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.
On the 10th of the month of Moharram, the martyrs of Kerbela tragedy are revered and their sufferings are recalled by the Muslims belonging to every part of the world. They express their deep grief over the tragedy and pay tribute to Mohsin-e-Islam and Insaniat (humanity) Imam Husain (grandson of Prophet Mohammad). On 11th of the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, every year, the Milad (religious congregation) and birthday of Prophet Mohammad is organized at the shrine. Like other rituals and customs observed at the shrine the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul Azha is done with great fervour and zeal. Namaz (prayer) of both Eids are held in Khaliji Mosque.

The shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is one of the distinct and important shrine of the world, where pilgrims are always present in large numbers they come from various countries, cities, and rural areas. They belong to various religion, sect, caste and creed. There are approximately 40000 on Thursday, Fridays, holidays and ceremonial days on other days the numbers are 25000. Pilgrims belonging to different age, (old, young, kids) and gender (men and women) can be seen at the shrine, they come for various purpose, mainly pilgrimage, observing Fatiha, nazar, performing rituals and ceremonies and finally for praying for the fulfillment of their needs. They firmly believe in the miraculous power of Khwaja.

Several miracles are attributed to Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Hence many Pilgrims are drawn towards the shrine believing in the miraculous power of the spiritual mentor.

Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani: Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani is famous as Syed-ul-Karim. He was born in Madina in 173 A.H (789). Hazrat Abdul Azim was highly respected by the contemporary Imams and saints, and had a special popularity. Several pilgrims visit everyday for performing pilgrimage and participating in the rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine.

Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine have facilities like library, Museum, clinic, faculty, various schools, publication centres, endowments and economical activities. Different class of people get benefited from the enrichment of the shrine.
Administration of the shrine is controlled by twelve board of trustees, several religious and local reliable persons and a representative who is selected by the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran. Mutawalli the head of board of trustees has eight assistants with specific duties.

Some important officials and functionaries, their contribution and services to the shrines are acknowledged and discussed in the study. Some of them are:

**Mutawallis**: Senior Mutawalli is selected by the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran. These Mutawallis perform the following duties such as: Checking offices, dealing day to day affairs, financial, welfare, health and therapeuic affairs, collecting money of the shrine’s fence, charity boxes, endowments, economical companies of the shrine, financial participations of the shrine in producing agricultural as well as other products. They also check the constructions of the buildings and sacred places, blacksmiths, installations, plumbering, carpentry, tailoring, gardening organizations etc. They also coordinate with working organization which are related to the shrine or with foreign organizations.

**Khadims**: They are 120 in numbers comprising male and female. Their duties include cleaning the surroundings, guiding the pilgrims, answering their queries, and solving their difficulties mainly about distributing the charities.

**Disciplinary officers**: There are 90 disciplinary officers (men and women) in the shrine. They maintain discipline and prevent the crowd in specific part, guide pilgrims to the courtyards and different parts of the shrine.

**Ferashes (servants)**: There are 42 Ferashes in Hazrat Abdul Azim’s shrine who work in three shifts. Their duties include cleaning different parts of the shrine, sweeping, washing, washing carpets, and covering different floors with carpets.

**Shoe keepers**: There are 46 shoe keepers in Hazrat Abdul Azim’s shrine, who work in three shifts, men shoe keepers keep men shoes and women shoe keepers keep women shoes, and give pilgrims a receipt.

**Roza Khans (preachers)**: They sit in the porches of the shrine every afternoon, especially on Thursday and Friday afternoons, because there are more pilgrims in the shrine on these days. Some pilgrims pay their debts to fulfill their needs as to solve their problems by giving money to a preacher and want him to elegize
which is usually about Imam Husain’s sufferings in Kerbela. They arouse pilgrims emotions.

**Eulogists:** They elegize in various mourning ceremonies with sad and happy poems and eulogies. They are invited by Mutawallis and in return they receive money.

