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Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies
Panjab University, Chandigarh

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PANJAB JOURNAL OF SIKH STUDIES



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DEPARTMENT OF GURU NANAK SIKH STUDIES
PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH

**PANJAB JOURNAL
OF
SIKH STUDIES**

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CONTENTS

Message

Professor Renu Vig
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Message

Professor Rumina Sethi, Dean of University Instruction
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Editorial

Professor Gurpal Singh, Editor-in-Chief
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Research Articles (English)

Page No.

- Paramourcy and the Princes - A Case Study of Political
Influence of Royal Houses of District Kangra: 1846-1947
Ankush Bhardwaj / Shivam Sharma 1-15
- Gender Disparity and Punjabi Children: A Geographical Analysis
Baljit Kaur / Harpreet Singh 16-34
- Prospective Commercial Models for Farmers Producer Organization:
A study of Punjab State
Gaurav Gaur / Hannu Gandhi 35-45
- Decorative Elements of Mughal Sarais of Punjab
Harsha Joshi 46-54
- Kartarpur Corridor: An 'Idea of Peace' through Religious Diplomacy
Jaskaran Singh Waraich / Harmanpreet Singh 55-65
- Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*
Karamjit K. Malhotra 66-81
- The Development of Clock Towers in Punjab Before 1947
Manmeet Kaur 82-92
- Endowments to the Sikh Institutions in Punjab
(Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century)
Meera Nagpal 93-107
- Portrayal of Caste, Religion, and Dalit Community in
Contemporary Punjabi Fiction: A Reading of
Bhagwant Rasoolpuri's Select Short-Stories
Ravinder Kaur 108-119

Contours of Women's Identity, Dependence and Liberation in Medieval Punjabi Devotion <i>Chandandeep / Priyatosh Sharma</i>	120-131
Urban Survival: A Case Study of Hissar <i>Reeta Grewal / Sonia</i>	132-139
Decomania: Study of Punjab's and Mumbai's Canvas <i>Rimaljeet Kaur</i>	140-149
Impact of Climate Crisis on Food Grain Production, Unemployment Rate and Health of Women - A comparative study of Punjab and West Bengal <i>Simran Kaur / Pratishtha</i>	150-168
The Construction of an Ideal Sikh Identity in Bhai Vir Singh's <i>Sundri</i> and <i>Bijay Singh</i> <i>Simrat Khurana</i>	169-179
Research Articles (Punjabi)	
ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਦੌਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ: ਇੱਕ ਪੜਚੋਲ <i>ਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ / ਬਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਿਰਕ</i>	180-191
ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ <i>ਨਾਇਲਾ ਆਜ਼ਮ ਕਾਜ਼ੀ</i>	192-205
ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ (ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ ਵਿਰਚਿਤ "ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ") <i>ਪੁਸ਼ਪਿੰਦਰ ਜੋਸ਼ੀ</i>	206-212
ਮਿਆਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਸ਼ਾਨਿਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ (ਬਾਣੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ) <i>ਰਾਜਵੀਰ ਕੌਰ</i>	213-219
ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਣਿਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ (ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ) <i>ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ</i>	220-227
ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ ਲਖਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ	228-231

Professor Renu Vig
Vice - Chancellor



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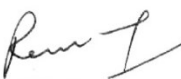


MESSAGE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies is publishing the ninth volume of the *Panjab Journal of Sikh Studies*. This journal has evolved into a platform dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and research. It is a bi-lingual journal published both in English and Punjabi. It is available online as well as a hardcopy

The Journal is broad-based cutting across disciplines. It is commendable that faculty as well as researchers publish original research showcasing new, bold ideas and perspectives in this Journal. The Journal contributes to a holistic understanding of society and culture, thereby taking the nation forward.

I extend my good wishes to the contributors and editors and I am confident that this Journal will continue to make significant advancements in research and introduce novel ideas.


(Renu Vig)

**OFFICE OF DEAN OF UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTION
PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH**



MESSAGE

In these dark times when the human civilization has nothing but odds amassed against it, we must learn to accept the challenges of ruthless capitalism, climate emergency and the genocidal sectarian conflicts that engulf our world. More than anything else, democracy stands refuted by the rampant inequity. Social groups that have historically dwelt on the margins continue to be excluded from all forms of rights, voices and privilege.

In this scenario, humanity must search for a solution based on humanity and justice, on tolerance and love. At such times, the teachings of Guru Nanak come to the forefront in our belief in the triumph of right over wrong, of truth over disinformation, deception and lies. To my mind, the first line of Japji Sahib becomes the central tenet of all religions: "There is One God./ He is the supreme truth."

I congratulate the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies in bringing out the Panjab Journal of Sikh Studies. I am sure the scholars on Sikh Studies will make substantial impact in our struggle to improve the world in the areas of human conscience and human accountability. We are at a juncture when we have to accept responsibility for ourselves and the world, remembering that 'By His writ some have pleasure, others pain;/ By His grace some are saved,/ Others doomed to die, relive, and die again. He will encompasseth all, there be none beside./ O Nanak, He who knows, hath no ego and no pride.' (Japji Sahib, Stanza 2)

Rumina Sethi
Dean of University Instruction

EDITORIAL

The *Panjab Journal of Sikh Studies* has carved a niche for itself in the field of academics and research. The Journal is a yearly **peer reviewed/refereed** publication addressing research in diverse areas of Sikh and Punjab studies. This Journal is bi-lingual and publishes articles in English as well as Punjabi. Its interdisciplinary scope is comprehensive enough to cover various aspects ranging from religious, literary, social, cultural, political, economic and contemporary issues. While its focus is the region of Punjab, it includes writings on Sikhs and Punjabis living in other parts of the world as well. The *Panjab Journal of Sikh Studies* publishes articles of high standard focusing on recent advancements in research of different subjects. An opportunity is provided to both faculty and students to produce insightful research at the local and regional level that will add new dimensions to the existing state of knowledge.

We are extremely grateful to the contributors for providing extensively researched articles. We express our gratitude to the referees for their expertise and generous cooperation. Thanks are also due to the editorial board for their hard work and support. We also wish to thank Dr. Sukhwinder Singh, Prince and Parmveer Singh SRF of Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies for providing valuable computer skills and to Mr Jatinder Moudgil, Manager, Panjab University Press, for the publication and printing of this issue.

Gurpal Singh, Chief Editor

Paramountcy and the Princes - A Case Study of Political Influence of Royal Houses of District Kangra: 1846-1947

Ankush Bhardwaj*
Shivam Sharma**

Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the extent of political power as was exercised by the petty potentates of District Kangra during the Colonial era. The paper covers the Riyasats of Lambagaon, Nadaun, Guler, Sibba, Datarpur, Jaswan, Nurpur, Kullu, Lahaul and Spiti and describes the nature of their political relations with the British Government. It makes an exhaustive use of primary sources and examines the part played by the British as a paramount power. It objectively looks at the role of the British in bringing modernism in the examined areas through among other thing by introducing the new system of judiciary and civil administration. Needless to say that this initiated a social change which had an impact on this area for many decades.

Keyword-Sanad, Monarch, British rule, Court of Wards, Pension, Jagir, Road Construction.

Kangra was under the suzerainty of Mughal and Sikh rule, with a brief interlude of Sansar Chand from C.E. 1786 to C.E. 1805. The period till C.E.1846 saw Sikh rule over the Hilly areas, with the Sikhs extracting tribute in one way or the other in the form of *Nazrana* and Succession Tax. The Anglo-Sikh wars from C.E. 1846 to C.E. 1848, in which majority of the Hill rulers helped the British against their erstwhile foes, the Sikhs, made the British redraw the rules of engagement with the Hill *Rajas*. The grant of *Sanad* to them defined the extent of control and their relation with the paramount power i.e. the British. The present paper shall cover the political aspect only with regard to the *riyasats* of Nadaun, Lambargoan, Siba, Datarpur, Nurpur, Kullu and Lahaul and Spiti, which fell under Colonial Kangra.

The ancient Katoch dynasty Kangra the state which is also referred to as *Trigarta*. Before the coming of British rule, Kangra was previously subjected to Mughal and Sikh rule. Their demands were mostly in cash and in kind. Political developments had divided the Katoch dynasty into three different branches, each following its own trajectory.

Raja Ranbir Chand, who was the grandson of famed *Raja* Sansar Chand, had assisted the British during the 1st Anglo-Sikh war, when it had broken out on 11

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December 1845.¹ He and his brother, Parmod Chand, had captured the Forts of Tirah and Riyah in C.E. 1846.² The other Forts conquered by them were Chaumukhi and Solah Singri, apart from the areas of Pathiar and Kharota in Palampur.³ The grateful British had then confirmed the *Jagir* of Mahal Morian to Ranbir Chand and he was also reimbursed for charges incurred.⁴ Parmod Chand, his brother, succeeded him after his death in C.E. 1847.⁵ Parmod Chand had an illegitimate son from a concubine named Pradhan Chand,⁶ The “Treaty of Lahore”, signed on 9 March 1846 had stipulated the transfer of all territories between Beas and Satluj to the British, with the result that Kangra, Guler, Jaswan, Datarpur, Nurpur, Kullu and Lahaul and Spiti came under the domination of the British.⁷ After their hopes of being generously treated by the British on par with the Shimla Hill States had been belied, the ruler of Kangra, Parmod Chand, supported the Sikh insurrections of C.E.1848, with the result that he was banished to Almora, where he died in C.E. 1851.⁸ Thus ended the direct lineage of the Katoch House.

A different line was followed by the lineage of *Raja* Fateh Chand, who was the younger brother of Sansar Chand. His son, Ludhar Chand, had rendered valuable service to the British during the Anglo-Sikh war of 1848-49, with the result that his *Jagir* worth Rs. 35,598 [Thirty Five Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Eight] was confirmed to him.⁹ After his death in C.E. 1850 due to paralysis,¹⁰ he was succeeded by his son Partap Chand, who was recognized as the head of *Katoch* dynasty by the British.¹¹ A *sanad*, written on 21 October 1847, defined the succession and other rights and also gave back the territory which was possessed by the Royal House of Lambagaon during the time of the outbreak of hostilities on the following conditions.

1. The King shall have no power to try criminal cases.
2. The King shall have no rights to collect Excise or Road tax.
3. The *Jagir* shall be bestowed upon the real sons of the *Raja* and not to anyone born by concubines.
4. It shall be mandatory to construct roads with a width of eleven hands within his *Jagir* and that too with his own expenses.¹²

The above *sanad* had also stipulated that no road cess was to be collected by the Royal House of Lambagraon. However, after the death of *Raja* Partap Chand, his successors breached this part of the agreement and levied road cess, for which the amount collected was Rs. 600 [Six Hundred]¹³ The British intervened and it was decided to use the amount for repairing the existing roads in the estate and to use the balance, if any, for repairing the palace.¹⁴

Kirat Chand and Udai Chand, the younger siblings of Partap Chand, also received annual allowances of Rs.3,000 [Three Thousand] and Rs. 2,000 [Two Thousand] respectively.¹⁵ The British intervention was seen on two occasions, Firstly, when due

to the extravagance of the *Raja*, the heavy debt accumulated was cleared through the management of “Court of Wards”, with the British managing the state after his death in C.E. 1864 due to his son being minor at that time.¹⁶ He was educated by the British at Mayo College, Ajmer¹⁷ and also through British private tutors, who were paid Rs. 100 [Hundred] a month for their services.¹⁸ The British granted him the Honorary rank of Major in C.E. 1868 [later promoted to Colonel] in the 37th Bengal Infantry, where he served with distinction in Black Mountain and Chitral Relief expeditions.¹⁹ Due to the help rendered by *Raja* Jai Chand in World War I, he was raised to the title of ‘*Maharaja*’ in C.E. 1921.²⁰ He had magisterial powers [both Civil and Criminal] within his jurisdiction, as a Magistrate of Second Class [without the power to give sentence of whipping]²¹, later raised to the First Class,²² apart from being a Sub-Registrar of his *Jagir*.²³ He also had the power of a *Munif* within his estate.²⁴ He was also ranked Number Two among the Viceregal *Durbars* of District Kangra.²⁵ The British also conferred upon him the title of “Knight Companion of the Indian Empire”.²⁶ *Maharaja* Jai Chand died in C.E. 1935 and was succeeded by his son Dhruv Dev Chand, who attained the age of majority in C.E. 1943. Till then, the state was managed by the ‘Court of Wards’.²⁷

The third line of the Katoch House was the Royal House of Nadaun. In spite of being enthroned as a chieftain by Ranjit Singh, *Raja* Jodhbir Chand had sided with the British during the Anglo-Sikh wars and was conferred a *Jagir* of Rs.26,270 [Twenty Six Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy] and recognized as the head of Katoch dynasty.²⁸ He was bestowed with “Knight Companion of the Indian Empire” and also exercised powers of a First Class Magistrate, a Sub-Judge and a Sub-Registrar, apart from being given a seven gun salute.²⁹ The British Government, in a *Sanad* issued on 22 September 1846, had stipulated the division of his estate after his demise. The other provisions in the said *sanad* were as follows.

1. The *Raja* was to collect the revenue in accordance with the rules framed by the Superintendent and the Commissioner.
2. The *Raja* was not to collect any tax on goods coming in or going out of his territory.
3. The *Raja* was given the territory in perpetuity, which he had held at the time of insurrections, subject to the condition that the sons should be born to his legal wife and not to the concubines.³⁰

The said *Raja* had applied to the British for non-division of his estate after his demise, for which purpose again a *sanad* was issued on 5 June 1851, in which the Government acceded to his request.³¹

The death of *Raja* Jodhbir Chand in C.E. 1873 saw his son Amar Chand succeeding to the *gaddi*, with him having Civil and Criminal powers within his jurisdiction [he was a First Class Magistrate and a Civil Judge].³² He was also ranked fourth among

the Viceregal *Durbaris* of Kangra District.³³ His brothers too were absorbed into the British imperial system. *Mian Hari Singh* was the Extra-Assistant Commissioner and *Mian Sher Singh* was Assistant Superintendent in Police.³⁴ After the demise of *Raja Amar Singh* in C.E. 1890, his son *Narender Chand* succeeded to the *Gaddi* and was made a First Class Magistrate, a Civil Judge and Sub-Judge for the whole of Kangra District, apart from being conferred with the title of “Companion”³⁵. The British help was also forthcoming to *Raja Narender Chand*, when he had fallen under the debt of Rs. 1,00,000 [One Lakh]. The British sanctioned him a loan of Rs, 1,49,715 [One Lakh Forty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Fifteen] and the *Raja* had to mortgage his land in Hamirpur and Palampur.³⁶ His son, *Mahender Chand* too was invested with powers of Third Class Magistrate, which were raised to Second Class in C.E. 1917³⁷ but was divested of same in C.E. 1924 on account of his questionable dealings.³⁸ The same was restored to him in C.E. 1933.³⁹ The British were reluctant to give the same powers to his son, *Rajinder Chand* as he was in arrears of his debt, but recanted after the said debt was paid for by the *Raja* and therefore, he was made a Magistrate and a Sub-Judge.⁴⁰ The death of *Raja Mahender Chand* in A.D. 1935 saw an ‘allowance’ battle within the family, with the mother of the then *Raja Rajinder Chand* accusing him of nonpayment of the stipulated amount of Rs. 400 [Four Hundred]⁴¹, with the British Government intervening to solve the mess.⁴² The British forced the *Raja* to adhere to the stipulated amount inspite of the protestations made by the former.⁴³ The British intervention was again in offing as the progeny of the *Raja Mahender Chand* had arbitrarily reduced the amount granted to his other family members from Rs. 1200 [Twelve Hundred] to Rs. 820 [Eight Hundred Twenty] and further to Rs. 600 [Six Hundred] per annum.⁴⁴ The British made it clear to the Royal House that the power to revise the allowance rests with them only and not with the monarch.⁴⁵ The British also gave loans to them whenever they were in need like in C.E. 1878, a loan of Rs. 50,000 [Fifty Thousand] was sanctioned in lieu of his state.⁴⁶ An annual *nazrana* of Rs, 5000 [Five Thousand] was paid to the British by *Nadaun*.⁴⁷

Guler, the senior branch of the Katoch dynasty, had remained under the Sikh domination till C.E. 1846. *Raja Shamsher Singh* had exhibited a feeling of loyalty towards the English during the Anglo-Sikh wars.⁴⁸ The *sanad* granted to him on 4 March 1853, defined his relations with the British and gave *Raja Shamsher Singh Guleria* the *Jagir* of *Taluqa Nandpur* and the area of *Tripal* in *Haripur Taluqa* in perpetuity on the condition of him having male issues via his wife only and not his concubines. It also contained the following provisions.

1. The King was to only collect Land revenue and couldn’t collect revenue from excise, drugs, irrigation and rent from shops.
2. He shall construct eleven hands wide roads within his *Jagir* and with his own expense.
3. The Fort of *Haripur* shall never be made war-worthy.

4. The Royal House will have hunting rights in the forests of Jhabar Ban i.e. the villages of Qasbah, Lohara, Garhi and Pahnoli.
5. He shall have to present himself and his troops before the British whenever required.⁴⁹

After his death in C.E.1877, his brother Jai Singh succeeded to the throne on the following terms.

1. He will only be considered as a *Jagirdar*.
2. He will have no power to levy taxes on intoxicants.
3. He will not ask for police and magisterial powers.⁵⁰

Jai Sing was conferred the title of *Raja* in C.E. 1878 by the British.⁵¹ Help was also forthcoming from the British in the form of a loan amounting to Rs. 80,000 [Eighty Thousand] when the former had asked for it.⁵² After his death in C.E. 1884, his son Raghunath Singh succeeded him and he was given a *Khilat* and *Nazrana* by the British.⁵³ He was ranked as 1st among the monarchs of Kangra in the Viceregal *Durbar*.⁵⁴ He was conferred the title of *Raja* in C.E. 1920 by the British.⁵⁵ He exercised Criminal and Civil powers within his *Jagir*, with him being appointed as Second Class Magistrate and a Second Class *Munsif* within the limits of District Kangra.⁵⁶ He was later made a Honorary Magistrate of the First Class in September 1926 for three years⁵⁷ and also worked as Probationary Extra Assistant Commissioner.⁵⁸ He was also the first Viceregal *Durbari* in the Kangra District.⁵⁹ *Raja* Baldev Singh had the unfortunate distinction of being last head of this Royal House as his son *Tikka* Nardev Chand died on 18 July 1955.⁶⁰

Like other hill states at that time, Siba was subjected to the rule of Ranjit Singh till C.E. 1845, who had it divided it between two cousins- *Raja* Govind Singh and *Mian* Devi Singh.⁶¹ The Sikh insurrections provided an opportunity for Ram Singh, who had succeeded his father Govind Singh, following the latter's death in C.E. 1845, to attack the areas held by his cousin Bijay Singh.⁶² This event prompted the Paramount power, the British to intervene and a *sanad* written on 28 November 1847 by Kanhaiya Lal Nazir defined the rights and obligations of *Raja* Ram Singh. The *sanad* stated that the area which was under the possession of the Royal House at the beginning of the hostilities shall be restored to *Raja* Ram Singh in perpetuity on the stated condition that his male progeny should not have been blood related to his maid-servant.⁶³ Other provisions stated in the *sanad* were as follows.

1. The King could not try criminal cases.
2. The King could not collect any tax from traders.
3. He shall construct roads having a width of fifteen hands with his own expense.
4. The King shall destroy the strategic positions in his Fort and shouldn't repair the same.

5. He shall have to present himself whenever summoned by the Government.⁶⁴

The British had also made Dada and Siba into one unit in C.E.1849 with Ram Singh retaining his *Jagir* and also the title of *Raja*.⁶⁵ Bijay Singh was given six villages having an annual income of Rs. 4,800[Four Thousand and Eight Hundred] but his *Jagir* was confiscated due to his involvement in the insurrections of C.E. 1848.⁶⁶ On the personal recommendation of the *Raja* of Jammu and also to the fact that his Royal House had rendered loyal service during the uprising of C.E. 1857, the annexed territory was restored to him in C.E. 1858, for which a *Sanad*, written on December 2 1858 at Jalandhar by *Wazir* Rup Chand, stated the terms of restoration as follows.

1. He couldn't administer criminal cases.
2. The British shall arbitrate in case of any dispute between the King and his subjects.
3. He couldn't realize any tax upon traders.
4. The King ought to build roads having a width of eleven hands.
5. He is bound to side with the British in case of any emergency.⁶⁷

The death of Ram Singh in C.E. 1874 saw the whole *Jagir* being made over to Bijay Singh, who was obliged to pay the tribute of Rs. 1500 [Fifteen Hundred] to the British Government.⁶⁸ Bijay Singh was also made to pay an amount of Rs. 3,000 [Three Thousand] to his brother Gulab Singh and nephew Karam Singh by the British Government.⁶⁹ Gulab Singh's sub-*Jagir* lapsed to the *Raja* of Siba after his death on account of him having two illegitimate sons-Tara Singh and Hari Singh.⁷⁰ Bijay Singh was finally given the title of *Raja* in C.E. 1878, just before his death in C.E. 1879.⁷¹ His son Jai Singh enjoyed judicial rights as a Second Class Magistrate and a Second Class *Munsif* within his *Jagir* and he was ranked third in the list of Provincial *Durbaris* of Kangra.⁷² The income from his *Jagir* was Rs.32,000[Thirty Two Thousand]⁷³. He was officially given the title of "*Raja*" as a hereditary distinction by the British on 15 March 1919.⁷⁴ After the death of *Raja* Jai Singh in C.E. 1920, his son Gajinder Singh succeeded him and his younger son, *Mian* Upender Singh was granted an allowance for his subsistence but with the former's death in C.E. 1925, the *Jagir* passed into the name of Sham Singh, the son of *Mian* Tarlochan Singh, the step brother of *Raja* Jai Singh.⁷⁵ Upender Singh, who was the younger brother of Jai Singh, was paid an allowance of Rs. 1000 [One Thousand], which he scorned and petitioned the British Government for its revision, which dismissed his claims.⁷⁶ The present titular ruler is *Raja* Brijinder Singh, who succeeded his father in C.E. 2000.⁷⁷

As had happened with other hill states, the state of Datarpur was reduced to the status of *Jagir* during the rule of Ranjit Singh.⁷⁸ However, the Datarpur House had revolted against the British in C.E. 1848 and consequently both Govind Chand

and his son Jagat Chand were banished to Almora by the British⁷⁹ and were paid an amount of Rs.3,600[Three Thousand and Six Hundred.]⁸⁰ As had been stated in previous pages, the areas of Datarpur and Siba were made one unit by the British in C.E. 1849.⁸¹ *Raja* Jagat Singh was permitted by the Political Department to settle at Benaras, with him receiving Rs. 200 [Two Hundred Rupees] per month,⁸² whereas his son *Mian* Devi Chand was allowed to come to Mandi⁸³, with him getting Rs. 100 [Hundred] per month as maintenance.⁸⁴ The British Government, however, didn't allow him to resume his *Jagir*.⁸⁵ Apart from Rs. 100 [Hundred], which he was receiving from the British Government, he also used to receive Rs. 2,400[Twenty Four Hundred] annually plus a *Jagir* from the *Raja* of Mandi.⁸⁶ *Raja* Jagat Chand died in C.E. 1877 and the British continued to give pension of Rs. 50 [Fifty] to his widow named Patial.⁸⁷ *Mian* Devi Chand died in C.E. 1883 at Mandi and his son Suram Chand joined the service of Jammu and Kashmir and rendered conspicuous service in the Army of that state, rising to the rank of General.⁸⁸ For his stupendous services at Gilgit, the Government honored him with the title of “*Sardar Bahadur*.”⁸⁹ His other son, Raghubir Chand was granted a pension of Rs. 35 [Thirty Five] per mensem for life by the British in C.E. 1884, while his widow [wife of Devi Chand] was given a pension of Rs. 15 [Fifteen] per mensem for life.⁹⁰ The present titular head of this Royal house is Baldeo Chand.⁹¹

Raja Ummed Singh of Jaswan was also reduced to the status of a *Jagirdar* during the period of Sikh rule.⁹² However, he and his son Jai Singh joined the Sikh side during the unrest of C.E. 1848. They were defeated by the British and their Forts of Amb and Akhrot were destroyed and both of them were perished to Almora, where they died.⁹³ However, the fortunes of Jaswan Royalty shined again when *Raja* Jai Singh's son, Raghunath Singh was married to the daughter of *Maharaja* Ranbir Singh of Jammu and Kashmir.⁹⁴ A *Jagir* was also given for his maintenance at Ramkot in Jammu by *Maharaja* Ranbir Singh.⁹⁵ The British Government also showed magnanimity as in C.E. 1877, the areas which were possessed by the Jaswan Royal House prior to the annexation of the territory by the British, were restored to Jaswan.⁹⁶ A *Sanad* was also given to Raghunath Singh in C.E. 1877, which bestowed to the Royal House, buildings at Rajpura and propriety rights over the garden at Amb.⁹⁷ This *Jagir* comprised 21 villages and the revenue derived from it was Rs. 18,442 [Eighteen Thousand Four Hundred Forty Two] per annum, apart from him also being made as a Provincial *Durbari*.⁹⁸ The stated orchard comprised an area of 25 acres, with him enjoying tribute free rights over it.⁹⁹ The British also granted him the personal title of ‘*Raja*’ in C.E. 1895.¹⁰⁰

The insurrections by Ram Singh of Nurpur during the stormy period of 1840s did not have any bearing on the British attitude towards his descendant, Jaswant Singh. Jaswant Singh, who was a minor during this time, was offered a *Jagir* worth Rs. 20,000 [Twenty Thousand] in C.E. 1846 by Sir Henry Lawrence, the Agent of Governor-General at Lahore, on the condition that the said *Raja* wouldn't reside in

Nurpur.¹⁰¹ As the offer was contemptuously declined by Nurpur officials, Sir John Lawrence reduced the amount to Rs. 5,000 [Five Thousand], which was then accepted by the Nurpur house in C.E. 1847, with the British raising the pension to Rs. 10,000 [Ten Thousand] in C.E. 1861,¹⁰² in consideration of the loyal service rendered by Nurpur during the uprising of C.E. 1857 and also due to the representation made by the Deputy Commissioner.¹⁰³ The British also gave the him lands in Kachch and an orchard called Macchi Bhawan and in C.E. 1867, a part of the pension allotted was made into a small *Jagir*, comprising the village of Branda Kandwahl,¹⁰⁴ amounting to Rs. 2,138 [Two Thousand One Hundred and Thirty Eight].¹⁰⁵ The rest amount of Rs. 7862 [Seven Thousand Sixty Two] a year was paid in cash.¹⁰⁶ The *Raja* also had 500 [Five Hundred] acres of forest and agricultural lands in the areas of *Mauza* Chatroli Ghati, Kach, Gheas and Lagor in Nurpur.¹⁰⁷ The British had exempted these mentioned areas from any sort of taxation.¹⁰⁸ *Raja* Jaswant Singh was also number six in the Viceregal *Durbars* of District Kangra and upon his death in A.D. 1898, his state was taken over by ‘Court of Wards’ for three years as his son, Gagan Singh, was minor at that time.¹⁰⁹ A pension of Rs. 7862 [Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Two] in perpetuity was given to Gagan Singh after the death of his father, apart from a maintenance allowance of Rs. 50 [Fifty] per mensem.¹¹⁰ After coming of age, he enjoyed the powers of a Third Class Magistrate in C.E. 1904 and he could hear cases pertaining to money, land and unclassified suits¹¹¹ He was also a *Munsif* of Third Class.¹¹² He was promoted to the position of a Second Class Magistrate in C.E. 1908 but wasn’t given the power to pass sentence of whipping and was also made the *Munsif* of Second Class.¹¹³ His status further increased in A.D. 1910, when he was made a Magistrate of First Class with his jurisdiction extending within the local limits of Kangra district.¹¹⁴ In C.E. 1908, he was made a hereditary *Raja* by the British and Sixth Provincial Governor of the Kangra District.¹¹⁵ His brother, *Mian* Udham Singh, served as a *Subedar* in the 29th Punjabi Regiment.¹¹⁶ He was given a pension of Rs. 50 [Fifty] per month by the British.¹¹⁷

Kullu was a *Tehsil* of the newly created District of Kangra in C.E. 1846.¹¹⁸ Thakur Singh, who was the *Raja* during the Sikh rule, was confirmed by the British in his *Jagir* of Waziri-Rupi with sovereign powers and the claims of Jagat Singh of Shangri were rejected.¹¹⁹ On the death of Thakur Singh in C.E. 1852, his son from a concubine, Gyan Singh, was not recognized as the *Raja* and was instead given the title of ‘*Rai*’.¹²⁰ He was devoid of any judicial or executive power and only half of the *Jagir* was bestowed upon him.¹²¹ After the death of the said *Rai* in C.E. 1869, his *Jagir* passed into the hands of his minor son, *Rai* Dalip Singh.¹²² It was therefore, managed by the ‘Court of Wards’ till C.E. 1883.¹²³ *Rai* Dalip Singh was made a nominated member of the District Board Kangra and the Kullu Local Board.¹²⁴ He also had the powers of First Class Magistrate and was the seventh courtier from District Kangra in the Court of Viceroy.¹²⁵ His son, Megh Chand, took over in C.E.

