

The Role Of A Sufi Leader During The Pandemic For Maizbhandari Sufi Community: A Case Of Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, Fatikchari, Bangladesh

Mejbaul Alam Bhuiyan

Lecturer, Nanupur Laila-Kabir College, Fatikchari & Research Fellow, Darul Irfan Research institute, Chattogram, Bangladesh

Abstract: The ongoing New Norm scenario has had a devastating physical, mental, and financial impact on the entire world's population. In this situation, world leaders are perplexed as to how to deal with the problem. They are at a loss as to what measures should be taken to fix the situation so that people's morale is not shattered and their psychology is maintained. In this situation, Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, the incumbent Pir (the spiritual leader) of Maizbhandari Darbar Sharif, Fatikchari, Bangladesh, has taken several initiatives to mitigate the challenges, ensuring that the Maizbhandari Sufi community is physically safe, mentally strong, and financially self-reliant. This study aims to examine how the Maizbhandari Sufi community reacted to the pandemic, as well as how a transformational Sufi leader may aid in the adjustment to a new normal life, and how Sufis used their teachings to improve society and play a strong role in the community. The mixed-method approach has been adopted, with the Usul-e-saba model (the seven principles) as a tool as well as a key informant interview. Based on the questionnaire, a 5 points Likert scale is also utilized to determine the responses of the target community members. The data has been analyzed using Smart PLS 3. The findings show that the Maizbhandari Sufi community was quiet, mentally stronger, and financially self-sufficient amid societal disruptions created by the epidemic.

Keywords: The Transformational Sufi leader, Usul-e-saba, New Norm, Syed Emdadul Hoque, Maizbhandar

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has caused a great deal of suffering and agony for the entire world's population. It has slowed the country's economy in addition to bringing suffering to the people. Many people have died and still are dying, and many people have lost their jobs and are struggling to meet their basic needs. Due to health concerns, the country's leaders and rulers have been forced to put a halt to the people's regular activities. The economy of the country cannot be addressed when social distancing is the primary concern for ensuring health safety. The pandemic has also had a severe psychological impact on the mindsets of the people. The epidemic has had a significant impact on the psyche of Bangladeshi home-quarantined students, with 46.92% being

depressed, 33.28% apprehensive, and 28.5% stressed, according to a survey (Zubayer et al.).

Even while world leaders and governments are attempting to alleviate people's suffering through immunization programs and the provision of necessary commodities for the needs of citizens, questions remain about how they can build the mental health of their citizens. Leadership entails not just assisting others in times of need, but also encouraging, strengthening, and eradicating mental depression. As a result, there is a significant distinction between a general and a transformational leader. A general leader can help his followers in an emergency, but not on a full-fledged basis. A transformational leader, on the other hand, encourages his followers, whether it's through standing by their side in an emergency or providing mental support. When

emergency conditions such as epidemics, earthquakes, cyclones, floods, and other natural disasters occur, people's mental health deteriorates and their mental strength is sapped. A transformational leader, rather than a traditional leader, can play a critical role at this critical juncture. Such a leader can offer psychological assistance to help them get through difficult situations.

The COVID-19 epidemic began in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China and the virus is still spreading around the world (Baldwin & Weder, 2020, 45). Due to its effects, global economic growth has slowed down, with global economic growth falling to 2.4% in the first half of 2020 from 2.9% in 2019 (AÇIKGÖZ & GÜNAY, 2020). World leaders have lost their path and are unable to come up with a solution after witnessing the scene. Nonetheless, they are putting out their best efforts to reduce mortality tolls and the spread of the virus in general. On March 8, 2020, IEDCR (The Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research) of Bangladesh reported the first case of Covid-19 (Bodrud-Doza et al., 2020). Due to the pandemic, there is a tremendous degree of concern among world leaders at this vital juncture.

Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, the incumbent Pir (spiritual Sufi leader) of Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif, Fatikchari, Bangladesh, has stepped forward as a transformational leader to address the crisis and provide a solution for the Maizbhandari Sufi Community's adherents. He has managed and is currently dealing with the adverse situations caused by the epidemic with a brave pace that has been appreciated not only by the Maizbhandari Sufi community but also by the general public. Therefore, for this study, the following objectives have been set:

- (1) To explore how the Maizbhandari Sufi community dealt with the pandemic.
- (2) To observe how a transformational Sufi leader can cope with the transition to a new normal, and

- (3) To find out how Sufis used their teachings to improve society and play a strong role in the community.

This study includes an Introduction, Literature Review, Research Objectives, Research Questions, Methodology, Findings and Results, Discussions, Recommendations, and Limitations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership is such a concept that it is hard to define. There are many different definitions of "leadership." More than four decades ago, Stogdill (1974) asserted that leadership might be defined in a variety of ways. Bennis estimated that there were at least 650 different definitions of leadership in the literature towards the end of the twentieth century (Bennis and Townsend, 1995). Kellerman, on the other hand, stated in an interview that he had heard over 1400 different definitions of the term "leadership." Confucius, a prominent Chinese scholar who lived 2500 years ago, did not define a leader, but he did emphasize the importance of a leader who is virtuous and cares for his people. Plato, the father of philosophy, advocated that the leader should be wise (Takala, 1998). Machiavelli stated that a leader should be moral and knowledgeable to gain the support of his followers. Rost (1993) also has defined leadership as a connection of influence between leaders and followers who want to see meaningful changes that reflect their shared goals (Silva, 2016).

The term "transformational leadership" alludes to a type of leadership that has an impact on both individuals and the social system (George). The forefather of transformational leadership, James MacGregor Burns (1978), defined transformational leadership as "leaders and followers elevating one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (LIZETTE et al., 2016). In 1978, (James MacGregor) distinguished between traditional transactional leadership and transformational leadership. The former leadership style is defined as those leaders who exchange one thing for another,

i.e., if productivity is high, the employee is rewarded, and if productivity is low, the employee is threatened.