**Dua Navees (writer of prayer):** They sit in the markets, some pilgrims who have problems, approach to them, they write prayer and pray on behalf of them, in return pilgrims give money to them and get satisfaction.

**Markets:** There are many small, big, new and old markets around Hazrat Abdul Azim’s shrine. Before visiting the shrine, pilgrims go to these markets to purchase necessary items like veil, head dress (rosary), prayer rug, candles, and charities and then visit the shrine. After returning from shrine they again visit these markets to purchase some gifts for their families and relatives such as cookies, chocolates, sweets, Jewelleries, clothes, stuff, head dress, prayer rug etc.

**Vendors:** There are many vendors in markets and allies around Hazrat Abdul Azim’s shrine. They sell some items to the pilgrims such as sweets, chocolates, decorated items, artificial Jewelleries, candles, lute, perfumes. These vendors do not have a specific place, they keep on moving in the area of the shrine.

**Beggars:** Men, women and children beg in markets, and streets around the shrine. Some beggars are blind and paralytic, and show their faulty limb or hands, to arouse pilgrim’s sympathy. Pilgrims give some money to them to increase the heavenly reward of their pilgrimage.

Different rituals and ceremonies are performed by khadims and Mutawallis they include:

**Daily rituals:** Khadims wear special clothes before Aazan (calling to prayer) everyday and recite peace upon Prophet Mohammad and his family. After cleaning the items and belongings of the shrine, they maintain discipline and guide the pilgrims. Another ritual which is performed by Khadims is the lightening of lamps (cheragh). All the pilgrims leave the shrine at 11 O’clock at night. Khadims close the doors respectfully and lastly, the senior Khadim closes
the main door.

**Weekly rituals:** Ashura (the tenth day of Moharram) prayer is performed at 7 o'clock in the morning on every Monday, it is about the commemoration of Imam Husain and his followers in Karbela. Komail prayer is another prayer which is performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine on every Thursday. Nodbeh prayer is performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine in the morning on every Friday. It is about the commemoration of Prophet Mohammad and his family. Friday prayer is also performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine on every Friday noon, in which pilgrims, Khadims, employees, and Ray's residents participate.

There are also some rituals on Friday afternoon every week in which many pilgrims participate to recite Quran and to pray for the dead (Fatiha).

**Monthly rituals:** On the last day of every solar month Khadims clean or perform dusting rituals (*ghobar rubi*) of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine in front of board of trustees. At first they collect the shrine's money then they clean the items of shrine's fence.

Recitation of Quran, praising for Prophet Mohammad, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Abdul Azim are another rituals performed at the beginning of every lunar month, in which khadims, employees and pilgrims participate.

**Yearly rituals:** The birthday anniversary of Hazrat Abdul Azim falls on the fourth day of Rabi-us-Sani. Khadims and Mutawallis arrange festive ceremonies. Hazrat Abdul Azim's death anniversary falls on 15th Shawwal. Khadims cover the whole courtyards and porches of the shrine with black ribbons as a symbol of lamentation. On the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad all parts of the shrine are decorated with green stuffs, coloured ribbons, flowers, and lights during this day festive ceremony is arranged, in which eulogists and poets recite some eulogies about Prophet Mohammad and people pray (recite peace upon Prophet Mohammad). On Prophet Mohammad's death anniversary, various parts of the shrine are covered with black stuffs. Khadims and employees wear black clothes as a symbol of mourning and participate in mourning ceremonies, listen to eulogies, and pray for Prophet Mohammad. Eid-ul-Fitr is the festival at the end of fasting month Ramadan and Eid-ul-Azha is a day of sacrifice. The
whole shrine is decorated with lights in these two great Islamic eves. Prayer (namaz) is held collectively on the two Eids. Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum is a festival in the memory of Hazrat Ali, on this day whole shrine is decorated with lights, and eulogists recite some eulogies. In the months of Moharram and Safar Hazrat Abdul Azim’s shrine is covered with black stuffs. Pilgrims especially male come to Hazrat Abdul Azim’s shrine from different parts of Iran to participate in majlis. Ramadan is a fasting month in which God gifted Quran to Muslims. Muslims read Quran each day during the month and finish the whole Quran within the month. During the month Sahn and Aftar are arranged for poor and pilgrims.