1903, after coming of age and had the powers of a Second Class Magistrate from C.E. 1904¹²⁶ till he was promoted as First Class Magistrate in C.E. 1911.¹²⁷ His estate was left with a balance of Rs. 20,000 [Twenty Thousand] after being cleared of all debt by the ‘Court of Wards.’¹²⁸ He also helped the British during World War I by recruiting soldiers, who were then resettled, with the British giving each of them Ten *bighas* of land.¹²⁹ He was succeeded by his son *Rai* Balwant Singh in C.E.1921, who continued to be the head till independence.¹³⁰

After the “Treaty of Lahore” in C.E. 1846, the British had decided to keep Lahaul in consideration of their trade with Tibet.¹³¹ The British also continued the system which was in vogue during the previous Sikh rule, with the *Negis*¹ exercising powers within their jurisdiction. Bali Ram was conferred with the title of *Negi* during this time, but he had to resign as differences had cropped up between him and the British Government.¹³² The British therefore, had made Tara Chand of Keylong as the new *Negi*,¹³³ with him exercising jurisdiction over the whole of Lahaul and having a Magisterial power of Second class, with power to try both Civil and Criminal cases.¹³⁴ He could give imprisonment upto one month with fine and also entertain both Civil and Criminal cases worth Rs. 50 [Fifty] and for all the services rendered, he received Rs. 25 [Twenty Five] per mensem.¹³⁵ The Britishers also appointed him as Honorary Extra Assistant Commissioner in C.E. 1861.¹³⁶ After his death in C.E. 1876, his son Hari Chand was the new *Negi* and was given the new title of *Wazir*.¹³⁷ He was the Fifteenth Provincial *Durbari* of Kangra District and also a member of Local Board of Kullu, with him having judicial power over the whole of Lahaul and he was also allowed by the British to keep all the fines and fees received in Criminal and Revenue cases, for which an allowance of Rs. 550 [Five Hundred Fifty] was paid to him for being a Sub-Registrar of Lahaul.¹³⁸ He also rendered great service to the British prior to him becoming the *Wazir* or *Negi*. In C.E. 1858, he had obtained information with regard to the death of Mr. Schlagentweit of the Survey department, after his murder by Wali Khan of Yarkand, apart from proceeding to Tibet in 1863-64 in order to gauge its trade potential with British India.¹³⁹ He had also advanced upto Yarkand in C.E.1870, with Sir Douglas Forsyth, to gather information regarding the areas of their trade route.¹⁴⁰ After his passing away, Amar Chand took over as the new *Negi* in C.E. 1914, with him also being appointed as a *Jamadar* in the British Indian Army and bestowed with the title of *Rai Bahadur*.¹⁴¹ His death in C.E. 1921 saw his son Abhe Chand being at the helm, who continued to rule till the area was merged with Himachal Pradesh in C.E. 1967.¹⁴²

The administration in Spiti region was done through *Nono* or the ‘Great Noble’. The *Nono* at the start of the British rule was Tanzam Namgyal, who was also made a Honorary Magistrate by the British and given the power to fine upto Rs. 10 [Ten] on criminal cases. However, he couldn’t try civil suits.¹⁴³ A controversy had

¹ Negi- The chief village headman having administrative charge is referred to as Negi in Lahaul.

erupted in C.E. 1861, when two officials, Choto *Nono* and *Chiring*² claimed themselves to be free from the authority of *Nono*, with the British Deputy Commissioner of Kangra, Mr. Ergeton, following a prudent policy and terminating the claims of both the parties.¹⁴⁴ *Nono* Namgyal was made responsible to collect to collect the land revenue of the said areas, for which he received a remuneration of Rs. 282 [Two Hundred Eighty]¹⁴⁵ His son, Durze Tsetan succeeded him in C.E. 1878, with him being made the sixteenth Provincial *Durbari* in District Kangra.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

The above information highlights that the suzerainty over the hilly areas by the British was on the same line as by the Sikhs or Mughals but cash was demanded by the British whereas cash and kind were demanded by the latter. The previous rulers had contended themselves with tributes only while the British rule touched every aspect of political life. The British control was more organized, with the granting of *Sanad*, which put the *Rajas* under obligations like rendering military assistance, building roads, to levy only that taxes which were sanctioned by the British. The British settled, any disputes between the ruling houses via arbitration. The said arbitration was seen in a number of cases such as in the ruling house of Nadaun, when after the death of *Raja* Mahender Chand in C.E. 1935, an allowance battle had started within the family. Nadaun Royal House again saw the British intervention when the descendants of *Raja* Mahender Chand, after his death, had arbitrarily reduced the pension to be paid to other family members. The British intervention was also forthcoming when Ram Singh of Siba Royal House had attacked areas held by his cousin Bijay Singh in C.E 1845. Another instance of intervention in Siba had happened in C.E. 1925, when Upender Singh, who happened to be the younger brother of *Raja* Jai Singh, had petitioned the British Government for revision of the pension granted to him. The British arbitration was also forthcoming when the house of Lambagaon breached a part of agreement which had forbidden the levying of road cess. Spiti region also saw British mediation in C.E 1861, when two officials refused to recognize the authority of *Nono*. The British also followed the earlier rulers when they too made the grant of titles like *Rai Bahadur*, *Sardar Bahadur*, *Maharaja*, *Raja* to the hilly *Rajas* as seen with the ruler of Lambagaon, Jai Singh, who was given the title of *Raja* in C.E. 1921, Guler ruler, *Raja* Jai Singh, was conferred the title in C.E. 1878, followed by his son Raghunath Singh, who was conferred the title in C.E. 1820. Another case in point is from the Royal House of Siba, whose ruler Bijay Singh was honored with the title of *Raja* in C.E. 1878. His son, Jai Singh was officially recognized as *Raja* in C.E. 1919. The son of the incumbent *Raja* of Siba, Suram Chand was bestowed with the title of *Sardar Bahadur* by the British government in lieu of his exceptional bravery in Gilgit. Amar chand, who became the new *Negi* in C.E. 1914, was also given the title

² Chiring- the head of the military and civilian authority in Spiti.

of *Rai Bahadur* by the British Government. The British also helped the *Rajas* whenever they were in debt as was twice seen in Nadaun, when the British government gave a loan of Rs. 1,49,715 [One Lakh Forty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifteen] and Rs. 50,000 [Fifty Thousand] in order to tide off financial emergency. Jai Singh from Guler *riyasat* was also given Rs. 80,000 [Eighty Thousand] when the former had asked for it. A different approach was adopted by the British with regard to primogeniture as the new rulers forbade the kings from making any of their progeny *Raja*, if the latter was a son of a concubine. This rule was strictly imposed and was made with every *riyasat*. The modern system of civil administration which the British had introduced in other parts of India at that time was also implanted in the hills and most of Monarchs were absorbed in as Judges and in Army. *Raja* Jai Singh of Lambagroan House was given the title of Honorary Major in C.E. 1868 while Suram Chand of Datarpur royalty served in the Army of Jammu and Kashmir and rose to the rank of General. Likewise, *Mian* Udham Singh of Nurpur princely state was a *subedar* in 29th Punjab Regiment. Another notable mention is of Amar Chand, who became the *Negi* of Lahual in C.E. 1914 and served as a *Jamadar* in the British Indian Army. While many of the monarchs loyally served the British in this capacity, a substantial number of them were absorbed in as Judges, with powers to try both Civil and Criminal matters. Jai Singh of Lambagroan, Amar Chand, Mahender Chand and Rajinder Chand of Nadaun Royal House, Raghunath Singh of Guler, Jai Singh of Siba, Gagan Singh of Nurpur, *Rai* Dilip Singh and Megh Chand of Kullu and Tara Chand of Lahual all held offices of Magistrates in their respective areas. Also all of the *rajas* in Colonial Kangra were in list of Provincial *Durbaris* of Kangra. The Monarchs, during the British time, were more dependent upon the paramount power which exerted more control than had been during the earlier Sikh and Mughal rule. The increased control under British rule led to a peaceful coexistence between the hilly states as the paramount power had complete authority.

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Gender Disparity and Punjabi Children: A Geographical Analysis

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Abstract

An effort has been made to examine the spatial patterns of child sex ratio in Punjab during 2001-2011. This study is based on data from the Statistical Abstract of Punjab and Census of India. Tehsils have been selected as study units. One of the significant aspects of this paper has been identification of driving factors responsible for the spatial variations in terms of gender inequality among the children. Among the various socio-economic factors deep-rooted patriarchal structure of rural society played a negative role in terms of gender disparity among the Punjabi children. Urban areas of the state emerged with relatively high child sex ratio than that of rural areas. Disparities at regional level have also been observed. Out of all the traditional geographical regions (Majha, Malwa, Doaba) Majha has emerged as the hot spot region of the state in terms of low child sex ratio. Whereas Doaba has relatively high child ratio followed by Malwa.

Introduction

Gender disparity in Punjab existed in various forms, the most obvious being the trends of continuously declining sex ratio and child sex ratio during the last few decades. Contemporary Punjab has recorded unfavourable child sex ratio which reinforces the historical deteriorating position of females in society. According to the report entitled “Combating Female Foeticide: A Perspective Plan” of Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Punjab, 2007, out of fifteen districts in the country with the most unfavourable child sex ratio, ten are in Punjab. It indicates that the state has recorded relatively higher discrimination against the girl child. Basically, the patriarchal culture of the state played a notable role in this regard. It determines the life of a girl child from her birth to death which ultimately violates the human rights of females. Patriarchal culture promotes son preference that is essentially a manifestation of social survival and socio-economic security which has been among the basic threads of human social organisation, and the prevalent view holds that it can be achieved through sons only.¹ This attitude plays an important role towards higher neglect of the girl child for the sake of having a son.

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Due to some socio-cultural and economic reasons, people prefer at least one son in the family right from the earlier days. To achieve this goal people were killing their daughters even after their birth by practicing female infanticide. Historically speaking, not all groups practiced female infanticide but there are grim reports that quite a few villages in the north-western plains had never raised one daughter.²

In Punjab, Major Lake reported to the Panjab Board of Administration in 1851 that “it is an undoubted fact that there are some 1000 families of *bedis* who, for the last 400 years have destroyed all their female offspring”.³ Thus, son preference is deep-rooted in the Punjabi society and it can easily be traced from the Punjabi culture, folk, language, marriage system, etc.⁴ Due to age-old social, cultural and economic responsibilities in the society performed by males the people of this region prefer a son at any cost. Moreover, in many parts of Punjab women who do not bear sons often face social stigma, family discrimination and even divorce by their husbands.⁵ It ultimately leads to son preference and low child sex ratio in Punjab.

The girl child is becoming an endangered species due to rampant misuse of the pre-conception and pre-natal diagnostic tests in the state.⁶ Moreover, new reproductive sex-selective technologies have also contributed to widening this gender gap.⁷ Punjab was a forerunner state to adopt these sex-selective technologies. The sex-selective abortion advertisements had widely spread in Punjab and Delhi in late 1970s and early 1980s.⁸ It was Punjab where the first ultrasound clinic was opened in the late 1970s.⁹ Gradually, the ultrasound clinics mushroomed across the study area, especially in the cities and towns. These sex-selective abortions are not only violating the rights of survival of girls but also creating a state of imbalanced child sex ratio that threatens the long-term stability regarding sustainable development goals of the society.¹⁰ Moreover, patriarchal mindset of people for son preference is responsible for the high use of these sex-selective technologies for abortion of baby girls in the state. As a result, the number of females had remained lower than that of the males in the state.

The rural Punjab recorded 844 female children per thousand male children whereas in the urban areas this number was relatively high (852). The rural-urban differentials in child sex ratio are the result of social, cultural, economic and political conditions prevalent in both areas. Consequently, the girl child is always at the edge of social periphery in the state.

Objectives of the Study

- I. To understand the spatial patterns of child sex ratio.
- II. To find out the regional differences in terms of child sex ratio.
- III. To analyse the rural-urban disparity in child sex ratio.
- IV. To identify the factors responsible for disparities in child sex ratio across the state.

Research Methodology

To achieve the above-said objectives, the data has been used from the Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2022* and Census of India, 2011. Tehsils are used as study units for the geographical analysis of child sex ratio. Choropleth maps have been prepared to understand the spatial patterns of child sex ratio in the state. Temporal changes in this regard have been shown with the help of suitable graphical methods.

According to the 2011 Census there were 846 female children per 1000 male children. Continuous decline has been observed in the study area in terms of child sex ratio since 1981 to 2001. It is significant to mention that the state has recorded an alarming decline (77 points) in child sex ratio during 1991-2001. The child sex ratio curve shows positive change by improving 48 points during 2001-2011 (Figure 1).

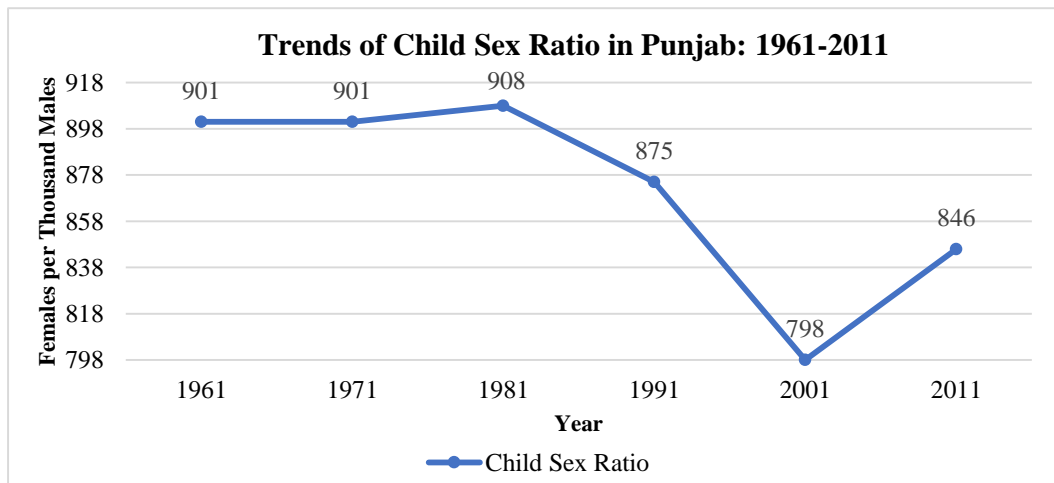


Figure 1

Source: *Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2022 and Census of India, 2011.*

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In 2011, Punjab ranked 26th among all the states of India in terms of child sex ratio. The child sex ratio of Punjab was 68 points less than that of the national

*Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2022 has used the child sex ratio (0-6 age group) data of 2011 Census. No new data after 2011 is available as Census was not conducted in 2021 due to Covid. The Statistical Abstract data is district-wise not tehsil-wise. Tehsil-wise data is only available in the District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.

average (914). At the tehsil-level, the highest child sex ratio (909) was recorded in Nakodar whereas Bhulath, on the other end, had the lowest (782) number of female children per thousand male children (Table 2). It has been observed that out of all the tehsils under study, thirty-seven recorded child sex ratio above the state average (846), whereas forty recorded child sex ratio below the state average (Table 1 and Map 2). In terms of rural and urban areas, child sex ratio was 844 and 852 respectively. Child sex ratio of rural Punjab was 79 points less than the national average (923) while in case of urban Punjab it was 53 points less than that of the national average (905) (Table 2).

Table 1

Classification of Tehsils on the basis of State Average for Child Sex Ratio: 2011

Tehsils	Overall	Rural	Urban
	Number of Tehsils	Number of Tehsils	Number of Tehsils
Above State Average	37	38	30
Below State Average	40	39	46
Total	77	77	76*

Source: *District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.*

Note: *One tehsil (Khadur Sahib) of the study area was all rural.

Spatial Patterns of Child Sex Ratio in Punjab

To examine the spatial patterns of child sex ratio at tehsil-level, the state has been classified into following three categories:

- I. Areas with relatively high child sex ratio (above 900);
- II. Areas with moderate child sex ratio (between 850-900);
- III. Areas with relatively low child sex ratio (below 850).

I. Areas with relatively high child sex ratio (above 900):

The analysis reveals that only two tehsils of the state namely, Nakodar and Phagwara recorded relatively high child sex ratio (Table 2), and both were located in *Doaba* region (Map 1).

Only three percent tehsils of the state recorded relatively high rural child sex ratio. Nakodar tehsil reported relatively high rural child sex ratio (906) followed by Phagwara (905). Out of all, more than forty-nine percent tehsils (38) of the study area recorded above the state average (844) for rural child sex ratio. On the other hand, more than fifty percent of the total tehsils (39) showed below the state average for rural child sex ratio (Table 1 and Map 4).

In urban Punjab, six tehsils of the study area lie in this category during 2001-2011. Out of these six tehsils, number of girl children was highest (932) in Anandpur Sahib followed by Malerkotla (928), Nakodar (925), Kapurthala (920), Nawanshahr (912) and Fazilka (905). Among these, three tehsils were located in *Malwa* and rest of the three tehsils were in *Doaba* (Map 5). Furthermore, out of all, thirty tehsils showed urban child sex ratio above the state average (852) whereas forty-six recorded child sex ratio below the state average in case of urban Punjab (Table 1 and Map 6).

Table 2 reveals that the urban areas of Punjab recorded relatively high child sex ratio as compared to their rural counterparts during 2001-2011. *Doaba* was ahead in terms of child sex ratio than *Malwa* during this period. Unfortunately, not even a single tehsil of *Majha* showed relatively high child sex ratio. Almost all the areas of this region recorded relatively low child sex ratio in total as well as rural and urban areas. *Doaba* is well-known for considerable over-sea emigration of people. From this region the emigration to many countries like U.K., U.S.A., Canada, Malaysia, East African countries and the Arabic world has taken place.¹¹ It may be due to exposure of people to the advanced world that might have changed their mindset and ultimately *Doaba* became relatively a high child sex ratio area.

In addition to it, *Doaba* is one of the regions of the study area where people are relatively well-educated. Literacy rate is high among both males and females of this region (Census of India, 2011). Areas with relatively high female literacy and education levels emerged with high child sex ratio. Early education especially among the females and relatively high socio-cultural awareness of people contributed in reducing the gender disparity among the children in this region.

Table 2
Child Sex Ratio in Punjab: 2011

Sr.	District/State	Tehsils	Total	Rural	Urban
1	Amritsar		826	826	826
		(i) Ajnala	846	845	853
		(ii) Amritsar -I	816	818	808
		(iii) Amritsar- II	825	824	825
		(iv) Baba Bakala	807	804	832
2	Barnala		843	847	835
		(i) Barnala	842	851	831
		(ii) Tapa	844	842	848
3	Bathinda		854	852	857
		(i) Rampura Phul	848	852	833
		(ii) Bathinda	858	857	859
		(iii) Talwandi Sabo	848	841	869
4	Faridkot		851	854	844
		(i) Faridkot	849	853	842
		(ii) Jaitu	855	857	851
5	Fatehgarh Sahib		842	835	857
		(i) Bassi Pathana	873	870	888
		(ii) Fatehgarh Sahib	828	816	859
		(iii) Amloh	849	849	849
		(iv) Khamanon	828	821	888
6	Firozpur		847	848	845
		(i) Zira	853	854	850
		(ii) Firozpur	840	842	833
		(iii) Jalalabad	833	836	821
		(iv) Fazilka	865	856	905
		(v) Abohar	849	854	838
7	Gurdaspur		821	821	820
		(i) Dhar Kalan	845	847	822
		(ii) Pathankot	820	828	810
		(iii) Gurdaspur	834	836	823
		(iv) Batala	807	798	830
		(v)Dera Baba Nanak	805	803	832

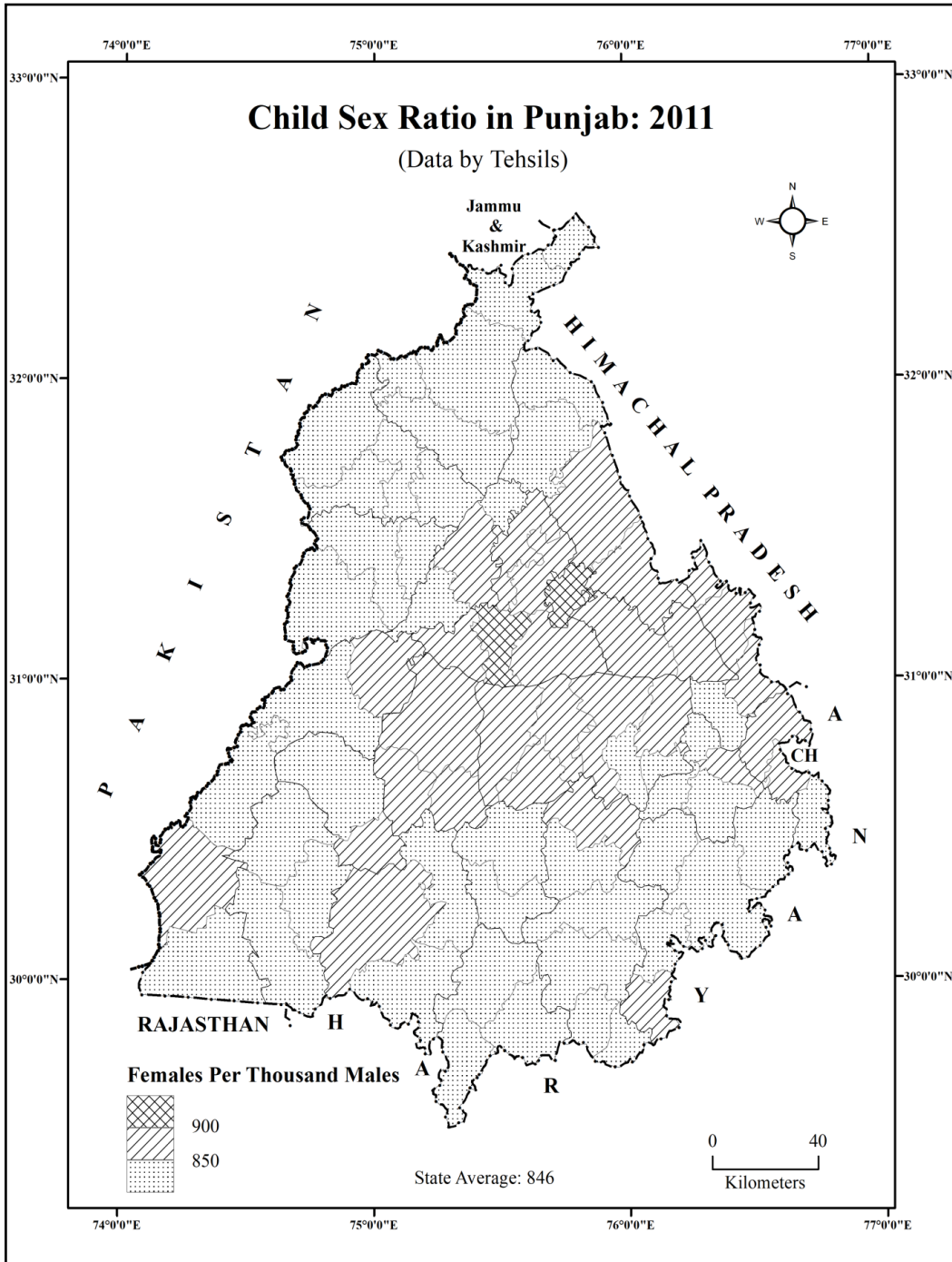
8	Hoshiarpur		865	865	863
		(i) Dasua	834	827	878
		(ii) Mukerian	845	851	816
		(iii) Hoshiarpur	883	888	873
		(iv) Garhshankar	888	890	862
9	Jalandhar		874	885	865
		(i) Shahkot	857	862	831
		(ii) Nakodar	909	906	925
		(iii) Phillaur	880	882	869
		(iv) Jalandhar - I	869	893	865
		(v) Jalandhar - II	873	881	839
10	Kapurthala		871	859	896
		(i) Bhulath	782	778	797
		(ii) Kapurthala	892	878	920
		(iii) Sultanpur Lodhi	838	836	853
		(iv) Phagwara	902	905	899
11	Ludhiana		860	859	860
		(i) Samrala	850	851	846
		(ii) Khanna	837	868	817
		(iii) Payal	835	840	817
		(iv) Ludhiana (East)	862	850	864
		(v) Ludhiana (West)	872	864	896
		(vi) Raikot	854	862	830
		(vii) Jagraon	874	878	856
12	Mansa		836	840	820
		(i) Sardulgarh	839	837	851
		(ii) Budhlada	837	842	813
		(iii) Mansa	833	840	816
13	Moga		860	863	853
		(i) Nihal Singhwala	858	863	743
		(ii) Bagha Purana	851	853	839
		(iii) Moga	864	867	859
14	Patiala		837	827	852
		(i) Samana	819	808	846
		(ii) Patran	850	850	850

		(iii) Nabha	817	812	829
		(iv) Patiala	843	826	860
		(v) Rajpura	837	834	845
15	Rupnagar		863	859	874
		(i) Anandpur Sahib	872	867	932
		(ii) Nangal	879	884	867
		(iii) Rupnagar	855	837	882
		(iv) Chamkaur Sahib	847	849	842
16	S.A.S Nagar		841	821	859
		(i) Kharar	851	834	868
		(ii) S.A.S Nagar (Mohali)	855	833	869
		(iii) Dera Bassi	821	801	840
17	Sangrur		840	827	869
		(i) Malerkotla	881	844	928
		(ii) Dhuri	817	817	818
		(iii) Sangrur	827	820	838
		(iv) Sunam	820	814	836
		(v) Lehra	846	844	856
		(vi) Moonak	834	829	851
18	S.B.S Nagar		885	884	889
		(i) Nawanshahr	900	896	912
		(ii) Balachaur	854	861	823
19	Muktsar		831	832	828
		(i) Malout	840	846	820
		(ii) Gidderbaha	827	817	861
		(iii) Muktsar	825	827	822
20	Tarn Taran		820	818	835
		(i) Patti	810	808	822
		(ii) Tarn Taran	835	832	852
		(iii) Khadur Sahib	808	808	A.R*
PUNJAB			846	844	852
INDIA			914	923	905

Source: District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 1991, 2001 and 2011 and Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2022.

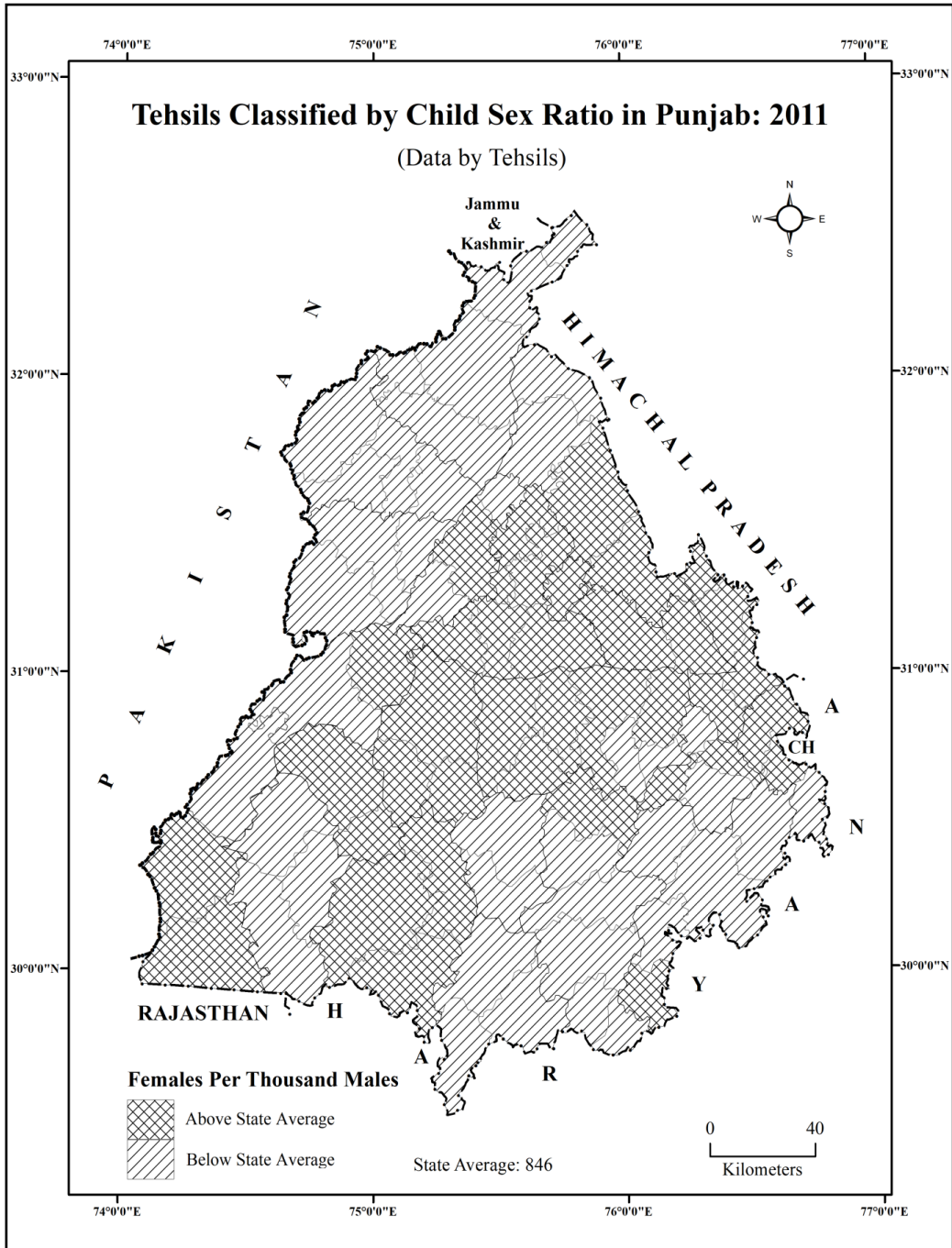
A.R* stands for All Rural.

Map 1



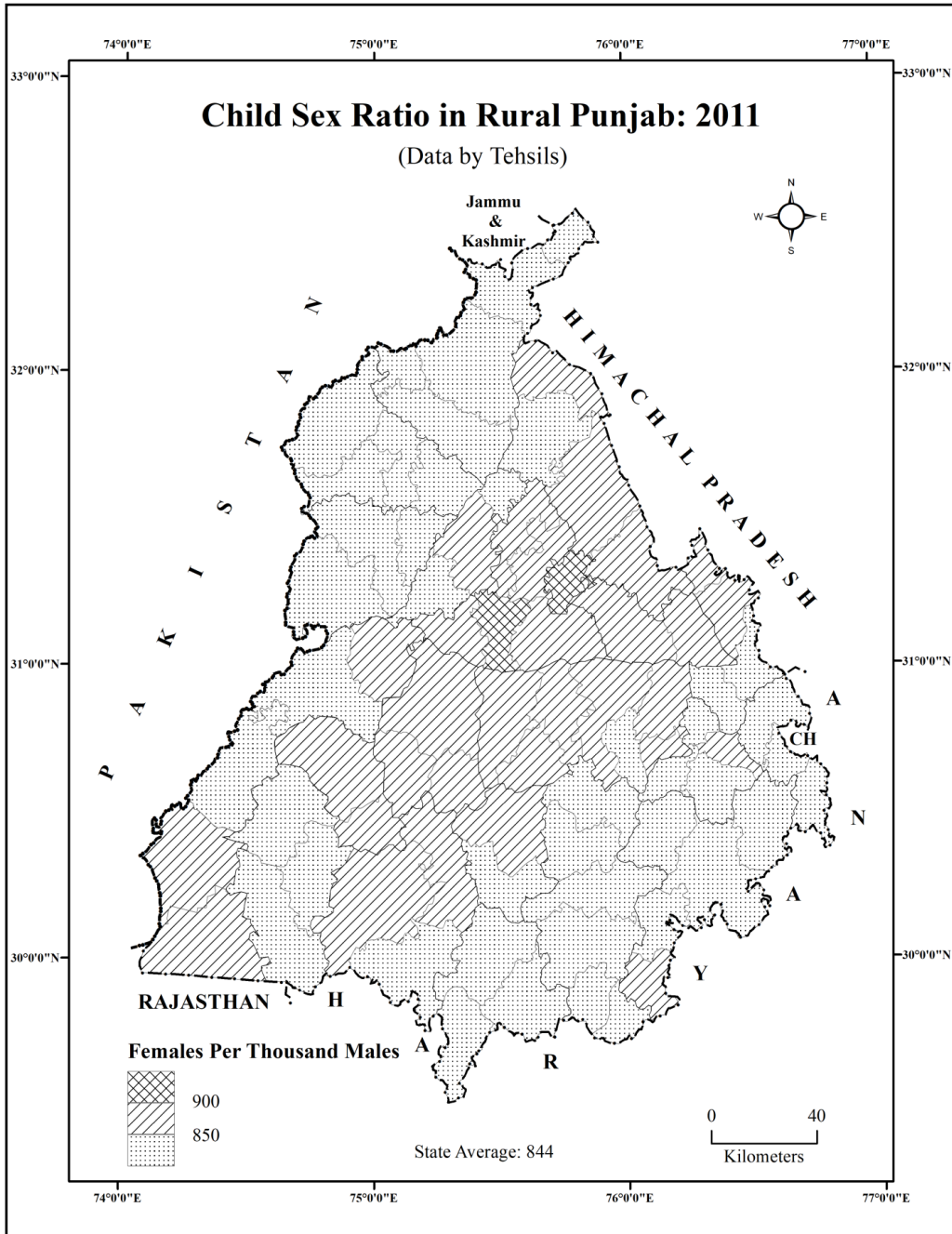
Source: District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.

