

Some Unpublished Sources of the Haryana

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Abstract: Archaeological and literary sources are rich sources for historical reconstruction. Details of art, architecture, and artisans are indicators of socio-economic, and cultural transition. These sources, which are available in bulk, may witness the post-medieval and modern periods of Indian history and the history of Punjab as well. Haryana is rich in its inscriptional and manuscript material, and a scholar of social science found them more reliable. In this research paper entitled "Some Unpublished Sources of Punjab: A Case Study of Modern Haryana," an attempt is being made to bring some unpublished materials from modern Haryana which was a part of Punjab before its formation in 1966 as a separate state.

Keywords: Panda, Purohit, Tirtha, Inscription, Hukamnama, Pehowa, Kapal Mochan, Sikh Gurus, Pothi & Bahi.

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Introduction

The structure and organization of sacred tradition are always preserved and maintained by guardians and cultural specialists of a sacred center. The same holds, where there are a number of sacred specialists who help the pilgrims to perform various rituals, and at the same time cultivate, preserve, and promote the cultural tradition of this sacred center associated with the battle of *Mahabharata* and the solar eclipse fair. They have been engaged in this pursuit from time immemorial.¹ Kurukshetra is an important pilgrim center in North India, for many reasons, throughout centuries there has been a constant influx of thousands of pilgrims from all walks of life including saints and kings to this holy place. Among the occasions, very important is the occurrence of an eclipse, particularly the solar eclipse, the day in which a large number of pilgrims from all over the country assemble here to take a dip in the holy ponds of Kurukshetra and visit the *thirthas* connected with the place with the belief of attaining *Punya* and *Moksa*.² Guru Nanak, the first Guru of Sikhs visited Kurukshetra in 1504 A.D. on the occasion of a solar eclipse.³ On reaching Kurukshetra, he observed that hundreds and thousands of people had congregated there to bathe in its sacred tanks. The Guru found this an excellent opportunity to spread his message there. Guru Nanak emphasized that ritual bathing was not an instant panacea to ameliorate one's karmic debt. This dispelled the prevalent belief and superstition that the malefic influence of two shadow mythical satellites *Rahu* and *Ketu* caused the eclipse, and bathing in sacred tanks, and giving alms to the priests could mitigate it. He stressed the meaninglessness of superstitious

beliefs in our daily lives relating to the dress, diet, travel, and taboos and emphasized the validity of leading a pure, simple, and virtuous life by reciting and remembering *Satnam* with fervor and faith.⁴

In memory of Guru Nanak Dev's arrival at Kurukshetra, the Gurudwara 1stPathshahi stands in the southwestern corner of Brahma Sarovar. It is said that Guru Nanak stayed at this place during his visit to Kurukshetra. After Guru Nanak, other Sikh Gurus Guru Amardas (1572 AD), Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1665 AD), and Guru Gobind Singh came to Kurukshetra on the occasion of the solar eclipse. According to local tradition, eight Sikh Gurus visited Kurukshetra on different occasions.⁵ Keeping the memory of Sikh Gurus and showing their faith in the philosophy of Gurus.

In North India, Kurukshetra is the witness to the visit of eight Sikh Gurus. Gurudwara's constructed in different places, which now becomes the symbol of composite culture.⁶ As far as the Sikh religion is concerned first five Gurus believed in Sainthood & *Bhakti* (devotion) while Guru Hargobind (6thPatshahi) gave the philosophy of *Miri* and *Piri* (temporal power and spiritual power). It was a great change in the Sikh Guru's Philosophy and Gurudwara 6thPatshahi & *Miri-Piri Chowk* is the witness to this change. Five Sikh Gurus- Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur, and Guru Gobind Singh are known for their sainthood, bravery, and sacrifice.

Many followers portray the visit of Gurus on the walls of their *havelis*. One follower of Pehowa depicted Guru Nanak on his *haveli* where Guru Nanak is preaching to his followers under a tree (Plate 1). Another wall painting emphasized Guru Gobind Singh and his marching past posture in a very systematic manner. In this picture, Guru Gobind Singh riding on a horse while his army is going along with flags and weapons in two rows (Plate 2). These wall paintings depict our cultural and military heritage.

In 1705 on a solar Eclipse Guru Govind Singh came to Kurukshetra from Anandpur Sahib and camped near Sathaneswar temple. Guru Gobind Singh and his family stayed with Mani Ram Brahman whose sister served Mata Gujari with great respect. As a result, Guru Gobind Singh gave a *hukamnama* (called *Patta* in the local language) to the family.⁷ Original *Patta* was missing from the Gurudwara. Only a copy of *hukamnama* (as a symbol) is still preserved in the *Gurudwara Patta Sahib*.



