Abstract

Pakistani immigrants in Greece: from changing pattern of migration to Diaspora politics and transnationalism

Pakistanis are one of the wide variety of recently established immigrants groups in Greece, analysed here as an example of the intersection of changing pattern of migration, Diaspora politics to transnationalism. Until recently, Pakistani emigration followed established patterns directed to UK, Middle East and other places in the West. Pakistanis now travel to wide variety of new destinations like Greece. This article analyses the changing pattern of Pakistani migration in Greece. Diaspora politics involves politics of recognition, issues like Mosque controversy in Athens, Immigration law and alleged abductions of Pakistani immigrants in Greece etc. transnationalism concerns the transnational religious networks like Sufi orders (tariqas) and missionary network of Tablighi jama’at among Pakistani immigrants in Athens.

Key words: Immigration Greece Pakistan diaspora politics of recognition transnational Islam
Introduction

In this age of new migration (Castle and Miller 1993) all societies have become more porous involving globalization and acceleration of worldwide global migratory flows. Despite the growing attitude of a “fortress Europe” policy among many European countries, the migratory flows may seem to continue for some time for the reasons to do with growing inequalities between Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs) and rich countries. While economical, demographic and political pressures from the Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs) will cause the south-north and east-west flows.

Greece along with its Southern European counterparts like Italy, Spain, Portugal until recently (early 1970s) used to be source of significant emigration became target and outburst of immigration originating in a wide variety of countries around the world. Majority of the source countries of immigrants in Greece are relatively close by such as Balkan countries like Albania, Bulgaria, Romania. Other are situated much more far away like Asian immigrants originating from China, Philippines, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and even places from Africa. These countries share no religious, cultural and colonial linkages with Greece. The presence of these immigrants in Greece is clear indicator and shift from immigrant sending to immigrant receiving country. Foreign workers and immigrants in Greece until the late 1970s and early 90s were relatively low in numbers. However, with the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the Eastern block, Greece has become a more multicultural and pluralistic society with the influx of economic migrants and refugees from neighbouring countries.

Sometimes in the early 1990s Greeks started to feel that Greece was no longer (as it had been more than a century) a country of emigration but has become country of immigration. Greece along with other countries like (Italy, Spain, and Portugal) is caught up in the so-called second (post war) wave of international migration. The shock and surprise of immigration also brought the uncomfortable feelings of presence of Cultural other (immigrants) in Greek society which used to be considered as non pluralistic in the past. Thus the substantial increase in the number of immigrant and refugees, in particular the Albanians, has affected the public perceptions. Racism, xenophobia and ethnic stereotyping have become widespread.

Mass migration to Greece is relatively new phenomenon though Greece started to attract Asian and African immigrants since 1970s. There may be several reasons of mass migration to Greece. These reasons are

(a) Diversion effects initially contributed to immigration in Greece because of stricter controls in North Western Europe since the mid-1970.

(b) Greece is accessible because of the centrality of its location and weaker border controls. It has 6,800km of vast coastline and 2,800km of mountain border which is difficult to patrol.

(c) It is situated in the close proximity of developing countries from Asia, Africa and Balkans. These places were centre of international changes and conflicts.

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1 All over the world, there are 6 millions people of Greek origin in 140 countries. There are 3 million Greeks in USA, 700,000 in Australia, 350,000 in Canada and 354,000 Greeks in Germany (Athens News, 23rd, January 2004).
Improving conditions of Greek economy, development of labour shortages and low birth rate means immigrants are needed to do the jobs which native workers seem no longer willing to do like construction work etc.

The specific character of Greek economy with a large underground and informal sector offers spaces and potential for irregular migration.

The current paper is about Pakistani migration in Greece. Pakistanis are one of the wide variety of recently established immigrants groups in Greece. Until recently, Pakistani emigration followed established patterns directed to UK, Middle East and other places in the West. Pakistanis now travel to wide variety of new destinations like Greece. The Pakistani immigrant diaspora community in Greece is still small compared to Pakistanis in UK but they are beginning to have impact on socio cultural landscape at least at local level.

This paper which is based on ethnographic research in Athens analyses the changing pattern of Pakistani migration in Greece. Diaspora politics involves politics of recognition, issues like Mosque controversy in Athens, Immigration law and alleged abductions of Pakistani immigrants in Greece etc. Transnationalism concerns the transnational religious networks like Sufi orders (tariqas) and missionary network of Tablighi Jama’at among Pakistani immigrants in Athens.

**Context of migration:-**

To understand Pakistani migration in Greece, we should see shortly the historical sequence of Pakistani emigrations to other destinations and the changing pattern of Pakistani migration to other new destinations like Greece.

Pakistan as a nation has existed only since 1947, when India was portioned to provide a Muslim homeland for Muslims of India. Pakistan was formed from Muslim majority areas in India’s’ East and west wings, while other predominantly Muslim territories, such as Hyderabad in the South and Kashmir in the North, became part of India. Despite massive population exchange in 1947 that particularly affected Punjab and Sindh, many Muslims remained in India (Alavi cited in Ballard 1996).

Thus from its inception, migration has been very important in the history of Pakistan. International migration from the area which is known as Pakistan started during British Raj. The first emigration was based on colonial linkages with Britain. A few ex sailors with in British merchant navy were the pioneers of the contemporary Pakistani migration to UK. It formed the basis of rapid increase through post war reconstruction and labour recruitment schemes in the 1950s and 1960s. Pakistani diaspora in UK is considered most established and biggest in Europe. In the context of tightening British restrictions since the 1960s, Pakistanis have been diverted first towards Middle East, Scandinavia, continental Europe, North America and Australia and even to Greece.