Map 2



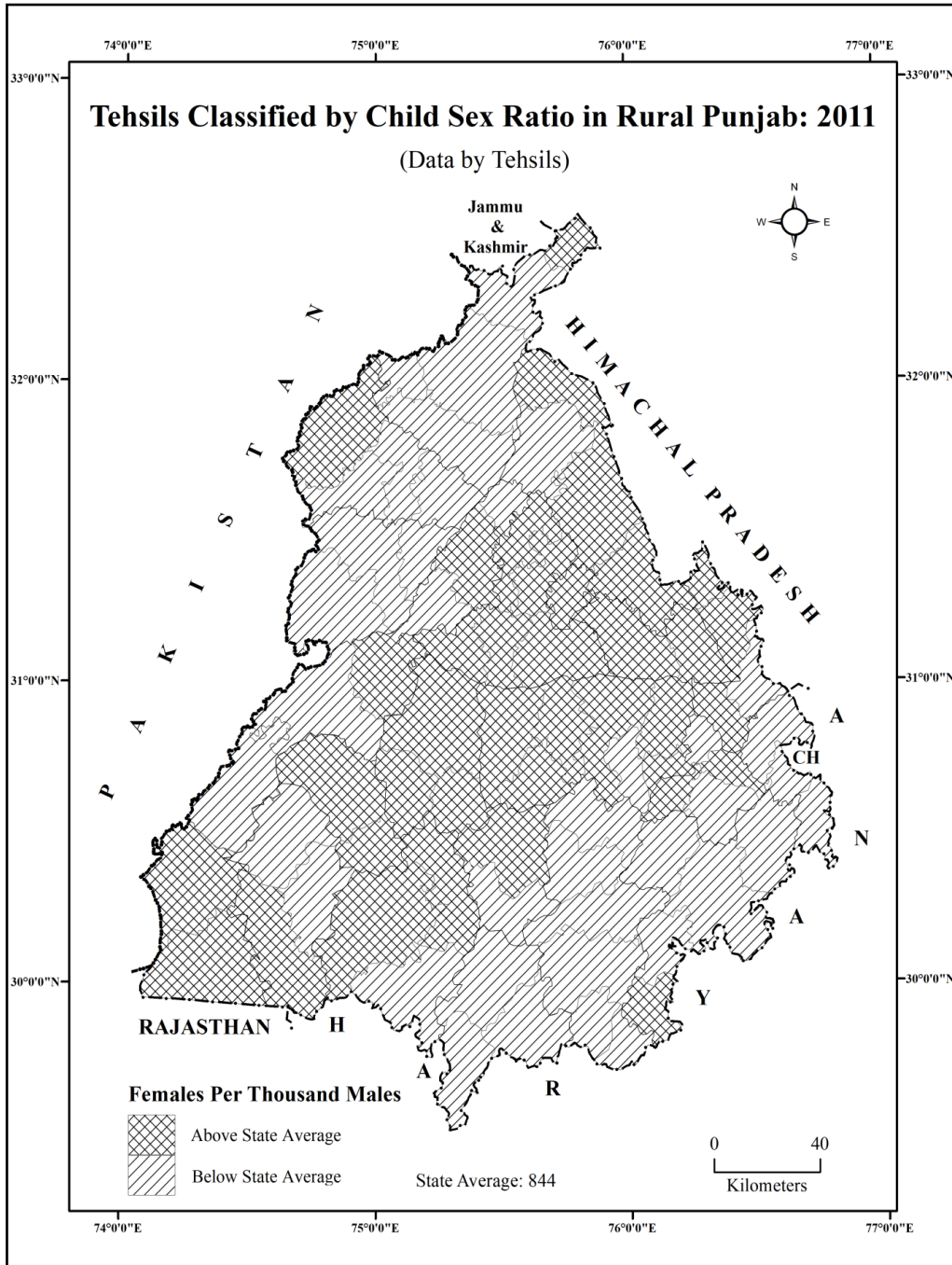
Source: District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.

Map 3



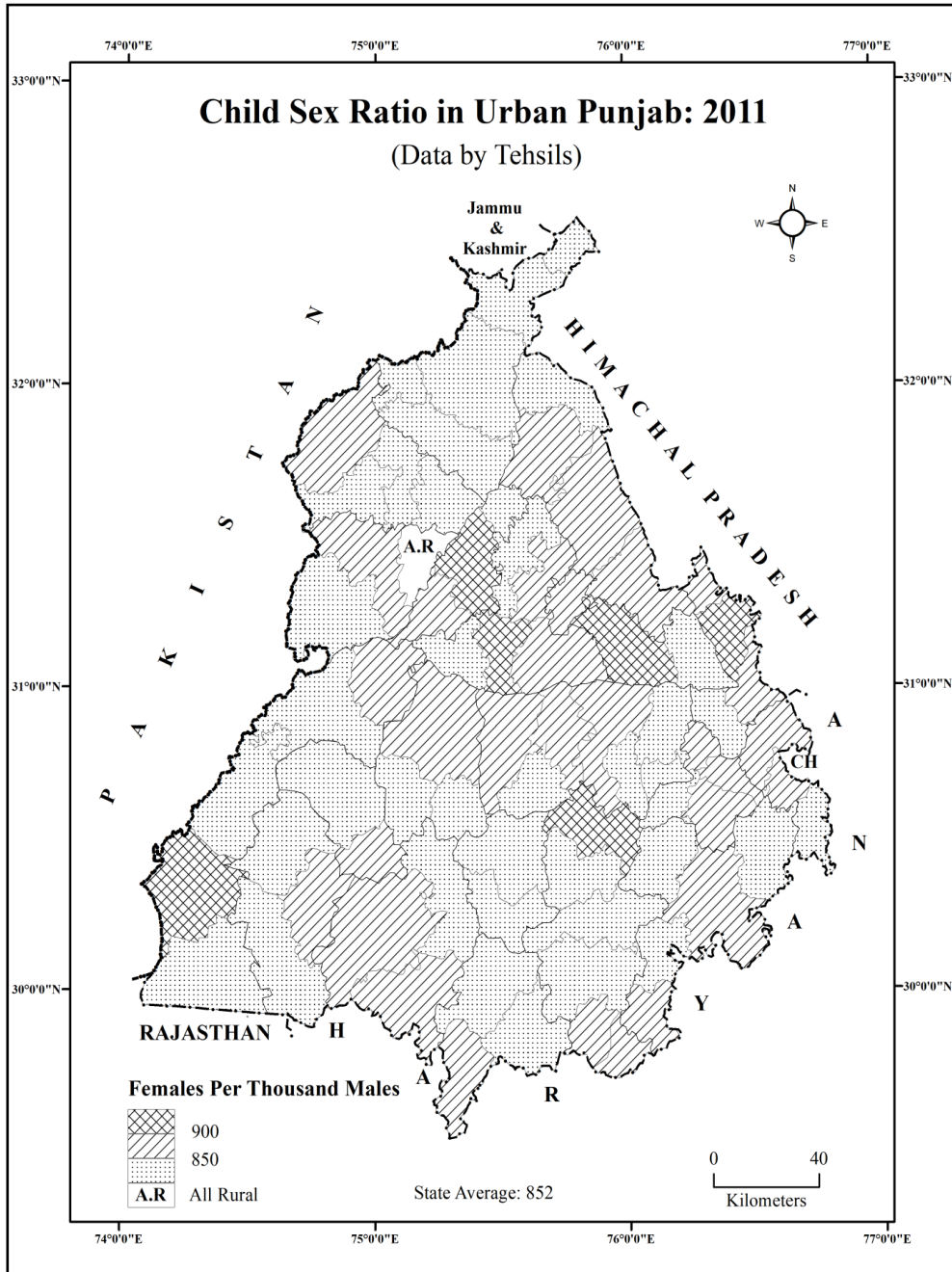
Source: District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.

Map 4



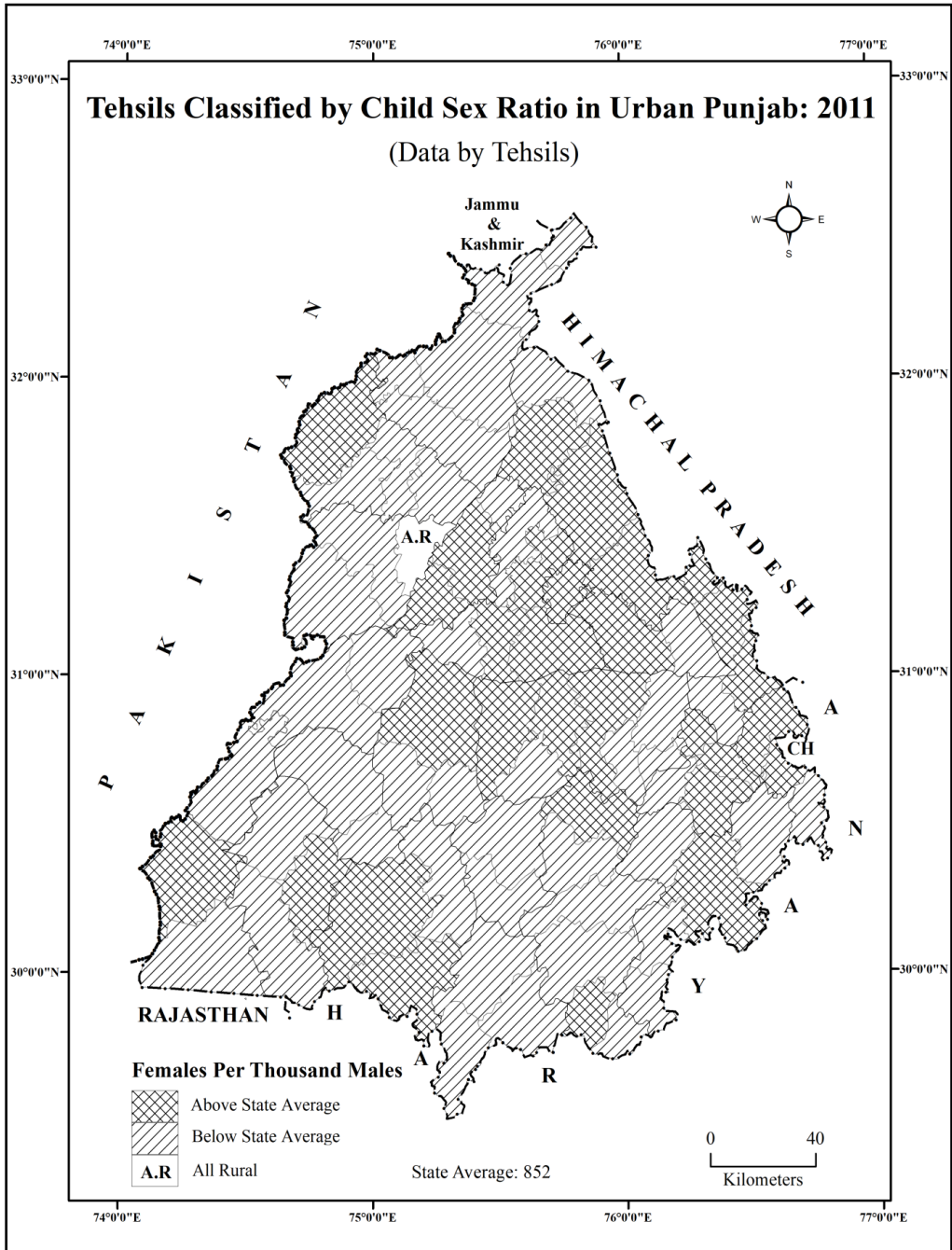
Source: District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.

Map 5



Source: *District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.*

Map 6



Source: District Census Handbooks of Punjab, 2011.

II. Areas with moderate child sex ratio (between 850-900):

Out of all the seventy-seven tehsils of Punjab, twenty-nine showed moderate child sex ratio during 2001-2011. Among these, Nawanshahr holds the top position by recording 900 female children per thousand male children followed by Kapurthala (892), Garhshankar (888), Hoshiarpur (883), Malerkotla (881), Phillaur (880). On the other hand, about sixty percent tehsils of *Doaba* and forty percent tehsils of *Malwa* reported moderate child sex ratio. A stretch of moderate child sex ratio had been observed from the north-east to the south-west crossed through almost entire central study area (Map 1).

Among the rural areas, about forty percent tehsils of the state found moderate rural child sex ratio. Out of these, Nawanshahr occupied first rank (896) in this respect. This category covers almost the entire *Doaba* region. In addition to it, twenty-one tehsils of *Malwa* belonged to this group. A long stretch with moderate rural child sex ratio had been marked from the northeast to the southwest of the study area (Map 3).

In urban Punjab, thirty tehsils reported moderate urban child sex ratio in 2011. Out of these, Phagwara tehsil with 899 females per thousand males occupied the highest position in this respect. About forty-seven percent tehsils of *Doaba*, forty-two percent of *Malwa* and seventeen percent of *Majha* recorded moderate urban child sex ratio.

III. Areas with relatively low child sex ratio (below 850):

There were forty-six such tehsils in the state where relatively low child sex ratio was found in 2011. Among these, Bhulath recorded the lowest (782) child sex ratio in the state (Table 2). About sixty percent tehsils of *Malwa* and twenty-seven percent tehsils of *Doaba* lie in relatively low child sex ratio category. One eye-opening finding comes out of analysis is that the entire *Majha* region emerged with relatively low child sex ratio (Map 1).

It is significant to mention here that majority of the tehsils under study area reported an imbalance in child sex ratio. Various socio-economic, cultural and religious factors are responsible for widening this gender gap. Son preference is a deep-rooted phenomenon of Punjabi society which is responsible for skewed child sex ratio. Broadly speaking, son preference can easily be traced from all the activities which have been carried out in the households. Sons are considered as bread earners in the family and the daughters are considered as burden for the family. Sons are preferred to daughters because males are more valued in families, communities and societies than females.¹² In addition to it, sons are important due to their old-age support, their active role in the funeral rituals of the parents and their relatively high economic utility in the Punjabi society. Moreover, the son can carry on family lineage but the daughters cannot.¹³ And perpetuating the family name is one of the

fundamental male duties and the absence of a male heir is considered disaster in the family.¹⁴ Consequently, daughters carry less socio-economic and cultural importance in the society.

The dowry system prevailing in the Punjabi society is also responsible for relatively low preference of girls to sons. It is spreading like an epidemic in the society in the era of globalisation and modernisation. Due to heavy burden of marriage and post marriage expenses of daughters the parents get inclined towards the elimination of the birth of a baby girl. The heavy demand of dowry from the groom's side drains the family resources of the bride. It is not only demanded at the time of marriage but remains the same practice for the entire married life.¹⁵ The married women's parental family is often expected to offer gifts for her entire life to enhance her reputation in her in-law's family on specified occasions (at the time of marriage, childbirth, children's marriage, annual festivals and whenever she visits her parental home). Even at the time of death females and their male partners are expected to be dressed up by the parent's side of the bride. Such customs drain the economic sources of the bride's family which further degrades the position of a girl child in the society. In this way, girls are considered as a social and economic liability. Due to the heavy expenses on daughter's marriage by parents, the female infanticide practice in Punjab was connected with the system of dowry.¹⁶ Consequently, more economic burden and lower economic security of the girls in the family leads to relatively more discrimination against daughters; which ultimately ends in low child sex ratio.

As far as the rural child sex ratio of the state was concerned, forty-four tehsils recorded relatively low rural child sex ratio (Table 2). Out of these, Bhulath tehsil recorded the lowest (778) value in this regard. All the tehsils of *Majha* showed relatively low rural child sex ratio (Map 3). Twenty-eight tehsils of *Malwa* and three of *Doaba* belonged to this category.

It has been observed that the landholders of the rural Punjab are worried about the income of their families which mainly depends upon agriculture. All the tasks of agriculture are carried out by male members of the family. These male-dominated tasks ultimately boost up the preference for a son in the family. Moreover, there is a notion among the rural people that the presence of a male child is a social security in the family against anti-social elements in the village. Due to having strong patriarchal mindset, landholding rural families have relatively high son preference as compared to landless families.¹⁷ Therefore, son preference is comparatively high among the landlords of rural families because of their socio-economic and cultural security; girls on the other hand are considered a liability in these families which ultimately leads to low child sex ratio in the rural Punjab. Son preference is relatively strong among the rural uneducated or poorly educated mothers of the agricultural families.¹⁸ However, most of the women of well-to-do rural and urban families have

also thought that having a son is an affirmation of pride and honour in society.

In addition, rural areas of the state have relatively low female literacy rate as compared to their urban counterparts (Census of India, 2011). Areas with relatively low female literacy rate emerged with low child sex ratio. Relatively low levels of education in rural areas of Punjab contributed to widening this gender disparity in terms of child sex ratio. Due to low levels of education, the females of rural areas are also highly patriarchal in nature and prefer a son. Consequently, the child sex ratio of the rural Punjab has deteriorated.

About fifty-two percent tehsils of the state reported relatively low urban child sex ratio. Bhulath tehsil recorded the lowest (797) urban child sex ratio in the state (Table 2). In addition to it, nine tehsils of *Majha*, twenty-six of *Malwa* and five of *Doaba* fell in this group. Tehsils of this category were found scattered across in the area under study (Map 5).

It has been observed that female foeticide is one of the dominant factors which largely affects the child sex ratio in the urban areas of the state. Sex determination techniques are widely used in the state. Availability and easy accessibility of these sex-selective techniques like ultrasound and sonography in the urban areas effected the sex ratio and child sex ratio, particularly in Punjab. These techniques are commonly used by the urban people with higher socio-economic status.¹⁹ Such persons have relatively higher information and access to health infrastructure than those in the rural areas. Consequently, use of these techniques seems very common among people with relatively higher socio-economic status. Easy availability of sex determination techniques along with traditional mindsets of son preference have also contributed in this regard. Additionally, in the urban areas the preference for the male child was considered necessary to look after the business of the family. Owing to the fact that the educated, literate and well-settled societies of urban areas have norms of small family size because they think that family resources can only be enhanced by males. This manifests the fact that the female child stands neglected vis-à-vis male child in urban Punjab. It ultimately leads to high gender disparity in the child sex ratio.²⁰

Summing Up

It has been observed that the child sex ratio of the state varies notably from one area to another. Inter-decadal and inter-regional variations have been observed in child sex ratio of the study area. Urban areas of the state have relatively high child sex ratio than that of the rural areas. Strong patriarchal structure, relatively high male domination and high son preference among the ruralities are the major contributor in this context. Besides, deep-rooted patriarchal culture along with highly practiced sex-selective abortions are the leading factors for the deteriorated position of child sex ratio in the entire state. At the regional-level, *Majha* has emerged as the hot spot region of the state in terms of low child sex ratio. On the other hand, *Doaba* has

observed relatively high child sex ratio as compared to *Malwa* and *Majha*. It has been suggested that every person can contribute towards creating balance in child sex ratio in the state by changing their age-old mindsets about females. Low child sex ratio is one of the major social threats to the Punjabi society. Imbalanced child sex ratio would affect the socio-cultural environment as well as basic threads of human social organisation in the state. Maintenance of balance between number of male and female children in the state is need of the hour. To achieve this goal sincere efforts towards this direction are required i.e., by the government, social workers, religious leaders, academicians etc.

Suggestions

- I. The first and foremost step should be to give desirability, equal superiority and priority to females within the four walls of each and every household. It would change the mindset of people regarding son preference.
- II. Secondly, it is quite obvious that everything involved in social structure directly or indirectly revolves around the economic aspect. Unless equal distribution of property among all the children by their parents is done, it is hard to end the gender imbalance in the study area. It is more true in case of *Jat-Sikh* families who own major share of agricultural land of the state.
- III. Tradition of dowry should be controlled at large scale.
- IV. The government should check the illegal sex determination forcefully.
- V. The Religious leaders must raise this issue on the basis of the religious scriptures that men and women are equal.
- VI. Academicians should sensitise people through their writings and lectures logically.
- VII. NGOs and social leaders should convince the masses about the importance of high child sex ratio and its significance in the long run.

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Prospective Commercial Models for Farmers Producer Organization: A study of Punjab State

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Abstract

As per the Agriculture census data of 2015-16, small and marginal holdings taken together (0-2 ha) constitute 86.21 per cent of the total holdings in 2015-16. Agriculture in Punjab is confined chiefly to a large number of scattered small and marginal holdings. This has resulted in highly fragmented land holding, rising cost of cultivation, scattered landholding, lack of assured markets and bargaining power in the market, and realizing better value for their produce. To overcome this problem, the concept of Farmers Producer Organization (FPO) was introduced. Integration of small, marginal and landless farmers into FPOs will help in enhancing their income. The Government of India has launched a Central Sector Scheme 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)', to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs in the country with budgetary provision of Rs. 6865 crore. This study aims at assessment of various factors with reference to promotion, nurturing, and graduation of FPOs as a viable business model. The study has been conducted in 22 FPOs selected in the state of Punjab. For the study, an exploratory research design has been used. The findings are based on factors like time period since establishment, legal status, sector of working, educational qualification of CEO, awareness level, number of members, turnover, number of members getting input, number of members giving output, capacity building of farmers & CEOs, infrastructure available, engagement in processing, market access, networking etc. Due to integration of farmers in Punjab, they are able to bargain more, reduce transaction cost and tap high value markets. It has also resulted in an average increase of farmer's income up to 15%.

Keywords: Land holding, Bargaining power, Business model, Markets

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Introduction

India has a total geographical area of 3.28 million square kilometres out of which 139.5 million hectares is the reported net sown area in 2015-2016.¹ Agriculture, with its federated sectors, is the chief source of livelihood in India. As per the Agriculture census data of 2015-16, small and marginal holdings taken together (0-2 ha) constitute 86.21 per cent of the total holdings in 2015-16. The rising concern is of highly fragmented land holding and rising cost of production. In Punjab, the proportion of small and marginal land holding was 13.36% and 18.25% in 2005-06, which increased to 15.50% and 18.53% by the year 2010-11 respectively.² There is a rise in the cost of production every year but the trends of increased income are not parallel to the cost of production. The precedent problems have resulted in dependency of farmers on the intermediaries and local moneylenders. However, government initiatives such as increased MSP, interest subsidies, free electricity, and loan waivers are there to support farmers but they have reached a limited percentage of farmers and have a limited impact.

The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India recommended the collectivization of farmers and their produce. A Farmer Producer Organisation is a licit body formed by primary producers, which enables farmers to enhance productivity and raises their bargaining power to realize higher returns for their produce, through collaboration. A FPO can acquire a legal status of cooperative society or company, which provides for sharing of profits among the members. An individual, an institution, an NGO, a CBO, a corporate unit, banks, government departments, agriculture universities, Producers' Association etc. can promote it. The primary responsibility lies with Producer Organisation Promoting Institute ranging from creating awareness, business planning, market access to FPO, development of management systems and procedures, capacity building programs for farmers and CEOs of FPOs, providing necessary handholding support, resolution to operational issues etc.

Central Sector Scheme 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 new Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)'

The Government of India with a view to doubling the farmers income by 2022 has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000

¹https://www.nfsm.gov.in/ReadyReckoner/CU1/CroppingIntensity_Jan2021.pdf

²Aercpau.com/assets/docs/Punjab%20profile.pdf

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)' to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs in the country with budgetary provision of Rs. 6865 crore. Implementing agencies will be responsible for formation and promotion. Financial assistance upto Rs 18.00 lakh per FPO for a period of 03 years will be provided under this scheme. In addition, provision has been made for matching equity grant upto Rs. 2,000 per farmer member of FPO with a limit of Rs. 15.00 lakh per FPO and a credit guarantee facility upto Rs. 2 crore of project loan per FPO from eligible lending institution to ensure institutional credit accessibility to FPOs.

Objectives

- ❖ Assessment of factors affecting FPOs to become a viable business model for doubling farmers income.
- ❖ To find out the effect of COVID-19 and various Government Initiatives.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in the state of Punjab in the month of June 2019. As per data available till July 2019 (before Covid-19, Punjab has highest numbers of FPOs promoted by NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) i.e. 67³ among the northern states of J&K (12), Haryana (49), Himachal Pradesh (53), Uttarakhand (52) and union territory of Delhi⁴. For the present study, purposive sampling and exploratory research design was used. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed for conducting the study. This study is based on both primary and secondary methods of data collection. Total of 22 FPOs were selected for the study. During the study, interviews of various stakeholders in FPOs have been taken. In addition, group discussion with members of FPOs has been held.

FPOs were selected on the basis of three basic criteria which were as follows:

1. Agro-climatic zone

As per Krishi Vigyan Kendra Faridkot and Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana Punjab can be divided into five agro climatic zones. Punjab has 22 districts. NABARD promoted FPOs present in 19 districts. Among 19 districts, 13 districts of Punjab were chosen randomly on the basis of different agro-climatic zones.

³nabfpo.in/image/sticPO.html

⁴<https://nabfpo.in/images/staticFPO.html>



2. Activities

FPOs are engaged in various activities such as horticulture, dairy etc. From each district, FPOs were chosen which are working in different sectors

List of selected district is as follows:

Zone 1-Pathankot, Rupnagar and Hoshiarpur

Name of district	Number of FPOs	Activity in which FPO's were Engaged
Pathankot	2	Fruits & Vegetables
Rupnagar	2	Fertilizers
Hoshiarpur	1	Meat and Food Processing

Zone 2-Fatehgarh Sahib, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, and Kapurthala

Name of district	Number of FPOs	Activity in which FPO's were Engaged
Fatehgarh Sahib	2	milk and grain
Gurdaspur	3	Two milk, one turmeric
Amritsar	2	one grain and one honey
Kapurthala	1	grain

Zone3-Ludhiana, Sangrur, Patiala and Tarn Taran

Name of district	Number of FPOs	Activity in which FPO's were Engaged
Ludhiana	2	one milk and one grain
Sangrur	1	one milk, one turmeric and one grain
Patiala	1	Fruits and Vegetables
Tarn Taran	1	grain

Zone 4-Bhatinda and Shri Muktsar Sahib

Name of district	Number of FPOs	Activity in which FPO's were Engaged
Bathinda	2	one Fertilizer and one grain
Shri Muktsar Sahib	1	milk

3. Classification done by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

Table1. Grading of FPO and Number of Selected FPOS

Grading of FPO	Number of FPOs
A	02
B	08
C	05
D	07

Analysis and Discussion

1. Registration Status and Turnover:

A FPO can be registered as a company/Society/Cooperative. The table 2 depicts that majority (ten out of twenty-two) of the FPOs were registered as company under section 25 of Indian Companies Act, 1956 or Producer Company under Section 581(c) of Indian Companies Act, 1956, further twenty seven percent of FPOs were registered under Society Registration Act, 1860 and the remaining FPOs (six out of twenty two) were registered as Cooperative Societies under Cooperative Societies Act. It has been observed that FPOs which are registered as a company have been facing a lot of difficulties such as more documentation for registration, penalties, shareholding issues, problems in addition of new members. In contrast to this, the process of registration is easy in Society Act 1860, Indian Trust Act and Cooperative Society Act in comparison to Company Act. Table 2 shows that three out of six (50%) FPOs registered as society have more than 20 lakh turnover. The probable reason for this can be less documentation, easy procedure of joining of new members, less penalties etc. Out of ten FPOs that are registered as a company, only two have been able to cross the turnover of more than 20 lakh. But in the list of limitations of registering as a society, cooperative, and trust, it has been observed that the Small Farmers Agribusiness consortium demands FPO to be registered as a company to be eligible for the Equity grant & credit guarantee scheme.

Table2. Registration Status and Turnover

Legal Status		Company	Society	Cooperative	Total
Turnover	0-5 lakh	1	0	1	2
	5-10 lakh	2	0	1	3
	10-15 lakh	2	1	1	4
	15-20 lakh	3	1	1	5
	20-30 lakh	0	1	1	2
	30-40 lakh	1	1	0	2
	More than 40 lakh	1	2	1	4
Total		10	6	6	22

2. Educational Qualifications of CEOs and Turnover

Table 3 highlights the correlation between turnover and educational level of CEOs. Four FPOs having turnover of more than 30 lakh have CEOs with educational

qualification of 12th standard and an equal number of FPOs also having turnover more than 30 lakh with qualification of their CEOs as graduation. In contrast, it was also observed that there was not even a single FPO who's CEO had postgraduate qualification or pursued higher degrees and have a turnover of more than 20 lakh. Therefore, it can be inferred from the table that there was no significant relationship between educational qualification and turnover. It has been observed in one FPO that due to regular change of CEO, FPO is not sure about the qualification of CEO's. It has also been observed during the study, that FPOs working in pesticide sector have been facing problems due to deficient education qualification required for license. It has been observed that if one person who has license issued in his/her name working with a FPO gets a higher salary from another organization or individual, he/she leaves the FPOs. Then they cannot sell the fertilizers and seeds without license. FPOs have to clear the stocks as soon as possible due to which they have been suffering numerous losses. In addition to this, for starting the business again, they require a new agriculture graduate and new licence, which results in consecutive loss in business to FPO.

Table3. Turnover and Educational Qualifications of CEOs

Educational Qualifications		10th	12th	Graduation	Higher studies	Don't know	Total
Turnover	0-5 lakh	1	1	0	0	0	2
	5-10 lakh	0	1	1	1	0	3
	10-15 lakh	0	1	1	1	1	4
	15-20 lakh	0	0	2	3	0	5
	20-30 lakh	0	1	1	0	0	2
	30-40 lakh	0	1	1	0	0	2
	More than 40 lakh	0	2	2	0	0	4
Total		1	7	8	5	1	22

3. Capacity Building of Farmers and Turnover

Table 4 shows that out of sixteen FPOs in which capacity building of member farmers have taken place, only five have more than 30 lakh turnover, which is about 31.5% of the total. Only one FPO, wherein capacity building had not taken place, had a turnover of more than 30 lakh. Therefore, it can be inferred that capacity building of farmers has a key role in the success of FPOs. Members of 16 FPOs receive different training in different cities and institutes in India, like KVK Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Pune, and Centre for Excellence in Horticulture, Kartarpur etc.

However, members of six FPOs were not able to get any training. It has been found that POPI gets grants for training but in these six FPO's members have not been imparted training.

Table4. Turnover and Capacity Building of Farmers

Capacity Building of Farmers		Yes	No	Total
Turnover	0-5 lakh	1	0	1
	5-10 lakh	2	1	3
	10-15 lakh	3	3	5
	15-20lakh	4	1	5
	20-30lakh	1	1	2
	30-40 lakh	1	1	2
	More than 40 lakh	4	0	4
Total		16	6	22

4. Members Giving Output to FPOs

Table 5 depicts that in one FPO only half the number of current members had given their output for sale to FPOs. Less than half the members of ten FPOs have given their output to FPOs for sale, which is 45.5 % of the total. The table reveals that eleven FPOs have received output for sale from more than half of its members. It has been observed that in Milkfed FPOs, supply of output is irregular in the summer season due to higher prices offered by private players. It has also been observed that in some FPOs members are requested to diversify crops. The reason for members not giving output may be lack of trust among members of FPOs.

Table 5. Members Giving Output to FPO

Members giving Output to FPO	Frequency	Percent
Half	1	4.5
Less than half	10	45.5
More than half	11	50
Total	22	100

5. Representatives of POPI in the Board of Directors

Table 6 represents that out of twenty two FPOs taken up for study; seven FPOs have at least one member in the Board of Directors as representative of POPI. This constitutes 31.8 % as a whole. The number of FPOs not having representatives of

POPI on board are found to be double of the above mentioned with a percentage share of 63.6%. One FPO has no knowledge about it. It has been observed that FPOs where POPI has a representative member hold the position of CEO. The reason for holding the position may be providing professionalism to FPO or might be only for the sake of salary. It has also been observed that mainly these representatives happen to be relatives of POPI.

Table 6. Representatives of POPI in Board of Directors

Representatives of POPI in Board	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	31.8
No	14	63.6
NA	1	4.5
Total	22	100

6. Meeting of FPOs and POPI

The role of POPI is paramount in the success of FPOs right from nurturing, promotion and developing it as a business model. Meetings are very important for an organization. Table 7 shows that exactly half of the FPOs under study have just one month's time gap between two consecutive meetings. Six FPOs show a time gap of two months between their meetings with a percentage share of 27.3%. Out of twenty two FPOs, two meet POPI as per need with percentage share of just only 9.1%. Three FPOs are those who hold meetings with POPI occasionally. It has been only 13.6%. It can be concluded that the time gap in meetings varied as most of the FPOs were from outside the district or even the state where FPOs are registered.