Transformational leadership is widely regarded as the most important type of leadership in the business world. A transformational leader inspires his followers to work hard to achieve their goals, which benefits both the individuals and the team or company (Bass et al., 2006). Leadership in Islam is based on trust (Amanah). Anyone who wants to be a leader must have moral traits and be a Tawheed (one God) believer who follows Shariah and performs Ibadah (worship). Leadership, according to Islam, is a psychological contract between the leader and his followers, in which the leader guides, treats, and protects his followers (Beekun, Badawi, 1999, Ahmad, Ogunsola, 2011).

In Islam, a leader must emphasize doing good for the sake of Allah, the Muslim community, and humanity. An Islamic leader cannot act according to his own desires; instead, he must follow Allah's law and will. He has sent prophets to the universe for mankind's guidance, and they have all taken on the role of leadership in guiding mankind on the right path. All they had to do was carry out Allah's will on the earth. Allah declares in the Holy Quran in this context: "And We made them leaders guiding men by Our command and We sent inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and to practice regular charity; and they constantly served Us only" Qur'an Al-'Anbyā', 73, (Alsarhi et al., 2014).

In the world, no country, nation, civilization, or family does not regard one of them as a leader or ruler. Nations, countries, and civilizations that lack effective leadership are unable to progress. On the other hand, those who are under proper leadership are advanced and respected. Proper leadership is referred to as latent khilafat-e-Rabbani or Allah's Representation. In this world, the individual with the most personality is best suited to lead the people. This superior personality is known as Khilafat-e-Uluhiyat (Allah's representative),

and those who have attained it are best suited for leadership. This type of leader avoids conflict and encourages religious equality. Sufi leaders are the only individuals who have this quality. This type of individual is both a God-seeker and a human guide (Hossain, 2009, 85).

The Maizbhandari tariqa (Maizbhandari Sufi order) was founded by Gauth al-Azam Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (1826-1906) to guide people on the right path through transformational leadership grounded on adle Motlaq (equality of justice) and religious equality. This type of leadership is entitled to Khilafat-e-Uluhiyat (the representation of Allah). Equality, justice, piety, humanity, the protection of others' rights, and so on are the defining characteristics of this leadership. His grandson, Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari (1893-1982), was entrusted with the responsibility of this Khilafat-e-Uluhiyat. As a transformational Sufi leader, he made significant contributions to the change of society and human beings. His aim and vision were to purify people so that a social system free of exploitation, corruption, injustice, oppression, and inequality could be built (Hoque et al., 2021).

Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, the incumbent Pir of Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif who was born in 1936, is also playing an important role as a transformational Sufi leader to change society and improve the human character, according to his father Syed Delowar Hossain's initiations (Hossain, 2018, 11). Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah developed Usul-e-Sab'a (the seven principles), which was institutionalized by Hazrat Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari, is a self-purification methodology that can help a leader to attain spiritual perfection. Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, a follower of Usul-e-Sab'a, has come forward as a Sufi leader to implement the seven principles methods among the Maizbhandari Sufi Community so that the community can achieve spiritual perfection as well as a hassle-free life and overcome all challenges posed by new situations by being self-purified (Hoque et. al, 2021).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To find out how the Maizbhandari Sufi community dealt with the pandemic.
2. To observe how a transformational Sufi leader can help with the transition to a new normal.
3. To find out how Sufis used their teachings to improve society and play a strong role in the community.
4. To find out how a transformational Sufi leader used the “Usul_e_Sab’a” model as a tool for transforming the Maizbhandari Sufi community during the pandemic.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How can the Maizbhandari Sufi community deal with the pandemic?
2. How can a transformational Sufi leader help with the transition to a new normal?
3. How did Sufis use their teachings to improve society and play a strong role in the community?
4. How can a transformational Sufi leader use the “Usul e Sab’a” model as a tool for transforming the Maizbhandari Sufi community during the pandemic?

An Introduction to Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari

Gauth al-Azam Khatemul Auliya Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (1826-1906), the founder of Maizbhandari tariqa, was a descendent of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him). In 1575, his ancestor Syed Hamid Uddin Gauri, a settler of Gaur city, the then capital of Bengal, relocated from there to Patiya, Chattogram, Bangladesh, due to an epidemic. Syed Abdul Quader, one of his sons, was appointed as Imam (leader of the prayer) in Azim Nagor, Fatikchari, Chattogram, where he settled. One of his descendants settled in Maizbhandar village, where Syed Ahmad Ullah, the great saint, was born in 1826 (Hossain, 2009).

During his time as a teacher in Kolkata, India, Khatemul Awliya, Gauth al-Azam Syed

Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari received the Khilafat-e-Uluhiyat (spiritual succession) from Hazrat Sheikh Syed Abu Shahama Muhammad Saleh al-Quadery Lahuri, the subordinate descendants of Gauth al-Azam Hazrat Abdul Quader Jilani. He returned to Maizbhandar village after attaining Khilafah, and by muraqaba (omniscience) and mushahada (witnessing), he was able to elevate to the highest rank of belayot and was awarded the title of Gauth al-Azam (Hossain, 2009).

The Sufi term for spiritual leadership is Khilafah, and it has been passed down from generation to generation by Sufi saints to lead people on the right path. Sufi leaders who practice this sort of leadership can transform their followers into flawless human beings. Before his death in 1905, Gauth al-Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari entrusted his grandson Hazrat Maulana Syed Delowar Hossain with the great responsibility of Khilafat-e-Uluhiyat (spiritual leadership). Syed Delowar Hossain was the third saint of this order, and he was the first to accept both spiritual and temporal leadership of this tariqa, which he held until his death. He led a simple, austere life (Bertocci, 2006). Through his thoughts, knowledge, and works, he laid the foundation of the Maizbhandari Sufi order.