Plate 1: Guru Nanak



Plate 2: Guru Govind Singh along with his army

Some Sikh monuments were constructed by the royal family in Kurukshetra. Nabha house was constructed by Maharaja Hira Singh. It was the residence for the kings who usually came to Kurukshetra for a holy bath in *Sannihit Sarovar* during a solar eclipse (Plate 3). After independence,

the Nabha house was used as space for a government school and then for an Ayurveda college. The second building of the *samadhi* of Wazir Singh, ruler of Faridkot State, died in Kurukshetra on 21 April 1874, after his death, a memorial was constructed (Plate 4). The construction of these monuments is an endure of Sikh art and architecture.

In Kurukshetra, all the *gurudwaras*, temples, mosques, *ashrams*, *sarovars*, etc. are in two-Kilometer surroundings and some have a common boundary. Gurudwara 9th *Patshahi* & Ancient Shiv Temple has their common pond for holly bath. In the early morning, one can listen to the *Gurubani*, *Aarti*, and *Aajan*.⁸



Plate 3: Nabha House



Plate 4: Faridkot House

In the east of Kurukshetra, Kapalmochan⁹ a small town in Yamunanagar district is a holy place for Hindus and Sikhs. It is believed that Guru Nanak Dev reached here from Haridwar via Saharanpur in the year *Samvat* 1584 on *Katak's* while blessing the people. Guru Gobind Singh also visited Kapalmochan *Samvat* 1736 *Kartikvadi Dwadashi*, Tuesday and was pleased with Jawala Das, *apurohit* of Kapalmochan *tirtha*, and granted him a *hukamnama* (Plate 5). Ramnath Mishra recited his story to Guru Gobind Singh during his second visit on *Samvat* 1745 and Guru was very much impressed and granted a *hukamnama*¹⁰ (Plate 6). It is believed that both the Gurus stressed the meaninglessness of superstitious beliefs and emphasized reciting and remembering God with fervor and faith.

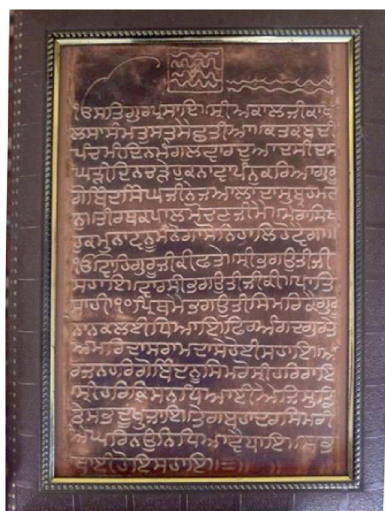


Plate 5: Humanamah, Smavat 1736



Plate 6: Humanamah, Smavat 1745

I

Bawal, a small town on Delhi-Jaipur Highway in the Rewari district, has many monuments from the reign of Nabha rulers, which are inscribed in Persian. These inscriptions are the original and primary source of history writing but find no place in the historians' eyes. On the main gate of a fort, a Persian inscription records the date of its construction.¹¹ One of the most unique bilingual inscriptions is therein a temple on red sandstone in Persian and *Devnagari* script emphasized the chronogram as well as numerical methods (Plate 7). This inscription witnesses the construction of a temple and pond by Bakhtawar Singh, Magistrate of Bawal, in the year *Samvat* 1926 (1869 AD). The third inscription¹² installed on a *sarai*, states that it was erected on the border during the reign of Maharaja Hira Singh Gosal¹³ (*wali-i Riyasat* of Nabha), by Lala Salagram, the Nazim of Bawal, in the year *Samvat* 1950 (1894 AD) (Plate 8).