**National perspective**

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2 The paper draws on ethnographic research conducted for my PhD studies. I would like to offer my thanks to IKY (Greek State Scholarship foundation) for four year Scholarship for my PhD studies in Greece.
Contemporary Pakistan, a post colonial society seems characterized by different crosscutting cleavages: Islam, ethnicity, caste (Biraderi or kinship group). It is also characterized by uneven development, political instability, civil unrest, long history of military rule and governance problems. The population (176,242,949 (July 2009 est.)) is growing rapidly, while agricultural and industrial production is declining. Investment on infrastructure and social sector is minimal particularly in rural areas. Urban population which consists of 36 percent of total population is provided well while the rural majority lacks basic infrastructure and facilities. In addition to this rural urban divide, Pakistan is also an in egalitarian society in terms of class, power and wealth. The ruling elites are composed of senior military officers, civil bureaucrats, and feudal classes, industrial and religious elites. These elites have bent the economy to their own interests. Pakistan ever since its independence and partition from India since 1947 has been ruled by military more than half period of its existence. Its politics has been marred by ethnic, religious violence and political repression. In response to Indian nuclear weapon testing in 1998, Pakistan tested its nuclear weapons. It has the seventh-largest army in the world - a major drain on the national resources. The government justifies high spending on the military because of the need to counter India in disputed Kashmir. In managing the economy, the elite has not only sought to protect its economic interests but also to sustain its political dominance (see also Ballards, 1989). Like many Asian and African post colonial developing countries within the contemporary globalized economy, Pakistan is in state of economic crises facing problems of energy crises and declining foreign exchange reserves. It is consequently under the control of IMF and World Bank, whilst the chances for recovery remain distant.

Beguiled by all this, many young men are drifting to the towns or migrating internationally to improve their socio-economic condition. Pakistani migration produces the following historical pattern:

First, internal, rural-urban migration in Pakistan, then emigration to UK starting from colonial times. In the context of tightening British restrictions since the 1960s, then, Pakistanis have been diverted first towards Middle East, Scandinavia, continental Europe, North America and Australia.

However relevance of these factors for explaining the patterning of migration is not enough. It is obvious that Pakistani migration to Greece is never that of self propelled individuals intent upon improving the socio-economic condition of for themselves but as migrants representative of their biradaris (kinship groups) intent upon improving the position of their ghar (household) and other close relatives at home. This may involve remittances and savings earned through migration. Thus Pakistanis migrate to improve their socio-economic conditions. However the more poor areas of Baluchistan province, rural Sindh and even South Punjab are not represented among Pakistani immigrants in Greece and elsewhere in Europe.

Pakistani migrants in Greece have regional character originating from some regional areas of Punjab. The majority, according to the key informants approximately 60 to 70 percent of immigrants come from the villages of Gujrat and other barani areas (rain fed) like Kharian, Jhelum. However there is no exact data available. The other areas from which immigrants come are Sialkot and Gujranwala. It is important to note that the Pakistani immigrants from three big cities like Karachi,

Lahore and Faisalabad are nominal here in Greece. When I asked about the reasons of this area specific migration of Pakistani to Greece

An informant stated:

“Most of the Pakistanis in Yoonan (Greece) come from the villages of Gujrat and its surrounding areas. Emigration in the beginning, took place from a context of poverty; in the latter, it was encouraged by economic dynamism and competition to become rich. This competition can be with in village or biraderi (kinship group) level. So many villagers came here because of the “rees or dekha dikhi” (emulation) of other immigrants who went to other European countries and became rich. The other reason is returnee migrants with their ostentation which plays the imagination of those staying at home, in this way forms the symbolic push factor underlying the emigration from rural Punjab. Moreover, most of the agents who arrange for the Donkey or Game (Human smuggling) are also from Gujrat and its surrounding areas like Kharian. The agents also know that people from Gujrat and surrounding Barani areas are ready to pay large sum of money because now migration to Europe has become a trend in these areas and most young man dream of going to Europe. ”

The success of returnees and of migrants stimulates emulation as well as the popular imagination (Appadurai 1996).

It is important to note these above mentioned regions shared cultures of internal movement fostered in the colonial period, and powerful traditions of employment as lascars along British shipping lines, or in the British army. After the mutiny of the Bengal army in 1857, British preferred and favoured Sikhs and Punjabi Muslims in Indian Army. They considered them as loyal and martial races. Over half of the Indian Army was drawn from the Punjab and during First World War, the Punjab with population of 20 millions provided with 350,000 combatants while Bengal with population of 45 million, supplied only 7,000 (Davis cited in Shaw, 1988).

The structural roots of migration from Punjab to Greece, which was stimulated almost exclusively from those regions which had existing traditions of migration and transnational connections, can be traced before partition in colonial policies. Moreover, areas of Northern Punjab such as Gujrat, Gujurwanwala and rain fed areas (barani) of Jhelum, Kharian where irrigation is difficult and the population pressure on land compel locals to migrate. This area has always been densely populated. Because of the small size of agricultural holdings, and the conventional division of labour between the sexes, many households have long had a surplus of male labour. There is a longstanding local history of tradition for men from such households to supplement their incomes by working as immigrants in other countries.

Thus key sources of emigration from Pakistan to Europe remain remarkably close to the places that connected Kashmir and specific areas of Punjab like Gujrat and near by barani areas (rain fed) and its villages.