Usul-e Sab'a (the seven principles), which was formalized by his writings and teachings, is the most well-known principle of the Maizbhandari Sufi order. He was the embodiment of Usul-e Sab'a throughout his life (Muhiuddin, 2021). Sufi leaders are most qualified to guide the masses in the right way. Because they've established a divine connection that is effectively mentoring them. As a result, such a leader is unconcerned when other leaders are fearful of their deeds. They are always guided by a heavenly and spiritual power so that they do not go astray and can properly guide their followers.

Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari, according to Peter J. Bertocci (2006), is the most intellectual Pir and is noted for his scholarly bent and publishing works that have

greatly contributed to the development of Gauth al-Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah's views and ideologies (Bertocci, 2006). Authenticity and legitimacy are important aspects of leadership, whether it be Sufi leadership or worldly leadership. Both types of leadership have a track record of success. He was effective in leading his followers on the path of light as Syed Ahmad Ullah's spiritual heir and trustee (wasi). "I am the perfect person to divulge this secret of belayot," he added in the context. Because I am the perfect saint's trustee. He declared me the heir to his throne just days before his death" (Hossain, 2009) (Muhiuddin, 2021).

Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari was born on an auspicious day in 1936 AD. Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari (1893-1982), the grandson of Gauth al-Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah, is his father (1826-1906). Syeda Sajeda Khatun, the daughter of Hazrat Maulana Syed Golam Rahman (1865-1937), is his mother, and Syed Foyzul Hoque (1865-1902), the only son of Gauth al-Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah, is his grandfather. After completing his primary and higher education, he worked as an officer at a bank for about twenty years before acceding to the spiritual leadership of this order (Bertocci, 2006). Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari was born into such a holy and dignified family that his stream of blood connects with two great saints, Gauth al-Azam Syed Ahmad Ullah, and Syed Golam Rahman, respectively. His great-grandfather was the first, while his maternal grandfather was the second. He was his father's third son, and his eldest brother, Syed Ziaul Hoque Maizbhandari (1928-1988), was a prominent Sufi saint who became legendary for his ascetic acts during his lifetime.

Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari was initiated by his father, Syed Delowar Hossain, and was later nominated as his father's Sajjadanshin (spiritual leader) in 1974, as announced in the emergency notification (Jaruri Biggopti) of 1975. In this context, his father said, "At the same time, I am declaring that, during my absence, I have nominated and appointed the current Nayeb Sajjadanshin Syed

Emdadul Haque as the heir to my throne in Gauth al-Azam Maizbhandari's Huzura Sharif (holy compartment). I've given him education and initiation and the right to initiate as well as the authority to regulate futuhat (Hadiya or gifts), and I'm pronouncing him the giver of success to carry on the gausiat (the spiritual leadership)" (Hossain, 2018).

To be a Sufi leader or sajjadanshin, Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbhandari specified some conditions and characteristics the most important of which is Ijajat (permission), also known as divine permission. The preceding Pir grants this form of authority to his next spiritual heir. Some of the characteristics he has described are as follows: Pir e Ershadi, or the qualified Sufi leader, can bring good or welfare to the aspiring person by his relief authority, and Pir e Kamel, or the perfect Sufi leader, is aware of the candidate's condition and can bestow the appropriate blessings on him in God's will power (Hossain, 2018).

According to Peter J. Bertocci (2006), while in ecstasy, Syed Ziaul Hoque (1928-1988) had little interest in exercising tariqa or formal management of tariqa, and instead encouraged his third brother, Syed Emdadul Hoque, to carry on the leadership mantle in 1982 as the current Sajjadanshin of Gausia Ahmadiya Manjil (Bertocci, 2006). In his research, Hans Harder (2015) mentions the issue of Syed Emdadul Hoque's nomination for sajjadanshin, stating, "Syed Emdadul Haq is the spiritual successor to Syed Delowar Hosain and saḡḡādanašīn of Ahmadiyya Manzil" (Harder, 2015).

Syed Delowar Hossain stated that his third son, Syed Emdadul Hoque, is the best suited among his sons for the position of Sajjadanshin. As the spiritual heir of the perfect Sufi saint, he has entrusted the responsibility of continuing societal reforms and moral development on the necks of sajjadanshin (Hossain, 2018). To guide his followers, a Sufi leader must possess moral characteristics, piety, innocence, and spiritual power. In the instance of Syed Emdadul Hoque, his holy being contained all of these qualities. The sun and moon may have flaws, but there

are none in the case of Syed Emdadul Hoque, as Syed Delowar Hossain once announced in ecstasy in front of his followers.

Syed Emdadul Hoque was also awarded the International Award of Excellence for Global Leaders by the Global Academy Research Academy (GARA) in Malaysia in 2020 in appreciation of his enthusiastic contributions to numerous social development and public welfare activities. His social welfare initiatives are not only limited to the Maizbhandari Sufi Community, but he also helps people from all walks of society (Hoque, 2020). He is a Sufi leader who is humanist and egalitarian. If a person of any religion wants his assistance, he gently extends a helping hand. His principles of generosity, compassion, sympathy and religious equality are admired by people of all races and religions.

Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari: A transformational Sufi leader

Muslims must have emulated the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life and ideology to achieve a practical manifestation of values. The Prophet is also the virtuous model of all time, according to the holy Quran. By conquering their hearts and minds, he changed his companions into enlightened beings (Maulding et al., 2012). A Sufi is a person who has a deeper understanding of religion, as well as a spiritual relationship and practical contact with God. In the absence of the Prophet, a Sufi assumes the role of leader, guiding the people down the straight path. Since a Sufi is the Prophet's representative. A Sufi leader is someone who strives to transform society and bring humanity closer to God's love. He attempts to develop a society that is just, welfare-oriented, and egalitarian, devoid of discrimination, exploitation, and oppression.

A Sufi leader concentrates on self-actualization and self-purification, attempting to resolve internal conflicts and approaching the Nafs-e-Mutmainna, the soul's ultimate level (Saeed et al., 2021). A Sufi leader must have had taqwa, or piety, and moral character, which ensures

that he lives a life of austerity, humility, self-discipline, and honesty (Maulding et al.).

As a transformational Sufi leader, Syed Emdadul Hoque has all of the traits that a Sufi leader should have. A transformational leader, according to Bass (2006), will have four characteristics: idealistic influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual concern (Bass et al., 2006). We'll go through each one in-depth, comparing Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari's efforts to these four aspects to discover if he meets all of them.

According to George (2006), idealistic influence serves as a role model for ethical behavior, instilling pride and earning respect and trust (George, 2006). After the discovery of Covid-19 in China in 2019, the global pandemic situation began in 2020. In the first quarter of that year, the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in Bangladesh (Hoque et al., 2021). To deal with the situation, the Bangladesh government imposed various restrictions including a lockdown and shutdown. It paralyzed people's economic and livelihood activities. Because the people were not prepared to face such a circumstance and had no prior experience with it. They lost their mental equilibrium as a result. Individuals were in a state of extreme frustration and anxiety.

The members of the Maizbhandari Sufi Community and the Sufi followers of Maizbhandari tariqa who follow Syed Emdadul Hoque as their role model and Sufi master are enormous. He has a lot of followers not only in Bangladesh but also in other countries around the world. They are all influenced by his ideology and follow him. Before the epidemic, he used to attend Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif every Friday and Saturday to listen to his followers' woes, sorrows, and concerns where many people used to gather to meet him. The situation changed dramatically when the epidemic in Bangladesh began in the first quarter of 2020. The Maizbhandari Sufi community was at a loss for what to do, and they couldn't even imagine how they would

meet with their Sufi Master to present their issues and get motivation and aspirations.

Syed Emdadul Hoque made the first measures in combating Covid-19 by posting guidelines on the Facebook page instructing his followers to follow hygiene rules and maintain a safe social distance. This sort of guidance greatly encouraged his followers, and they had got psychological support for a time in these stressful conditions. Many members of the Maizbhandari Sufi Community have lost their jobs as a result of the countrywide lockdown. They were unable to keep up with their family's expenses. In this situation, Syed Emdadul Hoque took steps to help their families by providing financial assistance. Aside from that, he encouraged the followers of the Maizbhandari Sufi Community to offer a helping hand to the poor members. As a result of his idealistic influence, the Community has been able to overcome the worsening situation.

To combat the coronavirus and reduce the infection, the government had to close all educational institutions in the country and restrict worshippers' access to mosques, temples, pagodas, and churches, as well as prohibit public gatherings. Sajjadanshin Syed Emdadul Hoque had stepped up in such a situation and began interacting with his followers to enable them to become more proactive. He then advised his followers to activate the Zoom Platform so that they could contact him virtually. Even though all sorts of public gatherings were prohibited in the country, he used the Zoom platform to hold Dhikr Mahfil in several branch committees of the Maizbhandari Sufi Community.

Despite the closure of educational institutions, he took measures through the DIRI Madrasah Board to undertake curricular activities via the Zoom platform among Maizbhandar Ahmadiya Emdadia Madrasha, Sinnomul Madrasha, Gausia Muniria Ahmadiya Madrasha, and Bador Marium Madrasha in Chattogram (Hoque et al., 2021). Another effort he took was to conduct Sufi and religious counseling using the Zoom platform, and these activities are still ongoing.

During the period of restrictions in the pandemic, any of his followers could reach him via the zoom platform regularly from any country in the world, and they still do. Thus, he is playing an important role in boosting their morale by providing various types of counseling.

During the pandemic's continued restrictions, another exceptional endeavor, the holy Quran teaching with translation and tafsir as well as tasawwuf class on the Zoom platform, provided psychological support to his followers. During those sessions, his followers from all around the world would participate (Hoque et al., 2021). During the nationwide lockdown on the Corona epidemic in 2020, another of his initiatives garnered international attention. DIRI (Darul Irfan Research Institute), which was launched at the end of 2019, has already begun its global voyage by hosting two international e-Conferences in 2020 and 2021.

The first and second e-Conferences were held on October 30 and 31, 2020, and October 16 and 17, 2021, respectively. The two e-Conferences' themes were respectively "Sufism, Perfected Humanity, and Divine Communion (ICSPHDC 2020)" and "Sufi Music, Perfected Humanity, and Divine Love (ICSMPHDL 2021)". Researchers from several countries, universities, research centers, and institutions from across the world attended the two-day e-conference, which presented a significant number of research papers. A research journal called 'Darul Irfan Research Journal' has also been published from the selected research articles for the international e-conference held on 2020 (Hoque et al., 2021).

The Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI) and the University of Chittagong (CU) recently signed a memorandum of understanding to give scholarships to researchers, M.Phil, and PhD students. As per the agreement, DIRI will provide three types of scholarships to academics, researchers, and students of Chittagong University every year. Each year, the University of Chittagong will deliver a lecture in memory of Gauth al-Azam Shah Sufi

Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (R.). The University of Chittagong will provide Syed Delwar Hossain Maizbhandari (R) Memorial Scholarship for the best performers in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences and Department of History and Culture of Islam.