Table 7. Time gap between Meeting of FPOs and POPI

Time Gap Between Meeting of POPI and FPO	Frequency	Percent
After one month	11	50
After two month	6	27.3
As per need	2	9.1
Occasionally	3	13.6
Total	22	100

7. Increase in Income

Table 8. Increase in Income

Increase in Income	Frequency	Percent
0-5%	3	13.6
5-10%	8	36.4
10-15%	6	27.3
15-20%	5	22.7
Total	22	100

Table 8 depicts that members of three FPOs in Punjab have seen a rise between 0 to 5 percent in their income level which is 13.6% share of the total. There were eight FPOs, whose members gained a rise of 5-10 % in their income. The percentage share of this slab is 36.4. The income of the members of five such FPOs has risen up by 10-15%. It has been observed that six FPOs are in the slab of 15-20%. The percentage share of both of these slabs is 27.3 and 22.7 percent respectively. The most probable reason for increased income is low cost of production, easy market access, quality produce and working in a combination of sectors. The concept of forming FPOs is that these should be helpful in the income enhancement of the farmers. It can be a good model for achieving the government's target of doubling the Farmers' income by 2022.

COVID-19 and 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)'

The Government of India had launched a new Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)' on 29.02.2020 just about one month before the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19. It was generally perceived that the number of formation of new FPOs will go down in the wake of Covid-19. But in contrast, the number of FPOs has increased during the last 2 years (till 09.03.2022). In the last two years number of FPOs registered by NABARD rose to 93. FPOs registered by implementing agencies under scheme for formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs stands at 22 as on 09.03.2022.

Conclusion

This concept of FPOs has resulted in the income enhancement of the farmers. Integration of farmers has resulted in the increase of farmer's income up to 15%. On the basis of findings it can be concluded that the concept of FPO can prove to be a potential way to increase the farmers' income and neutralize the problems faced by farmers due to small land holdings. Capacity building of farmers was found to be

important and to balance the problem of farmers being not interested to go outside their district it is recommended that an incubation centre must be developed in every district for nurturing at early stage by providing them infrastructural, management, training, business planning, mentorship and networking support under a single shed. In addition, the government should take appropriate measures to ease the process of formation of FPOs i.e. less documentation etc. As per the data collected from twenty-two FPOs spread across the thirteen districts in Punjab, different problems and success factors emerge from the study. It will help the appropriate agencies to find a suitable answer to the problems of nurturing, promoting and making use of it as a business model. Thus it can be concluded that due to integration of farmers in Punjab, they are able to bargain more, reduce transaction cost, tap high value markets etc. FPOs can be a good model if the nurturing and promotion of FPOs is done properly. The study of FPOs bears immense significance, as it can be a good solution to long-term problems that can have a positive impact on farmer's social and economic growth. Therefore, any change in the condition of FPOs will lead to economic prosperity.

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Decorative Elements of Mughal Sarais of Punjab

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Abstract

Mughal architecture is known for its monumental structures and its intricate decorative art. Islamic art is based on its religious beliefs and theological ideals, forbidding any depiction of idolatry and human forms. Thus, its arts and crafts were represented in various decorative patterns and formats that were highly stylized. The art was expressed by way of calligraphy, arabesque, geometric patterns, and the famous glazed tile works. Also, a rich imagery of symbolic, and religious motifs, mythical creatures, and celestial beings are seen on the architectural elements of their buildings. The Mughal Sarais were no exception to such ornamentation. Though a structure of public utility, the sarais were often embellished with decorative elements. The concept of Sarais originated in Persia and was adopted by the Mughals in India. Sarais were rest houses built along the trade routes to facilitate the travelers, pilgrims, merchants, and royalties to halt during their arduous journeys. These had the patronage of the emperors and were maintained by the state, who provided basic facilities to the travelers. Many Sarais were built across India, however, a few complete standing structures exist only in the region of Punjab. Punjab was an important political center as well as a halt on the northern trade route (Uttarapatha) connecting the Silk Route. Thus, many Sarais were built on this route. This paper discusses the decorative elements and ornamentation seen in Sarais from the region of Punjab, India, namely; Sarai Doraha, Sarai Amanat Khan, Sarai Nurmahal, and Sarai Dakhini.

Keywords: Mughal Sarais, Ornamentation, Calligraphy, Arabesque,

Introduction

In the vast scheme of Mughal architecture, the Sarais have played an important economic and social role. Patronized by the rulers, these were built along the major travel routes and in isolated areas to induce settlement for the benefit of the travelers. Though buildings of public utility, they too had been adequately embellished in the Mughal decorative fashion. Built in the Indo-Islamic architectural style, these, like any other Mughal monuments were ornamented with calligraphy, glazed tile work as well as low relief carvings. Though not at a scale like the other Mughal monuments, they still have some very interesting aspects concerning the decorative elements.

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Though an integral part of the Mughal architectural scheme, they find sparse mention in the main domain of its architectural and ornamental study. Hence, are not known beyond the region. Though Sarai is a common occurrence as a name of locations in many cities today, the actual concept and history behind it are not known to the common man, and perhaps, there once existed such magnificent Sarais in these areas.

In this paper, five Sarais from the Punjab region have been taken and their decorative elements discussed. They are; Sarai Doraha, in Ludhiana district; Sarai Nurmahal, and Sarai Dakhini, in Jalandhar district, Sarai Amanat Khan in Tarn Taran district, and Sarai Fatehabad in Amritsar. All belonging to the 17th century C.E. These Sarais are monuments of national importance. Sarai Nurmahal, Doraha, and Fatehabad are Centrally protected monuments. Whereas, Sarais Lashkari Khan, Dakhini, and Amanat Khan are State-protected monuments. In recent years they have undergone restorations which has helped to revive their past glory to some extent. The Fatehabad and Amanat Khan Sarai have been encroached on by the locals. While the rest of the Sarai is lost, their gateways stand amidst the cluster of houses and have some fine calligraphy and glazed tile work. Among the many Sarais that existed all over India, the Sarais in Punjab are perhaps the only few with complete standing structure which can aid in studying them from an art historical perspective. Architecturally, these Sarais have been discussed by a few scholars, but, not the decorative elements. The aim of this paper is to highlight this aspect of the surviving Sarais. Though many Sarais were built in the region, only those that display decorative elements have been discussed here.

The research methodology for this paper is qualitative. Field study and literature review have helped in understanding the ornamentation elements on these buildings. Comparison and similarities with other Mughal monuments were done to study the styles seen on these structures.

Origins of the Sarai

The Sarais were monuments of public utility and served as rest houses or roadside inns for caravans. They provided accommodation and a secure place to halt for the travelers, their animals, and goods. The genesis of Sarais is attributed to Central Asia and the Middle Eastern countries, which had these built along their trade routes and called them Caravanserais. The term Caravanserai is a composite Turkish term derived from the word caravan (group of travelers) and Sarai (a place).¹ These are also known by various names such as Khans, Rabats, and Han. The earliest surviving Islamic caravanserai is said to be the Qasr al-Hayr Sarai in Syria, dating back to the early eighth century C.E.² Their layout was usually a large fortified structure with a square plan, though a few circular plans are also seen. It has an open courtyard, which houses rooms on all four sides, and a *hammam*. The mosque and wells are within the courtyard. Very often a *baradari* or *baoli* is found outside the Sarai complex. There were two or more gateways, wide enough for the admittance of carts,

and animals. The Sarais in India confirm to the square plan and are built in the Indo-Islamic architectural style.

Islamic art and its Decorative Elements

Islamic art is deeply entwined in its religious beliefs and theological ideals, forbidding any depiction of idolatry and human forms. Thus, secular art represented Islamic art which was expressed in calligraphic verses of the Quran, and repetitive arabesque of geometric and floral patterns. All interwoven, interlaced, and with a sense of infinity in them.³ The antiquity of arabesque can be traced down to the ninth century C.E. under the Abbasids and developed fully by the eleventh century. In the medieval period, this developed gradually under various Iranian dynasties, but it was during the Sassanid period when arabesque became an iconographic ornamental tool and it became extremely stylized. In the sixteenth century C.E., the Safavids adapted arabesque to their architectural decoration, besides other mediums like pottery, glass, and metals.⁴ However, some scholars believe that the patterns of arabesque are also suggested to be derived from the palmette design from Greek architectural ornamentation.⁵ Calligraphy on the other hand was used to reproduce Quranic verses in a stylized manner. *Kufi*, *Naskh*, *Nastaliq*, and *Thuluth* are some of the calligraphy styles, among which *Nastaliq* and *Thuluth* were commonly used in architectural decoration in India. When produced on religious buildings it was to convey a religious message, but otherwise was solely for decorative purposes. The earliest form of calligraphic art in India can be seen in the Quwat-ul-Islam Mosque in the Qutub complex, Delhi. With time, calligraphy became an important aspect of the decorative element in all the Mughal monuments. Besides calligraphy and arabesque, the other forms of embellishments were glazed tiling. This artwork became an important component of Islamic architecture in Iran by the eleventh century C.E. and by the fifteenth century, C.E. it reached an unparalleled degree of sophistication due to advancement in its techniques. This technique was introduced in India by travelers coming from Central Asia to the Indian subcontinent and was soon adopted by all the Mughal rulers.⁶ However, it was during Jahangir and Shah Jahan's periods that such ornamentation of monuments reached its zenith. The colour palate consisted of cobalt (*lajward*), turquoise blue (*firozi*), green (*sabz*), orange (*sunehra*), yellow (*zard*), white (*sufaid*) and purple (*jamni*). The designs, usually geometric in nature were first formed with unglazed terracotta tiles, and then the spaces filled in with glazed tiles. Lahore and Multan established themselves as important centers of this art, and Lahore being an Imperial capital had its monuments embellished with some fine tile-work. The decorative work at Lahore fort and the Wazir Khan Mosque (1634 C.E) influenced many other monuments in Punjab, such as the Tomb of Ustad-Shagird at Nakodar, near Jalandhar, and on the Sarais in the region. The formatting technique followed in the Punjab region was close-bound and free-flowing, for both calligraphy and geometric patterns. Unlike that seen in the tile work at Delhi where there is delineation between tiles forming the mosaic pattern.⁷

The Sarais of Punjab

The Sarais discussed here were located on the main route of Agra to Kabul, which is one of the ancient routes connecting the Mughal Empire with the strategic and commercial center, Kabul.⁸ All the Sarais were built in the reign of Jahangir, who built many Sarais and issued orders to his generals for constructing such public structures, especially in isolated areas, and a town to settle around it.⁹ An amusing inscription on the Nurmahal Sarai states that taking payment from the travelers was forbidden by the governor of the district, and should anyone do it, may his wives be divorced. This confirms the ruler's involvement in the maintenance of the sarais. Among the Sarais, Sarai Nurmahal stands out for its unique low-relief sculptural art on its gateway. Whereas, glazed tile ornamentation and paintings are found in Sarai Doraha, Sarai Dakhini, Sarai Amanat Khan, and Fatehabad Sarai.

Sarai Nurmahal was an imperial Sarai as Emperor Jahangir halted here during his travels. It was built on the instructions of Emperess Nurjahan, Emperor Jahangir's Queen.¹⁰ An inscription on the entrance arch states the same. It is believed that she was brought up in this town, hence the name Nurmahal Sarai. This Sarai stands out as one of the most magnificent Sarais, among the ones extant in the region. Its western gateway has rich architectural friezes, which imply power and aesthetics. (Fig 1)



Fig. 1. Sarai Nurmahal, Western Gateway

Built in red sandstone, the sculptural reliefs are set within the central arch, which is flanked by Oriel windows (*jharokas*) on either side. (Fig 2) Which are in the traditional Rajput style with various architectural embellishments and carvings. Below are the elephant brackets which are surrounded by a bell pattern that appears to be hanging. The interior portion has geometric patterns on the roof and its pillars have Mughal arabesque designs.



Fig. 2. Jharokha, Western Gateway, Sarai Nurmahal

A small balcony at the center of the arch has a similar pattern. The upper portion of the entrance arch has rich imagery shown in three horizontal panels. Here we see, flying angles (angles in Islam are creatures from the divine world, and pure actions by humans can attract the blessings of the angels, and merit a better judgment day.)¹¹ While one of them holds a peacock (symbol of royalty), the other has a fish in her hand (symbol of fertility). A composite creature is shown on the extreme right of the second panel, it has the head of an elephant and the body of a griffin. The remaining compartments in the panels depict animal combats and royal games such as *Chaugan* (polo). (Fig 3) The entire imagery on these panels is one of power and royalty, perhaps emphasizing the royal status of the Sarai. The lintels of the entrance have delicately woven arabesque of interlaced foliage with a pair of birds between the scroll-work. The rest of the façade has symmetrical geometric patterns. The eastern gateway does not reflect the same artistry but has some sketchy paintings of floral patterns.

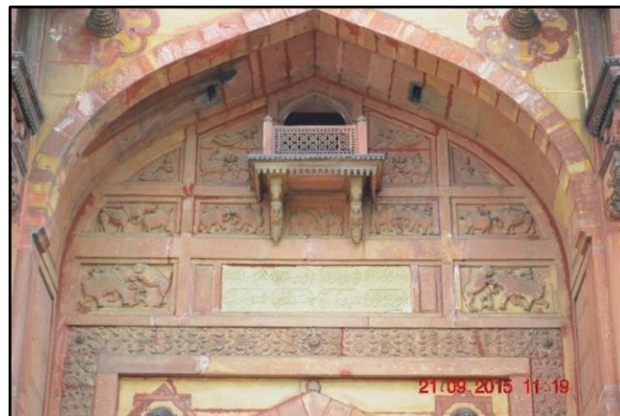


Fig. 3. Central arch, Western Gateway, Sarai Nurmahal

Sarai Amanat Khan, at Tarn Taran stands out for the ornamental decoration. It was founded by Abd-al-Haq, an Iranian calligrapher, who migrated and worked in the Mughal court. He was conferred the title of Amanat Khan by Shah Jahan for mastery of his art which is reflected in his work at the Taj Mahal. He built this Sarai in the memory of his late brother Afzal Khan. The façade of the Eastern gateway was once covered with delicately woven Quranic verses and floral patterns in blue and white tiles. (Fig. 4) The mosque within also has a few fragments of tile decoration. The Western Gateway has the common flowering pot motif, as seen in Lahore monuments as well as the tomb at Nakodar. (Fig. 5). From the remnants, this gateway appears to have been once richly embellished with an array of colours with calligraphy and interlaced floral designs.



Fig. 4. Eastern Gateway, Sarai Amanat Khan



Fig. 5. Flowerpot motif

The gateways of Fatehabad Sarai are replete with glazed-tile work in lemon yellow, cobalt blue, turquoise, and green colours. The eastern gateway is more decorated than the western gateway. There are bold floral patterns interlocked with geometric ones. Whereas, the western gateway has a single band of interlocking geometric patterns. They are placed very neatly between bordering strips in yellow on both sides. Though this is the only embellishment on the gateway, its refinement and artistry make it stand out. In comparison to the other sarais, the patterns seen here are larger in size, and geometric in nature which are very deftly placed. The mosque has

floral paintings on the dome at the entrance as well as on the interiors. The entrance arch has the *Muqarna* or the honeycomb pattern painted with verses from the Quran. Below this within compartments is the flowerpot painting (Fig. 6,7)



Fig. 6. Fatehabad Sarai



Fig. 7, *Muqarna* pattern

(Picture Source: <https://vmis.in>)

Sarai Doraha's northern gateway has a tiled decoration panel of repetitive patterns of the interlocked *swastika* motif and ten-petal motif executed in a geometric fashion and the spandrels of the arches on the sides in a similar geometric pattern. Whereas, the gateways of Sarai Dakhini have interlaced floral patterns in blue and yellow tiles with a diamond-shaped border of green and white as well as multi-coloured. While the mosque has few fragments of tile work, its entrance arch has floral carvings, which is now badly vandalized.

Besides glazed tile ornamentation, wall paintings were also part of the decorative scheme. The interior of the southern gateway of Sarai Doraha has figures painted dressed in Mughal attire and floral scrolls in the background. An interesting one is a

figure of a man who appears to be playing a flute with an animal below him. This reminds one of Krishna, as a cowherd. (Fig 8) The mosque within also has traces of floral design on the soffit of the arches. Sarai Amanat Khan also has a few patches of wall paintings of flora and vegetation preserved. Perhaps, the entire dome was covered with such paintings.



Fig. 8. Sarai Doraha, Southern gateway

Conclusion

The decorative element of the Sarais, when compared to the mainstream monuments like forts, mosques, and tombs, seems a little lesser in grandeur. This could have been due to reason of patronage as well as the nature of the structure. However, despite this, the Sarais were quite embellished and appeared to have a decorative scheme that was applied to all the Sarais. These monuments with all their embellishments in their full glory must have created quite a visual impact in these secluded routes.

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Kartarpur Corridor: An ‘*Idea of Peace*’ through Religious Diplomacy

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Abstract

Religion is imperative to Pakistan’s existence. Since the partition religion is at the core of Pakistan’s policies from domestic to foreign. Pakistan has also used religion as an instrument against India from rallying Muslim countries to vote against India on international forums or to support Pakistan’s anti-India resolutions and especially in sponsoring terrorism in the name of jihad in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since independence both the nations had strained relations and all the attempts to strengthen the relations between India-Pakistan would end up further straining the relations for one or the other reason. Some state and non-state actors in Pakistan always derail the confidence-building measures between both countries to achieve their ulterior motives. But Kartarpur Corridor gave a ray of hope to strengthen India-Pakistan relations and fulfil the decades old demand of Sikhs for a Visa-free visit to the final resting place of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in Kartarpur just four kilometers from the International Border in Pakistan. In light of the above the paper attempts to highlight the religious diplomacy of Pakistan with special reference to Kartarpur Corridor. Further paper will also discuss the historical importance of Kartarpur, the Politics of Kartarpur Corridor, its impact on India-Pakistan relations and security threats from Kartarpur corridor to India.

Key Words: Kartarpur Corridor, Religious Diplomacy, India-Pakistan Relations

Introduction

Pakistan, an Islamist state, was born out of the partition of British India in 1947 with Muhammad Ali Jinnah as its Founding Father. The first Governor General had campaigned for a separate state for South Asian Muslims but envisioned a modern state with a secular government. The contradiction between the demand for a separate state on the basis of religion and the wish for non-religious governance was evident from the very start. Some scholars observe that this contradiction is at the heart of Pakistan’s ongoing identity crises. Over the last seven decades of its

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formation, it has been observed that the religious ideology remains the most dominant factor in socio-political environment in Pakistan. Since 1947, the Islamic nation has mostly used religion as a tool for its foreign policy, in addition to using it to ensure internal stability (Chengappa, 2001). Pakistan has also been promoting itself as a champion of the causes of the Islamic world, justifying its possession of nuclear weapons by referring to them as "The Islamic Bomb" (Shaikh, 2002).

The relationship between the nuclear armed states has been complex and largely hostile due to a number of historical and political events. Soon after their independence, India and Pakistan established diplomatic relations but the violent partition and numerous territorial claims continued to overshadow the relationship. Since Independence, the two countries have fought three major wars, one undeclared war and have been involved in numerous armed skirmishes and military standoffs (Oberoi, 2020). One of many problematic outcomes of the 1947 partition of India and creation of Pakistan was that a number of sites of religious significance to the region's three main religions were divided on either side of the border (Dalrymple, 2015).

There have been numerous attempts made earlier to improve the relationship however, the efforts have been impeded by periodic terrorist attacks sponsored by Pakistan establishment including the Pulwama attack. Deterioration of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan and withdrawal from all level of talks and summits from both the sides, post Pulwama attack on 14 Feb 2019 has created a need for comprehensive and sustainable conflict resolution mechanism. In this light, the development of the Kartarpur Corridor is being seen as fulfilling the long due aspirations of Sikh community world over to pay homage to the religious shrine of their first Sikh Guru. It is clearly demonstrated that the deep shared cultural and religious histories of the region cannot be erased, only complicated by the border.

India and Pakistan do have an agreement that provides a framework to approach this dilemma. The Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines (1974) allows their respective citizens the opportunity to visit religious shrines in each country under certain conditions. Alongside Sikhism's holy sites in Pakistan, India contains a number of sites of great importance to followers the Sufi Islam, while Pakistani Hindus and Indian Muslims also rely on the protocol for their cross-border pilgrimages. Although religious tensions in the region continue to be fraught, the opportunity for more consistent and efficient access to pilgrimage sites is an area of cooperation between the two states that could prove fruitful (Wyeth, 2019).

Knowing the history of Indo-Pak relations, it is also being apprehended by the strategic circles in India that Pakistan has some ulterior motives to be achieved in the garb of Kartarpur Corridor. It is also being felt that Pakistan may win the favour of the internationally affluent and politically powerful Sikh community whose support can greatly help the country overcome its existing financial woes. Moreover,

the Khalistan movement that has roots in a number of foreign shores including Pakistan. Pakistan may attempt to leverage the development to its advantage.

Kartarpur: Historical Background and Significance

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, first Guru of Sikh religion travelled through several nations, imparting the message of universal peace, harmony, and love before arriving in Kartarpur in 1521. Duni Chand, the region's then-governor, gave him 100 acres of land situated on the Ravi river's bank, where he shed his travelling garb and embraced the dress of a modest householder and farmer. It is at this place Guru Nanak not only gave three pillars of Sikhism "Kirat Karo (working hard at whatever task one undertakes and an honest living), Vand Chhako (share wealth, possessions and talents with others), Naam Japo (meditation through reciting, chanting and singing)" but also established his first free kitchen or langar where any traveller or a person in need was provided food and shelter irrespective of faith, caste, age, sex, or social status. He passed away in 1539 after which, this location became a holy spot (Sharma, 2019).

Kartarpur, which means 'Place of God', is located in Pakistan Punjab's Shakargarh Tehsil, Narowal District. The Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara, an impressive white edifice, is located 2.5 kilometres off the Shakargarh road, in the midst of lush green fields in Kartarpur. Moreover, Guru Nanak Dev Ji the first Guru of Sikhism, founded Kartarpur in 1504 A.D., and his Sikh community included members of all religions and castes. He spent the last 18 years of his life at Kartarpur (Mazhar & Goraya, 2020). There was a disagreement between the local Muslims and Hindus following Nanak's passing. Muslims intended to bury Nanak, while Hindus wanted to cremate him because they regarded him as their Guru. According to popular belief, Guru Nanak's body was transformed into flowers and distributed to the two communities. After Guru Nanak's demise, on the demand of his followers, both grave and Samadhi were constructed in Kartarpur. It was in Kartarpur that the world's first Gurdwara was constructed in the 1520's. The original settlement was damaged by the Ravi river's shifting flow, and the shrine itself had undergone numerous rebuilds and repairs throughout the centuries (Mazhar & Goraya, 2020). While Maharaja Ranjit Singh covered its dome in gold then the shrine was later destroyed by floods and was rebuilt in 1925, by Bhupinder Singh, then Maharaja of Patiala (Sharma, 2019). Later on, the Pakistani government also renovated the shrine in 1995, and opened it for devotees in 2004 (Awan & Khalid, 2020).

Before the partition of British India, there was no problem for Sikhs to pay obeisance to the holy shrine of Kartarpur. But in 1947 when British India was divided into present-day India and Pakistan, number of religious sites of regions three main religions Sikhism, Hinduism, and Islam were also divided on the either side of the border. Overnight Sikhs were deprived of their unhindered access to

Kartarpur shrine because it was now part of Pakistan. After partition it was not just the arduous formalities but also hostile India-Pakistan relations that became hindrance for the devotees. However, in the absence of the corridor, devotees were required to undertake a difficult, 78-mile journey while adhering to stringent visa requirements and need to spend thousands of rupees on travel. But with the construction of the corridor, it is affordable and accessible to all like pre partition and its sides are barred and restricted travel to the shrine exclusively, runs straight from the border to the gurdwara (Saha, 2019)

Politics of Kartarpur Corridor

The first Sikh Guru was born and died in Nankana Sahib and Kartarpur Sahib, respectively and both became,ironically, part of Pakistan after partition, and the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab requested ownership of both locations in 1948. In 1969, then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi pledged to approach Pakistan about a land exchange in order to acquire Kartarpur but nothing happened. During the then Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s visit to Pakistan in 1999, the matter was discussed between him and Nawaz Sharif, his counterpart in Pakistan but discussions did not fructify. Once again during Pervaiz Musharraf’s administration, some efforts were made, and in 2000 the project was given the go-ahead to begin work on the corridor, but delays remained because of hostilities between the two states (Awan & Khalid, 2020).Later on, then President Pranab Mukherjee and former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also brought up the proposed corridor in 2008 but the plan could not be executed due to strained India-Pakistan relations (Sharma, 2019).



Source: Duhan, 2020

The real breakthrough came when Pakistan's present Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa assured former Indian cricketer turned Congress leader Shri Navjot Singh Sidhu who went to Pakistan in 2018 on the invitation of Imran Khan on his swearing in ceremony as Prime Minister of Pakistan. The decision was eventually made by Pakistan Government, ahead of the 550th anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev's birth which was celebrated in 2019, Pakistan announced to open the Kartarpur Corridor for Sikh pilgrims (Maini,2018). Finally, officials from both the governments discussed the technicalities of the corridor and gave green signal to the project.

The Kartarpur corridor, extends across a length of around 6 km in which 2 kilometres is on Indian side and 4 kilometres on Pakistan side of the border. The corridor connects Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Punjab's Gurdaspur district to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan and it also assists thousands of pilgrims in travelling to the revered shrine hassle free.

Prime Minister Modi had stated that the Kartarpur project might lead to stronger ties between the citizens of the two countries in 2018 and interestingly he also compared the Kartarpur project to the fall of the Berlin wall. It was on October 24, 2019, India and Pakistan formally agreed to the terms of the agreement, which allows 5,000 visitors per day to the holy shrine without a visa and 10,000 visitors on special occasions.

On November 9, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Indian side of Kartarpur Corridor and his counterpart in Pakistan Imran Khan inaugurated Pakistan side of Kartarpur corridor to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji on 12th November, 2019. While inaugurating the corridor then Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan reciprocated by stating that this corridor will be a new road to peace between the two countries (The Economic Times, 2019). Globally, the Kartarpur Corridor has been praised for its capacity to serve as a "bridge of peace" between the two close-by nations, which have a history of hostilities. Most importantly, UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the Kartarpur Corridor as a "corridor of hope" and the Darbar Sahib as "the best symbol" for peace and "interfaith harmony" following his visit to the site in February 2020 (Bainiwal, 2020).

India-Pakistan Relations Since Independence

Since Independence relations between India and Pakistan have seen more downs than ups. Within couple of months of their Independence India and Pakistan were fighting war when Pakistan attacked Jammu and Kashmir in October 1947. In total India and Pakistan had fought three wars in 1947-48, 1965, 1971 and one undeclared war in 1999 in the form of Kargil conflict. Number of other ongoing issues such as Jammu and Kashmir insurgency, terrorism etc are the major hindrances in establishing cordial relations between India and Pakistan. It will be wrong to say that both countries never tried to establish healthy relations. Number of confidence-

building measures were taken like ‘The Karachi Agreement’ of 1949, ‘The Indus Water Treaty’ of 1960, ‘Tashkent Declaration’ of 1966, ‘The Lahore Summit’ of 1999 and Hotline Between Prime Ministers were also maintained for some time (Ashraf, 2007). As a pleasing gesture, in 2014, Prime Minister Modi invited the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif for the swearing-in ceremony and PM Modi paid a courtesy visit to the then Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to wish him and his granddaughter on her wedding in December 2015 (The Indian Express, 2015). In spite of all the best efforts CBM’s failed for one or the other reason and both the countries returned back to hostilities and period of uncertainties. Once again in 2019, both the countries tried the new form of confidence-building measures by signing the Kartarpur Corridor agreement. Since, Partition Sikhs had to cover an arduous 78-mile journey under strict visa regulations to visit both birth place Gurudwara Nankana Sahib and resting place Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, that too on gurdwaras or special occasions only. But with the opening of Kartarpur Corridor devotees can visit Kartarpur Sahib throughout the year without any visa, just by crossing the border on foot and by travelling just by bus for few kilometres (The Times of India, 2021). Despite Pulwama attack and Balakot air strike, official meetings on Kartarpur corridor project were not halted as expected by some security experts because after attack India took stringent decisions of revoking “most favoured nation” status to Pakistan and also cancelling all forms of bilateral meetings with Pakistan. Although India-Pakistan relations were strained but Kartarpur Corridor had given new hope. Pakistan’s religious diplomacy may instil confidence in Indian decision makers on the seriousness of Pakistan’s efforts to ease down the tensions between both the countries.

Religious Diplomacy of Pakistan

Pasquale Ferrara (2019) has defined religious diplomacy as engaging religions, having a conversation with religious actors, considering religious beliefs as relevant for internal politics, foreign policy and international relations.

This definition fits into Pakistan genesis as it was partitioned on religious line from British India in 1947 and since independence Pakistan has used religion as key element in its policies. For both foreign policy and internal stability, Pakistan has used its Islamic or religious ideology. It has also mastered the art of using religious ideology in showcasing itself as the protector of the Islamic world and fighter of Islamic causes. Pakistan strategically named its nuclear bomb as “The Islamic Bomb” to justify its possession of the bomb (Shaikh, 2002). Pakistan always used religious sentiment of Islamic countries against India on Kashmir issue. In spite of Pakistan’s best efforts in recent times a number of Islamic countries have shunned its opposition to India on Kashmir issue and restrained from voting in favour of any resolution put forward by Pakistan at international platform.

Religious Diplomacy has been at the core of the India-Pakistan relations but

it was used by Pakistan against India at regional and international platforms. However, in last couple of years same religious diplomacy is being used by Pakistan to mend its relations with its principal rival India by opening Kartarpur Corridor. Kartarpur Corridor has become a ray of hope in hostile India-Pakistan relations and both the countries have been cooperating on Kartarpur Corridor although initially there were some temporary hiccups on certain issues like number of devotees to visit in one day, fee to be charged from devotees and seriousness of Pakistan to complete the corridor and some security concerns were also raised by the defence analysts but all the issues were resolved for the smooth execution of the project.

On 9th November, 2019 Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Kartarpur corridor and flagged off first batch of more than 500 pilgrims under the leadership of Jathedar Harpreet Singh to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, through the corridor which was opened ahead of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Besides PM Modi and then chief minister of Punjab Capt Amarinder Singh, former CM of Punjab Parkash Singh Badal, Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Ferozepur MP Sukhbir Singh Badal, Punjab Governor V P Singh Badnore and SGPC president Gobind Singh Longowal were also present on the occasion. Prime Minister Modi thanked his Pakistani Counterpart for responding to popular sentiment and making Kartarpur Corridor a success (Brar, 2019). There after corridor was closed temporarily in March, 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic but on 18th November, 2020 corridor was again opened for the devotees.

So, it is argued that religious diplomacy has potential to improve relations between Indian and Pakistan. People from both the sides, such as Sufis in Pakistan have been expressing their wishes to visit the Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, likewise Kashmiri Pandits of going to Sharda Peeth in Neelum Valley of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and soon, want to visit the religious places of their faith. Kartarpur Corridor can be a beginning in larger context of religious diplomacy between India and Pakistan but surely not the end. There are number of other religious places which can give further impetus to the relations between both the nations as we share common socio-cultural heritage.

Kartarpur Corridor and India's Security Concerns

Since Independence, Pakistan has been the top contributor of both traditional and non-traditional threats to India's national security. On traditional front, as already mentioned earlier, both the countries had fought three full-fledged wars and one Low Intensity Conflict in 1999 in the hills of Kargil. However, on the non-traditional front Pakistani military follows "Bleed India with a Thousand Cuts" military doctrine to destabilise India. Under its "Bleed India with a Thousand Cuts" military strategy Pakistanis nurturing terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) etc to conduct terrorist activities in India but at the same time it also tries to take advantages of internal fault lines of India by supporting non state actors or

separatists in India to do anti-India activities. Khalistan Movement, Kashmir Insurgency, terrorist attacks etc are the prime examples of Pakistan's military doctrine. Khalistan movement was not successful for number of reasons and lost it sheen in mid-1990s but it is being argued by India's national security experts that for quite some time Pakistan is again trying to revive Khalistan Movement.