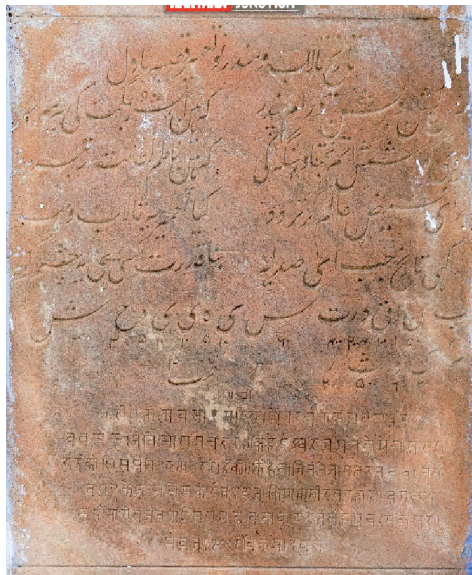


Plate 7: Tank & Temple Inscription

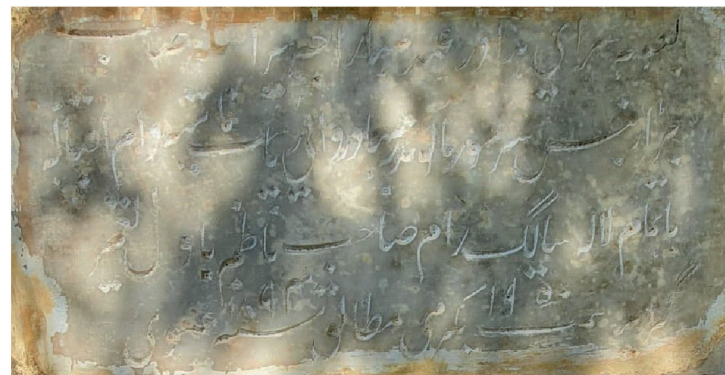


Plate 8: Bawal Sarai Inscription

A *Chhatri* is situated in the Surali-Bahalivillage on the Bawal-Rewari road and has four inscriptions, one in *Gurumukhi* and others in *Devnagari*. Out of four, three inscriptions have dates. The first inscription states the construction of a well, *chhatri*, and a temple by Raman Singh Sahay. The second inscription (Plate 9) emphasized that *achhatri* of Nathuram was constructed by his son Hoharaj in the 7th dark fortnight (*badi*), the month of *Vaishakha* in the year *Samvat* 1873, Thursday (18 April 1816) in the presence of *Mahant* Keshav Das of Bhadawas, 6th generation of Mohan Das *Ashram* and *Mahant* Totaram of Nangal. The inscription also mentioned the rate of grains and other good items in the year *Samvat* 1873.

If we go through the economic condition of south-east Punjab i.e. Modern Haryana or particularly the area of Punjab or its different provincial like Nabha, Patiala, etc. it becomes clear that agriculture depends on rain and is not well off. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Ajmer was the major trading centre and the trade route from Delhi passed through modern-day Gurgaon, Rewari, Narnaul, and Ajmer. Keeping in view the information of the inscription it is concluded with confidence that bullock and camel carts were the main source of loading. *Sarais*, *chhatris*, ponds, etc. were constructed for the tradesmen and the rates of grain mentioned in the inscription are good examples of this.

The *Gurumukhi* inscription¹⁴ witnesses the construction of a *chhatra* of Doda Jaat, son of Nainsukh, grandson of Ram Prasad (Pate 10). The writer of this inscription is Heera Singh Rajput of village Dhanaula and Mahatab Singh resident of village Rampur apprentice of Heera Chand, an employee of 4th Company in the army of the State Nabha, in the year 1917 in the presence of the Nabha official Dewan Ji Tehsildar Suadagar Mall Baniya, Thanedar Sheikh Qarim Baksh, Ganda Singh, Risaldar Raushan Ali, Officer Subedar Ishar Singh Gill, and Cashier Chunni Lal.