CU will provide scholarships of Syed Emdadul Haque Maizbhandari (M.) for M.Phil and Ph.D researchers ("DIRI, CU Sign MoU for Providing Scholarship to Students, Researchers," 2021). His DIRI has also offered researchers with Research Methodology Courses. Through DIRI's platform, his initiative has opened up new horizons for researchers and is contributing to the emergence of new research dimensions. During the pandemic's restricted situation, the Shah Emdadia Tele-Medicine service deserves special attention. When the Maizbhandari Sufi Community was imprisoned in their own home due to lockdown, the service was extremely helpful. Because it was difficult to get a physical visit with a doctor at the time, this service saved them a lot of pain (Hoque et al. 2021). The service continues to benefit everyone, even though the existing epidemic-related restrictions have been lifted.

In order to save patients' lives in an emergency, blood donation is unavoidable. An urgent supply of blood at their locations is more needed to save the life of a dying patient. Otherwise, the patients' lives will be jeopardized. In an emergency, the Maizbhandari Shah Emdadia Blood Donors Group is helping to deliver volunteer blood donations to dying patients. Syed Emdadul Hoque founded and leads a community of 700 active members who are willing to donate blood to a dying patient anywhere in the country. During the pandemic's continued restrictions, the group was more active, saving the lives of many people by donating emergency blood (Hoque et al. 2021).

The initiative of Syed Emdadul Hoque, a transformational Sufi leader, to organize the Gausul Azam Maizbhandari Medha Britti exam

(Non-formal Scholarship Exam) during the pandemic's continuous restriction has been applauded by teachers, guardians, and students. Prior to the pandemic, the exam was conducted in a conventional way with a small number of students, but the situation altered once the pandemic struck. Then he decided to hold the exam in a virtual environment. He was more successful in this case in organizing the exam. Because of the advantages of the virtual mode, more students took part in the exam than in the conventional way (Hossen et al., 2021).

He is also the initiator of the Maizbhandari Foundation's Meddhabikash Program. The program focuses on social awareness and creativity enhancement among the students. The program was held in the conventional mode before the pandemic, but in the new norm situation, the authority was forced to prepare the program in the virtual mode. When comparing the traditional mode to the virtual mode, the application has gotten a lot of support from teachers, students, and parents who want to set it up in the virtual environment (Hoque et al., 2021).

He also oversees the self-reliant initiative. Based on the Usul e Sab'a model, he attempted to make certain jobless members of the Maizbhandari Sufi Community self-sufficient. He chose 15 persons for this project and handed each of them automobiles worth BDT 4,50,000/- (four lakh fifty thousand taka). Thus, he has been able to transform the recipient's hands into a donor's hands (Hoque et al., 2021).

Bangladesh is bending to its population's growth. If this population is not converted into manpower, the country's future will be bleak. Gausul Azam Maizbhandari Technical and Polytechnic Institute was founded with this in mind. In the interim, Bangladesh's National Skill Development Authority has approved both institutions, and certain short courses have been introduced. Apart from that, he has launched several outsourcing courses in order to improve the skill set of the workforce and allow them to earn foreign currency. He believes that if the country's large population is

transformed into skilled manpower, they will not be burdened but will be able to generate foreign currency. The country will approach its development goal through their hands (Hoque et al., 2021).

Syed Emdadul Hoque is always worried about the people that follow him. He thinks about his followers at all hours of the day and night. He used to take information about his followers all the time during the pandemic's restriction period. At the time, he used the Zoom platform to meet with his followers and listen to their problems. From all over the country and the world his followers could communicate with him and report their problems via Zoom. Considering the benefits of technological advantage, he is still maintaining this activity.

METHODOLOGY

The Usul-e-sab'a model (the seven principles of self-purification) was used as a tool, as well as key informant interviews, in a mixed-method approach. We have attempted to demonstrate how a transformational Sufi leader has been able to transform his Maizbhandari Sufi Community followers into purified, stress-free, and self-reliant human beings during the epidemic time using the Usul-e-sab'a model. We have also used the Key Informant Interview technique to get more authentic information concerning the case of Shah Sufi Syed Emdadul Hoque, a transformational Sufi leader.

A questionnaire with a sample size of 50 participants has also been developed to collect information from the Maizbhandari Sufi Community. The questionnaire uses closed-ended questions with Likert Scale responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire is made up of two types of variables: independent and dependent. The independent variable is the transformational Sufi leader, and the dependent variable is the Maizbhandari Sufi Community. Finally, Smart PLS 3 has been used to analyze the data.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Usul e Sab'a Model:

Usul e Sab'a (the seven work ethic method) is developed and taught by Gauth al-Azam Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah, the originator of Maizbhandari tariqa. This method is constructed with the seven types of the pursuit method. It is divided into two facets, the three types of fana (the annihilation) and the four types of mauth (the death). According to Peter J. Bertocci (2006), the founder of Maijbhandari tariqa developed a sophisticated "Seven Step" (sapta paddhati) approach for attaining spiritual perfection (Bertocci, 2006). This Usul e Sab'a is simple to perform, hassle-free, and well-liked by all Sufi devotees. It's also simple to follow and give advice for people of all races, religions, and castes (Hossain, 2009) (Hoque et al., 2021).

During the country's ongoing restrictions due to the epidemic, it's worth noting how Syed Emdadul Hoque, a transformational Sufi leader, used the Usul e Sab'a (seven principles) methodology to transform the Maizbhandari Sufi Community. According to Hossain (2012), Hazrat Gauth al-Azam Maizbhandari prioritized the Usul e Sab'a, or the seven principles, which are acknowledged and valued by all Sufi followers in order to curb human beings' evil instincts and activate their good instincts (Hossain, 2012).

