

## Chapter: 4

# ADMINISTRATION OF MOSQUES AND DARGAHS IN BARAK VALLEY

The administration of *Mosques* and *Dargahs* of Barak Valley are managed by a *Mosque* and *Dargah* Committee constituted with the Muslim people of that particular society. The *Mosjid* and *Dargah* Committee are to maintain accounts, Preserve the fabric of the *Mosque* and *Dargah* and its buildings, organize and supervise the distribution of alms and food to the needy and visitors and manage various religious festival. *Dargahs* contain *Mazars* the *Shrines* of some Sufi saints where people gather specially on the day of *Urs* and pay homage to the departed soul of the *Pir*. The annual festival *Urs*, is considered as the most significant event of a *Dargah*, performed to recollect the death of the saint. It is done in every *Dargah* of Barak Valley. During the time of *Urs*, a committee is formed to make arrangements of the annual festival and after the end of festival, the committee is automatically dissolved. Like other places, the people of Barak Valley go to local *Dargahs* and treat them as pilgrimage centre to attend the annual *Urs*. *Dargah* veneration became more and more popular with the Muslims in Barak Valley because of gathering in mass number on the death day of the saint which is celebrated as *Urs*.<sup>170</sup> (Appendix-D)

Every institution must have a managing committee to run the institution smoothly. The *Mosques* and *Dargahs* are no exception to this. The administrative framework of *Mosque* and *Dargah* of Barak Valley is based on democratic principles. Every *Mosque* and *Dargah* has a managing committee to look after all affairs of the institution.

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<sup>170</sup> Information collected from field visit.

The committee is formed by the members under the *Mahalla* (Jurisdiction of *Mosque* and *Dargahs*) by direct or indirect representation. The strength varies from seven to twenty one members based on the strength of the population of the concerned *Mosque* and *Dargah*. The committee is headed by a President and a Secretary to look after all matters for the development and smooth functioning of the *Mosque* and *Dargahs*. From the observation, it is found that the tenure of the committee is normally three to five years. After the expiry of tenure of the committee, a new committee is reconstituted in a general meeting by the direct participation of the members of the concerned *Mosque* and *Dargahs*. Most of the *Mosque* and *Dargahs* of Barak Valley had its traditional rules like constitution to run the general administration of *Mosque* and *Dargahs* of Barak Valley.<sup>171</sup>

#### **Rules and Regulations of Mosques& Dargahs:**

The *Mosque* and *Dargah* committees of Barak Valley aimed at:

- ❖ To look after the day to day administration of *Mosques* and *Dargahs* and to provide effective and efficient services.
- ❖ The income from the existing property of *Mosques* and *Dargahs* are to be utilized for the development of the said institutions.
- ❖ To enhance and improve the sources of income for smooth functioning of *Mosques* and *Dargahs*.
- ❖ To run *Sabahi Maktab* (where primary Islamic education is imparted to Muslim kids) of every *Mosque*<sup>172</sup> and *Dargahs* in Barak Valley.

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid, information collected from *Hazi Altaf Hussain*, age-51, cashier of the Silchar Boro Mosjid, Mr. *Sabir Ahmed Chowdhury*, age-59, Head, Dept. of English, M.C.D. College, Sonai, Secretary of the Bhaga Bazar Jame Mosjid, Mr. *Kutub Uddin Barbhuiya*, age- 65, Senior Block Development Officer, Panchayat& Rural Development, Govt. of Assam, Secretary of the Lalabazar Town Mosjid, on 26.11.2017, 16.04.2018, and 12.12.2017, respectively.

<sup>172</sup> Bazlur Rahman Khan, *Madrassa Education System in South Assam*, the Milli Gazette, 2012, P-04.

- ❖ To collect weekly or monthly subscription and *Mothi* (specific amount of rice) from every house of concerned *Mahalla* (Jurisdiction of *Mosque* and *Dargahs*).
- ❖ To extend financial assistance for education and health for the *Eatim and Miskinn* ( orphans & economically weaker section of the society)
- ❖ To take up any other activities on *Urus, Miladsorif, Khanka* (religious festivals), cultural, social activities for awareness of communal harmony among the neighboring non-Muslim population of the society.<sup>173</sup>

### **Membership:**

Renowned and socially acceptable persons residing permanently within the *Mosjid* and *Dargah*, area are eligible for the membership of *Mosjid* and *Dargah* committee.<sup>174</sup>

### **Subscription/donation:**

For the smooth functioning of the *Mosques* and *Dargahs*, monthly/annual Subscription/donation are accepted from the members.<sup>175</sup>