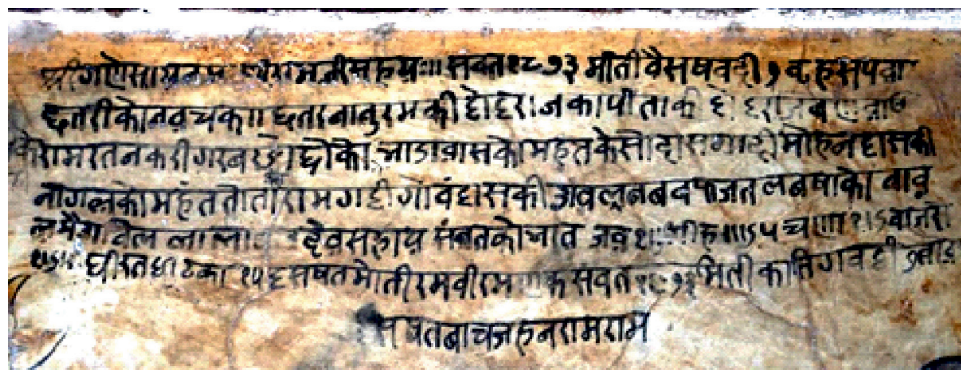


Plate 9: Surali-Bahali village Inscription

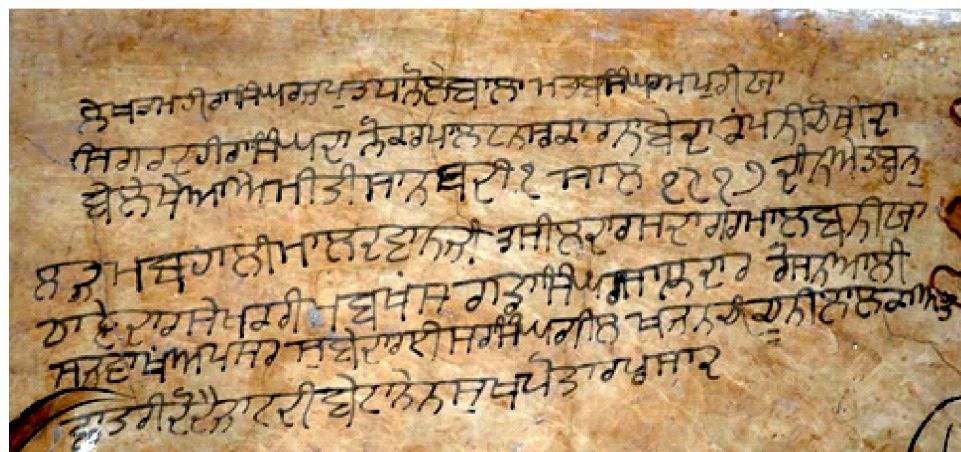


Plate 10: Surali-Bahali village Gurumukhi Inscription

II

Haryana is full of literary sources, scattered in every hook and nook. A Persian document, approx. one meter long, is in the possession of the descendent of Sheikh Jalaluddin Thanesari's family in Delhi. There are some names on this document which is signed with their seals on it. It is a very important document that proves Bhanga Singh and Bhag Singh,¹⁵ were the nephews of Mitha Singh, founder of the Thanesar family¹⁶ and a prominent Sardar of the Karorsinghia¹⁷ chiefship, after the fall of Sirhind, the *pargana* of Pehowa seized in January 1764. Bhanga Singh and Bhag Singh commanded a force of 750 horses and 250 soldiers. Bhag Singh and Bhanga Singh made a successful attack and captured Thanesar. About 800 people were killed and many were injured in this fighting. As soon as he captured Thanesar, he seized all his assets like royal treasury, documents, grains, etc. Their possessions comprised quite some estates in Indiri *Parganah*, some villages in Pehowa, and a large tract in Thanesar tehsil.

Pehowa, a small town near Thanesar was/is a rich centre of sacred Hindu rituals from birth to death for the last 300-400 years. Here *Tirtha Purohits* keep all the information of the pilgrims of north

India in their record books called *pothi* and *bahi* in the local language.¹⁸ Pilgrims of different castes and religions came to this place and share their information with the religious person known as Pandas who preserve this in their record books. This information about different places in north India can help in highlighting the socio-cultural and economic development in totality.

B. N. Goswami has used the term pilgrim registers, for these *bahis*.¹⁹ In Kurukshetra (Thanesar and Pehowa), *pandas* have 300-400 years old *bahis*. The purpose is intensely practical and is two-fold: for *pandas*, they form a record of all their *jajmans* from north India, for these *bahis* are a record of their visit with their ancestor's name and along with their signature.

The *bahis* grow year by year because each pilgrim after having performed the ceremony which often is the occasion of his visit makes an entry into the *bahi*. The entry runs something like this: the pilgrim first enters his ancestral place, place of his residence, his family details, date, and occasion of the visit, and lastly, he enters the payment or other gifts he gave to the *panda*.²⁰

The solar eclipse is the main occasion when thousands of pilgrims visit Kurukshetra. The *bahis* of the *pandas* also confirm this fact of the rulers of different states and the Guru paying a visit to this *tirtha* on the occasion of the solar eclipse fair.

Other occasions are *ChetraMela* and *Pitripaksha* when thousands of pilgrims visit Kurukshetra to perform the ritual *pind- daana*. It is believed that in the month of *ChaitraAmavasya*, if a person performs *pind-daana* for ancestors, they get *moksha*. At least 700 to 800 families of *purohits* live in Thanesar and Pehowa. Every *purohit* has a particular geographical area under his jurisdiction and maintains the records of that area carefully. The names of the area under their jurisdiction have been written in front of their office which has now become shops. There are hoarding like- *purohit* of Kullu district, *purohit* of Bilaspur state and district, *purohit* of Pathankot district, *purohit* of Sindh district, *purohit* of Bharatpur state, etc. Earlier their ancestors used to do this work for charity but now it has become a business. Being a priest's office shop and becoming a customer of pilgrims attests to this. It is also noteworthy here that consumerism took over religion and religious sentiments.