People of different age, sex and social status perform rituals at the shrine. Approximately 30000 come on Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days and on other days approximately 20000 come for pilgrimage to Abdul Azim’s shrine. Majority of them are from lower and middle classes. People of various countries such as India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon, visit this place.

Pilgrims come to the shrine for mainly pilgrimage, performing Fatiha, namaz, nazar etc. and also to participate in rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine. They also come to solve their problems as they believe in the miraculous power of the spiritual mentor.

Shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh: Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh was the son of Imam Moosa Kazim, he lived his life full of virtue and good deeds, he established himself as an exemplary saint. Against the harsh behaviour of Bani Abbas Caliphs with Alaviyan, Imam Zadeh Saleh found refuge in Iran. He was killed by one of the Bani Abbas officers. After his death, many pilgrims come to his shrine for pilgrimage and performing rituals and ceremonies.

Shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh have facilities for the pilgrims and general people like Hammam, book shop, charity institution, health centre library etc. Different class of people are benefited from these facilities. Important officials and functionaries related to the shrine are:
**Mutawallis:** Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine has one administrative manager who is selected by the board of trustees. He is a senior Mutawalli of the shrine. Other Mutawallis control administrative, financial, cultural and technical functions.

**Khadims:** There are 32 male and female Khadims in the shrine who work separately. Male Khadims work for males and female Khadims work for females. They stand in the porches and the surroundings of the shrine maintain discipline, guide the pilgrims and rest. They also clean the surroundings and items related to the shrine.

**Disciplinary officers:** There are 21 disciplinary officers (men and women) in the shrine, they stand in the surroundings of the courtyard, entrance and exit gates of the shrine. They maintain discipline in the courtyard of the shrine by controlling the crowd of pilgrims, guide them and explain about the cleanliness of the shrine.

**Shoe keepers:** There are 14 shoe keepers (men and women) in the shrine who work in two parts. Shoe keepings is located in front of exit and entrance doors which leads to the porches. They keep pilgrim's shoes and give them a receipt, without charging money.

**Ferashes (servants):** There are 10 ferashes in the shrine who work in two shifts. They clean and wash different belongings of the shrine.

**Eulogists:** Some famous eulogists are invited by the Mutawallis on different rituals.

**Dua Navees (writer of prayer):** A large number of prayer writers sit in the markets around the shrine. Usually women visits to them and they write various prayers on the paper.

The administration of Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine was given to Shemiranat charity institution by the approval of Islamic consultative assembly in 1984. The shrine’s board of trustees consist of six religious leaders including local and governmental trustees. Administrative manager is considered as senior Mutawalli. He is responsible for managing the administration of assistants.

Many rituals and ceremonies are held at the shrine and are controlled by Mutawallis. Some of them are:
**Daily rituals:** Senior Khadim opens the main door before morning prayer and pays reverence to Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh. After cleaning the items and surroundings of the shrine, they settle discipline and guide the pilgrims. Daily prayers are performed collectively every day in which Khadims participate. Recitation of Quran is another ritual held in the porches around the shrine.

**Weekly rituals:** One of the ritual and ceremonial day only women participate to offer cloth. A big table is kept on Thursday from 9 AM to 11 AM. This big table is placed in the meeting room. Sweets, cookies, dates, fruits, dried fruits, tea are placed on it. Ashura prayer is another ritual recited in the morning every Monday at 7 AM. It is about the commemoration of Imam Husain, his family and followers and their sufferings in Karbela. Komail prayer is a ritual which is held on every Thursday afternoon and it is a prayer for providing people's needs. One eminent person recites and others listen. Nodbeh prayer is another ritual recited on every Friday morning. It is about the commemoration of Prophet Mohammad and his family. Friday prayer is one of the prayer performed in the shrine in which pilgrims and people of the region participate. Al-e-Yaseen is also another prayer recited on Friday afternoon by an outstanding scholar of Quran.