If migration from Pakistan to the West once meant exclusively going to the UK, it can now mean going to Canada, Australia Italy, Spain, or even Greece. In this way Pakistani migration has diversified selecting new destinations like Greece which has been an area of transit migration for a long period of time. Pakistani migration to Greece can be explained by number of factors diversion effects generated by stricter controls in North Western Europe, centrality of location, weaker border controls and rapid economic development. Living in Greece helps them foot hold in European Union. Greece also became important as destination as a result of amnesty and immigration laws of 1998, 2001 and 2005. The attraction of immigration law, amnesty
seems also obvious. The news of immigration law was quickly spread through social networks in Pakistani diaspora living in different parts of Europe and back in Pakistan. The chances of getting Greek residence permit and legal stay in European Union also caused inflows of Pakistanis living illegally in other parts of Europe and back in Pakistan.

**Pakistani immigrant population in Greece and a brief profile**

Greece has been a tourist economy for the rich parts of world; in the present, the tourism sector is a significant sector of Greek economy. The wealthy tourist is welcome type of foreigner in Greece as compared to the mixed reactions in recent years of immigrants and refugees from developing societies. The boundaries between the two types of foreigner groups have been the subject of conflict for Greek policy makers.

Compared to Pakistani migration to UK, the migratory flows to Greece is relatively recent development. If we go back to the history of Pakistani immigrants in Greece, they started coming to Greece as sailors or workers in the shipyards of Sikaramangas in the early Seventies according to bilateral treaties between two countries. However, their number was less than few hundred. Thus Pakistanis are one of the old immigrants in Greece as compared with new post 1990 arrivals.

The exact number of Pakistani immigrants is still unknown because of non availability of exact data. Official statistics give limited information about the exact number of immigrants in Greece partly because many immigrants arrived clandestinely and hence un recorded. We can have some idea about total number of Pakistani immigrants by 2001 Census. According to this Census, about 60 percent immigrants are from Albania. The second nationality is Bulgarians followed by Georgia and Romania. According to 2001 Census total Pakistani immigrants consist of 11,192 which is 1.4% of total immigrants in Greece. However, according to figures of the ministry of interior, the total number of Pakistanis is 20,331, which are 2.53 percent of the total number of immigrants who have been issued work and residence permit by the ministry of interior (Eleftheros Typos, Sabbato 25 Iouniou,2005).

According to different estimates though, the actual figure may be much higher. According to one rough estimate the total number of Pakistanis living in Greece is approximately 50,000 while according to another one there are more than 70,000 Pakistanis in Greece. However these figures are difficult to confirm.

Gradually and slowly, in the late eighties and early nineties the number of Pakistani immigrants increased in Greece. They arrived in Greece as young adults and their inflow reached its peak in the Nineties. They arrived as workers, hence although they also hoped to make their fortunes; their starting point was that most found they had little alternative but to accept manual employment and odd jobs which most of them do till today. These are kinds of jobs which the Greeks do not want to do. These are kinds of jobs which include most of the time poor conditions of employment such as long hours, low pay, social or physical isolation. Majority of them have been incorporated regularly or irregularly into manufacturing industries as welders, masons, labourers, mechanics etc.

These immigrants are largely uneducated, rural young labour migrants who live in poor and overcrowded bachelor housing and occupy the lower tiers of Greek labour market. These immigrants use social networks to find job and settle in new environment. Being male immigrants, Pakistani immigrants have less demand on
health, education, schooling and other social services as there are very few Pakistani females and children in Athens. This situation also reflects the overall general trend and situation of Pakistanis in Greece. This situation raises question of Gender and migration.

**Diaspora Politics or Politics of recognition:-**

Generally in a new environment in diaspora and displacement situation, immigrants often soon set about collectively organizing themselves. The formation of immigrant associations is one prominent kind of socio-religious organization, established to raise and distribute funds and coordinate activities (Rex, Joly and Wilpert 1987). This is especially seen today in the ever more effective and organised expressions of immigrant concerns often described as ethnic mobilisation or the politics of recognition etc.

The immigrant associations may negotiate, protect, advance their legal, cultural, religious economical rights while mediating, lobbying policy makers and power brokers in the receiving society.

Majority of Pakistani immigrants in Athens have a very poor knowledge of Greek and face great difficulty in dealing with Greek bureaucracy, immigration authorities and Greek offices. In this context, these immigrant turn to their fellow villagers or immigrant welfare associations for help. In this way, these welfare and immigrant associations gain positions of influence among fellow Pakistanis. Leadership question is not a monolithic whole among Pakistanis as there are wide varieties of leaders in different immigrant welfare associations to leaders of political parties. These associations and their leaders may invoke support from communal causes (like mosque and cricket teams) to individual issues. Sometimes they compete or conflict with one another to gain influence or power (as, for example, different factional groups within Pakistani immigrant association and their leaders. There were allegations and counter accusations of election rigging in the previous elections of main immigrant association).

Main Pakistani immigrant association which is called “Pakistan community of Greece, unity was established in 2000. The main motive and purpose behind its formation was to make arrangements in case of death to send back dead bodies of immigrants to Pakistan and to provide platform to solve problems. So the fear of death has caused the immediate reason for the formation of Pakistani immigrant association. The immigrants association is non religious form of mobilization and organization.

During 2000, because of unavailability of resources, Pakistan Embassy refused to send back the dead bodies of immigrants. So in this context, Pakistani immigrant association was established. Pakistani community association has approximately 8 regional units in different areas of Athens. The president of immigrant association is elected through voting by Pakistani immigrants taking place every three years. Pakistani immigrant association also arranged protests with the help of immigrants associations against the immigration law.