The three types of fana (the annihilation) of Usul e Sab'a (the seven principles) which are called Fana-e-Salasa are fana anil khalq, fana anil hawa and fana anil irada. Fana anil khalq refers to self-reliance. That is, having no hope or desire for anything from anyone, as a result of which the human mind becomes self-reliant and confident in its own abilities (Hossain, 2009). Miller expressed self reliance as Striving for autonomy in one's daily work (Miller et al., 2002) As a transformational Sufi leader, Syed Emdadul Hoque always maintains Usul e Sab'a in his holy entity as an incarnation of it, and he always encourages his Maizbhandari Sufi Community followers to do the same. He has encouraged them not to be idle and dependent throughout the pandemic's continued

restrictions. He pushed them to be self-sufficient.

He also advised those who are unemployed or have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic to cultivate their own fields in order to increase food production and minimize food shortages. *fana anil hawa* refers to refraining from unnecessary acts and talks; as a result, life becomes easier and less stressful (Hossain, 2009). During the pandemic, this strategy was particularly efficient in reducing coronavirus infection among the Maizbhandari Sufi Community. To keep safe, Syed Emdadul Hoque asked his followers not to go out unnecessarily, and if they did, they must have followed the health guidelines. By following his instructions, the Community has been able to keep the infection to a minimum.

fana anil irada refers to giving precedence to the will power of God and subduing one's own will or desire to God's will culminates in the acquisition of *Taslim* (submission) and *Raza* (satisfaction) according to Sufism (Hossain, 2009). That is to say, whatever happiness or grief may befall us, we must submit it to Allah's will. He consistently teaches his people the lesson of *fana anil irada* as a transformational Sufi leader. Many members of the Maizbhandari Sufi Community died of coronavirus during the epidemic, and he had advised them to be patient and surrender their will to Allah's will.

The four types of *Maut* (the death) of *Usul e Sab'a* (the seven principles) which are called *al-Maut a-Arb'a* are *Al Maut al Abyad-White Death*, *Al Maut al Aswad-Black Death*, *Al Maut al Ahmar-Red Death* and *Al Maut al Akhdar-Green Death*.

Al Maut al Abyad-White Death (Khalil,2021)

This type of death is achieved by fasting and abstinence. As a result, the human mind is filled with light and radiance (Hossain, 2009). He advised his followers to exercise restraint and constraint during the epidemic. He advised that

no one should overspend and that those who are able should support those who are unable.

Al Maut al Aswad-Black Death is achieved through the hostility and condemnation of the enemy. Because, after facing criticism and condemnation from others, when a person discovers the source of the criticism or condemnation in himself, he has the opportunity to mend himself and beg Allah for forgiveness with a penitent heart. If he does not find fault with himself and believes that he is guilt-free, he gains the morale to praise Allah and notices the accumulation of great power in his personality. He considers the critic to be a friend (Hossain, 2009). He constantly tells his followers to keep away from any kind of controversy or criticism. He advises his followers to think of the critic as a friend. Benjamin Franklin Quotes "Critics are our friends, they show us our faults" (2007., n.d.) *Al Maut al Ahmar-Red Death* is attained by detaching oneself from lust and greed, and by achieving *belayat* (spiritual power), one is regarded as a perfect saint (Hossain, 2009). Syed Emdadul Hoque always tells his followers to keep their lust, greed, and ego under control. Because, people are faced with destruction as a result of excessive greed. It defiles the human character and also stifles spiritual development. *Al Maut al Akhdar-Green Death* is that when one gets accustomed to living a life without luxury, this type of dying develops. As a result, the human intellect craves nothing more than the Creator's love.

It is known in the Sufi terminology as *Belayate Khizri* (Hossain, 2009). Syed Emdadul Hoque, who is accustomed to leading a simple and austere life, always advises his followers to do the same. During the restriction period of the Corona pandemic, many of his followers found that they had given up their excessive pleasures in order to help the poor and helpless with the money they possessed. They are also continuing this activity at the present.

Key Informant Interview

Early in December 2021, a Key Informant Interview was conducted to assess and enhance the quality of the information. Kazi Md. Siful Aspea, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Chittagong Independent University, Bangladesh, and member secretary of the International e-Conference Organizing Committee of Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI), Bangladesh, has been named as a key informant who is also a Sufi fellow of Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, the incumbent Pir of Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif, Fatikchari, Bangladesh.

He participated in a telephone interview. Our questions were all open-ended, which was suited for our study. The questionnaire has not been included in this study due to space constraints. The information and data collected from this study has been examined using the qualitative research method.

Measurement Model Analysis

The Measurement Model has been analyzed using the two constructs of the transformational Sufi leader and the Maizbhandari Sufi Community.

Constructs' Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's Alpha, which is used to assess construct reliability, is 0.75 on average. Composite reliability is 0.78 on average. The average extracted variance (AVE) value is 0.6435, which is higher than 0.50. As a whole, it is significant. The measurement model has been proven to be reliable and valid.

Indicator Reliability

The factor loading reliability of the two constructs is, on average 0.8175. It is more than 0.70, which indicates that it is reliable.

Latent Variables Correlation

It is seen that the correlation of latent variables is correlated. The value of the latent variables is

not more than 0.7. As a result, latent variable correlations are acceptable.

Discriminant Validity

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion is a measure of discriminant validity. Each latent construct's AVE (average extracted variance) should be greater than the construct's highest squared correlation with any other latent construct (Fornell-Larcker Criterion). The first construct value is 0.81, which is the square root of the AVE value of 0.656, and the second construct value is -0.36, which is less than the first construct value of 0.81. As a result, discriminant validity is shown to be acceptable.