### **Collection of fund:**

In Barak Valley, it is seen that every institution has its sources of income. The following are the main sources of income. **Donation:** The visitors and the local people make donation to the *Mosques* and *Dargahs*. **Monthly Collection:** An amount is collected from every family belonging to the *Mosques* and *Dargahs* area every month by the *Mosque* and *Dargah* committee. **Urs & Waaj:** Every *Mosques* and *Dargahs* has its annual function/festival. During the function/festival a huge amount is collected in the form of

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Information gathered from *Hazi Abdul Khaliq*, age-85, Retired LPS Teacher and president of the Hulashnagar Pacca Mosjid, *Hazi Faiz Uddin Laskar*, age-75, Retired Teacher, and 782 no. Saidpur L.P.S, on 18.04.2015, and 17.11.2015 respectively.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

donation. **Property:** Some *Mosques* and *Dargahs* have their own property such as land, shops etc. They collected rent from such properties. **Fruits & Vegetables:** Local people, particularly in villages, donate fresh fruits and vegetables to *Mosques* and *Dargahs* as votive. These are sold and the amount comes to the *Mosque* and *Dargah* fund.<sup>176</sup>

The *Mosques* and *Dargahs* create fund mostly from collections in donation box which is placed outside the main door of *Mosques* and *Dargahs*. The donations form a part of the income of the *Mosques* and *Dargahs*. The donation box collection made by the locals and visitors is spent for the conduct of various religious festivals like *Waaaj*, *Urs* and its development. Besides, donation from any other government or non-government agencies to the fund of the *Mosque* and *Dargahs* are also accepted.<sup>177</sup>

#### **Control of fund:**

The fund so collected is deposited in a nearby Bank. The President/ Gen. Secretary are entitled to operate the fund through Bank (Joint) account of *Mosque* and *Dargahs*.<sup>178</sup>

#### **Accounts:**

The Cashier maintains all the accounts in accordance with provisions framed by the managing committee of *Mosques* and *Dargahs*. The cashier shall ensure that all income should be deposited in the said bank account on the same day or positively on the next working day.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Information collected from field visit.

<sup>177</sup> Information collected from *HaziAbulHashim*, age- 76, (Retired Teacher of 124 No.RatabariMaktab), Secretary of the RatabariJameMosjid on 16.04.2017 during field visit.

<sup>178</sup> Information collected from field visit, reported by MrMehbulHussain, Secretary of the FatakazarJameMosjid, *Nayeem Uddin*, age- 55, cashier of the RatabariJameMosjid, on 16.04.2017, *HaziAltafHussain*, op. cit., on 26.11.2017.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

**Audits:**

Qualified auditor is appointed by the Executive Committee for a term of one year who will audit the accounts of *Mosques* and *Dargahs*, at least once in a year and the annual audit report of the said institutions will be submitted to the executive committee after the approval in General meeting.<sup>180</sup>

**Procedure for conducting meeting:**

The president of the *Mosques* and *Dargahs* presides over the annual general body meeting and special general body meeting. In his absence, Vice president is entitled to preside the same. In the absence of both, the nominee of the president or senior most member of the *Mosques* and *Dargahs* committee is to preside over the meetings.<sup>181</sup>

All decisions at the general meeting or special general meeting is taken by a simple majority of votes of the members present. Each member shall have one vote. The president of the said institutions if he presides over the meeting or the person in chair at the meeting shall have a casting vote which he may exercise in case of equality of votes except in election matter.

The proceeding of every meeting is to be recorded in the minute's book together with the resolutions passed on each subject. The minute's books have to be signed by the president and secretary of the said institutions.

The resolutions of the previous meeting are to be placed in the next meeting for their confirmation.

A copy of the minutes of the meeting is to be sent to all members of the concerned *Mosques* and *Dargahs* committee within seven days of the meeting.

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<sup>180</sup> Reported by *Hazi Altaf Hussain, Mr. Sabir Ahmed Chowdhury, Mr. Kutub Uddin Barbhuiya*, op. cit., on 26.11.2017, 16.04.2018, and 12.12.2017, respectively.

<sup>181</sup> Information collected from field visit.

The secretary of the said institutions, in consultation with the president of the same institution or on the direction of the president, prepares a notice fixing the day, date, time and place of such meeting along with agenda for the meeting. The notice is hanged on the notice board of the said institutions.<sup>182</sup>

### **Procedure of the general meeting:**

The general body of the *Mosques* and *Dargahs* is the apex body with supervisory powers over the affairs of the said institutions; first meeting of the general body is to be held within a short period of time from the date of approval of the people of the concerned *Mosques* and *Dargahs* in general meeting by the body.