In Athens, there is no official mosque for the Muslim immigrants. So the Muslim immigrants have to negotiate the proper place of worship in diapora situation in Athens. Pakistani immigrant associations engage campaigns that proper place of worship should be allowed to them.
In this context, Pakistani immigrant associations like Pakistan community Ittehad Greece (Pakistan community alliance Greece) and Pak-Hellenic Cultural and welfare Society along with visiting Sufi saint from Pakistan arranged meetings differently with the head of the powerful Church of Greece, Archbishop Christodoulos. The purpose of this meeting was to engage campaign for religious rights and a formal mosque to be allowed in Athens.

The other example is the alleged case of abductions of 28 Pakistani immigrants by Greek and British Secret services after London bombing. This alleged claim was made by 28 Pakistani immigrants and whole issue was made to public and media by Pakistani immigrant association.

Alleged abductions of 28 immigrants was a major issue and there was a great concern among Pakistani diaspora but also among Greeks. This issue was highlighted again and again in Greek and international media. Pakistani immigrant association and its President has close relations with sympathetic political parties and groups like PASOK, Synaspismos, KKE, trade unions, anti Fascist, anti racist groups, human rights organizations and stop the war coalition. These parties and groups protested on the issue of alleged abductions of Pakistanis in Athens. While the Greek, British government and Pakistani Embassy staff denied the claims of kidnappings.

Informal mosques, migrants:-

Making place of worship, changing factory store into place of worship

Upon settling in a new and alien environment, immigrants and religious groups often try collectively to organize themselves for purposes of religious worship. Historically, the places of worship in alien environment have constituted the most controversial and symbolically laden arenas with respect to religious outsiders and cultural others. In many cases in European societies, initiatives to build new purposely built mosques have aroused controversies and debates and place of Islam in Europe. In Greece, the Muslims (consisting of autochthonous populations and economic immigrants) are second largest religious group and their efforts to built first official and formal mosque in Athens have aroused controversies and debates in Greece. Formal mosque is an intended claim on public space and public sphere. This claim on the construction of formal approved mosque has been part of process of making new demands upon public sphere, a process that has become embroiled with non Muslim (Greek) concerns over visible Muslim presence. The mosque is also becoming a place where Pakistani immigrants are negotiating a communal identity that has both religious and socio-cultural facets. The religious practice of Muslim immigrants in Athens is largely hidden from the public view because it is practiced in prayers rooms located in the cellars of apartment blocks as there is no official mosque or place of worship in Athens. Athens is the only capital in the old European Union which does not has a formal approved mosque. In this back ground, the Muslim migrants in Athens pray at so called “informal, underground or make shift mosques” which are not properly licensed. Dozens of make shift mosques have been set up in the capital in apartment, shops and garages, factories and stores intended for quite different purposes and often not confirming to safety regulations. Mosque in Kolonos is one of them. When these underground, makeshift or store front mosques are established in buildings originally designed for other purposes, only the interiors of these buildings
are transformed into recognizably Islamic places. In the terminology of vernacular architecture, the storefront or makeshift is extended to housing stock, such as apartments, suburban homes when it is transformed into markedly different spaces and new uses—in this case, to sacred space functioning as mosque. The storefront mosque comes under the rubric of “non-pedigreed architecture” a label designating the “vernacular, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous” constructions of the informal, undocumented sector (Rudofsky 1964 cited in Susan 1996:204).

However, Plans were made for a mosque to be built [with foreign money] near to Athens Airport and the 2004 Olympic residences, in order to provide places of worship for competitors. These plans ran into trouble. In case of my locale in Kolonos, a big hall which used to be abandoned factory is hired on the name of library and then it is changed into mosque. Mosque in Kolonos is called Masjad-i-Quba and was established in August 1994. It belongs to Sunni Hanafi Islam. The name given to the mosque in Kolonos reminds the first Mosque (Masjid-i-Quba) in Islam which Prophet established during his hijra (migration) to Medina. Thus mosques are also seen as a site of hijra and known as mahjars (migrant) and given names like Masjadi-i-Quba(to recall the first mosque established by prophet during hijra to Medina). This reminds us how the founding event of Muslim community, the hijra (migration) a charged spatial metaphor in itself is reconstructed again in Kolonos. It is considered to be the first ever underground or informal mosque established by Pakistani immigrants in Athens. Authorities are aware of this mosque and sometimes these Pakistani Muslims are checked and monitored by the authorities. Especially it was done during the security of Olympic Games. The monthly rent for the mosque is 300 Euros per month which is paid by mutual funding from the immigrant community members. The affairs of the mosque are run by a mosque committee.

For the immigrants, mosque in western context fulfils a much wider range of functions than in their country of origin. It is a physical space, meeting place in which sojourners gather collectively allowing reconstitution of social networks disrupted by emigration. In addition to their basic purposes as a site for Ibadat (worships) mosque is also gathering point to meet, to socialize and exchange information. Religion may become important for Immigrants faced with insecure, precarious tenure in the receiving society, problems of belong and identity, marginality, minority status, racism, stigmatization and discrimination. Reassertion of global Muslim identity and its broader understanding among immigrant groups in the West may be simply back lash and reaction to these conditions. In this context, mosque may provide source of companionship, social community, and spiritual comfort. It is also a mark of Islamic identity and of the difference between identity of Pakistani immigrants and that of Greek society. Mosque is differentiation of one religious group from an other with in the same ethnic community e.g. Mosque in Kolonos is more close to Barelvi Islam as compared to Deobandis. Although some of Deobandi key informants also pray in this mosque.