When in 2018 newly elected Imran Khan's government and Pakistan Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa assured Indian cricketer turned politician Navjot Singh Sidhu to open Kartarpur Corridor for Sikh devotees ahead of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Sikh community all over India and even world over, was very happy with this decision and everybody was thanking or praising Imran Khan of his good gesture for accepting the long pending demand of Sikhs to pay obeisance at Kartarpur Sahib. At the same time, Indian defence analysts were seeing this decision from national security prism and they were suspicious of Pakistan's real motives for this decision. Indian National Security apparatus was also on its toes to analyse the pros and cons of Kartarpur Corridor (Chari, 2019).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on the one hand did not want to hurt the Sikh community's sentiment but on the other hand it was concerned about the ulterior motives of Pakistani agencies. Modi government was convinced that Kartarpur Corridor can be used by Pakistani agencies to brainwash Sikhs to achieve their malicious agenda. Indian government was concerned about the enthusiasm of Pakistan Army to complete the Kartarpur corridor. Raising more curiosity in India, Frontier Works Organisation, a military engineering unit has completed the construction of the corridor in record time. Moreover, Pakistan's army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa promised opening of the corridor and Pakistan army became the main driving force in the successful completion of the corridor. This is another reason for Indian security agencies to believe that Pakistan will try to fulfil its underlying strategic objective of leveraging and promoting a separatist movement in another border state of India (Laskar, 2019).

On the one hand Pakistan has assured India of not letting Kartarpur Corridor to be used for anti-India activities but on the other hand according to an article published in online news portal OpIndia Indian intelligence agencies have reported that Pakistan is misusing the Kartarpur Corridor to interact with Indian pilgrims and cultivate contacts with them (OpIndia, 2022). The then Punjab DGP Dinkar Gupta also pointed out in a press conference that Kartarpur Corridor can be huge national security challenge from terrorism point of view (The Indian Express, 2020).

Colonel Jaibans Singh (Retd), a defence analyst, argued that Pakistan would want to benefit from anything that could cause trouble in India. But he also added that because people of Punjab are well aware of the wicked intentions of Pakistan, they cannot be brainwashed. No Indian Sikh will be radicalised because of the opening of this corridor (SV, 2018). It is again reiterated and strongly argued that the

Kartarpur Corridor has the ability to promote religious tourism, people to people contact to bridge the trust gap between the two countries, and potentially even conflict resolution by maintaining channels of communication open.

Conclusion

Religion is imperative to Pakistan's identity. From demand to creation and till present times Islam had played a crucial role in shaping what Pakistan is today. From time to time Pakistani leadership has used religion to their convenience to either fight India or to control internal fault lines of Pakistan. Religion also became an instrument of Pakistan's foreign policy from making alliances with Muslim world, to use of religion of fighting non-state actors against India. Not only that Pakistan also named its nuclear bomb as "The Islamic Bomb" to justify its possession.

So, if we glance through the journey of India-Pakistan relations since independence it has seen more downs than ups. Apart from four wars, Pakistan has been continuously using non-state actors to support the insurgencies in India. Although from time to time different means has been used by India to normalize its relations with Pakistan, every time for one or the other reason normalization process is derailed.

Throughout the history Pakistan has used religion against India but the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor on the occasion of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was highly appreciated by the Sikh community settled world over in general and political leadership in particular. Moreover, despite some security concerns, Indian government also took the bold step in converting this "Idea of Corridor" into reality. More important to highlight, it is for the first time Pakistan had used its religious diplomacy to ease its relations with India rather than using religion against India. So, on the successful opening of Kartarpur Corridor religious diplomacy should not be halted rather steps should be taken to open other religious places in both the countries for the pilgrims to further ease the tensions and create conducive environment to resolve other issues between both the countries.

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Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*

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Abstract

The paper analyses the Gurbilas Patshahi 10 by Koer Singh who happened to be Kalal (distiller) by caste. As a literary form, gurbilas emerged early in the eighteenth century to celebrate the life and mission of Guru Gobind Singh. Koer Singh's Gurbilas was composed sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century. In its 21 chapters, the writer dwells on the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the tenth Guru's early life and battles, institution of the Khalsa, the new injunctions, conflict with the hill rajas and the Mughal faujdars over Anandpur, martyrdom of the sahibzadas, Guru Gobind Singh's activities in Malwa (Punjab), dispatch of the Zafarnama to Aurangzeb, dealings with Bahadur Shah, the Guru's travel through Rajasthan, and the last days at Nanded. There is a brief reference also to the rise and fall of Banda Singh and martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh. In addition to oral evidence, Koer Singh appears to rely mainly on the Bachittar Natak and Sri Gur Sobha. His work was probably intended to inspire people to support the Khalsa in their struggle for sovereign power. The writer lays emphasis on the idea of social equality and the diverse social composition of the Khalsa. He suggests that the Khalsa were against the 'Turks' (Muslims associated with administration) and not against Muslims per se.

The *Gurbilas* is a new form of literature which emerged in the eighteenth century.¹ The Sikh writers of the eighteenth century who wrote on Guru Gobind Singh were familiar with the *Bachittar Natak* and the *Sri Gur Sobha*. In terms of form and content, these two works are the sources for Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*. Koer Singh's *Gurbilas* is written in Braj language in Gurmukhi script. This work is composed in praise of the life and mission of Guru Gobind Singh. It is significant to note that Koer Singh happened to be a Kalal (distiller) by caste which was considered low in the traditional social order.

Dating, Sources and Scope

Writing in 1968, Fauja Singh places *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* in 1751, in accordance with the date recorded by Koer Singh.² Writing two decades later, Surjit Hans rejects this date on the basis of its contents, and places it in the early nineteenth century.³ This has been accepted by some scholars like Harjot Oberoi, W.H. McLeod and Louis Fenech.⁴ Questioning this assumption in 1992, Madanjit Kaur argues at length that Koer Singh's work can be safely placed between 1751 and 1762-- the two

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possible interpretations of the statement made by the author himself towards the end of his work. She goes on to refute the arguments put forth by Hans one by one.⁵ Writing in 2004, Gurtej Singh also says that Koer Singh's *Gurbilas* makes a lot of sense when placed in the 1750s.⁶

In 2019, J.S. Grewal points to a piece of external evidence to clinch the argument in favour of the early date of Koer Singh's *Gurbilas*. In his *Sri Gur Panth Prakash* (verse 14 of *sakhi* 24), Ratan Singh Bhangu says that the account given by 'Mani Singh Sant' was elaborated by Sukha Singh. It is reasonably certain that the reference here is to the *Gurbilas* attributed to Bhai Mani Singh which was actually composed by Koer Singh and expanded by Sukha Singh. This small piece of information confirms that Koer Singh wrote earlier than Sukha Singh whose date of composition is known to be 1797.⁷ When combined with internal evidence, this helps to place the writing of Koer Singh's *Gurbilas* sometime before the inception of Khalsa Raj in 1765.

Koer Singh takes the reader into confidence that he had heard much about Guru Gobind Singh from Bhai Mani Singh, a great martyr and a devout Sikh. Fauja Singh points out that Koer Singh used literary sources mainly the *Bachittar Natak* and Sainapat's *Gursobha*.⁸ Gurtej Singh mentions that Koer Singh used the *Zafarnama* and the *Sarabloh Granth*, besides the information provided by some eyewitnesses. Gurtej Singh adds that in Koer Singh's work there are echoes of some compositions included in the *Dasam Granth*.⁹

Koer Singh's *Gurbilas* consists of 21 chapters. The first six chapters relate to the life of Guru Gobind. Chapters 7-9 relate in a way to the institution of the Khalsa, including the battle of Nadaun, episode of the Goddess and removal of the *masands*. Chapters 10 to 13 are devoted to the battles of Guru Gobind against the hill chiefs and the Mughal *faujdar*s. It may be noted that all these battles are given *after* the institution of the Khalsa even though in the *Bachittar Natak* and the *Gur Sobha* they are placed before the institution of the Khalsa. Chapter 14 relates to the struggle which resulted eventually in the evacuation of Anandpur by Guru Gobind Singh. Chapters 15 to 20 dwell on Guru Gobind Singh's activities after leaving Anandpur, and chapter 21 gives his last days.

At the outset of his *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, Koer Singh invokes Ad Purkh Kartar, who can be found and known only by turning to the Guru. He also seeks the aid of Adi Shakti Mata who made the Panth all powerful. At the end of the *Chaupai*, he refers to the line of ten Gurus to underline the unity of Guruship. Koer Singh highlights the role of Makhan Shah Lubana in identifying the ninth Guru and gives some detail of Guru Tegh Bahadur's travels. He dwells on the Guru's martyrdom for the sake of *dharam*. Here, the writer gives a broad outline of the life of Guru Gobind Singh and the institution of the Khalsa, which he proposes to depict in detail in the body of his work.¹⁰

Early Life and Battles of Guru Gobind Singh

In chapter 2, Koer Singh reconstructs the wider context, which is not strictly historical, to place the birth of Guru Gobind (Guru Gobind Singh) at Patna in 1666 during Guru Tegh Bahadur's journey to Assam in the company of Raja Man Singh (actually Raja Ram Singh). In this connection, Koer Singh reiterates the statement in the *Bachittar Natak* about the purpose for which Guru Gobind Singh was commissioned by God to create a Panth for the destruction of 'Turks' (Muslims associated with administration) who had become intolerant and oppressive. The young Gobind was four and a half years old when Guru Tegh Bahadur sent the message from Makhawal that he had to return to the Punjab and that Gobind should come to Makhawal. Koer Singh adds that at Patna Gobind was loved by the *sangat*; he received weapons as toys; he was seen as a redeemer in the future, and on request from the *sangat* Gobind's cradle was left behind as a holy relic. On his way to Makhawal, Gobind was welcomed enthusiastically by the Sikh *sangats* at many places, notably Sankar Puri (Kashi/Benaras), Audh Puri (Awadhपुरi/Ayodhya), and Prag (Prayag/ Allahabad). At Ayodhya the Brahmans raised the issue of accepting offerings by the Guru who was a Surajvanshi Kshatriya. They were satisfied when they were told that people made offerings voluntarily after their wishes were fulfilled.¹¹

In chapter 3, Koer Singh gives detail of the places visited by the Guru before reaching Makhawal. His meeting with Pir Arif Din showed the young Gobind as the supreme being.¹² In chapter 4, Koer Singh gives the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur which was the means of taking over rulership from the 'Turks' who are explicitly stated to be the 'enemy'. Koer Singh gives 1675 as the year of martyrdom. He talks about the marriage of the tenth Guru with Jeet Kaur and the *tilak* ceremony of Guru Gobind. At the end of the chapter, the *purohit* of the Sodhi family asks Guru Gobind to wear *janeu* as a symbol of Hindu *dharam*.¹³ In the next chapter on 'Raj Saj', Koer Singh states that Guru Gobind began his Guruship in 1676, refusing to wear the sacred thread and telling the Brahman that he was under the protection of the Wielder of the Sword, the Great God (Mahakal) from whom he had received the sacred thread of the sword. Even Guru Nanak had rejected the sacred thread.

Koer Singh mentions the Guru's active participation in hunting. His kettle drum called the *RanjitNagara* was a symbol of his independent status. It was not liked by Bhim Chand, the Raja of Kahlur. The *masands* informed Mata Gujri of the Guru's activity and the trouble it could create with the hill chief. When the Guru was questioned by Mata Gujari, he said that he was not scared of any *raja*.

Later, Bhim Chand visited Guru Gobind and asked for an elephant. The tenth Guru replied that he could ask for anything other than the elephant. Bhim Chand got angry and threatened the Guru to get ready for battle. Bhim Chand approached the *raja* of Kangra and also Aurangzeb. Koer Singh brings in *masands* who narrate the

story to Mata Gujri to create fear in her mind. When Mata Gujri questioned Guru Gobind he told her that Sri Guru Dev (Akal Purkh) had sent him to fight and to kill 'Turks'. Koer Singh lays emphasis on the *nagara* and mentions the artillery of Guru Gobind Singh to highlight his military power. On invitation from the Sirmaur state (Nahan) Guru Gobind Singh left for Paonta in its territory. All the hill *rajās*, including Raja Fateh Shah of Garhwal, came with gifts to meet Guru Gobind. The ruler of Nahan welcomed the Guru and told him that he could establish a new town and construct a fort at Paonta.¹⁴

In chapter six on the battle of Bhangani,¹⁵ Koer Singh talks of the hunting activity of Guru Gobind at Paonta. Sikh *sangats* from different places came there for Guru Gobind's *darshan*. Bhim Chand now sent his *wazir* with an apology and invitation for the Guru to resettle in Anandpur. While going to Garhwal for the marriage of his son, Bhim Chand thought of going to Srinagar through Paonta. The Guru allowed Bhim Chand's son, that is the bridegroom, to cross the river, but not Bhim Chand and his army. As a result, Bhim Chand arrived late for the marriage ceremony and narrated the story of his enmity with the Guru to Fateh Shah (the chief of Garhwal). Fateh Shah got angry and decided to march against Guru Gobind Singh with a large army. The Guru went out of Paonta to face him, and chose Bhangani as the field of battle. Supported by several hill chiefs, Fateh Shah in his pride hoped to defeat the Guru. Many commandants on Fateh Shah's side were killed, like Bhikhan Khan and Harish Chand. It is pertinent to note that Koer Singh highlights the social composition of the army of the Guru which consisted of the Jatts, Bhattas, Lubanas, Chamars, Baniyas, Aroras, Shudras, Chippas, and Tarkhans. All of them fought together. Mahri Chand and Kirpal Ram (Kirpal Chand) are mentioned among the brave warriors who fought on the side of Guru Gobind Singh. After Sango Shah's death he is mentioned as Shah Sangram (the king of the battle). Guru Gobind Singh came back to Anandpur after his victory in the battle of Bhangani.

In chapter seven, Koer Singh places the battle of Nadaun sometime after the battle of Bhangani.¹⁶ He does not give the dates of these battles. He states that Bhim Chand visited the Guru after the battle of Bhangani, apologised to him and requested the Guru to support him in time of trouble. After some years, Mian Khan sent Alif Khan to collect tribute from the hill *rajās*. Now Bhim Chand supported by other hill *rajās*, approached Guru Gobind Singh for help against the Mughal *fauj-dars*. The Guru and his warriors went to support the hill chiefs and their participation in the battle turned the tables against the Mughal commander who was obliged to retreat.

Looking at the two battles, Koer Singh says that the battle of Bhangani was fought by Guru Gobind Singh in defense. The cause of this battle was Bhim Chand who had instigated Fateh Shah. However, in the battle of Nadaun, Guru Gobind Singh supported Bhim Chand who was the leader of a revolt against the Mughal authority.

Episode of the Goddess

With reference to Koer Singh's treatment of the worship of the Goddess in his *Gurbilas*, Gurtej Singh says that it was 'partly an expression of the dichotomy that prevailed in his mind'. He was unable to subscribe exclusively to 'Sikhism' or 'Hinduism'. Through this tale he appears to rationalize the wielding of weapons by the lower castes. The gods and goddesses of the Brahmanical pantheon worshipped the Guru after the *devi* appeared. They offered weapons and other items which the Guru would later prescribe as mandatory symbols of the faith of the Khalsa. The Khalsa were destined to succeed and they deserved wholehearted support of the Hindus in the interest of preserving Hinduism. Thus, an imaginary story was woven into the narrative for the consumption of the Hindu masses. Gurtej Singh emphasizes that this was the underlying purpose of Koer Singh's *Gurbilas*.¹⁷

Koer Singh narrates the episode of the Goddess in chapter eight.¹⁸ It is placed after Guru Gobind Singh's return to Makhawal-Anandpur from Paonta (that is, after the battle of Nadaun) and before the institution of the Khalsa. The Guru is said to have himself decided to hold the ceremony to invoke the Goddess for creating the Khalsa Panth. He sent letters to the *munis* and *gianis* of Kashi, Gaya, Mathura, Haridwar, Gomti, Sindh, and Kashmir. All the Brahmans agreed that it was difficult to invoke the Goddess, but, they suggested that Puri was the one place where there were no 'Turks'. The Brahman Datt Ram of Puri could possibly invoke the Goddess. Koer Singh sets out to narrate the tale of the appearance of Chandika (also called Bhavani, Ambika, Kali, and Sharda Bhavani) to bless Guru Gobind Singh. She was worshipped for three years but she did not appear. The Brahmans told Guru Gobind Singh that the Goddess used to appear in one year during the Satyuga (first cosmic age), in two years during the Treta (second cosmic age), and in three years during the Duapar (third cosmic age), but in the Kaliyuga she took four years. Therefore, they needed a secluded place to invoke her. Naina Devi hill was chosen for this purpose. The Brahmans presented the Goddess as the supreme deity, the creator of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh. Her praises could bring political power (*raj*), and Khalsa Panth could be made manifest to destroy the enemy. Destruction of the 'Turks' and the establishment of sovereign rule were two sides of the same political coin. Guru Gobind Singh participated in the worship. The gods were now afraid that the Guru might be empowered by the Goddess at their cost. Koer Singh goes on to say that they did not know that the Guru was doing all this for the welfare of others (*par-upkar*). Millions of paradises and thousands of thrones were at his feet, and millions of boons from the gods and goddesses were not equal to his feet. Only for the welfare of others did the Guru keep himself aloof and use the agency of the Goddess to institute the Khalsa. The successful invocation of the Goddess was his wondrous act (*kautak*).

However, many spirits are stated to have tried to scare or lure the Guru when

he was worshipping the Goddess without eating anything. But they could not cross the line of '*satnam*'. The Guru paid no attention to them. Those who had no faith in the Guru were skeptical about the whole project. When the time of her appearance was coming close, the officiant Brahman told Guru Gobind Singh that the Goddess required sacrifice of a brave person. The Guru told him that none else was as brave as the Brahman himself. The Brahman ran away. Five Sikhs of the Guru offered themselves for sacrifice. The Guru told them that he would call them if and when they were needed. They were 'the five beloved' (*panjpyare*). The eight-armed Goddess appeared with weapons and other articles in all her hands. The Guru offered to make sacrifice of 125,000 Sikhs. When the Goddess said, 'ask for the boon', he asked for the creation of the Khalsa to destroy the *mlechh* (impure, foreigner). The Goddess said that, like her son Shankar, the Guru would always remain detached (*nirban*). Then she gave him the *khanda* (double-edged sword) with which she had killed the demons Sumbh and Nisumbh. Now, Guru Gobind Singh praised the Goddess and he was praised by Brahma, Mahesh, and other gods. They offered whatever was in their power. Hanuwant gave *kachhehra* (*kachh*), Vishnu gave *kes*, and the Goddess herself gave weapons. The Guru gave gifts to the Brahmans and they sang his praises.¹⁹ He was distinguished from everyone else in the world to have made the *devi* appear. On the occasion of Baisakhi, the Sikhs came in large numbers. They had heard about the appearance of Kalika. Here ends the episode of the Guru and the Goddess.

After the successful invocation of the Goddess, Guru Gobind decided to remove the *masands* from the Panth to set his own house in order (*greh-sodh*). With one exception, they were all burnt. Koer Singh says that Guru Gobind Singh took this decision because the *masands* were dishonest; they oppressed the Sikhs, indulged in illicit sexual pleasures, defied the Guru, and thought that the Guru was dependent on them. The other charges against the *masands* were that they did not pay due respect to the Granth and regarded themselves as the Guru's equals.

Creation of the Khalsa Panth

An account of the creation of the Khalsa Panth is given in chapter nine.²⁰ At the time of Baisakhi in Kesgarh when Guru Gobind Singh asked for heads, some Sikhs thought that the unbearable sight of Kali had an adverse effect on his mind: he had killed the Masands earlier, and now he was out to kill the Sikhs. Koer Singh describes the ceremony of initiation performed by Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru poured clear water into a vessel of iron and started reciting *mantars*. Kirpa Ram informed Mata Ji (the Guru's mother) that the Guru was going to institute the Khalsa Panth and for this purpose he was preparing the *pahul* for initiation. She came and put *patashas* into the bowl. Having thus prepared *amrit*, the Guru offered prayer (*ardas*). Then he administered *amrit* to five Sikhs: Daya Singh, a Sobti Khatri of Lahore; Nihchal Singh (Mohkam Chand), a Chhipa of Dwarka; Sahib Singh, a Nai of

Bidar; Dharam Singh, a Jat of Hastinapur; and Himmat Singh, a Jhivar of Jagannath. The first injunction given to the five on this occasion was not to associate with those who cut their hair and killed their infant daughters; or with the Minas, the Masands and the 'Turks'. The initiates should discard every other form of worship and take refuge in the 'Wielder of the Sword'. They should bear arms, keep their *kes* unshorn, wear *kachh*, and keep a dagger (*kard*). Each one should keep a *kangha* to comb his *kes* twice a day. Above all, the Khalsa should be prepared to sacrifice their life for the cause of the Guru.

Koer Singh then refers to the injunctions against gambling, visiting a prostitute, and entertaining greed of any kind. The Khalsa should feed the hungry. He says that Guru Gobind Singh introduced the practice of inter-dining among the Khalsa irrespective of their caste background in terms of Shudar, Vaish, Khatri and Brahman. This carries the implication that the Khalsa were not to observe the formalities of *chauka* observed by the higher castes for cooking and dining. The Khalsa should not have any sexual relations with a Muslim woman, nor should they trust the 'Turks'. The writer warns that those who do not heed this injunction shall suffer in the end.

For Koer Singh, the Sikh Panth and the Khalsa Panth are synonymous. He uses the terms Gurmukh, Sikh, and Gursikh Khalsa. The only other category is that of the excommunicated groups among the Sikhs. He gives the names and castes (*jatis*) of the five Sikhs who offered their heads to Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur on the Baisakhi day. As mentioned above, at least three of them were Shudars in the traditional social order: a Chhipa (calico-printer), a Nai (barber), and a Jhivar (water-carrier). He goes on to say that people criticized Guru Gobind Singh for abolishing all distinctions between the four castes: the Shudar, the Vaish, the Khatri, and the Brahman ate together at one place. But the Rajput Rajas of the hills refused to become members of the Khalsa order because their *kula dharam* (family tradition) did not permit them to eat with the lower castes. Guru Gobind Singh then decided to give rulership to the Shudars.

Conflict with the Hill Chiefs and Mughals

The writer says in chapter ten that after instituting the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh wrote to all the Sikh *sangats* to come to Anandpur. A long list of the regions and places outside the Punjab is given in this connection. Subsequently, with a large number of Sikhs gathered at Anandpur, the problem of food and fodder became critical and the Guru allowed them to make collections from the territories of the hill chiefs. Now, they thought of approaching Aurangzeb. Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur being pre-eminent among the chiefs, spoke on their behalf to apprise the emperor how Guru Gobind Singh had created the Khalsa Panth with the blessings of the Goddess to destroy the Mughal power. Bhim Chand added that the Guru started plundering their territories when the chiefs refused to support him in his hostility

towards the emperor. Aurangzeb sent a large army against Guru Gobind Singh. On this point Koer Singh quotes a verse from the *Akal Ustat* that the Guru was under the protection of God. The battle that followed is described by Koer Singh in detail. He refers to the fortresses of Taragarh, Bijaygarh, Agamgarh, Holagarh and Kesgarh. The Guru's family was in Agamgarh. Eventually, the allied forces were repulsed by the Singhs. They were given robes of honour and *kangan* (gold bracelets). With this ends the tenth chapter.²¹

In chapter 11, the hill chiefs thought of another stratagem.²² An intoxicated elephant could be used to break open the fortress in order to fight with the Singhs under siege. Guru Gobind Singh encouraged Duni Chand, a *masand* who had been renamed Gurbakhsh Singh after taking *pahul*, to face the elephant, assuring him that he would be victorious. However, he was so frightened that he left Anandpur at midnight. He met a bad end. Guru Gobind Singh then empowered Bachittar Singh (son of Bhai Mani Singh) to attack the intoxicated elephant and strike at his forehead. On being struck the elephant turned back in panic crushing the enemy. This was followed by a battle in which thousands of 'Turks' were killed, and the hill chiefs ran away like the deer before a lion. Guru Gobind Singh told the Singhs that it was not desirable to pursue the fleeing enemy.

It should be pointed out that the account of battles given by Koer Singh in chapters 12 and 13 is essentially similar to the account of events given in the *Bachittar Natak*.²³ However, whereas these events are placed in the *Bachittar Natak* before the institution of the Khalsa, Koer Singh places them after the institution of Khalsa, though the broad internal sequence of events is the same in both. The unsuccessful campaign of the Khanzada, son of Dilawar Khan, against Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur is given first, followed by the campaign of Hussain Khan who was killed by the troops of two hill chiefs before he could reach Anandpur. The campaign of Jujhar Singh is given by Koer Singh before the arrival of Prince Muazzam and the *ahadis* sent by Aurangzeb for action against Guru Gobind Singh and the refractory hill chiefs. Koer Singh says that Guru Gobind Singh remained safe but those who left him in panic suffered miseries at the hands of the *ahadi* Mirza Beg.

Evacuation of Anandpur

Chapters 14 and 15 relate to the long siege of Anandpur by the allied forces of the hill chiefs and the Mughal *faujdar*s, ending with the evacuation of Anandpur by Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa.²⁴ The hill chiefs had again approached the emperor, and complained against the Guru. Aurangzeb told them to lead the attack with their combined forces and he would also send an army to join them. Koer Singh mentions a number of hill chiefs who brought their forces for action. On the arrival of the Mughal forces, it was decided to lay siege to Anandpur which continued for a long time. In due course, the people under siege became short of food and water and

suffered the pangs of hunger and thirst. Koer Singh gives incidents to illustrate the kind of miseries suffered by the Sikhs. The incident of a Sikh (Bhai Kanhiya), who provided water to Muslims and Hindus without making any distinction between them, is mentioned in this connection.

Eventually, the Sikhs complained to the Guru of their unbearable misery and the Guru advised them to have patience for some more time. But they insisted that it was better to leave Anandpur than to die of hunger and thirst. Guru Gobind Singh told them that they would be responsible for what happened later. He told the Sikhs to get ready for leaving Anandpur, each carrying his own baggage. The treasury was distributed among the Singhs. Whatever could not be carried was destroyed.

Events after Evacuation of Anandpur

Chapter 16 relates largely to the developments till Guru Gobind Singh reached Kangar.²⁵ The hill chiefs attacked the Singhs who had to fight them on the way. At Shahi Tibbi, Guru Gobind Singh told Uday Singh (son of Bhai Mani Singh) to take a stand and fight. He and his supporters died fighting. Meanwhile, Guru Gobind Singh reached Chamkaur and he was invited by its *zamindar* to occupy his *garhi*. According to Koer Singh, the *zamindar* was actually insincere; he informed Bhim Chand and the Mughal *faujdar* at Sarhind. The Mughal troops laid siege to Chamkaur. There were 40 Singhs in all in the *garhi*. Koer Singh describes how they all came out one by one to fight unto death, including Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh (actually Zorawar Singh). On Ajit Singh's death, Koer Singh comments that Sahibzada Ajit Singh had drunk the cup of love and proved to be a true Khalsa. This carried the implication that he had become a martyr. When only a few Singhs were left in the *garhi*, Guru Gobind Singh told Sangat Singh to put on the Guru's dress because he himself had an important task to perform in Malwa. During the darkness of the night Guru Gobind Singh left for Macchiwara.

After a short stay with a Sikh at Macchiwara, the tenth Guru left in the garb of a *pir*, accompanied by Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan. For their sincere services the Guru gave them a *hukamnama* asking his Sikhs to take care of the Khans and their descendants. They said that they had served the Guru in the name of God and this *hukamnama* was of no use for them. Guru Gobind Singh told them that Khalsa Raj would be established and their services would be recognized and rewarded. They accepted the *hukamnama*. Passing through Malwa, Guru Gobind Singh reached Kangar where he stayed for some time.

Meanwhile, says Koer Singh, Mata Gujri accompanied by the two younger *sahibzadas*, came out of the fortress of Chamkaur in search of her son, wondering where he had gone. Her loud lamentation was heard by some 'Turks' who were happy to know who she was. They took her and the two *sahibzadas* to Sarhind where it was eventually decided to give the two *sahibzadas* the option of accepting Islam or death. They refused to accept Islam and they were bricked alive. Koer Singh

underlines the ignominious role of Chandu Shah (Sucha Nand) Puri in this matter. Mata Gujri wounded herself with a dagger and she was swallowed by the earth.

At Kangar, the Brar Sikhs came to see Guru Gobind Singh and became his Khalsa. The Guru told the Khalsa that he would now destroy the 'Turks'. The Khalsa pointed out that the Mughal emperor was very powerful and had a huge army. However, he could do whatever he liked and it would be acceptable to them. Guru Gobind Singh wrote a letter to Aurangzeb, the well-known *Zafarnama*. Koer Singh outlines the contents of this letter. It refers to Aurangzeb's oath on the Qu'ran for safe passage to the Guru but subsequently he was attacked by the Mughal troops at Chamkaur. The emperor would be accountable to God. He was alien to justice, and God would judge him truly on the Day of Judgement. He earned his own living in the hope of going to paradise but no one goes to paradise without good deeds. The letter said that preparing copies of the Qu'ran in his own hand was of no use. He had killed his father and his brothers. He would not go to paradise simply because he happened to be a Muslim. The Prophet of Islam had made it clear that he would intercede only on behalf of those Muslims who had done good deeds. Further, Aurangzeb claimed to be an idol breaker but this was a false claim. If he had destroyed one idol, many others were worshipped in every house. Guru Gobind Singh told him that if he had any sincerity in his heart he should come to see the Guru with only a thousand soldiers. All his faults would be forgiven. There was no danger involved because all the Brars were under the Guru's control. The writer says that there were other similar things written by the Guru in his *Zafarnama*, also called '*Bijay Nama*', which carried the mark of his seal.

In chapter 17, Koer Singh narrates how the *Zafarnama* was taken to Aurangzeb by Daya Singh and delivered to the emperor.²⁶ Accompanied by five of the Khalsa, Daya Singh went to Delhi where he was well received by the *sangat* and provided with cash necessary for his journey. Passing through Agra, Gwalior, Ujjain, Burhanpur and Aurangabad, Daya Singh reached Ahmadabad [Ahmad Nagar]. He went to the local *dharamsal* and showed the Guru's order to the *sangat*. They received the *hukamnama* with reverence and served Daya Singh with devotion. However, they were reluctant to do what the Guru had asked them to do. Daya Singh sent message to Guru Gobind Singh that he was feeling helpless and urged the Guru to help him. Aurangzeb saw in a dream that a Sikh of the Guru had come to Ahmad Nagar with a letter for him, and he was staying with the local Sikh named Jetha Singh. On the day following, Aurangzeb sent his servant to bring Daya Singh to his presence. Daya Singh was well received and he delivered the *Zafarnama* to the emperor. Aurangzeb was shocked to read it; the more he read it the greater became his suffering and he died.

