

**Department of History and Culture
Faculty of Humanities and Languages
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi**

Invites you to a lecture

By

Yogesh Snehi

On

Sufi Shrines in Post-Partition Punjab? Dreams, Memory and Continuities

18 October, 2012 (Thursday)

12:15 PM

Venue: Seminar Room, Department of History and Culture, JMI

Prof. Syed Hasan Mahmud, Department of History and Culture will chair the session

Medieval Punjab was among the first regions of South Asia to experience the significant influence of early Sufi mystics. The early Sufi orders which found their presence in the region included the Chishtis and Suhrawardis in the Sultanate milieu, and Nasqbandis and Qadiris in the Mughal period. By the end of the Mughal empire, the province was dotted with the shrines of several mystics from Sheikh Al-Hujwiri (Lahore), Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya (Multan), Baba Farid (Pakpattan), Bu Ali Qalandar (Panipat), Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (Sirhind) and was connected with networks of pilgrimage to the shrine of Muinuddin Chishti (Ajmer) and Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari (Uch) towards the south and Nizamuddin Auliya (Delhi) and Sabir Pak (Kaliyar) to the east of Punjab.

The region was also dotted with several popular shrines ascribed to local Pirs which also became increasingly popular. Thus colonial ethnographers could not ignore recording the dominant influence of popular shrines ascribed to Lalanwala Pir in the riverine plains of rural Punjab and Khwaja Khizr in the urban centres along the river Indus and its tributaries. The mystic landscape of Punjab produced 'counter-hegemonic' poetry of Bulleh Shah and Shah Husain and several others, on the one hand and *qisse* versifying legends of Hir-Ranjha, Sohni Mahiwal, etc on the other. The shrines of these poets also emerged as significant centre of pilgrimage for Punjabis in the colonial milieu. However, pilgrimage and veneration to these very shrines was also marked by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reform and revivalist debates among 'Hindus', 'Muslims' and 'Sikhs'.

Partition of Punjab in 1947 apparently destroyed such networks which developed through centuries of interactive traditions in the region. Contemporary discourse of such shrines in Pakistan has been marked by bombing of the shrines of almost every significant shrine associated with the Chishti and the Qadiris orders in Pakpattan, Lahore and several other areas of Pakistan Punjab. It will be intriguing to explore what happened to such shrines in Indian Punjab when these were left behind by the migrating Punjabi Muslim population? What happened to the rural and urban landscape of the region which was mired in the reactionary communal politics on the one hand and contending debates of the Indian and Pakistani nation-state formation?

This discussion uses the trope of dreams and memory to draw a trajectory of continuing significance of both dominant and popular Sufi shrines in the social formation of west (Indian) Punjab

About the Speaker

Dr. **Yogesh Snehi** teaches History at the School of Liberal Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) and offers a postgraduate course on 'The Making of Modern Punjab'. His research has engaged with the critical debates on the Punjab region. He has published several research papers, organised workshops and conducted surveys on themes related to diversity, sexuality, region formation, identity and communalism, piety and orality at popular Sufi shrines. He is also working on the social reform in colonial Punjab. He was awarded a fellowship from Tasveer Ghar that enabled him to create a digital repository of images that are in circulation at popular Sufi shrines in contemporary Punjab.