Structure Model Analysis

The path coefficient, R^2 , and t-values can all be used to assess the Structure Model. The path coefficient is -0.36 and the R^2 is 0.13 in this case. For two-tailed testing, the critical t-value at the 5% significance level is 4.767. The significance of the Structural Model has been proven.

Respondents' evaluation Analysis

A questionnaire is developed using Google Forms, and data is evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale based on two variables. The questionnaire is then forwarded to the appropriate group. The sample size was 50 participants. There were 34 male and 16 female among them. There are 24 people between the ages of 20 and 30; 12 between the ages of 31 and 40; 8 between the ages of 41 and 50; and 6 between the ages of 51 and 60.

Twenty questions were asked, ten of which were about the transformational Sufi leader and ten of which were about the Maizbhandari Sufi Community. The agree rate is 89.20%, the neutral rate is 5.20%, and the disagree rate is 5%, according to our findings.

Discussion, Recommendations and Limitation

The transformational Sufi leader is dedicated to the development of human character and the creation of affection for good deeds. Essentially, they attempt to construct a society based on justice, devoid of oppression, injustice, corruption, malice, conflicts, and, most importantly, free of all types of riots, on the basis of *adle mutlaq* (equality of justice). In Islamic civilization, a Sufi leader is regarded as a role model by the people. They develop their own character based on their words, acts, and behaviors. The number of those who follow Syed Emdadul Haque Maizbandari among the Maizbandari Sufi community as their Sufi Master or the Sufi leader is several lakhs. Syed Delowar Hossain Maizbandari, his father, assigned him the task of reforming society and developing the moral character of human beings (Hossain, 2018). He is carrying out the mission entrusted to him with the utmost efficiency and integrity.

Thousands of people have been and continue to be able to develop morals by correcting their character as a result of his inspiration, fervor, and enthusiasm. Even in the midst of the Corona pandemic, he continues to encourage his followers to live their lives in the light of *Usul e Sab'a* (the seven principles). Because of his inspiration and motivation, they are able to overcome the coronavirus crisis. In this way, he continues to set an example of a transformational Sufi leader.

Based on the *Usul e Sab'a* (the seven principles), the following recommendations have been made:

Firstly, a Sufi leader is self-reliant, never idle, and always encourages others to work hard. In such a case, if Sufi adherents follow their ideology, they will not remain idle.

Secondly, a Sufi leader always avoids something or an issue that is meaningless and useless. If Sufi followers avoid useless issues or activities, they will be able to avoid disputes, riots, and vain talks.

Thirdly, in all situations, whether good or bad, a Sufi leader always dissolves his own will in favor of Allah's will. In the ongoing pandemic situations, if Sufi followers follow them and dissolve their own will onto Allah's will, they will not be stressed, mentally depressed, or bewildered.

Fourthly, a Sufi leader is constantly restrained, avoids tension, and avoids quarrels. If Sufi followers practice restraint in all situations they will be able to avoid unexpected mishaps. During the Corona pandemic, infection will be largely controlled by exercising restraint, maintaining a safe distance from people, and avoiding unnecessary activities.

Fifthly, a Sufi leader considers criticism positively and regards the critic as a friend who corrects one's mistakes. If Sufi followers who are motivated by this ideology embrace criticism as a way of self-correction, the enemy will become a friend, making it easier to develop a better society through concerted effort.

Sixthly, Sufis never indulge in greed or lust. Sufi followers will be able to rid society of corruption, adultery, oppression, and the violation of others' rights if they can control their greed, lust, and evil impulses.

Finally, Sufis are used to living a simple life. Extravagance is always avoided by them. If Sufi followers continue to abstain from luxury, the social divide between rich and poor would narrow, and poverty would decrease.

Limitations

This study does have some limitations. The sample size is the first constraint. A total of 50 participants were included in the study. Second, gather additional resources on the transformational Sufi leader, which limited the scope of the research. Thirdly, we did not have a research paper in the case of Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbandari; instead, we completed the study through field work. If we had more

academic articles and books about him, the study would be more useful and trustworthy.

REFERENCES

1. AÇIKGÖZ, M., & GÜNAY, A. (2020). The early impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the global and Turkish economy. *Turkish Journal Of Medical Sciences*, 50(SI-1), 520–526. <https://doi.org/10.3906/sag-2004-6>
2. Alsarhi, N. Z., Salleh, L. M., Z. A., M., & A. A, A. (2014). The West and Islam Perspective of Leadership. *International Affairs and Global Strategy (IISTE)*, 18(June), 42–56.
3. Baldwin, R. E., & Weder, B. (Eds.). (2020). *Economics in the Time of COVID-19*. CEPR Press.
4. Bass, B.M., & Riggio, R.E. (2006). *Transformational Leadership*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
5. Beekun, R. I., & Badawi, J. A. (1999). *Leadership: an Islamic perspective: Amana* Beltsville, Maryland
6. Bennis, W.G., and Townsend, R. (1995). *Reinventing leadership*. Collins Business Essential, New York.
7. Bertocci, P. J. (2006). A Sufi movement in Bangladesh. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 40(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/006996670504000101>
8. George, William. “Transformational Leadership.” *Enterprise Transformation: Understanding and Enabling Fundamental Change*, 2006, pp. 69–77, <https://doi.org/10.1002/0470007826.ch4>
9. Bodrud-Doza, M., Shammi, M., Bahlman, L., Islam, A. R. M. T., & Rahman, M. M. (2020). Psychosocial and Socio-Economic Crisis in Bangladesh Due to COVID-19 Pandemic: A Perception-Based Assessment. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00341>
10. Hoque, S. I., Abedin, M. M., & Chowdhury, M. S. (2021). Delving into blood transfusions data through data mining: a study of maizbhandari shah emdadia blood donors group to select volunteer blood donors efficiently. *American International Journal of Multidisciplinary Scientific Research*, 10(1), 1-11.
11. DIRI, CU sign MoU for providing scholarship to students and researchers. (2021, December 6). *Chattogram Gazette | Nothing but Authentic*. <https://chattogramgazette.net/diri-cu-sign-mou-for-providing-scholarship-to-students-researchers/?fbclid=IwAR1xQAjaSa6RZKu1hCBQUWo6fs-WrrNNzn7zjOEozJCpPbGGCq6Oe57nPcw>
12. George, William. (2006). *Transformational Leadership. Enterprise Transformation: Understanding and Enabling Fundamental Change*, pp. 69–77, doi:10.1002/0470007826.ch4.
13. Harder, H. (2015). *Sufism and Saint Veneration in Contemporary Bangladesh: The Maijbhandaris of Chittagong*. Routledge.
14. Hoque, Uddin, Asgor And Bhuiyan, S. S. I. M. M. M. A. M. A. (2021). *Application Of Seven Principles Of Maizbhandari Tariqa On Business Ethics For Sme’s Sustainability In*