Meanwhile, Guru Gobind Singh had left Kangar and reached Kot Kapura where Kapura served him well. The Guru asked him to hand over the fortress to him

so that he could fight and ultimately destroy the *mlechh*. Kapura felt annoyed and said that he would not spoil his relations with the emperor. He was cursed by the Guru. The tenth Guru then moved towards the present day Muktsar. On information given by Kapura, the Mughal troops came from Sarhind to attack him. Koer Singh says that later on Kapura died of the Guru's curse. The Khalsa informed the Guru that a large army of the Mughals had arrived near Muktsar. Guru Gobind Singh prepared for the battle which was fought for three hours before the Mughal troops retreated towards Kot Kapura. The Khalsa who had disowned the Guru also participated in the battle and all died fighting except five. Guru Gobind Singh told them several times to ask for a boon, but they insisted that they would be happy if the paper on which they had disowned the Guru was torn and destroyed. Ultimately the Guru tore that paper in their presence. The corpses of those who had died in battle were honorably cremated and a *shahidganj* (memorial to the martyrs) was ordered to be built over the spot. The place came to be called Muktsar (literally, the pool of liberation) and it was sanctified by Guru Gobind Singh as a place of pilgrimage. According to the writer, to bathe in the 'pool of liberation' in the month of Magh was as meritorious as bathing in the *sarovar* (pool) at Ramdaspur (Amritsar).²⁷

In chapter 18, Koer Singh states that Guru Gobind Singh crossed a frightening wilderness and came to the fort of Bathinda.²⁸ There he met two eminent Sikhs: Bhai Bhagtu and Bhai Bahlo. He went on to Talwandi Sabo and stayed there for a considerable time. He was welcomed by Dalla and some other small or big *zamindars*. The Sikhs began to flock to the place and it developed into a flourishing township. A tall tower was raised at a place close to a pool which was chosen by Guru Gobind Singh for literary activity. It was declared to be the Kashi of the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh told Dalla several times to ask for a boon. Dalla asked for nothing else but rain, millets, and a good harvest. The Guru then talked about his departure for Dakhan and the people were anxious that the Guru should stay on in Malwa because it was safer here. There were dangers in going to the Dakhan. But the Guru told them that he had to go. He left Talwandi, saying '*Vahegurukifateh*' at the time of his departure. On the way, Guru Gobind Singh met Bhai Rupa, and called Batha Ram of Pattan Farid and instructed him to build a *dharamsal* and dig a well at that place to counteract the influence of the *pirs* of Pattan. On entering Rajasthan, the Guru was welcomed by the Rajput *rajas*. Koer Singh says that a Khatri Sikh of a flourishing town offered his daughter for marriage to the Guru and the Guru married her.

Daya Singh met Guru Gobind Singh in Rajasthan and informed him that Aurangzeb had met his death on reading the *Zafarnama*. Guru Gobind Singh wanted to know who would succeed Aurangzeb. He was told that Prince Azam had claimed the throne. Bahadur Shah (Prince Muazzam) was Aurangzeb's elder son and Guru

Gobind Singh was in his favour because he had served the Guru sincerely. He wrote to Bahadur Shah at Lahore, assuring him that he would be successful. Guru Gobind Singh himself prepared to go to Delhi in order to witness the war of succession. Before leaving Rajasthan he had to fight a battle in Baghour which was forced on him. The Khalsa were victorious in this battle and occupied the fort.

In chapter 19, Koer Singh talks of the help given by Guru Gobind Singh to Bahadur Shah in his battle against Azam Shah who had crowned himself.²⁹ Bahadur Shah was not confident that he would win against his brother who had larger resources. He expressed his anxiety to the Guru at Delhi through a messenger. Guru Gobind Singh told him that he should have no doubt that he would come into possession of *raj*. The Guru himself would come to his aid whenever he remembered him. Bahadur Shah felt reassured. In his battle with Bahadur Shah, Azam fought with great courage and valour, and he was about to strike Bahadur Shah with his sword when an arrow of Guru Gobind Singh stuck Azam and he died on the spot. When the courtiers of Bahadur Shah praised him for his success in battle he remarked that he knew whose arrow had killed Azam.

In chapter 20, Koer Singh talks of the places seen by Guru Gobind Singh, and his meetings with Bahadur Shah.³⁰ The Sikh *sangat* in Delhi received Guru Gobind Singh with enthusiasm and served him with devotion. He saw several places in Delhi including the place where the ninth Guru gave his head. From Delhi Guru Gobind Singh went to Mathura and Gokul and saw Bindraban (Vrindavan) where Krishna used to sport with the *gopis*. From there he went to Agra and encamped at four *kos* from the city. He was invited by Bahadur Shah to his palace. Guru Gobind Singh was fully armed when he saw Bahadur Shah. The emperor showed reverence by touching his feet. The Guru was pleased and advised him on statecraft. Bahadur Shah offered costly presents to the Guru. Later on Bahadur Shah visited the Guru's camp and requested him to stay in Agra for the rainy season. Koer Singh gives detail of the discussions which Guru Gobind Singh had with a *pir*, the *qazi* and the *diwan* on religious matters. They were all pleased with the Guru. Koer Singh mentions a hunting expedition in which both the emperor and the Guru participated. A lion killed a few of the emperor's men who were sent to kill the lion. Bahadur Shah requested Guru Gobind Singh to send one of his followers to face the lion. On a hint from the Guru, a follower named Roshan Singh killed the lion.

Four months later, Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa went to Rajasthan with Bahadur Shah and his army. In his conversation with a Singh at a village near Jaipur, Guru Gobind Singh talked of Sikh *raj* in the future. He assured the Singh that he would himself be present in the Khalsa when they would destroy the 'Turks'. Koer Singh goes on to mention that Guru Gobind Singh wanted to go to Patna. Before taking his leave for the east Guru Gobind Singh saw many places in Rajasthan, like Amber, Jodhgarh, Jaisalmer and Chittor. Through Kasi (Benaras) then Guru Gobind

Singh reached Patna and stayed there for 4 years and 4 months before he moved towards Dakhan. Passing through Burhanpur Guru Gobind Singh reached Nanded.

The Last Days at Nanded

The last days of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded are the subject of the last chapter of his *Gurbilas*.³¹ Koer Singh quotes the well-known words of Guru Ram Das that congregational worship is an essential part of the daily routine of the Sikhs. The writer goes on to mention the presence of *rababis* and *dhadis* in the *sangat*. He gives a detailed account of the circumstances leading to Guru Gobind Singh's death, adding sub-themes at various places in the narrative. The grandson of Painde Khan figures prominently in this narrative. He was patronized by Guru Gobind Singh but he thought of avenging the death of his grandfather at the hands of the Guru. He managed to get closer to the Guru and found the opportunity to attack him. The Guru was wounded deeply but he killed the aggressor. Bahadur Shah is said to have sent a European physician (*hakim*) to dress the wound of Guru Gobind Singh which appeared to have healed in eleven days. Some Sikhs from Lahore and Multan came to have the Guru's *darshan* and he was presented with a bow. When he stretched it, the wound reopened. It took 16 days to heal. At this stage, Guru Gobind Singh announced that he was now prepared for his final departure from the world. In the *sangat* at Nanded there was a talk of the future of the Sikhs and their guidance. Guru Gobind Singh said that the Khalsa were his sons and they should take revenge for the death of the *sahibzadas*. Then, he ordered Banda that he should perform this task fearlessly. He became a Sikh of the Guru and he was given weapons. Banda destroyed the 'Turks' in Sarhind and fought several battles in the Punjab. He became proud of his success and infringed the prescribed way of life (*rahit*) of the Khalsa. The Guru did not like pride (*ahankar*) and withdrew his support. Consequently, Banda met his death.

Guru Gobind Singh told the Khalsa to die fighting against the 'Turks' till the number of Sikh martyrs reached 1,25,000. Their rule would then be established. The Guru assured them that he would remain present in them so long as they followed the *rahit*. They should never indulge in sexual intercourse with the women of 'Turks'. Anyone who infringed this injunction should be punished. They should never trust the 'Turks'. Anyone who did this would become liable to punishment (*tankhahia*). Among other instructions regarding the *rahit*, Guru Gobind Singh underlined selfless service of the Panth. They should believe only in ten Gurus and regard them as one. They should regard the Granth as the Guru. To see the Granth was to see the Guru. Koer Singh quotes the verses of Guru Ram Das regarding the daily routine of worship by the Sikhs. The Khalsa were placed under the protection of God. Guru Gobind Singh would support the Khalsa so long as they observed the *rahit*. Collectively, the Khalsa were his form (*rup*).

Another sub-theme taken up by Koer Singh here is that of the practice of *sati*.

The Singhs submitted to the Guru that Mata Sahib Devi would not be able to bear separation from him. The implication of this submission was that Mata Sahib Devi wished to be burnt with him on the funeral pyre. Guru Gobind Singh told them categorically that this would not be proper. She should live after the Guru's death. Consequently, Mata Sahib Devi went to Delhi with the Singhs chosen by Guru Gobind Singh.

A funeral pyre had been prepared for the tenth Guru in an enclosure (*kanat*). All the Sikhs were present there. Guru Gobind Singh told a Singh to ensure that everyone left the enclosure. The funeral pyre was lighted and the Guru was left alone. In the morning the Sikhs found no remnant of the Guru's body in the ashes, not even of his weapons. They were wondering what would have happened. An Udasi came by at this juncture and told them not to mourn. He had seen Guru Gobind Singh in his usual attire sitting in a *palki*, implying that he had bodily gone to the other world.

Koer Singh's *Gurbilas* ends with a brief account of the circumstances leading to the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh along with a number of other Singhs in 1734.

In Retrospect

It is important to note that Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi* 10 gives a fuller picture of the life of Guru Gobind Singh than the *Bachittar Natak* and *Sri Gur Sobhaput* together and extends it into the 1730s. The writer also claims to have used the oral evidence provided by Bhai Mani Singh who was an eyewitness to many events in the life of the tenth Guru. However, at a few places, their sequence, especially of the Guru's battles and activities after leaving Anandpur and his last days, seem to be different from general understanding and so are a few names. Probably, the writer relied on oral evidence here. The episode of the Goddess is given in a full chapter. But the Goddess finds no place in the *Khalsa rahit*.

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur is seen as the means of taking over rulership from the 'Turks' who are explicitly stated to be the 'enemy' in the *Gurbilas*. Koer Singh says that their destruction is necessary for establishing 'Khalsa Raj'. He assures that the Guru himself would remain present among the Khalsa to ensure their ultimate triumph. Koer Singh clarifies that the Sikhs were against the 'Turks' (Muslim administrators) and not against the Muslims *per se*.

It may be added that Koer Singh is rather brief in his account of the rise and fall of Banda Singh. The *Gurbilas* also has a short account of the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh. It is significant to note that a lot of emphasis is laid on an egalitarian society and the writer is not hiding his own caste background.

Ending with a formulaic statement, Koer Singh says that by hearing exposition (*katha*) of the *Gurbilas* all one's desires would be fulfilled, including the attainment of *raj*. Koer Singh's work was, in all probability, intended to inspire

people to support the Khalsa in their struggle for sovereign power. Indeed, the contents of *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* make better sense in the context before the formal declaration of Sikh rule at Lahore in 1765.

Endnotes

1. The *Gurbilas* is a poetical work written in praise of the Guru. It bears the same connotation as ‘*gursobha*’.
2. Fauja Singh, “Introduction” to Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, Patiala: Punjabi University, 1968 (cited hereafter as *Gurbilas*), p.2.
3. Surjit Hans, *A Reconstruction of Sikh History from Sikh Literature*, Patiala: Madaan Publications, 2005 [1987], pp.247-50.
4. Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 99 and 99,100n. W.H. McLeod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa: A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 206. Louis E. Fenech, *The Darbar of the Sikh Gurus: The Court of God in the World of Men*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.18.
5. Madanjit Kaur, ‘Koer Singh’s *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*: An Eighteenth Century Sikh Literature’, in *Sikhism*, ed. Jasbir Singh Mann and Kharak Singh, Patiala: Punjabi University, 1992, pp.161-72.
6. Gurtej Singh, ‘Compromising the Khalsa Tradition: Koer Singh’s *Gurbilas* in *The Khalsa: Sikh and Non-Sikh Perspectives*, ed. J.S. Grewal, New Delhi: Manohar, 2004, pp. 51-55.
7. J.S. Grewal, *Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708): Master of the White Hawk*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 28-29.
8. Fauja Singh, “Introduction” to Koer Singh, *Gurbilās Pātshāhī 10*, p.4.
9. Gurtej Singh, ‘Compromising the Khalsa Tradition: Koer Singh’s *Gurbilas*’, in *The Khalsa: Sikh and Non-Sikh Perspectives*, ed. J.S. Grewal, New Delhi: Manohar, 2004, pp. 47-48.
10. *Gurbilas*, pp.17-25.
11. *Gurbilas*, pp. 26-38.
12. *Gurbilas*, pp. 39-47.
13. *Gurbilas*, pp.48-65.
14. *Gurbilas*, pp. 66-71.
15. *Gurbilas*, pp. 72-81.
16. *Gurbilas*, pp.82-99.
17. Gurtej Singh, ‘Compromising the Khalsa Tradition: Koer Singh’s *Gurbilas*’, pp. 48-56.
18. *Gurbilas*, pp.110-26. For the detailed discussion on the Goddess in the eighteenth century Sikh literature, see Karamjit K. Malhotra, *The Eighteenth Century in Sikh History: Political Resurgence, Religious and Social Life, and Cultural Articulation*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 290-300.
19. Koer Singh makes a few more references to the Goddess. In his representation to Aurangzeb, Raja Bhim Chand states, among other things, that Guru Gobind Singh had the sight (*darshan*) of Kalika after worship and received *khanda* from her, which made him very powerful. In connection with the arrival of Prince Mu‘azzam in the Punjab (in 1696) for action against the rebels, Koer Singh mentions the worship of Kalika at the time of worshipping the weapons in Anandpur on the occasion of the Navrata (Navratra, the first nine days of the light half of the month of Asvin during which Goddess Durga is worshipped).
20. *Gurbilas*, pp. 127-39.

21. *Gurbilas*, pp. 140-59.
22. *Gurbilas*, pp.160-69.
23. *Gurbilas*, pp.170-77.
24. *Gurbilas*, pp. 178-91.
25. *Gurbilas*, pp.192-220.
26. *Gurbilas*, pp. 221-28.
27. *Gurbilas*, pp. 227-28.
28. *Gurbilas*, pp. 229-44.
29. *Gurbilas*, pp. 245-51.
30. *Gurbilas*, pp. 252-74.
31. *Gurbilas*, pp. 274-96.

The Development of Clock Towers in Punjab Before 1947

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Abstract

Punjab was one of the last Indian states to fall under the British rule. Many invaders brought their architectural styles to India. Likewise, British culture also influenced architecture. Anglo-Indian architecture developed in Punjab as well, following the development of structures in various architectural styles across the Indian states. Many distinct buildings were built, including clock towers, which illustrate how they changed and evolved over time in various states before being subsequently developed in cities of Punjab. Clock towers, commonly known as 'Ghanta Ghar', are freestanding structures built as prominent British buildings that depict the influences and expansion of British architecture.

The study seeks to identify architectural styles of clock towers of Punjab under British Empire upto 1947. The study analyses clock tower architecture in Faisalabad, Ludhiana, Fazilka, and Faridkot. Data collection, analysis, and site visits were done to summarize.

Keywords: *Anglo-Indian, Architecture, British, Clock Tower, Punjab, India.*

Introduction

Through north-western passes the Indian subcontinent and Punjab [29°30'N, 76°50'E] has been attacked by a wide variety of foreign invaders, including the Persians, Greeks, Mauryans, Scythians, Mughals, and many others.¹ The British were the last to rule India. The province of Punjab has experienced a significant degree of political instability throughout its history, primarily attributed to the autonomous rule of numerous kings within the region. The political situation in Punjab was characterized by a notable absence of a centralized government. Until Ranjit Singh (1780–1839),² a misl chief's son who governed Punjab as a valiant independent monarch for four decades. Under his leadership, Punjab achieved a state of political stability.³ After the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849, the British authorities established control over the province and dismissed the previous regime's military commanders. Individuals who expressed their loyalty to the British were placed under the authority and governance of the British.⁴

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The acquisition of a significant portion of the Punjab region by the East India Company in the year 1849 marked a notable event in the British rule over the Indian subcontinent, signifying one of the final stages of their territorial control. In 1858, the Punjab, along with the rest of British India, was brought under the direct control of the British Empire. When the British annexed the Sikh state of Punjab, they already controlled a large portion of the Indian subcontinent. They had constructed a well-established system of political control and land revenue administration. The Treaties of March 1846 had granted the British administration authority over Lahore and Amritsar, which were considered the most prosperous districts in Punjab.⁵

During the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the northern regions of India engaged in armed resistance against the British colonial government, while the Punjab region aligned itself with the British forces. Subsequent to the mutiny, the government initiated public infrastructure projects, encompassing the construction of roads, railways, educational institutions, residential buildings, churches, etc. During this period, as the British government consolidated its influence in Punjab, British settlers sought to expand the economic landscape beyond just trade, necessitating the construction of various buildings. Given that Punjab was the final region under British administration in India, the British were already prepared and thus opted to construct buildings in accordance with their own style and architectural preferences.⁶

Thus, upon the arrival of the British, their cultural influences were introduced, subsequently exerting an influence on the architectural landscape. The Indo-Saracenic design was introduced by the British colonial authority, drawing inspiration from indigenous Indo-Islamic architecture, specifically Mughal architecture, to create a traditional Indian style characterized by its stylistic and ornamental elements. The architectural composition and design of the structures appeared to bear resemblance to contemporary buildings in other revivalist genres, such as Gothic revival and Neo-Classical, though incorporating Indian elements and embellishments. The architects successfully retained elements of British and European architectural styles while simultaneously incorporating Indian designs. Over the course of time, the foreign architectural style gradually assimilated with the pre-existing architectural style of India. Consequently, upon the British rule Punjab, the architectural landscape exhibited a discernible manifestation of cultural influence.⁷

Literature Review

Extensive scholarly research has been devoted to Colonial architecture, with

particular emphasis on the presidency towns of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay, in addition to other major Indian cities like Delhi and Hyderabad. *A History of Architecture* by Dan Cruickshank provides a historical overview spanning from the pyramids to the present day. He investigates global architecture, analysing the functions, plans, layouts, and objectives of structures. His research focuses on the examination of British colonial architecture in Calcutta, Bombay, Mysore, Hyderabad, and Delhi, encompassing forts, trading posts, cathedrals, secular structures and clock towers but there is no mention about the Punjab clock towers. With no additional details, he has enumerated only one mansion constructed during British rule in the north Punjab region.⁸

P.N. Chopra and P. Chopra's book *Monuments of the Raj*⁹ discusses the colonial architecture of the buildings constructed by the British in present day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

'British Architecture of Lahore: An introductory Note of their Religious and Educational Buildings'¹⁰ by Muhammad Hameed and Samia Tahir examines the architectural structures that were constructed in Lahore throughout the British Raj. The structures that were safeguarded during the British colonial period include churches, cathedrals, the Lawrence and Montgomery halls, Government College University, the National College of Arts, Aitchison College, Punjab University, the Lahore Museum, the General Post Office, the Senate Hall, memorials, railway stations, and bridges but there is no connection to the clock towers of present Punjab.

Other researchers have also documented the clock towers in India but it is Subhash Parihar who has documented one clock tower from Faridkot in detail which includes study of material and style, in his book *Architectural Heritage of a Sikh State – Faridkot*.¹¹ However, many scholars have documented and researched on the clock tower made by Britishers in Pakistan such as Prof. (Dr.) Neelum Naz in her article 'Historical Perspective of Clock Towers of Pakistan: Estcourt Clock Tower, Gujranwala',¹² Mazhar Abbas in 'The First Clock Tower of Lyallpur',¹³ Abdul and Muhammad in 'Northbrook Clock Tower and Ripon Hall: History and Architecture of Ghanta-Ghar Multan, Pakistan'.¹⁴ but not much information is found on the clock towers of present Indian Punjab. Just one Image of Clock tower from Amritsar is found on the postcard. It was sent to Oetis Hale in California from India. Fig-1 shows clock tower in the area of Golden Temple which was demolished. There is no other written document found on the architecture and design of this clock tower.¹⁵



Fig-1: Clock tower in Amritsar¹⁶

Research Methodology

The research methodology primarily involved conducting comprehensive fieldwork in order to document a substantial number of clock towers located in the present region of Punjab. A detailed photographic documentation was undertaken. The research involved an examination of unpublished documents in both state and national archives, as well as any additional relevant items found in private or public collections. A comprehensive examination of the extant literature found in books, journals, and newspapers was conducted. Interviews were held with scholars, officials, and inhabitants around buildings as well. One of the constraints encountered during the execution of this study was that entry was prohibited or the conditions inside were inadequate.

Clock Tower

According to scholarly assertions made by Thomas Metcalf and Sanjay Srivastava, the presence of public clocks in British India served to consolidate imperial authority. The British authorities implemented the construction of substantial public clock towers that were strategically positioned to serve as prominent symbols of the dominance of the Raj within the physical environment.¹⁷

The construction of clock towers in India contributes to the notion of a British clock culture by indicating that clocks became symbols of British identity. Following the Sepoy Mutiny, the construction of the first clock towers in India took place in the year 1860.¹⁸ The construction of clock towers was intended to serve as a visual representation of Britain's imperial power, a claim substantiated by the historical evidence of a 13th century military monument pillar in Aligarh, a city historically known for its rebellious nature, being dismantled in 1862 and subsequently reconstructed as a clock tower. Clock towers served as symbolic representations of British imperialism to both the British and natives. The establishment of clock towers in the region by the British played a pivotal role in the formation of a colony of British settlers, as these structures were considered crucial buildings. Later, additional structures were constructed in that location.¹⁹

The early most surviving clock tower in present Punjab is from Faridkot (Fig-2). The Raj Mahal, Clock Tower, and Kothi Darbaganj, the state's three Gothic Revival buildings, were all completed during the reign of Raja Balbir Singh, who ascended the throne on December 16, 1898. All were completed by the end of 1902, according to the state's court history, Aina-i Brar Bans, which was published in December 1902.²⁰ The clock tower is a free-standing structure with four plainly visible clock faces on the cardinal sides, designed in the classic Gothic style. The tower itself, which is 6.6 m square on the outside, has four stories, each with its own cornice, and is topped with a conical spire that is further topped by a high metallic finial.



Fig-2: Clock Tower form Faridkot²²

The year 1902 is inscribed on each side of the clock tower as the year it was built.

Gothic pointed arches adorn the sides of the first two storeys and the cardinal sides of the fourth storey. The arches in the uppermost storey are subdivided into smaller arches. Decorative towers and pinnacles are placed on the parapets of the first and second storeys. The facades are embellished with various motifs. The spandrels of the archways in the first storey feature plaster relief arabesque designs. The remaining surfaces are adorned with textured panels displaying simple geometric designs. Fluted rectangular pilasters with petal designs at the base and top soften most of the corners.²¹

The British Empire's initial dominance over Lahore in Punjab, subsequently spread to Amritsar, eventually encompassing the entirety of the Punjab state. The construction of a clock tower in Lahore was undertaken by the British. The Faisalabad Clock Tower (Fig-3), situated in Faisalabad, now in Pakistan, is an enduring architectural landmark that dates back to the British Raj era. It stands as one of the earliest surviving structures in its authentic state. The construction of the structure took place in 1905 during the period of British colonial rule over a significant portion of South Asia throughout the nineteenth century. Sir Charles Riwarz, the British lieutenant governor of Punjab, lay the foundation for the stately Clock Tower on November 14, 1905. The structure was constructed using red sandstone that was transported from Sangla Hill *Tehsil*, located approximately 50 kilometres in distance. The clock tower is situated in the center of the market, commonly referred to as a *bazaar*.

The construction of the Clock Tower was situated atop a well, imbuing it with historical significance. Skilled sculptors, such as Gulab Khan, who hailed from a lineage associated with the construction of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, meticulously placed sizable red sandstone slabs following thorough polishing and precise measurements. The construction and decoration of the tower also involved the participation of skilled carpenters. The tower's entrances and windows were fortified with sizable wooden boards, which were installed without undergoing saw-cutting to form protective barriers. The clock of the tower was imported from Mumbai. According to historical accounts, the construction of the clock tower is believed to have been undertaken as a tribute to Queen Victoria. During its construction, fountains were erected in the vicinity of four distinct *bazaars*, namely *Aminpur Bazaar*, *Katchery Bazaar*, *Karkhana Bazaar*, and *Jhang Bazaar*. These fountains were strategically positioned to ensure visibility from all eight bazaars surrounding them. However, it should be noted that two of the fountains are no longer present. The plaster of the Clock Tower has exhibited signs of degradation, manifesting in the emergence of cracks on the stairwells and exterior pillars. The railing has been shattered, and the roof has become a bird's haven.²³



Fig-3: Clock tower from Faisalabad²⁴

The Clock Tower, commonly referred to as *Ghanta Ghar*, located in the city of Ludhiana (Fig-4), has a history spanning over a century. The inauguration of the Victoria Memorial Clock Tower in Ludhiana took place on October 18, 1906. The ceremony was presided over by Sir Charles Montgomery, who held the position of Lieutenant Governor of Punjab and its dependencies at the time. The selection of the tower's location was determined by the contemporary authorities due to its close proximity to both the commercial district and the train station. The construction of the tower was undertaken in order to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign. The structure exhibits a fusion of architectural elements derived from the Indo-Saracenic and Mughal styles. The clock tower stands tall at approximately 100 feet (30 meters), making it a prominent structure in the cityscape.²⁵ The architectural structure is adorned with a substantial timepiece positioned on each of its four facades. The tower is constructed using red bricks, which was commonly used in the architecture of the region at that time. The clock tower is embellished with ornamental features, including arches, balconies, and finials. It is adorned with balconies and windows that showcase intricate *jali* work, also known as lattice screens.²⁶



Fig-4: Clock Tower from Ludhiana

The clock tower, colloquially referred to as *Bangla* in earlier times is located at the center of Fazilka city (Fig-5). It is an architectural structure that combines elements from the Mughal Empire, British India, and *Vastu Kala*. Construction of the monument, standing at a height of 95 feet, commenced in 1936 and reached completion on June 6, 1939.²⁷ Seth Shopat Rai, Pediwal Rai Sahib, and Madan Gopal Pediwal gave this historical building its original name, *Ram Narayan Ghanta ghar*, and dedicated it to the public. It is adorned with four gates in each cardinal direction, accompanied by a commemorative board displaying inscriptions in four languages, symbolizing its ceremonial inauguration. The staircase leading to the upper level consists of a total of 82 steps. Additionally, clocks are positioned on each of the four sides of the structure, with the machine centrally located within.²⁸ The clock tower typically features a blend of architectural styles influenced by British colonial and local Indian designs. It incorporates elements of Victorian, Gothic, and Indo-Saracenic architectural styles. The tower features decorative elements such as arches, cornices, balconies, and carvings. These embellishments add aesthetic appeal and architectural elegance to the structure.

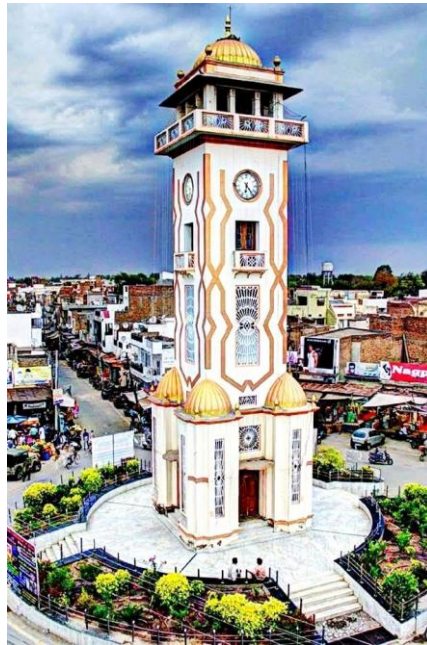


Fig-5: Clock Tower from Fazilka²⁹

The British architectural style of clock towers in Punjab, as exemplified by the clock towers in Faridkot, Faisalabad, Ludhiana, and Fazilka, showcased a fusion of British colonial and local Indian architectural elements. These clock towers served as prominent landmarks, reflecting the colonial influence during the British Raj. These were constructed during British colonial rule before 1947, and represent distinctive architectural expressions of their time. The Faridkot Clock Tower is characterized by its classic Gothic features, including pointed arches, decorative towers, and ornate motifs. In contrast, the Faisalabad Clock Tower, reflects a fusion of colonial aesthetics and indigenous materials. Built with red sandstone from Sangla Hill Tehsil, it symbolizes British influence while showcasing the craftsmanship of local artisans. Ludhiana's Ghanta Ghar, commemorates Queen Victoria's reign and combines Indo-Saracenic and Mughal architectural elements. Its towering presence, red brick construction, and intricate *jali* work contribute to its architectural charm. Lastly, the Fazilka Clock Tower, demonstrates a later colonial period's architectural evolution. It harmonizes Victorian, Gothic, and Indo-Saracenic styles, blending British colonial and local Indian influences, featuring decorative arches, cornices, balconies, and carvings.

These clock towers not only served as timekeeping devices but also stood as symbols of colonial authority and architectural finesse. They showcased the dynamic interplay between colonial aesthetics and indigenous craftsmanship, leaving a lasting legacy of historical and architectural significance in Punjab's landscape.

The clock towers displayed a variety of design features, including a mix of Victorian, Gothic, Indo-Saracenic, and traditional Indian styles. They often featured tall structures with clock faces on all sides, providing a practical timekeeping function for the respective cities. The towers were constructed using materials such as red bricks, stone, and were adorned with ornamental details like arches, balconies, and decorative towers. Each clock tower had its unique architectural characteristics, contributing to the overall charm and grandeur of the cityscapes. They not only served as functional timekeeping devices but also became symbols of identity, cultural heritage, and historical significance in their respective locations.

These clock towers stood as enduring testaments to the architectural legacy left behind by the British in Punjab before the partition of India in 1947. They continue to captivate the imaginations of residents and visitors alike, reminding us of the historical and architectural connections between Punjab and the British colonial era.

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ENDOWMENTS TO THE SIKH INSTITUTIONS IN PUNJAB

(Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century)

Meera Nagpal*

Abstract

Giving away of alienations by a ruler had continued from ancient times and was practiced by the new rulers of eighteenth century Punjab, Ranjit Singh and his successors. Persons and institutions belonging to the Sikh faith, various Hindu cults and Islam got immense support from the rulers of the period under review. In the present paper, the focus is on the grants given to the Sikh institutions and is largely based on the primary data collected from Foreign/Political Proceedings kept at the National Archives of India, New Delhi. The Sikh institutions have been divided into three categories in the present study. The first category includes the main Sikh Shrine i.e. the Golden Temple, the attached bungas, Gurdwaras of the Sikh Gurus and other famous Gurdwaras. The second category comprises the udāsī establishments like akhārās, derās, darbārs, samādhs and dharamsālas. The institutions of akālīs and nihangs, nirmala sādhs and ganjbakshia sādhs form the third category.

Keywords: *dharmarth* grants, early rulers of Punjab, Ranjit Singh and his successors, Golden Temple, Gurdwaras, *bunga*, *nirmala sādhs*, *udāsī*, *ganjbakshia sādhs*, *akālīs* and *nihangs*, late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

I

Giving away of revenue-grants by a ruler in favor of an individual or an establishment has an ancient history in India and the same continued under the Turkish rule and the Mughals. These grants were known as *brahmadeya* and *agrahara* in ancient times and as *milk*, *wazīfā*, *in'ām* and *augāf* during the Turkish times.¹ Changes were brought in the terminology during the Mughal period when they were known by various terms like *milk*, *amlak* and *suyurghal*. Latter was a term brought from Central Asia by the Mughals.² But the term that appears the maximum in official documents and other records was *madad-i-ma'āsh* which meant 'aid for subsistence'. The Mughals had a separate department, headed by *sadr-us sadur*, which looked after these grants. The *madad-i-ma'āsh* holders were one of the major social groups of Mughal India.³ The Mughal Emperor, Jahangir called the *madad-i-ma'āsh* grantees the *lashkar-i-duagon* or the army of prayers.⁴

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During the late eighteenth century, as a result of creation of a vacuum in Punjab, which came into existence due to the weakening of the Mughal authority after the death of Aurangzeb and the Afghan invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali, a large number of independent principalities rose under the Sikh, Afghan and the Rajput rulers. The new rulers too followed the example of the Mughals and started giving grants and called them *dharmarth* or *bhet*. During the early nineteenth century, Ranjit Singh unified the Punjab and followed Mughals in his procedures for making alienations to various faiths. His successors, Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Dalip Singh continued the same practice. There were other early nineteenth century rulers also who made endowments to various religious personages and institutions.⁵

Persons and institutions belonging to the Sikh faith got immense support from the rulers of the period under review and so did the *purohīts* and *brahmans*, *jogīs* and *mahants*. Hindu temples, *vaishnava maths*, *thākurdwāras*, *derās*, *samādhs* and *dharmśālas*. State patronage was not just confined to the adherents and buildings of Sikhism and Hinduism but was also extended to the Muslim individuals and institutions by the new rulers of the Punjab.