### **Generally the meeting of the General body is of two types:**

**Annual General Body Meeting:** The annual general body meeting is called by the managing committee on or before 31<sup>st</sup> January of every year or any suitable date.<sup>183</sup>

### **Functions of the Annual General Body Meeting:**

- To consider and approve the budget estimated for the ensuing year, before submitting it to the executive body.
- To approve the annual audit, statement of accounts of the *Mosques* and *Dargahs*.
- If any members of *managing committee* has/ have, failed in his/ their duties or legging behind in fulfillment of his/ their responsibilities, or has acted or acting, in a prejudiced manner for the interest of the said institution, the members are entitled to raise the subject, by notice, and if there exists *Prima facie* case against

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<sup>182</sup> Information gathered from *Mr. Sabir Ahmed Chowdhury*, op. cit., Quoted from *AzimUddinLaskar*, age-70, President of the SilcharBoroMosjid, on 16.04.2018 and 26.11.2017 respectively.

<sup>183</sup> Information collected from field visit.

- such members, meeting of the general body is to be held to pass resolutions for taking necessary action.
- To approve the proposals of the managing committee if any.<sup>184</sup>

**Special General Body Meeting:** All general meetings other than annual general meeting are called Special General Body Meeting.

**Functions of the special General Body Meeting:**

- A special general body meeting may be called at any time by the *managing committee* on their own will or at any critical situation or crisis.
- It may be called on requisition made to the *managing committee* in writing by at least 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the body members.
- It is to be called within a few days from the date of requisition.
- At such a special general body meeting, no business other than specified in the notice is transacted.
- In case within half an hour after the time appointed for holding such a meeting, if there is no quorum the meeting is to be dissolved.<sup>185</sup>

**Quorum of the general meeting:**

The presence of 2/3<sup>rd</sup>. members forms the quorum of the General Meeting.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Information collected from Secretary of the Hailakandi Cachari Mosjid, *Mr. Akram Rasul Laskar*, (Teacher of Boalipar High School, Hailakandi), Quoted from *Hazi Abdul Khaliq*, op. cit., on 12.12.2017 and 18.04.2015 respectively.

<sup>185</sup> Information collected from *Mr. Sabir Ahmed Chowdhury*, op. cit., Quoted from *Mr. Azir Uddin Chowdhury*, age- 59, Principal, Hailakandi B.ed. Colege, President of the Shah Noor's Dargah Managing Committee, on 16.04.2018 and 16.04.2015 respectively.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

**Selection/ election procedure of the executive committee:**

The Executive Committee of said institutions is generally formed in an Annual General Meeting, eligible members are entitled to participate and vote to elect/ select members for the institutions.<sup>187</sup>

**Structure of the executive body:** The Executive Committee is formed with the following office bearers;

- One President
- One Secretary
- One Asst. Secretary
- One Cashier
- One Auditor
- Three / uneven number of Executive member.<sup>188</sup>

**Term of the executive body:**

The term of the Executive Committee is of normally 3 -5 years only from the date of its commencement.<sup>189</sup>

**Procedure for re selection or reelection of the members of executive body:**

Item above 8 (eight) may be followed for re-election of the executive committee if and when necessary.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Information collected from *HaziAbulHashim* on 16.04.2017 during field visit.

<sup>188</sup> Reported by *Mr. Sokat Ali Laskar*, age-59, Live-Stock Inspector, Vet nary Dept. Haliakandi, Member of the Algapur Bazar Mosjid, on 15.04.2015.

<sup>189</sup> Information collected from field visit.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.



### **Procedure of the meeting of the executive body:**

At least one meeting must be held once in three months called by Secretary with the consent of the President, after issuing letter containing specific agenda with 7 (Seven) day's prior notice.<sup>191</sup>

### **Quorum of the meeting of the executive body:**

At least 2/ 3<sup>rd</sup> of the Executive members have to be present in the meeting to form the quorum of that meeting.<sup>192</sup>

### **Constitution of Mosques and Dargahs committee:**

- ❖ It consists of 7 to 21 members according to the strength of the population of the concerned *Mosques* and *Dargahs* that implement/execute/ realize the decisions of the general body.
- ❖ It makes the by -laws for the institution.
- ❖ It is to be formed for one to three years by the members of the general body.
- ❖ It is collectively accountable to the people of concerned *Mosque* and *Dargaharea*.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Information collected from *Mr. KutubUddinBarbhuiya*, age- 65, Senior Block Development Officer, Panchayat& Rural Development, Govt. of Assam, Secretary of the Lalabazar Town Mosjid, Hailakandi, on 12.12.2017.