**Monthly ritual:** Cleaning or dusting ritual (ghobar rubi) of the shrine is performed at the last day of every solar month by the board of trustees. At first some verses and eulogies are recited, then nine persons are selected by the board of trustees, they wear white and rose-odorous dress.

After completing the said ritual, the shrine’s fence is closed, then the collected money is calculated in the presence of the managers. Thereafter, it is given to the bank representative for depositing in the account of the shrine. Recitation of Quran is another ritual held in the beginning of every lunar month.

**Yearly rituals:** Birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad is a glorious ceremony held in Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine on this day, the whole shrine is decorated with green stuffs, coloured ribbons, lights and flowers.

Many wedding ceremonies are also performed on this holy day, many pilgrims who are financially sound, come to the charity institution of the shrine for helping poor people who are getting married. On the death anniversary of
Prophet Mohammad the whole shrine especially its fence (Zarih) are covered with black stuffs. Pilgrims recite Quran and pray for Prophet Muhammad. On the eves of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha the whole surroundings of the shrine are decorated with flowers, lights and coloured stuffs. Namaz is performed collectively on both Eids. On the Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum the whole shrine is decorated, festive ceremonies are held in which a number of people participate. Festive rituals are also held on the birth anniversary of Hazrat Zainab, eulogists recite some eulogies and poems in the commemoration of Hazrat Zainab. In the months of Moharram and Safar the whole shrine is covered with black stuffs, mourning rituals are held. Several mourning groups come to the shrine from different parts of the region to participate in the rituals of Ashura (tenth day of Moharram). In the month of Ramadan recitation of Quran is done after evening prayer in the shrine. One chapter of Quran is recited on each day so the whole of Quran is completed at the end of the fasting month.

There are also other happy ceremonies held on the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatima and twelve Imams. Several eulogists recite eulogies and happy poems to enhance the happiness.

Rituals are performed by the pilgrims at the shrine who belong to different age, gender and social status. It is very interesting that people belonging to middle and lower class visit in large numbers. People of various countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and India visit the shrine.

According to the manager of the shrine about 20000 pilgrims visit this place on Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days. While on other days the number is approximately 15000.

Pilgrims come to the shrine mainly for the pilgrimage and to participate in the rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine like Fatiha, recitation of Quran, namaz (prayer) and for participating in the birth anniversaries. These pilgrims are needy and come to get their wish fulfilled through the miraculous power of the saint.
In the present study an attempt has also been made to trace the **similarities and differences** between the shrines of India and Iran in one of the chapters. Some of the similarities are:

Tracing the genealogy of all the four saints under the study, it was found that, it is connected to Hazrat Ali. All these saints had a common purpose of propagating Islam based on Quran, Hadith, tradition, life style, deeds and sayings of Prophet Mohammad.

The shrines have a kitchen or *langar khana* in which cooked food is distributed amongst the pilgrims and poors.

The shrines under the study have different places of residence for the accommodation of employees and Mutawallis. Officers for receiving offers (*nazal*) from the pilgrims are always present in the shrine.

Governmental authorities and the pilgrims expressed their love and veneration towards the saint by donating properties, markets, shops, agricultural lands, orchards and centres for production. Good income is generated and earned from the said properties and from it new properties are bought and production centres are established.

Official matters of the shrines are dealt by a well defined hierarchical administrative system, different aspects of the shrine such as repair works, security, and accounts are controlled by the office of the shrine.

At the shrines of India and Iran everyday congregation prayer takes place. Employees and pilgrims of the shrine comprises the gathering. The shrine is closed at night and all pilgrims leave the premises.

Mourning in the month of Moharram is observed in the shrines of India and Iran respectively. During first ten days of the month lunch and dinner is offered to the people participating in mourning function.