Vinod Pacholi, a *tirthapurohit* of Pehowa, mentioned the genealogy of Guru Gobind Singh's family with the help of *Majhabahi*.²¹ Anil Kumar, a research scholar in the Department of History, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra also pointed out the genealogy of the family of Guru Gobind Singh.²² In view of this, we can find out detailed information about the genealogy of Guru's family (Plate 11&12).

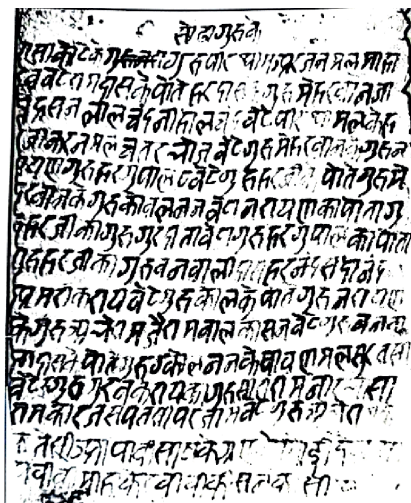


Plate 11: Sodhi Guru bahi

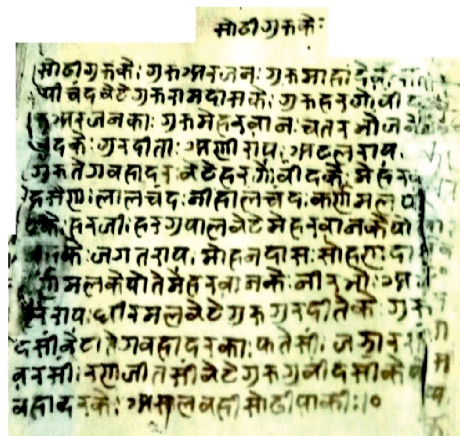
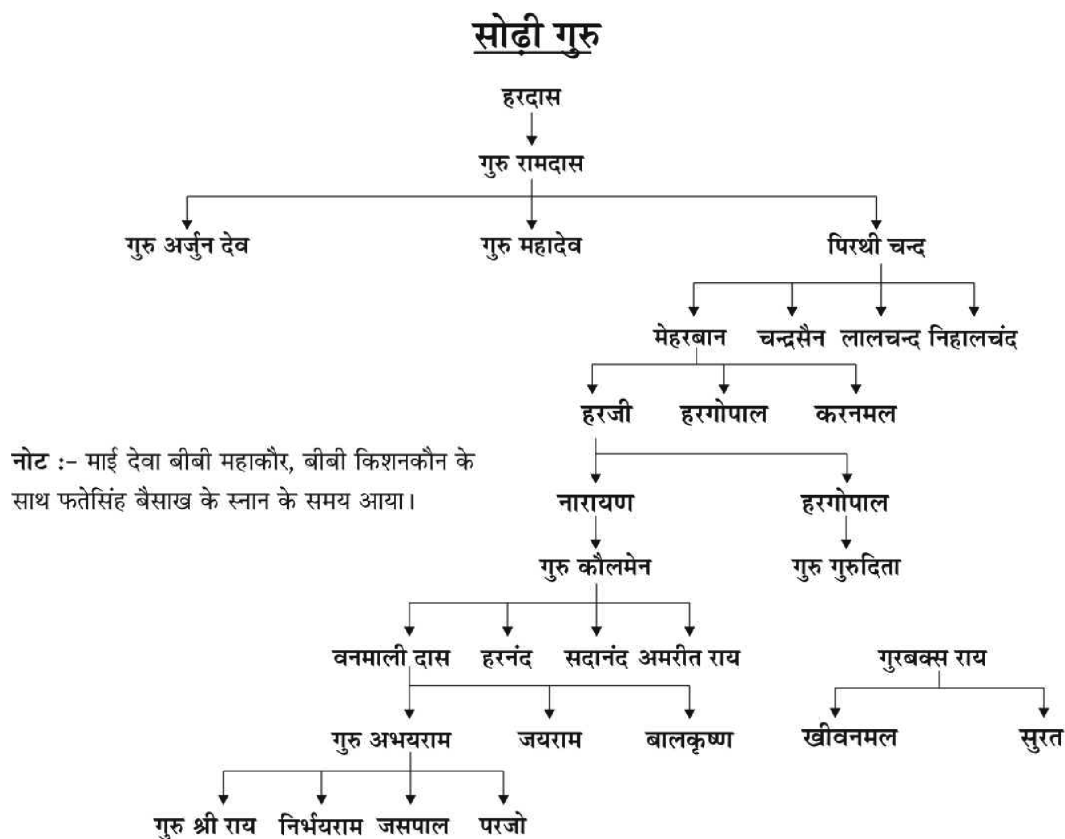
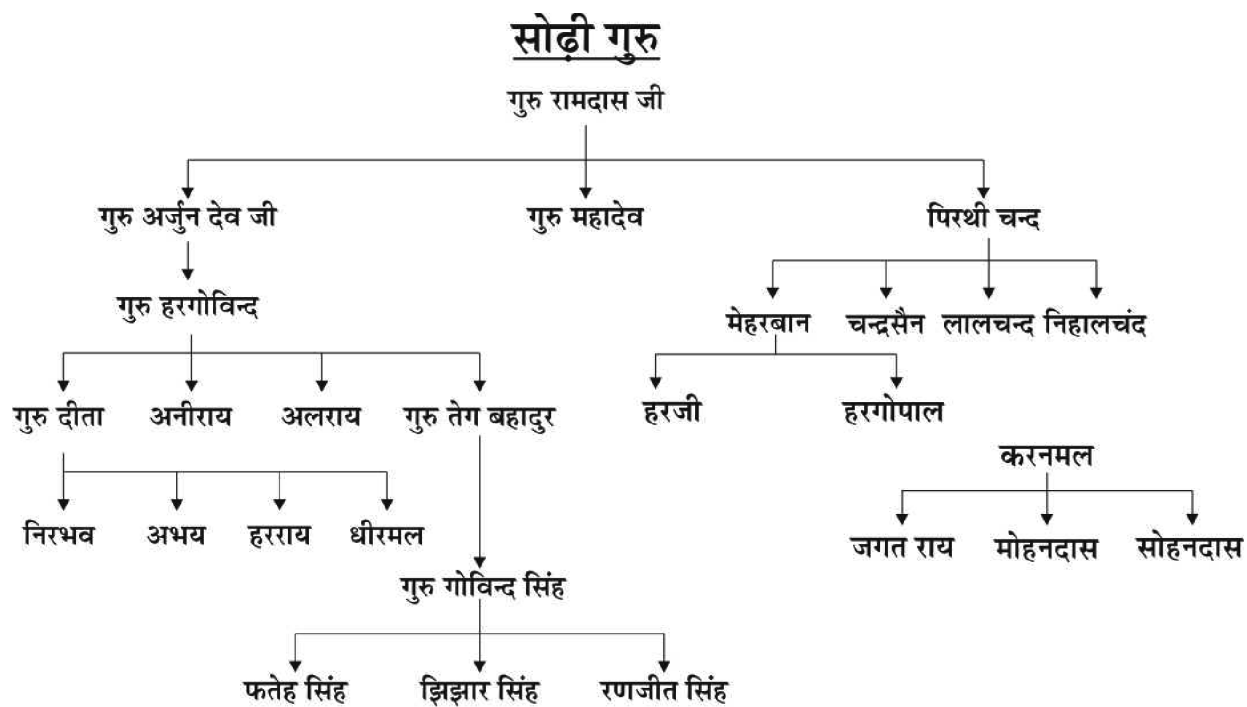


Plate 12: Sodhi Guru bahi

There are entries of Sodhi's of Punjab coming in large numbers for performing the ritual of *pinddaana*. The women of the Sodhi family also participate in the ritual of *pinddaana* and *gatidaana*.²³ As per plates 11 & 12, the genealogy chart of the SodhiGuru family is as follows:



Genealogy Chart of Plate 11



Genealogy Chart of Plate 12

In these genealogies, chart 11, did not mention the sequence of Gurbakhsha and his two sons. In this way, in chart 12 Karanmal and his three sons Jagat Rai, Mohandas, and Sohandas did not exist in this sequence. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's family members also came here for *Pinddaan*. *TirthaPurohit* mentioned detailed information regarding his visit, in his *bahi*. According to the SodhiBahi, the genealogy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Plate 13) is as under:

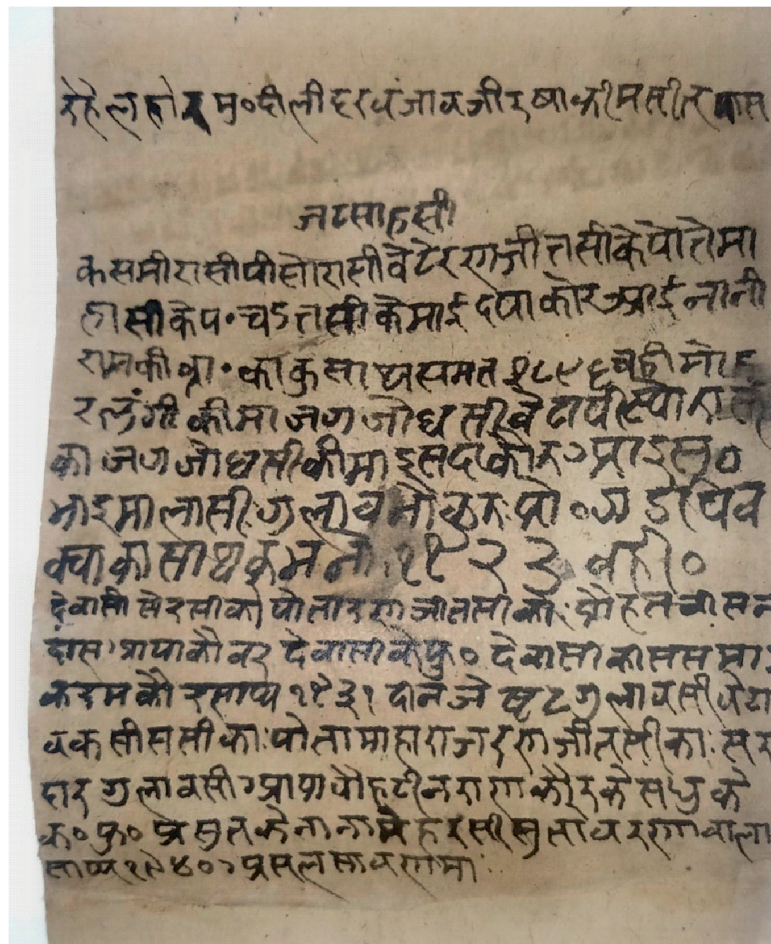
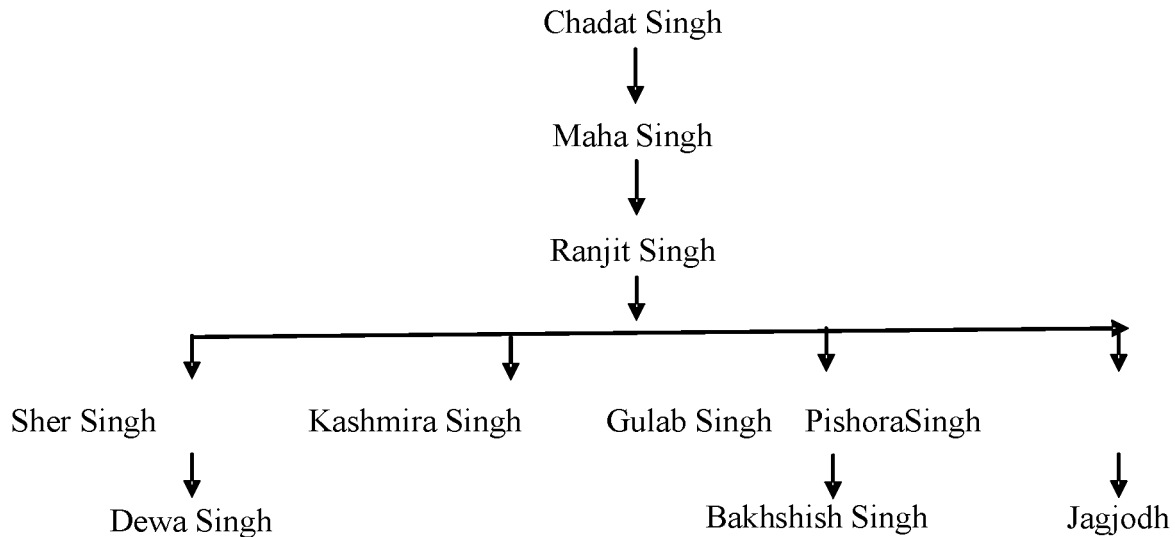