In the present paper, the focus is entirely on the *dharmarth* grants given to the institutions of Sikh faith and is largely based on the primary data collected from Foreign/Political Proceedings kept at National Archives of India, New Delhi. The Sikh institutions have been divided into three categories for the present study of grants assigned to them. The first category includes the main Sikh Shrine i.e., the Golden Temple, the *bungas* attached to it, Gurdwaras of the Sikh Gurus and other famous Gurdwaras. The second category comprises the *udāsī* establishments like *akhārās*, *derās*, *darbārs*, *samādhs* and *dharmśālas*. The institutions of *akālīs* and *nihangs*, *nirmala sādhs* and *ganjbakshia sādhs* form the third category.

II

In the first category, the most sacred shrine of the Sikhs, the Golden Temple, got the maximum share of grants from the various rulers of Punjab during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Among the rulers of late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, Bagh Singh Hallowalia, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, Jai Singh Chainpuria, Khan Singh Kanhiya, Jai Singh Kanhiya, Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Uttam Singh Majithia gave grants worth 937 rupees to the Golden Temple.⁶ Out of these, Mahan Singh gave the maximum grants worth 200 rupees. He gave away half a village in Gujranwala to the head *granthīs* of the institution in 1793 and the same was continued under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. These grants were given to persons attached to the shrine. For instance, the *granthīs*, *mutasaddis*, *pujaris*, *ardāsias*, *rabābīs*, *rāgīs*, *dhupias*, *shamāfaroze* (lighter of lamps), *khazanchī* (treasurer) and sweepers are known to have received a total of grants worth 8,083 rupees, 1,145 rupees, 925 rupees, 1,760 rupees, 1,178 rupees, 1,247 rupees, 763 rupees, 501 rupees, 500 rupees

and 283 rupees, respectively, during the period under review. It is important to mention here that these endowments were also made by Lahore State and its officials.⁷ A sum of 126 rupees was also given by the Patiala Darbar for the establishment.⁸ The *ghurchara jāgīrdārs* also imitated their masters. For instance, Baj Singh Bhagowalia, a *ghurchara jāgīrdār*, alienated a well worth 20 rupees in Pargana Sourian in Amritsar district to Sham Singh, a *granthī* at Golden Temple, in 1828. The maximum amount that was given by any grantor of the period under review to the Golden Temple in a single grant was 1,100 rupees when Ranjit Singh and Kunwar Nau Nihal Singh granted a village worth the above-mentioned amount in Tappa Khalsa to Jassa Singh *granthī* in 1835. The *sanad* of the prince clearly mentions that the grantee's men are to be put in possession of the village. The minimum value in grant that was granted to the premier institution of the Sikhs was by Baba Mahan Singh of Ber Baba Nanak who gifted a mango tree worth 8 rupees from the Sialkot to an *ardāsia* of Golden Temple in 1823. The earliest grant to the establishment was given by Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya in 1778. The well and the land adjoining it, worth 60 rupees, was given to Chanchal Singh, the head *granthī*, as a *bhet*. The recent grant during the period under review was given by Sardar Sadda Singh Virk, then *jāgīrdār* of the village. A well worth 40 rupees was given to Ram Singh *mutasaddi* in 1842.⁹

Next type of establishment in this category is *bungas*. These were attached to the Golden Temple. Akal Bunga, Jhanda Bunga, Shahid Bunga, Nirmala Sadhs' Bunga Bagh, Bunga Sarkarwala, Bunga Burianwala, Nakkai Bunga, Bunga of Ramgarhia Sardars, Bunga of Mitt Singh Padhanian and Bunga of Kaithal family received grants from various persons during this period. In case of Akal Bunga, twenty-one persons are known to have given grants to the establishment to the tune of 14,767 rupees. These grants were given to the *granthīs*, *mutasaddis*, *pujaris*, *ardāsias* and *khazanchī* attached to the institution. Each category got 1,427 rupees, 1,610 rupees, 3,108 rupees, 245 rupees, 440 rupees and 1,186 rupees. Among the rulers of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Lehna Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Hari Singh Bhangi, Surjan Singh of Sialkot, Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, Bagh Singh Hallowalia, Amar Singh, Nar Singh Chamariwala, Tara Singh Chainpuria and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia gave grants worth 7,857.¹⁰ Out of these, the maximum was granted by the Bhangi Sardars and that was 4,800 rupees. A minimum of eighteen grants worth 5,389 were given by Ranjit Singh to Akal Bunga. Prince Sher Singh was the only son of Ranjit Singh to have given a grant to the institution. The *jāgīrdārs* like Atar Singh Kalianwala, Jodh Singh Saurianwala, Budh Singh and Suddh Singh Chhina, Bagh Singh Muraliwala, and Hukma Singh also gave grants. Even *zamīndārs* of villages gave grants worth 100 rupees. The maximum grant to Akal Bunga as an individual grant was 1,600 rupees which was granted by Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh Bhangis as an offering in 1753. This was also the earliest grant that was given to the establishment.¹¹

Maximum grant to the Shahid Bunga was given by Natha Singh Shahid amounting to 1,886 rupees and all these were given in Wazirabad district. He was followed by Ranjit Singh and Ram Singh Kuthalia who gave grants worth 1,100 rupees and 920 rupees.¹² Other grantors to the same institution were Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, Milkha Singh Pindiwala, Nidhan Singh Daskawala and Jodh Singh Saurianwala.¹³ Jhanda Bunga received a minimum of 4,089 rupees as endowments during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.¹⁴ Among the grantors the only names that re-surface are of Bagh Singh Hallowalia, Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, Amir Singh Dodia, Jodh Singh Saurianwala, Ranjit Singh, Ram Singh Kahilonwala and Fateh Singh Jhulna.¹⁵ Interestingly, a grant is known which was assigned to more than one *bunga* on one occasion when on conquest of Ramnagar, Maha Singh granted a combined grant from the conquered territory to Golden Temple, Akal Bunga, Shahid Bunga and Jhanda Bunga. In another case, a village was given away by the same grantor wherein half the village was assigned to the Golden Temple and rest was to be shared by the three *bungas*, mentioned above. In another case, Amir Singh Dodia granted a village to Nand Singh, a *rāgi* of Jhanda Bunga, wherein he was asked to cultivate the land and enjoy the proceeds.¹⁶

Bunga Sarkarwala, a costly building adjoining Golden Temple, was built by Ranjit Singh. The major portion of grants enjoyed by the *bunga* came from the builder of the institution which was 2,278 rupees. Prince Kharak Singh and Rani Chand Kaur also patronized it. A *jāgīrdār* named Bhai Ram Singh, granted a well worth 100 rupees to Dharam Singh, incharge of the *bunga*, in Taluqa Mutteval in Amritsar district in 1839.¹⁷ Nakkai Bunga got grants from Nakkai Sardars like Ran Singh, Gian Singh, Wazir Singh, Mehr Singh and Jodh Singh to the tune of 335 rupees.¹⁸ Though named after the Nakkais but the maximum grant to the establishment of 400 rupees was given by Prince Kharak Singh. Others to make endowments to the same were Dhara Singh Gugrewala and Pardhan Singh Asal.¹⁹ Bunga Burianwala got grants from Ramgarhia Sardars like Jassa Singh and Diwan Singh, his nephew.²⁰ Another *bunga* to get grants was Bunga Bagh Guruki of *nirmala sādhs* at Amritsar. The earliest grant given to the institution was by Sardar Ran Singh of Chanduvadala when a village worth 450 rupees in Amritsar district was given to Bhai Kour Singh in 1767 as *bhet*. Mai Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh and ruler of Batala, and Jodh Singh Saurianwala were other grantors to the establishment.²¹ Bunga of Kaithal family at Amritsar also got a village as grant from Bhai Udey Singh of Kaithal to defray the expenses of *bunga* in 1829.²² Bungas of Mitt Singh Padhania and of Ramgarhia Sardars also got grants from their respective owners during this period.²³

The Gurdwaras of the various Sikh Gurus to received grants in Punjab during the period under study were many. The institution named Darbar Manji Sahib at Shaikhupura in Gujranwala enjoyed endowments from various grantors to the tune of 205 rupees. It was so prominent an institution that even the *zamīndārs* and village

headmen are known to have given grants to the establishment. For instance, the *zamindārs* of the village Ghoroki Madder in Shaikhupura assigned thirty *ghumāons* worth thirty rupees for the establishment in 1776.²⁴ Similarly, Dera of Guru Angad Dev at Khadur Sahib in Amritsar and Dera of Guru Ramdas at Lahore are known to have received grants from Ranjit Singh.²⁵

Sacred places related to Guru Arjan Dev received immense patronage during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Darbar Sahib at Taran Taran in Amritsar district received villages and wells worth 5,857 rupees from various grantors. Tobbe Darbar of Guru Har Rai received grants worth 561 rupees from grantors like Gurbakhsh Singh Dodia, Nar Singh Chamariwala, Sahib Singh Dorangla and Mohar Singh, the son-in-law of Karam Singh Chahal, a *jāgīrdār* under Lehna Singh of Lahore.²⁶ Infact Gurbakhsh Singh Dodia is known to have given three separate grants to Gajja Singh for the said institution at three different times between 1793 to 1803 ranging from twenty-five *ghumāon* of land to a full village which was given away in *dharmarth* in Amritsar and Dinanagar.²⁷ The religious places related to Guru Tegh Bahadur like Gurdwara of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Garshankar in Hoshiarpur district, Gurdwara of Guru Tegh Bahadur in Kularan in Kaithal, Gurdwara Shahidganj, Adh Granth establishment, Darbar Sahib Mangat, Anandpur Sahib and Gurdwara at Sirhind got their share of endowments from grantors like Gurdit Singh Santokhgaria, Jodh Singh Kalsia, Bhai Udey Singh of Kaithal, Ranjit Singh, Dalip Singh and others for *degh* and for the upkeep of the institution. One of these grants was given on occasion of sun eclipse.²⁸

Various Gurdwaras were also endowed in the princely states of Patiala, Kaithal, Ladwa and districts like Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Delhi and Abchnagar from various rulers and officials during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Some of them were the Gurdwara Moti Bagh in Patiala, Gurdwaras Khera, Gurdwara Bigri Paswala in Rajpura, Dera Granth Sahib at Pikhani and Banur, Gurdwaras at Karak and Lucknour, Gurdwara of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Gurdwara Mala Sahib Badshahi, Bangla Sahib, Haveli Sahib, Gurdwara of Dai Mata Sahib Devi, Gurdwara of Dai Mata Gundri in Delhi and Hazur Sahib in Abchnagar. The latter is known to have received a handsome grant worth 7000 rupees from one of the successors of Ranjit Singh, Kharak Singh, in 1840 and the document bears the seal of the ruler.²⁹

III

The second category of Sikh institutions to receive grants includes *udāsī* establishments like *akhārās*, *derās*, *darbārs*, *samādhs* and *dharamsālas*. Among the Sikh religious orders, the *udāsī* sect enjoyed the maximum revenue-free grants. The Akhara of Baba Santokh Das in Amritsar got the maximum grants not only among *udāsī akhārās* but also among all the institutions of this particular sect.³⁰ It received grants to the tune of 17,815 rupees. Other *akhārās* to follow were Kashiwala Akhara

at Amritsar, Akhara Balanand at Amritsar and Jhelum, Akhara Pritam Das at Amritsar, Akhara Bibeksar at Amritsar, Akhara of Baba Tahl Das at Amritsar, Akhara of Ghamand Das at Amritsar, Akhara of Karam Das at Narowal at Amritsar, Akhara of Baba Sant Das at Vatala, Akhara Mahant Melaram at Lahore, Akhara Gurdial at Kapurthala and Akhara Mastram at Dinanagar. These received 9,035 rupees, 4,178 rupees, 2,920 rupees, 2,225 rupees, 2,220 rupees, 2,092 rupees, 1,577 rupees, 1,370 rupees, 1,140 rupees, 950 rupees and 405 rupees.³¹ In the list of *udāsī derās*, Dera Khurd and Dera Kulan of Bhai Pheru at Kasur got the maximum grants up to 15,592 rupees, with each individually getting 8,990 rupees and 6,602 rupees from the grantors during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Others to follow were Dera of Bhai Pirthi and Dera of Sant Prasad at Kasur, Dera Baba Nanak at Vatala, another *udāsī derā* at Kasur and Dera of Bhai Sucheta at Kasur. They received 2,125 rupees, 1,948 rupees, 1,216 rupees, 775 rupees and 250 rupees.³²

Another type of *udāsī* establishments to received patronage during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Punjab were *udāsī darbārs*. Among *darbārs*, Darbar Rori Sahib at Sialkot received the maximum grants to the tune of 4,649 rupees. It was followed by Darbar Nankana Sahib at Shaikhupura, Darbar Balkira, Darbar Nankana Khurd at Shaikhupura, Darbar Baoli Sahib Guru Nanak at Sialkot and Darbar Sahib Mahistan. These received 1,285 rupees 5 *annas* and 4 *paisa*, 831 rupees, 710 rupees, 700 rupees and 366 rupees 10 *annas* and 8 *paisa*.³³ Among the *udāsī samādhs*, the Samadh of Sahib Ram Kaur at Dinanagar, Samadh of Baba Mahan Sahib at Wazirabad and Samadh of Bhai Anup at Dinanagar received grants worth 1,741 rupees, 1,340 rupees and 1,334 rupees. Samadh of Baba Mahan Sahib at Wazirabad received all its grants in Wazirabad.³⁴ The *udāsī dharamsāla* of Bhai Sadhuram at Pak Pattan too enjoyed grants to the tune of 460 rupees and that too in the same district whereas *udāsī dharamsāla* of Mai Nakain also enjoyed alienations worth 450 rupees.³⁵

IV

The third category to receive grants includes institutions of sects other than the *udāsīs* and those were *akālīs* and *nihangs*, *nirmala sādhs* and *ganjbakshia sādhs*. Babe di Ber, an *akālī* establishment in Sialkot received 53 grants worth 9,968 rupees during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.³⁶ It enjoyed the patronage of twenty-three donors. More than half of this amount was granted by Natha Singh Shahid to the value of 5,023 between the years 1806 to 1816. Ranjit Singh was the next one to follow, though the amount was far less than the maximum, giving villages and wells worth 1,612 rupees. Next to follow was Tara Singh Chainpuria, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Surjan Singh Bhangi and Nihal Singh Atariwala, a *jāgīrdār* of Sahib Singh of Gujrat, giving gifts and donations worth 565 rupees, 464 rupees, 300 rupees and 300 rupees, again. They were followed by chiefs like Bagh Singh Miraliwala, Nar Singh Chamariwala and Sahib Singh Bhangi giving pieces of land

worth 250 rupees, 240 rupees and 215 rupees. The *jāgīrdārs* like Sham Singh Sultanwindia, Mitt Singh Padhania, Gurmukh Singh Lamba and Wazir Singh Rangar Nanglia also donated grants to the establishment. Other grantors include Nar Singh Bhangi, Morh Singh Mariwala, Budh Singh Chawandi, Jit Singh Nihang and Bagh Singh. There is a very interesting reference where Dalip Singh gave a piece of land worth 100 rupees in 1844 to Ram Singh *granthī* of the institution as a charm against small pox as the latter presented some rice for that purpose. This was also the latest grant given to the institution during the period under review. Even *ghurchara jāgīrdārs* like Sardul Singh, Rattan Singh Bhinder and Sadda Singh patronized the establishment. Most of the alienations were assigned in Sialkot.³⁷ Another *akālī* establishment to receive patronage was Gurdwara Dhamtan Sahib in Patiala territory. It received a grant worth 150 rupees from Gurbaksh Singh of Tangour in 1765 in Thanesar for charitable purposes.³⁸

Another institution of the *akālīs* and *nihangs*, Gurdwara Bibeksar in Amritsar received 470 rupees in endowments from various grantors during the early nineteenth century.³⁹ Raja Sangat Singh of Jind was one of the donors to the institution. He assigned a well worth 110 rupees in Dinanagar for the *bhog* expenses at the establishment in 1832 which was later confirmed by Ranjit Singh. But the most interesting case is the grant by the Gurdwara Abchnagar of a well worth 40 rupees to the institution in 1825. What makes it interesting is that the donor institution itself received it in grant from the priest of Akal Bunga in 1823.⁴⁰

Various *dharamsālas* of *nirmala sādhs* were also endowed during the period under study. A minimum of 1,954 rupees were given in form of land and villages to the same.⁴¹ The maximum alienations were made to a *dharamsāla* at Amritsar which amounted to 794 rupees. The earliest grants to the institution were made by Gurmukh Singh Ragyawala and Sobha Singh Bakkha, who gave grants worth 84 rupees and 120 rupees, respectively, that too in the same year, 1773. But Bagh Singh Hallowalia, gave the maximum grants in terms of value. He made endowments worth 505 rupees between the years 1775 to 1783. Other grantors to the same include Sham Singh Atariwala and Sardar Budh Singh. Even the *zamīndārs* of the village granted a piece of land worth 25 rupees to the establishment in 1811.⁴²

Another *dharamsāla* of *nirmala sādhs* to be patronized was in Dinanagar. Sukha Singh, a *granthī* of the *dharamsāla*, received grants worth 450 rupees from Mali Singh Guraya in the same district. Hira Singh Guraya also gave a piece of land worth 10 rupees to him for the institution.⁴³ The establishments of *nirmala sādhs* out of Punjab also received alienations from rulers of Punjab. One such case is of Asthan at Kankhal in Saharanpur on the banks of Ganges. Bhai Ramtaram of the institution got a village worth 700 rupees in Amritsar from Mai Sada Kaur in 1819.⁴⁴

An establishment of *ganjbakshia sādhs* at Dinanagar was also among the recipients of grants in Punjab.⁴⁵ The earliest grant to the same was made by the

Mughal emperor, Muhammad Shah, when he gave a share of village worth 800 rupees in Dinanagar during the early years of his reign and later confirmed it again in 1745. This grant was later confirmed by Mai Sada Kaur and Prince Sher Singh, in the years 1821 and 1837, respectively. Among the early rulers of Punjab, Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya and his brother, Bagh Singh Kanhiya, have been donors to the institution. Out of these the foremost gave lavish grants of villages worth 1,600 rupees to the Gurdwara. Among the sons of Ranjit Singh, Prince Sher Singh made alienation worth 30 rupees to Ratan Singh of the establishment. The *jāgīrdārs* like Sahib Singh and Lubba Singh gave grants of land worth 5 rupees each to Ratan Nath for the upkeep of the Gurdwara. These were the instances of the minimum amount given to the institution by any grantor. There is also an example of a grant of land worth 10 rupees by a *ghurchara jāgīrdār* named Mehr Singh. Even a *lambardar* of the village, named Mangal Singh, gave a piece of land worth 25 rupees in Dinanagar to Pirthi Nath of the institution. It must be mentioned here that a total of twelve grants were given to the *gurdwārā* worth 2,600 rupees and all of them were in Dinanagar.⁴⁶

Another institution to be patronized during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was Berh Dukh Bhanjani in Amritsar. It received a total of 405 rupees in endowments from Jai Singh Kanhiya, Surjan Singh Bhangi and Ranjit Singh. The earliest was made by the Kanhiya Sardar when he granted a share of village worth 30 rupees in Dinanagar to Baba Tahl Singh Bhalla in *dharmarth*. But the maximum grant in terms of value was given by Ranjit Singh when he gifted a village worth 325 rupees in Sialkot to Sadda Singh Bhalla, the attendant of the establishment, for the upkeep of the same.⁴⁷

V

In retrospect, this paper attempts to present the long list of Sikh institutions and establishments that were patronized, supported and endowed in every possible means by various kinds of rulers, officials and individuals during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Needless to say, that Golden Temple was one such institution that received grants from a huge number of late eighteenth century rulers, Ranjit Singh, his various successors and people working with the state like *ghurchara jāgīrdārs*. The alienations were made to anyone who was attached to the institution and serving it in any capacity which even included sweepers. The maximum amount that was given by any grantor of the period under review to the Golden Temple in form of a single grant was 1,100 rupees by Ranjit Singh. The earliest grant to the establishment for the same period was given in 1778 by Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya. Darbar Sahib at Taran Taran in Amritsar district received handsome grants worth 5,857 rupees in form of villages and wells from various grantors. Some new rulers of Punjab are known to have given more than one grant to a particular institution repeatedly and here the example of Gurbaksh Singh Dodia

giving three separate grants to Tobbe Darbar of Guru Har Rai in a period of ten years is apt.

Out of all the *bungas*, Akal Bunga received maximum amount in grants that too from twenty-one persons. These grants were given to the *granthīs*, *mutasaddis*, *pujaris*, *ardāsias* and *khazanchī* attached to the institution. Bhangi Sardars gave the maximum alienations out of all the late eighteenth century rulers and the amount comes up to 4,800 rupees but it was Ranjit Singh who is known to have given at least eighteen grants worth 5,389 to Akal Bunga between 1808 and 1827. Prince Sher Singh was the only son of Ranjit Singh to have given a grant to the institution. The maximum grant to Akal Bunga in an individual grant was 1600 rupees which were granted by Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh Bhangis as an offering. This was also the earliest grant that was given to the establishment as it was given away in 1753. Shahid Bunga was assigned maximum amount and that too all the land-revenue free grants in Wazirabad by Natha Singh Shahid. Ranjit Singh is known to have built Bunga Sarkarwala, a costly building near Golden Temple, and hence the major portion of grants enjoyed by the *bunga* came from the builder of the institution.

Though named after the Nakkais yet the maximum grant to Nakkai Bunga was given by Prince Kharak Singh maybe because his mother, Raj Kaur, was a Nakkai. Bunga Burianwala got grants from Ramgarhia Sardars like Jassa Singh and Diwan Singh, his nephew, as this establishment was built under Jassa Singh's patronage. Though there were only two women, Sada Kaur and Chand Kaur who alienated grants in favor of *bungas*. Bunga Bagh Guruki and Bunga Sarkarwala, respectively yet the Golden Temple and the attached *bungas* held so much importance during those times that Maha Singh granted a combined grant from a recently acquired territory to Golden Temple, Akal Bunga, Shahid Bunga and Jhanda Bunga. The maximum grants in terms of value were given to Akal Bunga, followed by Shahid Bunga, Jhanda Bunga, Bunga Sarkarwala, Nakkai Bunga, Bunga Burianwala, Bunga Bagh, Bunga of Mitt Singh Padhanian, Bunga of Ramgarhia Sardars and Bunga of Kaithal family. The value for the same were 14,767 rupees, 4,916 rupees, 4,089 rupees, 2,518 rupees and 8 annas, 849 rupees, 650 rupees, 591 rupees, 500 rupees, 400 rupees and 200 rupees, respectively. In total 29,480 rupees were alienated in favor of *bungas* during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Punjab.

The *udāsī* establishments like *akhārās*, *derās*, *darbārs*, *samādhs* and *dharamsālas* enjoyed the maximum revenue-free grants as a sect. The Akhara of Baba Santokh Das in Amritsar got maximum grants among all the institutions of this particular sect as it received grants to the tune of 17,815 rupees and was handsomely endowed like the Golden Temple and Akal Bunga. Among Akalis, Babe di Ber in Sialkot received 53 grants worth 9,968 rupees from twenty-three donors during the

late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. More than half of this amount was granted by Natha Singh Shahid which was to the value of 5,023 between the years 1806 to 1816 and the entire grant was made in Sialkot by the ruler as he was the ruler of Sialkot.

Though the rest of the leftover amount was not as huge as the endowments made to other big institutions yet the number of donors to Babe di Ber highlights its popularity as the list of grantors included chiefs like Bagh Singh Miraliwala, Nar Singh Chamariwala Sahib Singh Bhangi, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Surjan Singh Bhangi, Ranjit Singh, Dalip Singh. Even the *jāgīrdārs* gave endowments to the institution. For instance, Nihal Singh Atariwala, who was a *jāgīrdār* of Sahib Singh of Gujrat was one of the donors besides the other *jāgīrdārs* like Sham Singh Sultanvandia, Mitt Singh Padhania, Gurmukh Singh Lamba and Wazir Singh Rangar Nanglia who donated grants to the establishment. Other grantors included Nar Singh Bhangi, Morh Singh Mariwala, Budh Singh Chawandi, Jit Singh Nihang and Bagh Singh. Even *ghurchara jāgīrdārs* like Sardul Singh, Rattan Singh Bhinder and Sadda Singh patronized the establishment.

The *granthi* Ram Singh of the institution used to give charms against small pox by giving some rice for the purpose. Gurdwara Bibeksar in Amritsar seems to have been famous among the rulers of cis-Sutlej states as Raja Sangat Singh of Jind was one of the donors to the institution.

The various *dharamsālas* of *nirmala sādhs* found generous patrons in the new chiefs and the *zamīndārs*. Bagh Singh Halowalia gave the maximum grants in terms of value by way of alienating endowments worth 505 rupees between the years 1775 to 1783. Gurmukh Singh Ragyawala and Sobha Singh Bakkha were among the earliest grantors of the sect. Hira Singh Goraya and Mali Singh Goraya also figure as grantors to the *dharamsālas* of this sect. Giving away of a village by Sada Kaur to Asthan at Kankhal in Saharanpur, a *nirmala sādhs* establishment out of Punjab, hints that this sect wasn't entirely ignored. Another sect of the Sikhs to be supported during the period under review was *ganjbakshia sādhs*. Its importance can be guessed from the patronization it received from the Mughal Emperor, Muhammad Shah, in the early days of his rule which later was re-confirmed in 1745. The confirmation given by Sada Kaur and Prince Sher Singh after almost a century speaks volumes about the sanctity of that particular establishment at Dinanagar that was endowed. Maha Singh also is known to have given lavish grants to the institution. Another institution to be patronized during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was Berh Dukh Bhanjani in Amritsar.

The institutions enjoying Mughal patronage were the *udāsī* Dera Kulan of Bhai Pheru at Kasur, Darbar Nankana Sahib at Shaikhupura, Darbar Sahib Balkira at Nankana Sahib, Darbar Sahib Mahistan at Nankana Sahib, Namdeo Darbar at Gurdaspur and Gurdwara of *ganjbakshia sādhs* at Dinanagar. The Sikh

establishments to receive the earliest grant was an *udāsī* institution named Darbar Rori Sahib at Sialkot as it enjoyed endowment since the middle of the sixteenth century. Interestingly, the earliest known grant by any woman during the period under review was given by Mai Karmon, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh. She gave away half a village in Pakpattan to Tahl Das of the *udāsī derā* Kulan of Bhai Pheru at Kasur as early as 1793. The same was confirmed by the Maharaja in 1820. A grant by a woman to an *udāsī* establishment in the late late eighteenth century speaks volumes about the popularity of the sect. References have been found where one Sikh institution gave a grant out of its own grant for the support of the other Sikh establishment. The minimum value in grant that was granted to the premier institution of the Sikhs was by Baba Mahan Singh of Ber Baba Nanak who gifted a mango tree worth 8 rupees to an *ardāsia* of Golden Temple in 1823. Among the rulers of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, references to about fifty-eight grantors have been found. Some of them were Bagh Singh Hallowalia, Gian Singh, Mehr Singh, Ran Singh, Kahan Singh and Wazir Singh Nakkai, Jai Singh, Jaimal Singh, Fateh Singh, Gurbaksh Singh and Fateh Singh Kanhiya, Tara Singh Kathgurhia, Jodh Singh Kalsia, Jassa Singh, Jodh Singh, Karam Singh and Diwan Singh Ramgarhia, Jai Singh and Tara Singh Chainpuria, Nar Singh Chamariwala, Gurbaksh Singh of Tangour, Mahan Singh and Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Bagh Singh Muraliwala, Lehna Singh, Gulab Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Hari Singh and Sahib Singh Bhangi, Sahib Singh Sialkotia, Jodh Singh Sourianwala, Natha Singh Shahid, Nidhan Singh Daskawala, Mala Singh Guraya and Jodh Singh Wazirabadia.

As many as forty *jāgīrdārs* of Ranjit Singh acted as benefactors to the Sikh religious institutions. Some of them were Sham Singh, Nihal Singh and Thakur Singh Atariwala, Budh Singh and Sudh Singh Chhina, Karam Singh Chahal, Hukma Singh Chimni, Ratan Singh Darhiwala, Atar Singh, Chatar Singh and Dal Singh Kalianwala, Jawand Singh Mokal, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Budh Singh Mouranwala, Fateh Singh Mann, Jwala Singh and Mitt Singh Padhanian, Amir Singh and Wasava Singh Sandhanwala, Ratan Singh Sourianwala, Sham Singh Sultanvandia, Fateh Singh Sirhaliwala, Hari Singh Nalwa, Jamadar Khoshal Singh, Nidhan Singh Panchata, Lakkha Singh Uwanwala, Sadda Singh Virk, and Gurmukh Singh Lamba.

Even the courtiers and officials of Lahore Darbar followed the example of their Maharaja and made endowments. Some of them were Diwan Sawan Mal, Diwan Moti Ram, Diwan Hukma Singh, Diwan Dal Singh, Kardar Fakir Chiraghudin and Kardar Mokhamdin. There are references of grants by *lambardars* like Ali Gouhar, Arura Singh, Gian Singh and Mangal Singh. The instances of grants by *zamindars* and *chaudharies* are also available. There are as many as thirty-five references of grants given by *zamindars* to the Sikh institutions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Punjab.

Bhai Lal Singh and Udey Singh of Kaithal, Fateh Singh and Rattan Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala, Raja Sangat Singh of Jind, Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala, Gurbaksh Singh of Tangaur, Sarmukh Singh, a *jagirdar* of Ladwa and Sardars of Kingra territory were among the grantors of cis-Sutlej States. Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu also gave grants for the same. Thirteen women are known to have acted as donors to the Sikh establishments. A total of twenty-four grants worth 2,869 rupees were given by them during the period under review. Some of them were Mai Karmon, Mai Malkhan, Mai Man, Mai Raj Kaur, Mai Sada Kaur, Mai Sobhi, Rani Nakkain, Rani Chand Kaur, Rani Khem Kaur and Mehtab Kaur. Even a slave named Mai Dasi, a servant of Sada Kaur, gave grants to the religious institutions. The maximum in terms of value was given by Sada Kaur as she alienated grants worth 980 rupees. The minimum was given by Mai Dasi as the grant was worth 10 rupees.

The maximum grants were given by Ranjit Singh who assigned 57,701 rupees in patronage to the Sikh institutions. His successors like Kharak Singh, Sher Singh, Dalip Singh, Koer Nau Nihal Singh and Koer Kashmira Singh too followed the example of Maharaja and made alienations to various Sikh institutions. Among them, Kharak Singh gave the maximum grants amounting to 10,867 rupees. Though this paper just covers the Sikh establishments but if the grants given to religious personages and individuals who are not attached to any establishment of the Sikh faith are also included then the number of grants, grantors and grantees will increase manifold.