Transnational Dawa missionary movements for example Tablighi Jama'at foster (Deobandi) or Da'wat-e Islāmī (Barelvi) make attempts at proselytizing in the mosques by visiting them often and providing islah (guidance) to immigrants. Thus mosque as a social space and arena is the meeting place for different religious interests, whether conflicting or converging. Besides this, when a deadly earthquake hit Pakistan in which 70,000 people were killed, mosque in Kolonos served as
platform for collecting money and relief effort for earthquake hit people back to homeland.

**Religious composition:-**

Among the Pakistani immigrants in Athens, there is wide variety of religious denominations evident in Pakistan has been transposed to Greece.

The majority of Pakistanis in Greece tend to identify with Barelvi movement and come from villages and rural areas of Punjab. After Barelvis, more numerous are Deobandis. They are followers of Hanafi Islam. Within the Sunni Muslim tradition, Hanafi is one of four “schools of law”. Both these sects have their origins in the reformist movement set in motion by Shah Walliullah but came into existence in post war 1857 British India. For Muslims of India, it was a period of political weakness and threatening to their culture after being defeated, repressed in the mutiny of 1857 against British. In the after of the mutiny several religious trends emerged among Indian Muslims in a bid to revive their standing. They ranged from Deobandis, Barelvis to pro western reforms. All these reformers saw education as key to their reforms. Deobandis came to focus mainly on education and on keeping alive in the seminars Muslim medieval and theological doctrines. The Deobandis take their name from the Indian town of Deoband, 90 miles northeast of New Delhi where the first Deobandi learning centre, Darul Uloom ("House of Knowledge") was started in 1866. Deobandis have puritanical bent in their interpretations of Islam and claim to represent Islam as founded in the Quran and Sunnah. In Athens, they are represented by a transnational missionary and Dawa movement called Tablighi Jama'at. Deobandis are opposed to customs such as sama (musical sessions to induce ecstasy), Urs (festival commemorating birth and death of Sufi saint) pilgrimage and shrine based Sufi Islam.

The Barelvis derive their name from Ahmed Raza Khan of Bareilly, India (1856-1921). Barelvi Islam is heavily influenced by the mystical Sufi and mystical traditions that have always been widely prevalent in South Asian Islam. Barelvi religious ideology is based on folk Islam with emphasis on Sufism, veneration of saints, idolization of the prophet and one’s spiritual preceptors and popular and festive display of syncretic religious rituals. A key difference between Barelvi and Deobandi is that Barelvi's believe in the intercession between humans and Divine Grace. This consists of the intervention of an ascending, linked and unbroken chain of holy personages, pirs (sheikh), reaching ultimately to Prophet Mohammad, who intercede on their behalf with Allah. For the Barelvis, the holy Prophet is a superhuman figure whose presence is all around us at all times; he is hazir, present; he is not bashar, material or flesh, but nur, light. The Deobandis, who also revere the Prophet, argue he was the insan-i-kamil, the perfect person, but still only a man, a mortal. Barelvis emphasise a Hub-e-Rasul (love of Muhammad), a semi-divine figure with unique foreknowledge of ilmu, l-ghaib. The Deobandis reject this idea of Muhammad. Veneration of the prophet has long history in Sufi and popular devotionalism. Their critics claim that Barelvis are guilty of committing innovation (Bid’at) and therefore, they are deviated from the true path - the path of Sunnah.

The Barelvis groups in Athens are represented by three kinds of tendencies like Da’wat-e Islāmī(2) Minhajul Quran (MUQ-the method of Quran) and Athens based branch of the transnational Qadiriyya Sufi order( Pir Sahibzada pirzada Sultan Fiaz-ul-Hassan) . These groups have their own informal mosques in Athens.
Transnational religious networks: Sufis and Tablighis

Transnational networks are one of the main topics of globalization and transnational studies. Current writings on globalization and transnationalism have focused on labour and capital flows. A focus on the religious dimensions especially South Asian missionary movement like Tablighi jama’at and Sufi orders (tariqas) have been marginally constructed around migration and transnationalism. Transnationalism is an effort to understand the implications of multiplicity of social relations, ties, involvements and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states. The phrase “transnational” can be used to refer and explain to a variety of Phenomena. Smith, Guarnizo (1998) and Portes (Portes et al. 1999) ask us to specify the levels of transnationalism which scholars analyse. I suggest that I will refer to transnational Sufi religious social formation (Werbner 1999) and transnational missionary network of Tablighī Jamā’at (Kepel 1991; Masud 2000; Metcalf 1996, 2002) among Pakistani diaspora in Athens.

Tablighī Jama’at :-

Tablighī Jama’at is a missionary movement of Sunni Islam which was founded by Maulana Ilyas (1885-1944). Its emergence in 1926 in India is also important that traditional Islam did not know have organized missionary movement until Tablighī Jama’at was formed. Although before the start of Tablighī Jama’at which is institutionalized form of Tabligh and Dawa in the 20th century Islam, there were Sufi orders which defined conversion as Tawba, meaning to return were primarily concerned to make Muslims true, better Muslims and involved education, welfare, and health in the form of charms, amulets and prayers for the sick and needy and also fear of divine wrath who denied the Sufis.4

Marc Gaborieau (1999) describes its modus operandi: “The invitation (tabligh) to Islam is not the affair of religious specialists, but the responsibility of all Muslims who must devote their time and money to it; one should not wait for people to come to hear the preaching, but ether preachers should travel to reach the people; preaching is done by self-financing itinerant groups; the mingling of all social classes is obligatory within these groups; the primary objective is to deepen the faith of those who are already Muslims, proselytism toward non-Muslims being marginal; and the promotion of the unity of Muslims being a primary objective, theological as well as political controversies are prohibited inside the movement” (Gaborieau, ISIM Newsletter 1999).