After pilgrimage the pilgrims pay visit to the market for purchasing gifts for friends and relatives. While leaving the shrine they bow their head and do not show their back to the grave.
All shrines observe daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rituals. Pilgrims mainly visit to the shrines for Prayer, nazar, reciting Quran, performing Fatiha, they believe in the miraculous power of the saints.

Some of the differences are:

The saints buried in Indian shrines have spiritual tree (Tariqat) but that of Iran do not possess. Most of the saints in Iran have arrived under political refuge against the tyranny of the rulers of the time.

In India the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti has two cauldrons in which foods for the pilgrims are cooked. It is a unique equipment and no other shrine of India and Iran possess such cauldrons.

All shrines have endowments and properties attached to them in large numbers, yielding them good income. The case with the shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim is different, the shrine has numerous endowments, as compare to other shrines, income is large. Shrines have facilities like library, Museum. clinic, faculty, various schools and publication centres, endowments and economical activities. Different class of people get benefited from the enrichment of the shrine. Income is strategically multiplied by the officials who look after the shrine.

The pilgrims visiting the shrines of India is comparatively large in number to that of Iran.

Shrines of Iran are taken care by the Mutawallis, these Mutawallis are not related to the saints, they render the services of repairing and expanding the shrine. Women Khadims are only available in the shrines of Iran.

In the shrines of India the pilgrims take off their shoes before entering the shrine, on the specified place. The shoes are looked after by shoe keepers who receive money in return. But in the shrines of Iran the place for taking off the shoes is at the entry gate of the tomb and the shoes are looked after without paying money.

In the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya the administration is controlled by Sajjada Nashin since their number is large so they take up administrative work
periodically. The turn of one Sajjada Nashin comes after a week. This periodical change results into a new mode of administration every week.

Contrary to it the shrines of Iran has administration controlled by a single unit. A trustee council exist in the shrine of Iran. The members of this council are known as Mutawallis, these Mutawallis discharge the administrative responsibilities and have over all control of the shrines.

The saints under study in India have perform miracles in their life time. Saints of Iran have not performed miracles in their life time. However, people in general in Iran believe that whatever they achieve through the medium of saints is nothing but a result of the miraculous power of the saints.

It is compulsory for the pilgrims at the shrines of India to cover their heads before entering the shrine but in the shrines of Iran it is not compulsory.

In the last chapter which concludes up the study of shrines of India and Iran. Some major points are:

It is worthy to note that some rituals performed by the pilgrims at the shrines are related to pre-Islamic culture and traditions of India and Iran. When Aryans came to India and Iran, they possessed culture and tradition of their own. Reflection of their culture and tradition can be traced in Zoroastrians and Islam in Iran and Hinduism and Islam in India. Through illumination and spread of fragrance Aryans use to invoke gods. Hence lighting ceremony or the illumination at the shrines is essentially a ritual of Aryans which inculcated in the religious practices of India and Iran and thereafter became an essential ritual of the shrines.

The present study delves deep into the life history of the saints of India and Iran investigating course of happenings and circumstances (after the death of saint) which lead to the formation of concrete structure of the shrines. Be it a shrine of India or Iran, the establishment of pilgrimage and the construction of shrine was executed by the disciples and followers of the saints.
Religious aspects of the shrines offer spiritual favour to the society and strengthens it against disintegration. Shrines also provide shelters to those who wish peace and harmony against the onslaught of materialism.

Study of shrines in terms of psychological analysis of the pilgrims reveals the fact that shrines have also wielded influence on the society through individual's psychology.

The most important and significant role of shrines is of cultural, social and economical, they are the meeting point of the people of various class, religion and creeds. When they come at one place to perform the rituals and observe the customs they come closer by lifting the barriers of religious differences.

Study of rituals and ceremonies related to the saints and their tombs are worth from the sociological point of view as the above mentioned activities have religious, psychological, cultural, social and economic dimensions. This study will also explain the importance of shrines as a social institutions which play a significant role in moulding religious and social way of life of a big section of the society.