Plate 13: SodhiBahi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

According to *Sodhibahi*, it has been given by the five generations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He died in 1839 AD, so Kashmira Singh and Pishora Singh son of Ranjit Singh along with their mother Daya Kaur,²⁴ their grandmother-in-law and *brahman* Kakucame to Pehowa on *samvat* 1896 (1839 AD). On the next visit, Jagjodh Singh son of Pishora Singh came to Pehowa along with his mother Sadakaur on the occasion of the bath. A net visit occurred by Bhai Mala Singh along with his *pandit* who came to Pehowa when they were going to Kumbha on *samvat* 1923 (1866 AD). During this visit, Dewa Singh, son of Sher Singh, grandson of Ranjit Singh along with his *purohit* Bisan Das and his mother-in-law Karm Kaur came here and brought the *phool's* (*asthi's*) of Dewa Singh's son, in *samvat* 1931 (1874 AD). In the last entry of Bakhsis Singh son of Gulab Singh, grandson of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sardar Gulab Singh came to Pehowa along with his grandfather-in-law and brought his wife Narayan Kaur's *phool*. She died in the obstetrical.²⁵ In this way, some *panda* records the cause of death.

The next category of literary sources consists of *pattas* and *farmans* in possession of the *pandas* to record the gifts and grants given by the rulers. Isha Kumari pointed out that *tirthapurohit* Shashi Bhushan Sharma has two *pattas* in the Urdu script given by Raja Anand Chand of Bilaspur. In this *patta*, four *bighas* of land situated in Chandol village near Bilaspur were granted by the said ruler of the *purohit's* family as charity. In another *patta*, the same ruler granted two *bighas* of land near Narayangarh in Ambala district to his *tirthapurohit* of Kurukshetra. In another *patta* which is in the possession of *Pandit* Brij Sharma, a *Sodhi Jagirdar* named Kisen Singh Sodhi of Anandpur Sahib granted four *bighas* of land to his *tirthapurohit*.²⁶

The last category consists of personal papers of the *pandas* themselves. These include their account books and some personal letters including correspondence with their *jajmans*, especially the rulers, for example, the birth of a male baby in the royal family, succession of a new ruler, etc.²⁷

These records, however, have certain drawbacks as these are restricted only to the Hindus and Sikhs. The sacred system is not free from change. Various forces such as changing political order and administrative setup, economic strain, and modernization have tried to induce changes in the system, but the guardians of the tradition and various control mechanisms have kept the forces of change away from inhabiting any basic structural change in the tradition.

Concluding the above-mentioned primary source of the regional history of Punjab it can be assumed that a deep study of such sources can add more to the socio-economic and political history of the region. Hidden aspects of the composite culture of the different religious and social bases of the society get new looks and strengthen the social bonds of society. The micro-study of the topic mentioned in this research paper is the need of the hour in the period of the locality crisis. It is concluded that the glorious past can give a new path to society. This can be the future perspective of this research paper.

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7. Atul Yadav, *Haryana: ItihasikDharohar*, 35.
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9. KapalMochan is an ancient site, where Cunningham reported a stone slab probably a lower part of a sculpture bearing an inscription in *Brahmishcript* thatcan be assigned to the 7th – 8th century AD. Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report 1862-65*, vol. II(New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1872), 220-221; Charles J. Rodgers, *Revised Lists of Objects of Archaeological Interest in the Punjab* (Lahore, 1891), 53.
10. At present, both *hukamnamas* are well-preserved with Subhash Sharma, *tirthapurohit* of KapalMochan.
11. I would like to thank Sh. AnkurSangwan of Haryana Junction for providing me the photograph.
12. I am thankful to Prof. SubhashParihar, an eminent historian, for their transliteration and translation of this inscription.
13. This inscription mentioned the title of Hira Singh was Maharaja of Brar Bans Sarmaur, Malvendra Bahadur, *wali-i Riyasat*, of Nabha.
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22. Anil Kumar, *PehowākeDhārmikKulāchāryonkāekSansthāgatAdhyayan*, Unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation, Department of History (Kurukshetra: Kurukshetra University, 2002), 36-37.
23. Isha Kumari, “Bahis of Pandas,”307.
24. Ratan Kaur and Daya Kaur were both sisters, widows of Sahib Singh of Gujrat. Ratan Kaur had a son named Multana Singh in 1819 while Daya Kaur had twins, Kashmira Singh and Pashaura Singh in 1821 named after the conquests of Multan, Kashmir, and Peshawar by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

25. Anil Kumar, *PehowākeDhārmikKulāchāryonkāekSansthāgatAdhyayan*, 13-14; Pt. Vinod Pacholi, “MaharajRanjit Singh JikekeParivar Bare,” *Kurukshetra Janpad*, edited by Kuldeep Chand (Kurukshetra: BhartiyaItihasSankalanSamiti-Haryana, 2018), 52.
26. IshaKumari, “Bahis of Pandas,” 306-307.
27. IshaKumari, “Bahis of Pandas,” p. 308.