Its world headquarters is in Delhi and European headquarters of Tablighī Jamā’at is in Dewsbury in England. With regard to worldwide network of Tablighī Jama’at, Britain represents important link between the subcontinent and Europe. Tablighī missionary work is carried out global level across Europe, Africa and Asia and functions not merely among Pakistani diaspora but also among other Muslim immigrants from Arabic and African back ground.

Tablighi Jama’at has today emerged as a transnational and global religious movement and has now supporters all over the Muslim world and the West. The movement has spread widely by Muslim migration to Europe and other parts of the world. For the Muslim immigrants living in the west, the biggest challenges come in preserving their faith while facing modernity, minority status, racism, marginalization, uncertainty of livelihood, belonging and identity crises. Many Islamic movements capitalize upon this situation, among them Tablighi Jamā’at. For Tablighis, Muslim migrants and their souls have to be rescued from corruptions of materialistic West like promiscuity, family patterns, and consumption. This can be done by going out with Jamaat for Khruj fi sabeel Allah (travel for preaching of Islam).

The current situation of Pakistani immigrants in Greece resembles a lot with post second world war (during sixties) immigrants in Britain who used to live in male neighbourhoods. The religious sentiments have been expressed in avoiding non halal meat (ritually slaughtered meat) but for the rest the men are preoccupied with survival, which leaves little time for religious devotions.

In Athens, I met many Tablighis who were providing immigrants with ritually slaughtered (Halal meat) in their shops. The Tablīghī Jamā’at tries to change every Muslim into preacher and teacher of other Muslims, preaching others (thus preaching himself) to correct Islamic practices.

There are six principles (chhai batein) which form the fundamentals of Tablighi Jama’at:

1. Kalamah tayyiba (declaration of faith)
2. Salaat (offering prayers with full concentration and prescribed rituals)
3. Ilm and zikre (knowledge and remembrance)
4. Ikram-i-muslim (respect for Muslims)
5. Ikhlas-i-niyyat (sincerity of purpose)
6. Tafirgh-waqt (sparring of time for the tabligh)

Besides disseminating its ideology of reviving a puritan and practical Islam, Tablighis in Greece are instrumental in urging and preaching the increased religiosity and devotion among Pakistani immigrants in terms of literal imitation of the conduct, attitudes and practices of the Prophet Mohammed. It generally keeps low profile in Athens and elsewhere in the world avoiding formal organization and eschewing media. Unlike other Islamic organizations, its most important feature is the focus on the islah (reform) of individual self rather than on state. It propagates regime of self-discipline and pious lifestyle among immigrants. It is instrumental in the change regarding the behavioural patterns of immigrants connected with a creation of public sphere of gatherings (ijtima) and taking time off to go with (Jama’at) one day a week, three days a month, forty days a year or four months in a life time. The main centre of their activity is mosque. Their methodology is to organize mobile units of volunteer missionary preachers mostly from working class background and send them to various places in Athens in immigrant neighborhoods. These lay preachers stay at mosques. They invite and preach local Muslims to come in a local mosque while presenting their message in the form of bayan (talk) and six points described earlier.

Response from immigrant side may vary. Some of the immigrants refuse to come to the mosque as they say they are tired from the work and they have to cook food and take shower, while others may go to the mosque to perform prayer and listen to the bayan. Bayan is an inspirational religious talk in which instances from the Quran and the Prophetic traditions (hadit) are described. After that usually a session of reading from a book written by Muhammad Zakariya (1898-1982), “The Virtues of Good Deeds” (Fazail-a Amal) takes place. Then the immigrants are asked to volunteer for future preaching tours (tashkil). Some of the immigrants will give their
When the preaching group goes back it will report to the local Tabligh centre either in oral or written form (Karguzari). In Athens there is no Tablighi centre as such. Tablīghī Jamā’at following Deobandi precepts is opposed to the Bareīvi tradition and faces strong competition in Dawa activity in Athens from Bareīvi groups. These Bareīvi groups in Athens are represented by three kinds of organizations like Da’wat-e Islāmī, Minhaj ul 5 Quran(MUQ-the method of Quran) and Athens based branch of the transnational Qadiriyya Sufi order( Pir Sahibzada pizarza Sultan Fiaz-ul-Hassan). These Bareīvi groups cooperate together especially to celebrate the Iid milad-un nabi(the commemoration of prophet’s birth and death) and during “Urs” rituals at the celebrations commemorating the birth or death of Abdul Qadir Gillani, Ahmed Raza Khan Bareīvi, Sultan Bahu, Data Hajweri and Pir Golra Sharif etc.

The Da’wat-e Islāmī (invitation to Islam) which is a Bareīvi missionary movement started under the Muhammad Ilyas Qadri(b1950) in 1981 at Karachi, Pakistan but has spread widely by Muslim migration to Europe and other parts of the world. In Athens, it has established four centers and is very active among Pakistani immigrants in its preaching activities.

There may be similarities in the preaching methods of both missionary organizations as preaching is done by volunteers and self-financing itinerant groups who travel to mosques and immigrants neighbourhoods while inviting, urging Muslims to become good and better Muslims. However their definition what it means to be a good and better Muslims may vary. During its missionary programme Da’wat-e Islāmī keeping true to its Sufi Bareīvi devotional precepts, promotes glorification and love of Prophet (Hub-e-Rasul). Madni prefixes are used in its every day terminologies like madani qafla(madani carvan), madni Tahreek(madni movement), madni gifts( madanī in’amat) etc. Da’wat-e Islāmī and its popular pietism also promote intercession of Sufi saints. The patron saint of Bareīvi Islam is Abd al–Qadir Jlani, the celebrated saint and father of the Qadiriyya order. One can become mureed(disciple) of Qadiriyya order by email, post or through website of Da’wat-e Islāmī or via its centre in Athens.