<sup>192</sup> Information collected from *Mr. Jamal Uddin*, age- 75, President of the Udharbond Bazar Mosjid on 27.12.2017 during field visit.

<sup>193</sup> Information collected from *Mr. Sabir Ahmed Chowdhury*, op. cit., on 16.04.2018.

**Duties and powers of the Mosques and Dargahs committee:**

- The executive body is responsible for day to day administration of the *Mosques and Dargahs*.
- It exercises power in accordance with the decisions taken in the general body meeting within the guideline of the Islamic laws.
- The managing committee bears the power to recruit, to remove and also to make salary structure for the staff of the said institutions.
- It is the disciplinary authority for the staff of the *Mosques and Dargahs*.
- Under no circumstances, the administrative and financial powers can be delegated.
- It can form sub committees for construction, Education, Health, social service, etc.
- It approves receipts and payments.
- It notifies the general body meeting to the people of the concerned *Mosques and Dargahs*.
- It is the duty of the *managing committee* to send a report at the commencement of every financial year highlighting the achievements made during the previous year in respect of protection of properties, its development and steps taken to improve the financial status of the *Mosques and Dargahs*.
- It has the power to issue notice for a particular issue.

- It also exercises powers on special religious occasions like *Urus, Sob-e-borat, Sob-e-kadar, Sobe-mehraz, Id-ul-fitrar, Id-ul-azha, Moharam and Miladsharif*, Administrators rent out land around the *Mosques and Dargahs* to tradesmen at fixed rates. It is during these occasions that the administrators also collect those contributions that guarantee the regular functioning of the said institutions as well as income of its servants.<sup>194</sup>

**A member of the Mosques and Dargahs committee ceases to be the member by;**

- ❖ Reasons of death, resignation, removal;
- ❖ Conviction resulting in any penalty;
- ❖ Absence, from three consecutive meetings without valid reason;<sup>195</sup>

The format shows the name, address, occupation, qualification and designation of the members of managing committee of Ratabari JameMosjid:<sup>196</sup> (Appendix-E)

**Duties of the Imam of Mosques:**

The *Mosque & Dargah* administration needs some persons to fulfill the work of day to day activities apart from the committee members. *Imams* of the *Mosque* play a very significant role in promoting socio-cultural and spiritual progress among Muslims. Practically, the role of the *Imam* of a *Mosque* is seen limited only to leading prayers, conducting burial services, solemnizing marriages and so on. The *Imams* of *Mosque* have greater opportunity to interact with common people, to address them during the weekly Friday congregational prayers, and to participate in their occasions of joy and sorrow. He is a respectable person having requisite Islamic educational qualification along with good character and habits. He is selected and appointed by the concerned *Mosque and Dargah* committee. An Imam has the right to lead the *Musalli* (those who

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<sup>194</sup> Reported by *Mr. Azir Uddin Choudhury, Hazi Altaf Hussain*, op. cit., on 16.04.2015 and 26.11.2017 respectively.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Reported by *Maulana Wasil Ali*, age-75, (Ex Teacher of Kazirbazar Senior Madrasa), President of the Ratabari JameMosjid, on 16.04.2018.

perform *Namaj* in *Mosque*) of the concerned mosque in the light of holy *Quran* and *Hadith*. Most of the *Imams* provide Islamic basic education to the children of the concerned *Mosque* and *Dargah*. He also guides them to form good habits and character.<sup>197</sup>

In Friday sermons or *ZumhaKhutba* as delivered by the *Imam* in every *Mosjid*, all sorts of socio- religious issues are discussed on the occasion in presence of all Muslims from that particular *Mosjid* area. He also fixes the time for *Namaz* in consultation with the *managing committee*.<sup>198</sup>

### **Duties of Khadim in Mosques and Dargahs:**

*Khadim* is also a salaried person of the *Mosques* and *Dargahs*. He plays an important role by calling *Azan* for *Namaz* five times in a day and keeps *Mosques* and *Dargahs* and its surrounding environment neat and clean. He also collects weekly or Monthly *Muti* (subscription) from the people of the concerned *Mosques* and *Dargahs* area.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Imran Mahmud, ShahriarRawshon, Md. JahidurRahman, *Role of Mosque for Human Resource Development*, IIUC STUDIES, ISSN 1813-7733, Vol-9, 2011, PP-287-88.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid,P-288.

<sup>199</sup> Observations from field visit.

From the above discussion it is evidently found that the *managing committee* plays a pivotal role in conducting the services of *Mosques and Dargahs*.