- Fatikchari, Bangladesh. American International Journal of Business and Management Studies, 20–33. <https://doi.org/10.46545/aijbms.v3i1.206>
15. Hoque, S. I., Asgor, M. A., Bhuiyan, M. A., & Adaikalam, J. (2021, July). The Prospects and Challenges of Working from Home (WFH) in the New Norm: Case of DIRI, Chittagong, Bangladesh. Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI), 12(7), 10527-10541.
 16. Hoque, S. I., Karim, A. M., Hossen, M. R., & Arjumand, D. (2021). Evaluation Of Patients' satisfaction In Telemedicine Service Quality: A Case Study On Maizbhandari Foundation, Fatikchari, Bangladesh. American Economic & Social Review, 8(1), 1-10.
 17. Hoque, S. I., Nasheen, N. S., Asgor, M. A., & Islam, M. A. (2021). Social Awareness And Creativity Enhancement Program Through E-Learning Platform: A Case Of Maizbhandar Foundation's Meddhabikash Program, Fatikchari, Bangladesh. American Economic & Social Review, 7(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.46281/aesr.v7i1.1030>
 18. [Hoque, S. E. \(2020\). Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif-News Updates. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from http://www.sufimaizbhandar.com/news_feed.php](http://www.sufimaizbhandar.com/news_feed.php)
 19. Hoque, Asgor, Uddin, Bhuiyan, S. S. I. M. A. M. M. A. (2021). Application Of Seven Principles Of Maizbhandari Tariqa On Business Ethics For Sme's Sustainability In Fatikchari, Bangladesh. American International Journal of Business and Management Studies, 3(1), 20–33. <https://doi.org/10.46545/aijbms.v3i1.206>
 20. Hoque, S. I., Nasheen, N. S., Asgor, M. A., & Islam, M. A. (2021). Social Awareness And Creativity Enhancement Program Through E-Learning Platform: A Case Of Maizbhandar Foundation's Meddhabikash Program, Fatikchari, Bangladesh. American Economic & Social Review, 7(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.46281/aesr.v7i1.1030>
 21. Hossain, S. D. (2012). Multototo (6th ed.). Maizbhandari Prokahoni.
 22. Hossain, M. S. D. (2009). Belayot_e_Mutlaka. Anjuman_e_Muttabayine Gause Maizbhandari.
 23. Hossain, S. D. (2018). Manob Shobbota. Maizbhandari Prokhasoni.
 24. Lizette, Eriksson, F., & Jonsson, C. (2016). Transformational Leadership's Effect On Motivation And Trust. School of Business, Society and Engineering, 62.
 25. Hossen, M. R., Hoque, S. S. I., Karim, A. M., & Arjumand, D. (2021). A Comparative Study On Students' Level Of Acceptance And Preference Of Conventional And Virtual Mode At "Gausul Azam Maizbhandari Medhabritthi (Scholarship Exam) Program In Fatikchari, Bangladesh. American International Journal of Social Science Research, 6(1), 41–51. <https://doi.org/10.46281/aijssr.v6i1.1057>
 26. Maulding, W. S., Peters, G. B., Roberts, J., Leonard, E., & Sparkman, L. (2012). Emotional intelligence and resilience as predictors of leadership in school administrators. Journal of Leadership Studies, 5(4), 20–29. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.20240>

27. Muhiuddin, M. (2021). Genealogies of Maizbhandari Thoughtss: Syed Delawor Hossain and his Paradigm of Sufi Perception. *Darul Irfan Research Journal*, 1(1), 44-80
28. Saeed, B., Hasan, S. S., & Ajmal, M. A. (2021). Psychological impacts of Sufism in the 21st Century in Pakistan. *Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences (JHSMS)*, 2(1), 38–49.
<https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.jhsms/2.1.4>
29. Silva, A. (2016, November 1). What is Leadership? *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 8(1), 9-18.
30. Takala, T. (1998). Plato on Leadership, *Journal of Business Ethics* 17:785- 798
31. Zubayer, Abdullah Al, et al. Psychological States of Bangladeshi People Four Months after the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Online Survey. *Heliyon*, vol. 6, no. 9, 2020, p. e05057. Crossref, doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05057.
32. Miller, M. J., Woehr, D. J., & Hudspeth, N. (2002). The meaning and measurement of work ethic: Construction and initial validation of a multidimensional inventory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(3), 451–489. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2001.1838>
33. Khalil, A. (2021). White Death: Ibn al-‘Arabī on the Trials and Virtues of Hunger and Fasting. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 141(3), 577–586.
<https://doi.org/10.7817/jameroriesoci.141.3.0577>