Despite the similarities in methods of preaching, Tablīghī Jama’at and Da’wat-e Islāmī are two competing model of Dawa expansion and ideological activity.

It will be interesting here to note that Tablīghī Jama’at differs from Dawat-e-Islami in its avoidance to modern means of communication and media like TV, cassettes, audio and videos tapes, CDs, internet and website, such as are used almost by Dawat-e-Islami. According to Eickelman and Anderson, a transnational Muslim public sphere is being opened up through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (Eickelman and Anderson, 1999). The Tablīghis generally avoid this trend. Their method of preaching is oral (zabani) and preaching of movement takes place through worlds of mouth without using media. On the other hand, the Da’wat-e Islāmī has a strong presence in the media. It uses different forms of digital, cyber and electronic religiosity to disseminate its message. It has its own web site (www.dawateislami.net) and its TV channel (www.madanichannel.com). It uses internet for granting discipleship and distributing amulets (Tawizat).

Athens based branch of the transnational Qadiriyya Sufi order (Pir Sahibzada pizarza Sultan Fiaz-ul-Hassan) is also very active among Pakistani immigrants.

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5 Founded in Jhang, Pakistan in 1981 by charismatic leader Tahirul Qadri is also popular among Pakistani diaspora and Greece and elsewhere in Europe.
Tablighi Jama’at and its activities are marginalized by the above mentioned Barelvi groups in Athens.

In the following, I will describe Athens based branch of the transnational Qadiriyya Sufi order (Pir Sahibzada pirzada Sultan Fiaz-ul-Hassan).

**Sufis:-**

In the contemporary research as well as in common perception, Islam is viewed in one dimensional and monolithic Islamic fundamentalism or political Islam framework. Sufi tradition seems to be important for majority of Muslims. Sufi tariqas are one of the most important channels for the social expression of the transnational nature of Islam. First it has to be said that there is nothing new about Sufism as a global religious movement. Sufis began their itinerant existence in the tenth century AD, and have carried the Message of Islam from the Near East to South Asia, Indonesia, and West Africa. It can be argued that religious communities are among the oldest of the transnationals: Sufi orders, Catholic missionaries, and Buddhist monks carried work and praxis across vast spaces before those places became nation states or even states (Rudolph 1997: 1).

Tassouf is a term applied to the mystical tradition within Islam which emphasises the love of God and the grasp of divine realities. It tells that “Sufis are God’s friends (Aulia), perpetually engaged in remembrance [zIkR] of Him. Sufism also constitutes a Path [tariqat]. A Sufi on the path under goes transformations in personal ethics linked to a denial of the self (nafs) through annihilation in one’s shaikh and after him in the prophet and God. This transformation is conceptualized in notions such as tauba (repentance) or tawakkul (trust) in God. Thus Sufi salik (traveller on Sufi path) passes through different “stations or stages”, representing virtues such as absolute trust in God, to a higher series of ecstatic states. Sufi is believed to be Wali or friend of God physically and mentally purified of all mundane desires. Sufi saint (Pir, Wali) is considered a means (Wasila) to reach God and is widely believed to have powers of divine light (nur), grace (faiz) and blessing (barkat) emanating from Allah.

Sufis are organized hierarchically, the central role and adherence to the Sufi Shaykh, Pir or Wali, the murshid-murid(teacher-disciple)relationship and the concept of pir-bhai/community of followers and disciples.

The majority of Sufi followers in Athens belongs to Barelvi school of thought and come from villages and rural areas of Punjab. Barelvis believe in intercession between humans and Divine Grace and Barelvis emphasise Hub-e-Rasul(love of Muhammad), a semi-divine figure with unique foreknowledge of ilmu,l-ghaib. Many Punjabi Muslims prior to their immigration to Greece come from the families with affiliation to a particular Sufi saint in Pakistan. Sufi shrines (khanqah, mazar) in Pakistan remain centre of intense religious, devotional activity and their burial places draw millions annually. But there are no obligations to perform pilgrimage to these places. These Sufi shrines are managed under the guardianship of descendants of the deceased saint (pir) who once lived there. These descendants are also pirs by taking part in the charisma of their ancestors and may acquire new fame crossing socio-cultural and geographical boundaries.

The tradition of Sufism is gaining currency among Pakistani immigrants and Murid movement seems to be developing continuously in Athens. Currently among Pakistani diaspora, there are three kinds of Sufi orders active in Athens and have murids (disciples). The majority of the Pakistanis immigrants are murids (disciples)
of Qadiriya (Sufi order said to be found by Abdul Qaddir Jillani in eleventh century Baghdad) and than Chishtiyya (Sufi order originated in India) and third Sufi order which has murids here among Pakistani immigrants are Naqshbandis (A Sufi order originating in the Central Asia in the fourteenth century). While majority of Pakistanis do not belong to any Sufi Silsila (Sufi order) but they follow and respect all of the three above mentioned (Sufi orders) Silsilas They attend the lectures of visiting Sufi saints and ask for protective amulets, healing and baraka from visiting Pakistani Pir as through them it is believed divine light (nur), grace (faiz) and power of blessing (barkat) emanating from Allah. They also participate in the processions on id milad al nabi (the prophet’s birth day). The procession of id milad al nabi in Athens is organized by the main Barelvi organizations like Da’wat-e Islami, Sultan Bahu trust and Minhajul Quran.

In context of Athens among Pakistani immigrants, I will briefly describe and consider an important visit to Athens during September 2005. Sahibzada pirzada Sultan Fiaz-ul-Hassan is an important itinerant Sufi, Pir of Qadirriaya Sufi order who visits Greece every year to give blessings and advice to immigrants. He has murids (disciples) not only in Pakistan but also in Greece, England among Pakistani diaspora. He is Sajjada nashin (descendant of originally Sufi saintly founder and guardian of tomb) of the famous shrine of Sultan Bahu situated in Jhang, Punjab. Sultan Bahu (ca 1628-1691) was famous a Sufi saint, a great writer, belonging to Qadirriaya Sufi order.

He visited different informal mosques in Athens including mosque in Kolonos where he met many groups of Pakistani immigrants who had come from different parts of Athens and Greece.

The mulaqat: meeting with Pir

The mulaqat or meeting was conducted in the small hall of the informal mosque in Kolonos. The hall was full of murids and followers of the Sufi saint. The immigrants from working class background and belonging to different parts of Athens and even from villages outside Athens have gathered there. They were waiting anxiously for the arrival of the Sufi saint. Awaiting the pir, they were praying and chanting Zikr of God. One of his murid informed about the arrival of the pir and an impressive silence filled the hall of the mosque. Everybody stood up as a sign of respect. During his bayan (speech) he gave advice to immigrants on different matters from learning Greek language to become good human beings and good Muslims in alien environment. He also stressed that Islam teaches peace and peaceful coexistence with all the religions of the world and it has nothing to do with terrorism which is generally being presented these days. He advised his murids that they should prove by deeds and acts that Islam is religion of peace and peaceful coexistence. In this context, he also mentioned his meeting with Archbishop of Greece Christodoulos, he called the meeting as the inter religious and inter cultural dialogue between civilizations. In this meeting, the problem of formal mosque and other problems regarding Pakistani immigrants were discussed with him. So Archbishop of Greece Christodoulos promised to help and cooperate with Pakistani immigrants for the mosque and other problems. This meeting suggests that, Pakistani Sufis play the role of community leaders by engaging in campaign for the rights of places of worship. During meeting, there were many immigrants who asked help and healing on different matters.
Healing, miracles and Barakat:

Sufi saint (wali, pir) is considered a miracle man who has great powers (barakat), some of which such as healing powers are in demand in Punjab, Pakistan but also in Athens among Pakistani immigrants. Healing, solutions to problems and baraka is widely asked from Pir among Pakistanis both in Athens and in Pakistan. In Mulaqat (meeting) with Pir or sheikh, I noted some of the problems which immigrants stated to pir like headache and pain in the whole body, problem of immigration papers, seeing bad dreams like snakes in the sleep, not finding work in Greece etc. He gave them tawiz (protective amulets) dam and darud. Thus not only in Pakistan but also in Athens, Pakistanis (Barelvi Sufis) turn to visiting Sufi saints for solutions to practical problems, healing and barakat.

After Pir (Sufi saint) did collective Bai’unat (bai,a means literally the buying of the soul the soul of the adept or disciple by the saint) of the immigrants who want to become his murids. Within any Mulaqat(meeting) there were many immigrants who have come to do bai,at, that is, to be initiated into the order through a pledge of allegiance to the saint. There were many immigrants who became his new murids while there were others who had already did baiyat from some other Sufi saint, so they could become talib (seeker).Thus besides becoming murids (Disciples), many immigrants also became talibs(Seekers) in Kolonos.

After the meeting, Langer (cooked food which is distributed freely at Sufi lodge in South Asia) was distributed. In Pakistan, most major Sufi shrines have larger arrangements. In Athens, langer is provided for the celebration of eid milad-un nabi(the commemoration of prophet’s birth and death) and during “Urs” rituals at the celebrations commemorating the birth or death of Abdul Qadir Gillani, Ahmed Raza Khan Barelvi, Sultan Bahu, Data Hajweri and Pir Golra Sharif. These rituals are called gyarvin sharif, the eleventh of the month, and are held in almost all Barelvi mosques in Athens. The performance of zikr, the remembrance of God’s name, is popular among Pakistani immigrants in Athens. In all the Barelvi mosques in Athens, zikr sessions are held once a week. Mosque in Kolonos is one of them.

These events are very important for the Pakistani Barelvi Sufis during migration process. They also show transnational character of Sufi orders. Furthermore, they testify to the Murid’s ability to sacralise space through ritual.

I would like to add that transnational social formations are kept alive by the visits of Sufi pirs from Pakistan. These visits are very important to keep the ethno-religious-scape (to paraphrase Appadurai 1990; 1996) alive from an organisational as well as a spiritual point of view. Werbner argues that the sacralizing of space is centrally embedded in Sufi Islam, Sufism being a missionizing, purificatory cult (Werbner 1996). As the event above suggests, a subtle ritual inscription in foreign western space is at stake, through which it is recreated through ritual which temporarily sacrilises space.

Conclusion:-

In this article I have tried to describe the changing pattern of Pakistani migration to Greece. If migration from Pakistan to the West once meant exclusively going to the UK, it can now mean going to Canada, Australia Italy, Spain, or even Greece. In this way Pakistani migration has diversified selecting new destinations like Greece. Pakistanis during the settlement process negotiate, protect, advance their legal,
religious and cultural rights while mediating, lobbying policy makers and power brokers in the receiving society. Moreover, transnational Sufi Tariqas and missionary Tablīghī Jamā’at are expression of transnational Islam and they provide immigrants with spiritual and ideological point of references and also give them feed back while controlling potentially deviant behaviour in an alien environment.
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