Endnotes

1. The terms *brahmadeya* and *agrahāra* grants denote the granting of tax-free land to a learned *brahman* in perpetuity as a recognition of his learning or religious achievement. Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History- Some Interpretations*, 2nd ed., Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1984, p. 139. The terms *milk* and *inam* stand for revenue free land grants. The term *wazifa* denotes subsistence allowance in cash. *Auqaf* is plural of *waqf*. The land grant made for the maintenance of a religious shrine was called *waqf*. Jigar Mohammed, *Revenue Free Land Grants in Mughal India- Awadh Region in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (1658-1765)*, 1st ed, New Delhi: Manohar, 2002, p. 22, fn.107-110.
2. Jigar Mohammed, *Revenue-Free Land Grants in Mughal India*. In medieval Iran generally the term *sayurghal* was used for revenue free land grants. pp. 22-23, fn 112, 117.
3. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India -1556-1707*, 2nd ed, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. pp. 343-353.
4. Jigar Mohammed, *Revenue Free Land Grants in Mughal India*, p. 32.
5. Jhanda Singh Bhangi (1765-1774), Ran Singh Nakkai (1767-1781), Mahan Singh Sukarchakia (1774-1790) and Jodh Singh Wazirabadia (1776-1809) are some of the early chiefs to have given grants. The rulers like Jodh Singh Ramgarhia (1803-1816), *Gurdit* Singh Bhangi (1800-1805), Fateh Singh Ahluwalia (1801-1836) and Sada Kaur (1789-1822) were some of the other early nineteenth century rulers to make endowments. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab-During The Late Eighteenth Century*, 1st ed, New Delhi: Manohar, 1993, pp. 163-172.

6. Meera Nagpal, 'Endowments to the Sikh Gurdwaras by the Ruling Class of the Punjab (Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century)', *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXXXVI, Part-I, April-2015, Serial No. 91, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 50; Bagh Singh Hallowalia, ruler of Zafarwal, lost his territories to Ranjit Singh in 1810. Mahan Singh Sukarchakia, the ruler of Gujranwala, and Gulab Singh Bhangi, the ruler of Amritsar, gave grants to Golden Temple. Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, ruler of Sri Hargobindpur, lost territories to Ranjit Singh in 1816. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab-During the Late Eighteenth Century*, pp. 161, 163, 169 and 172. Jai Singh Chainpuria was another ruler to give such grants. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs-Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, 1st ed., New Delhi: Manohar, 1978, p.150, fn 14. Jai Singh Kanhiya (died 1789), ruler of Batala, and his son, Gurbakhsh Singh Kanhiya, patronized the main Sikh shrine at Amritsar. Uttam Singh Majithia, the ruler of Rawalpindi, became tributary of Ranjit Singh in 1803. Lepel H. Griffin & C.F. Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab* (revised by W.L. Conran & H.D. Craik), Vol. I, (reprint) Delhi: Low Price Publication, 2010, pp.380-384 and 425-426.
7. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 218.
8. Punjab State Archives, Patiala, *Charity by Maharaja Mohinder Bahadur*, File No. 1134 & *Maafi to Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, by Patiala State*, Dharmarth Head, Basta No. 70, File No. 136.
9. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 218.
10. Jhanda Singh (1765-1774) and Ganda Singh (1774-1775), the Bhangi chiefs, were the rulers of Amritsar. Budh Singh Bagga (1805-1808) was the ruler of Sujapur who lost his territories to Ranjit Singh in 1809. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab-During the Late Eighteenth Century*, pp. 160 and 169. Nar Singh Chamariwala, ruler of Chamari, died in 1806. Tara Singh Chainpuria was a chief during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs-Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, pp. 23 and 150, fn 14. Lehna Singh Bhangi (1764-1797) was the ruler of Lahore. Amar Singh Bagga (1759-1805) was the ruler of Sujapur. Lepel H. Griffin & C.F. Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab* (revised by W.L. Conran & H.D. Craik), Vol. I & II (reprint-first published 1909) Delhi: Low Price Publication, 2010, pp. 477-484 (vol I) and pp. 38-39 (vol II). Hari Singh Bhangi (died 1764) was the ruler of Amritsar. Lepel H. Griffin & C.F. Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab* (revised by W.L. Conran & H.D. Craik), Vol. I, 1940. pp. 456-457.
11. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 218, pp. 232-309.
12. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 31 December 1847, No.2207, 14 January 1853, No. 229 & 10 June 1853, No. 219.
13. Nidhan Singh Daskawala was the ruler of Daska who lost his territories in 1810 and received a service *jagir*. Jodh Singh Saurianwala, ruler of Saurian, is believed to have supported Ranjit Singh in his occupation of Lahore. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab-During the Late Eighteenth Century*, pp. 22 and 172. Malkha Singh Pindiwala, ruler of Rawalpindi, later became *jagirdar* of Ranjit Singh. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs-Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, p. 21.
14. The Jhanda Bunga was named so as two standards were erected in honour of the fourth Sikh Guru, Guru Ramdas. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 218, pp. 312-315.
15. Ram Singh Kahilonwala, was the *jagirdar* of Bhag Singh Bagga, the ruler of Sujapur. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab-During the Late Eighteenth Century*, p. 112.
16. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 219.

17. Ibid
18. Ran Singh and Gian Singh, the Nakkai chiefs of Chunian, ruled during 1767-1781 and 1789-1807, respectively. Wazir Singh and Mehr Singh were the Nakkai chiefs of Gogera during 1780-1790 and 1790 onwards. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab-During the Late Eighteenth Century*, pp. 169 and 173. Jodh Singh Nakkai was also another chief to give grant to the *bunga*. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs-Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, p. 150, fn 14.
19. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 219.
20. Ibid. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia stayed as a guest of Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, *granthī* in a *dharamsāla* in Saharanpur district when his adverse fortune had obliged him to leave the native country. On his return to Punjab, he sent for Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, the *granthī* at the said *dharamsāla*, and gave him a village in *jagir*. On his demise, his *chela*, Tahl Singh, built a *bunga* under the patronage of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia (1758-1803) was the ruler of Sri Hargobindpur and Diwan Singh was his nephew. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs-Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, p. 31, fn 90.
21. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 27 May 1853, No. 202.
22. Bhai Udey Singh was the ruler of Kaithal who ruled during 1806-1843. Lepel H Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab* (reprint-first published 1870), Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2008, pp. 196-197. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 31 December 1847, No. 1808, pp. 407-410.
23. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 219.
24. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 28 November 1856, No.128.; Meera Nagpal, Endowments to the Sikh Gurdwaras by the Ruling Class of the Punjab (Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century), *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXXXVI, Part-I, April-2015, Serial No. 91, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 48.
25. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 16 April 1852.
26. Gurbaksh Singh Dodia (1795-1813) was the chief of Doda. Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab-During the Late Eighteenth Century*, p. 168. Sahib Singh Dorangla was also a chief. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs-Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, p. 150, fn 14; Meera Nagpal, Endowments to the Sikh Gurdwaras by the Ruling Class of the Punjab (Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century), *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXXXVI, Part-I, April-2015, Serial No. 91, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 49.
27. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 14 January 1853.
28. Bhai Udey Singh was the ruler of Kaithal who ruled during 1806-1843. Lepel H Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, pp. 196-197. Jodh Singh Kalsia was a minor Sikh chief who accepted suzerainty of Ranjit Singh in 1806. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs-Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, p. 60. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 31 December 1847, No. 2206.
29. Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Kharifa Syed Mohd Hassan, *Tarikh-i-Patiala* (History of Patiala-translated by Kharifa Saadat Hussain), Vol. I, Manuscript, M/832/I. Punjab State Archives, Patiala, *Grant of Muqfi to the different Religious Institutions from the State*, Dharmarth Head, Basta No.5, Case No. 7988, S. No. 148, pp. 40, 41 & 43. Ibid., *Charity by Maharaja Mohinder Bahadur*, File No. 1134, pp. 2 & 13. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 31 December 1847, Nos. 1807-1811, 1849.
30. Sulakhan Singh, *Heterodoxy in the Sikh Tradition*, Jalandhar: ABS Publication, 1999, p. 56.
31. Udasis is a sect within the Sikh community established by Guru Nanak Dev's elder son Baba Shri Chand. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurush abadratanakar Mahankosh or Encyclopaedia of the Sikh Literature* (tr.), Vol II, Patiala: Punjabi University, 2008, p. 21; National Archives of India,

- New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 16 April 1852, No. 48-51; *ibid*, 7 January 1853, No. 219; 14 January 1853, No. 219.
32. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 7 January 1853, No. 219, 27 May 1853, No. 202 & 14 January 1853, No. 219.
 33. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 14 January 1853, No. 241. Gurmukh Singh, *Historical Sikh Shrines*, Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1995, p. 60.
 34. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 21 February 1851, No. 87A. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 7 January 1853, No. 219 & 27 May 1853, No. 202.
 35. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 7 January 1853, No. 219 & 27 May 1853, No. 202.
 36. The *akalīs* or *nihangs* constitute a sect of the Singhs who put on a blue dress and are ever ready to sacrifice their lives without fear of death. Hence, they are known by this name. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurushabadratanakar Mahankosh or Encyclopaedia of the Sikh Literature* (tr.), Vol I & III, Patiala: Punjabi University, 2008, pp. 85-86 (Vol 1) & pp.1795-1796 (Vol III).
 37. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 14 January 1853, No. 219.
 38. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 19 March 1852, No.65-68.
 39. Gurmukh Singh, *Historical Sikh Shrines*, Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1995, p. 104.
 40. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 10 June 1853, No. 219.
 41. The *nirmala sadhs* form a branch of Sikh religion. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurushabadratanakar Mahankosh or Encyclopaedia of the Sikh Literature* (tr.), Vol III, Patiala: Punjabi University, 2008, p. 1817.
 42. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 27 May 1853, No. 202.
 43. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 14 January 1853, No. 234-236.
 44. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 27 May 1853, No.202.
 45. Ganjbakshia was a faqir who was a follower of Guru Amar Das. He was a religious preacher and his followers call themselves as *ganjbakshia*. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurushabadratanakar Mahankosh or Encyclopaedia of the Sikh Literature* (tr.), Vol II, Patiala: Punjabi University, 2008, p. 1102.
 46. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 27 May 1853, No.202.
 47. National Archives of India, New Delhi, *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 14 January 1853, Nos. 234-236.

Portrayal of Caste, Religion, and Dalit Community in Contemporary Punjabi Fiction: A Reading of Bhagwant Rasoolpuri's Select Short-Stories

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Abstract

This research article delves into the nuanced exploration of caste, religion, and the Dalit community in contemporary Punjab, with a specific focus on the select short stories of Bhagwant Rasoolpuri. Punjab stands as a unique exception in the Indian context due to the distinctive status accorded to Dalits within the state. Noteworthy scholars on Punjab, including Ronki Ram, Paramjit Judge, and Harish K Puri, assert that casteism in Punjab deviates from the conventional purity/pollution paradigm. Instead, societal divisions manifest along the lines of agricultural land ownership, creating a dichotomy between the privileged landowners and those without. However, the observations posited by scholars are contested by Dalit intellectuals who argue that despite claims to the contrary, Dalits in Punjab encounter untouchability, discrimination, and exclusion—both physical and symbolic—from dominant castes. Despite existing research highlighting biased treatment of Dalits in pre-Independence Dalit literature, a gap persists in understanding the contemporary status of Dalits in Punjabi society. This article seeks to address this lacuna by conducting a critical analysis of the fiction authored by Bhagwant Rasoolpuri, a prominent Dalit writer. The aim is to scrutinize and interpret the current status, issues, and concerns faced by Dalits in Punjab, shedding light on the complexities of their lived experiences. Additionally, the study endeavors to contribute to the broader understanding of the portrayal of caste, religion, and Dalit narratives within the realm of contemporary Punjabi fiction. Through an in-depth examination of Rasoolpuri's works, the research offers insights that resonate with the multifaceted dynamics characterizing the social fabric of contemporary Punjab.

Keywords: Punjabi Society, Caste Dynamics, Religion, Dalit Community, Dalit Literature, Bhagwant Rasoolpuri

Introduction

In the context of regional demographics and land distribution, Punjab emerges as a distinctive region housing nearly one-third of India's Dalit population. Although constituting the largest proportion of the Scheduled Castes within the regional states, Dalits in Punjab paradoxically possess the smallest share of agricultural land nationwide. This peculiarity is exacerbated by widespread landlessness among the

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Dalit community, while agricultural land remains predominantly monopolized by the Jats, a dominant peasant caste. In a predominantly agrarian state like Punjab, land ownership significantly shapes an individual's social standing. In stark contrast to their counterparts in other regions, Dalits in Punjab claim the smallest share of land ownership, with only five percent engaged in farming activities despite comprising the largest percentage nationally. Majority of Dalits find themselves compelled to work in agriculture due to their limited land ownership, resulting in a subservient relationship with predominantly Sikh Jat landlords. These statistics, often cited by social scientists, underscore the 'special' status of Dalits in Punjab, where the absence of untouchability practices is attributed to the interdependence between landlords and Dalits. In essence, critics argue that this intricate socio-economic interplay has mitigated the prevalence of untouchability in the state.

Furthermore, the transformative era of the Green Revolution wielded substantial influence over the social and economic landscape of Dalits in Punjab. This period witnessed an influx of agricultural labor from regions beyond Punjab, prompting Dalits to explore alternative occupations traditionally reserved for artisan communities. Despite these shifts, the dynamics between landowners and Dalits persisted, characterized by enduring social hierarchies. Despite their significant contributions to agricultural labor, Dalits continued to face social disdain, with their caste identity serving as a determining factor in shaping their destinies. Renowned scholars and critics specializing in Casteism within Punjab unanimously acknowledge that untouchability in the region differed from practices in other parts of the country, though the complete elimination of untouchability cannot be unequivocally asserted. Evidently, the perspectives of social scientists and literary figures from Punjab diverge when addressing questions concerning caste relations within the state.

Existing research in this domain points to Dalit literature during the pre-independence era, shedding light on the prevalence of caste-based discrimination and untouchability in Punjab. However, recent systematic inquiries into this phenomenon are conspicuously lacking. Consequently, this paper endeavors to meticulously investigate and elucidate the status, issues, and concerns facing Dalits in Punjab. Employing content analysis of contemporary Punjabi fiction, the study turns its focus on selected short stories penned by the esteemed Dalit writer from Punjab, Bhagwant Rasoolpuri. The analysis draws upon the insights of eminent critics on caste, including Dr. B R Ambedkar, Gail Omvedt, Gopal Guru, Raj Kumar, Om Prakash Valmiki, and others. Additionally, the perspectives of contemporary critics specializing in Punjab, such as Paramjit Judge, Harish Puri, Ronki Ram, and Surinder Jodhka, are incorporated to comprehend the current issues and political landscape of Punjab. This interdisciplinary approach seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of the evolving socio-political scenario concerning Dalits in the region.

Dalit Consciousness in Punjabi Fiction

While the roots of Dalit consciousness in Punjabi fiction can be traced to an earlier period, it truly began to take substantive form in the latter half of the 1970s. Bhai Veer Singh's novel 'Baba Nodh Singh' marked the initial instance of a Punjabi novel addressing the Dalit population in Punjab's villages. Subsequently, Nanak Singh's 'Chitta Lahoo' delved into the theme of caste discrimination. However, it was Gurdial Singh who brought a realistic portrayal of caste discrimination into the forefront of fiction. Hence, he is acknowledged as a pivotal voice for the subalterns. The novel 'Jug Badal Gya Hai' by Sohan Singh Sheetal encapsulates the transformative shifts in the lives of Dalits. Beyond these significant contributions, the writings of Karamjit Kussa, Jaswant Singh Kanwal, Om Prakash Gaso, Karamjit Singh Aujla, Ninder Gill, and Balbir Parwana collectively amplify the narratives that illuminate the tribulations endured by the Dalit community.

Dalit autobiographies have emerged as powerful narratives addressing the complexities of Dalit identity and shedding light on the challenges faced by this community. Noteworthy contributions in this realm include Lal Singh Dil's 'Dastaan' and Balbir Madhopuri's 'Changiya Rukh'. Shifting focus to the genre of Punjabi short stories, its inception was marked by idealism and progressivism, evolving later to encompass profound humanistic themes. Pioneers in this transformation were Nanak Singh and Charan Singh Saheed, who introduced the common man as a central figure—an innovation not prevalent in the earlier tradition of Punjabi short-story writing. In contrast, Gurbaksh Singh Preetlari directed his narrative lens towards unraveling psychological tensions within human relationships. Works such as Nanak Singh's 'Kallo' and Preetlari's 'Chandidas' exemplify a shift towards humanistic concerns, transcending the traditional focus on caste questions or untouchability in Punjabi short-story literature.

The subsequent phase in Punjabi short stories unfolds under the dominance of progressive writers who approach the issue of caste through a class-oriented lens. This narrative wave illuminates the pain and tribulations experienced by the Dalit community, with notable contributions such as Sujan Singh's 'Prauana', 'Bagaan da Rakha', 'Mahatma', and 'Kutta', Sant Singh Sekhon's 'Ujara', and 'Purohit', Kulwant Singh Virk's 'Turi di Pand', Gurdial Singh's 'Chaare de Pand', 'Haar Gya Ratniya' and Mohan Bhandari's 'Gangajal' and 'Mainu Tagore Bna de Maa'.

Advancing into the third phase of Punjabi short stories, Dalit lives undergo scrutiny from a Marxist perspective, unraveling the inner and outer layers of the Dalit community. Noteworthy voices from this period include Atarjit, Lal Singh, Kirpal Kijak, Prem Gorkhi, Nachattar, and Mohan Lal Philoria. However, it is in the fourth phase of Punjabi Dalit short stories that Dalit writers take the helm in representing their community. In contrast to previous perspectives—Progressive, Marxist, or humanistic—Dalit writers such as Saroop Siyalvi, Gurmeet Kariawali,

Bhagwant Rasoolpuri, and Des Raj Kali bring forth the social and political dimensions of casteism in Punjab. Their narratives, rooted in personal experiences, assert that Punjab is not exempt from caste-based discrimination, thus challenging the myth of a casteless Sikh society in the region. This literature, led by Dalit writers, serves as a powerful exposé, shedding light on the profound suffering, pain, and anguish endured by the Dalit community in Punjab.

Portrayal of Dalits, Caste, and Religion in Contemporary Punjab by Bhagwant Rasoolpuri

The significance embedded in Rasoolpuri's fiction lies in its poignant and realistic depiction of 21st-century Dalits. His short stories meticulously unravel the hopes, fears, anguish, and anxiety experienced by the community in the face of the humiliation imposed by their caste status. Rasoolpuri's narratives center on crucial issues such as caste identity, reservations, economic deprivation, poverty, and social injustice prevalent among Dalits. Additionally, his works lend a powerful voice to the concerns of Dalit women, broadening the scope of his exploration.

An examination of Rasoolpuri's fiction offers a comprehensive insight into the contemporary status of Dalits in Punjab. Here, Dalits no longer solely depend on the landowning community; they have diversified into various occupations such as leatherwork, government jobs, or other labor-intensive roles in villages or cities. The writer adeptly captures the aspirations of the new generation of Dalits in Punjab, depicting their resolve not to succumb to the dominance of Jats. Instead, they aspire to forge an identity free from the burden of caste-related shame, embracing both their caste and occupation with pride. Despite reservation policies and shifts in economic status, Dalits continue to face disparities when compared to the dominant caste. Rasoolpuri critically addresses this disparity in his fiction, targeting this societal group to bring attention to the persistent challenges faced by Dalits in contemporary Punjab.

In his narratives set in contemporary Punjab, Rasoolpuri addresses the enduring issue of poverty and caste discrimination against Dalits, utilizing this persistent challenge to underscore the lack of substantial change for Dalits even seven decades after India's independence. Specifically, his short stories, such as 'Dhoor', 'Kumbhi Narak', 'Black Dustbin', 'Sukkian Kunna', and 'Kabar Gaah' offer a Dalit perspective on the intricate problem of landlessness. Through the lens of his Dalit characters, Rasoolpuri sheds light on the issue of landlessness and poverty, emphasizing how Dalits are consistently exploited, even to the extent of relinquishing their *shamlaat*. Additionally, Rasoolpuri brings into focus the harsh reality of caste dynamics in rural Punjab. His writings unravel the intricate web of the caste system in this region, with a prominent emphasis on Dalit identity. Notably, the Jats, as a landholding community, heavily rely on Majhabis, Chamars, and Valmikis for various tasks, including fieldwork, land cultivation, household chores, and animal care. This

dependency often results in seemingly amicable treatment of Dalits by Jats, as depicted in stories like 'Kabar Gaah' and 'Sukkian Kunna'. However, Rasoolpuri subtly exposes the fragility of this rapport, revealing that the characters' relationships with their masters remain favorable only until the Dalits assert themselves.

Furthermore, due to their engagement in occupations traditionally deemed 'unclean' – such as handling and skinning dead animals, scavenging, and serving as attached laborers – Siris Dalits faced societal disdain. The story 'Kumbhi Narak' vividly portrays a scenario where Dalits are denied entry into a Gurdwara, a Sikh place of worship, under the pretext that their bodies emit an odor of dirt and filth from their work. Consequently, some members of the community turn to Christianity, finding solace in the fact that within this faith, they are welcomed without scorn. In the narrative, Rajan, a Dalit character, shares his experience of embracing Christianity: "Oye Raju! We have started going to the Church now...We dress up nicely for that...We sit on chairs...We read the Bible...We can take it (Bible) along...put it in our bag...We can also keep it down on the floor...the priest of the church respects everyone". Rajan expresses his surprise at the lack of discrimination within the place of worship. This contrast with other Indian religions fosters a sense of welcome and acceptance for the Dalit community within Christianity. Such statements by the characters serve to underscore the prevalent caste tensions depicted in the narrative.

In a similar vein, in 'Rehmat Masih Mattu di Jiwani' (Biography of Rehmat Masih Mattu), Rasoolpuri depicts the challenges faced by Dalits who embrace Christianity. He contends that despite the religious conversion, their caste status remains unchanged, contrary to the anticipated transformation desired by the Dalits. In the narrative, Garib Das, Rehmat Mattu's father, opts for a change in religion with the hope of altering his social standing and attaining equality among other castes. Following the conversion, he adopts the term 'Masih' alongside his name. Several others from the Valmiki community also convert with him. Regularly, they gather every Sunday, dressed in clean attire, to attend Church services. However, the anticipated change in social status does not materialize as expected. Garib Das, now 'Garib Das Masih', joins as a Chowkidaar in the village. During a police inquiry, when he proudly identifies himself as 'Garib Das Masih', the policeman dismissively remarks, 'You may choose to become Sikhs or Christians, but you will still remain a Churaa' (Maran Rutt, 19). This incident highlights the persistent challenges and societal perceptions faced by Dalits despite their religious conversion.

The exploration of the question of religion among Dalits is powerfully illuminated in Rasoolpuri's narrative, 'Ad-Danka'. The story unfolds the historical trajectory of Dalits, dating back to the pre-Independence era, when they sought solace in various religions in their pursuit of equality and inclusion within places of worship. The protagonist reflects on the exclusionary practices faced by Dalits,

expressing, 'It goes back to the times of the Britishers. On one side, the country was fighting for the freedom of India; on the other, we (Dalits) were fighting for our identity. We said that we do not need independence but freedom from casteism. The Britishers used to think in our favor. But whenever they used to work in our favor, either Arya Samajis or Gandhi used to intervene' (Maran Rutt 60).

Furthermore, he narrates instances where Dalits, particularly Valmikis, faced discrimination in Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Multan. Feeling marginalized, they embraced Islam, yet this did not alleviate their plight, as a new division, termed 'Mussalli,' emerged among Muslims. In regions influenced by British presence, such as Sialkot and Gurdaspur, Valmikis turned to Christianity. In areas dominated by Sikhism like Majha, Dalits adopted Sikhism, leading to a further subdivision known as Majhabi Sikhs. Additionally, the protagonist mentions Babu Mangu Ram's proclamation of Ad-Dharam Mandal, prompting communities like Chamar, Sansi, Gandhile, Julahe, Megh, Kabirpanthi, and others to identify themselves as Ad-dhrmis. This multifaceted journey through religious affiliations underscores the complex struggles faced by Dalits in their pursuit of a distinct identity.

Having delved into the historical trajectory of Dalit exclusion, the narrative transitions to the contemporary circumstances of Dalits in Punjab, portraying them as still grappling for a distinct religious identity that affords them equal standing. It appears that their pursuit of equal status through religion is deemed necessary, as if reservation alone is insufficient for achieving such parity. In the story 'Ad-Danka', a leader articulates the aspiration to establish the identity of their religious spaces as 'Satguru Ravidas Dhaam'. While expressing respect for the Granth containing the teachings of their Guru (Guru Ravidas), there is a desire for a separate Granth specific to their community, to be revered in all their sacred spaces. This, they believe, would enable future generations to celebrate joyous occasions and express their sorrows through their own sacred scripture.

Babu Joginder Pal, another character in the narrative, paints a contemporary picture of religious dynamics in Punjab. He notes that the youth of the village have rejected visits to Gurudwaras or temples, insisting on transforming places of worship in the village into 'Satguru Ravidas Dham' (Maran Rutt 46). This portrayal by Babu Mangu Ram reflects the predicament of Dalits in Punjab, particularly when responding to a Sikh character named Sardar who suggests that if Dalits wish to keep Guru Granth Sahib in their places of worship, they should adhere to the same rituals of respect toward the Granth Sahib. Mangu Ram responds passionately, highlighting the historical discrimination faced by Dalits:

'You don't consider us humans! When you do not let us enter Gurdwaras, then only we have created Ravidas Mandirs...then your community started yelling at us that Granth Sahib cannot be kept in the temples...then we created Ravidas Gurdwaras...You don't let us live even now...where should we go now'? (69)

In the majority of stories within the collection ‘Kumbhi Narak’, Rasoolpuri vividly captures the life and culture of Chamars, a caste traditionally associated with the occupation of carrying and skinning dead animals. In the story ‘Dhool’ (Dust), a poignant scene unfolds where Melu reminisces about his father's experiences of untouchability and caste-based discrimination. His father, despite receiving gifts from landlords and upper-caste individuals, was always careful to avoid direct physical contact. He carried a utensil with him, symbolizing the reluctance of upper-caste individuals to share their utensils with him. However, the narrative shifts to the present times, where Dalits are ‘touched’ but with a calculated purpose. During a meeting with Melu for an election, Pavittar Singh touches his shoulder, expressing a desire for Melu's support and promising assistance for the village youth. This deliberate gesture serves as a commentary on how Dalit votes are manipulated, reducing Dalits to mere vote banks. Melu's decision not to support Pavittar Singh tells a different story—one of a new Dalit who refuses to be submissive and stands against those in power. Crucially, this transformation becomes possible because Melu is no longer working as an agricultural laborer in the fields of the landlords. As Ronki Ram notes, Dalits choosing occupations beyond traditional roles like Siris has provided them with a platform for assertion. Over the last few decades, a significant shift has occurred, with Dalits venturing into professions traditionally associated with artisan castes. This shift has contributed to a notable decline in the percentage of Dalits in the agricultural workforce in the state, decreasing from 24 percent in 1991 to 16 percent in 2001 (Ram 5-6).

Nevertheless, he posits that the Green Revolution played a pivotal role in altering the socio-political landscape for Dalits in Punjab, albeit with consequences that led to their subjugation. The Green Revolution marked a shift from traditional agriculture to a commercial and mechanized farming system. Rasoolpuri addresses this transformation in his story ‘Kabar Gaah’, expressing disdain for the market-oriented agriculture that favored landowners. Unfortunately, this shift did not prove beneficial for Dalits, who, as a landless community, were unable to cultivate their own land. The commercialization of agriculture resulted in outsourcing labor from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where laborers were willing to work at lower costs. This had a detrimental impact on the livelihood of Dalits engaged in Siris, exacerbating their marginalization and widening existing divisions between them and the dominant peasant caste in Punjab.

Consequently, caught between the influx of cheap migrant labor and the advent of mechanized farming, Dalit laborers began seeking employment in sectors beyond agriculture. Milkhi Ram's father and grandfather, who had previously worked as animal skinners, transitioned to working in the fields of Surain Singh. Following in their footsteps, Milkhi Ram worked as a Siri for Rulda Singh, the grandson of Surain Singh. However, a shift is observed in the aspirations of the succeeding generation, as Milkhi Ram's son Raj aspires to work abroad, distancing himself from the

traditional occupation, and his daughter is employed in a Finance Company.

In this manner, the diversification of job opportunities diminished the reliance of Dalits on landowners. The social mobility experienced by the new middle-class Dalits, coupled with their relative emancipation from economic dependence on landowners, gave rise to a newfound Dalit assertion in Punjab. This transformation is palpable in the narrative of 'Dhool', where Melu's brother Gelu actively seeks employment outside the village, aiming to break free from the grasp of the landowners. Despite Melu's reservations, who views any occupation other than skinning dead animals as a departure from their ancestral legacy, Gelu is resolute in his decision to seek work in the city.

Melu, in stark contrast, takes pride in his work, viewing the art of skinning dead animals as a distinctive marker of his identity. This occupation not only empowers him to subsist without depending on landlords but also frustrates him when he observes village youth disparaging their own occupations and succumbing to the lure of drugs. Similarly, Nani, proud of his identity linked to his work, asserts that landlords depend on individuals like him to remove dead animals from their premises. This pride is notably absent in the works of Gurdial Singh.

Conversely, Jagsir, toiling in Dharam Singh's fields, fails to establish a connection with his work. His passive submission contrasts sharply with the assertiveness exhibited by characters like Melu and Nani. The narrative introduces a new form of Dalit assertion during panchayat elections, as Melu challenges Pavittar Singh's involvement in enticing village youth towards drug addiction, a departure from historical passivity.

The theme of landlessness gains prominence, with Nani expressing concern about potential loss of their *hadda rori* during panchayat elections. Despite legal papers securing their land, Melu acknowledges the challenges faced by Dalits in asserting their rights. Viridi notes the formidable Jat stronghold on land, systematically denying lower castes access to village common land.

Following Pavittar Singh's electoral victory, Gelu fears losing their *hadda rori*. Melu's helplessness is palpable as he receives a notice demanding twenty thousand rupees to retain the *hadda rori*. Rasoolpuri's 'Dhool' offers an alternative perspective on landlessness, depicting the struggles of Dalits unable to secure land for work or housing through the character of Melu, a modern, assertive Dalit.

Similarly, in 'Black Dustbin', Rasoolpuri depicts Dalits engaging in protests and actively fighting to reclaim *shamlaat* land from the grip of upper-caste individuals. In 'Kabar Gaah', the narrative spans three generations of Dalits tirelessly toiling in the fields of Surain Singh, yet their efforts contribute little to their upliftment. In a poignant moment, Milkhi, the central character, attends a rally of protesting farmers and, overcome by his own helplessness, laments:

Rulda Singh, our leaders are only talking about farmers... What about us... who do not have any piece of land... they are also burdened by debt... but no one talks about people like us...

He further adds,

Our Dalit brothers who are under debt and commit suicide, the government should think about them as well. Their loans should be condoned.

In his stories 'Ad-Danka' (Ad-Bigul) and 'Rehmat Masih Mattu di Jiwani', (Biography of Rehmat Masih Mattu) Rasoolpuri highlights caste and class discrimination in the contemporary Punjab. In 'Rehmat Masih Mattu di Jiwani', an incident unfolds wherein the offspring of Rehmat Masih contemplate pursuing opportunities abroad or securing government employment. This episode serves as a depiction of the upliftment of Dalits in Punjab. The protagonist, Rehmat, sends his daughter to Canada, while his son establishes himself in Chandigarh after completing his engineering studies. Concurrently, Rehmat's wife, employed as a primary teacher, contributes to the family's advancement. This narrative illustrates their liberation from the constraints of poverty, resulting in the creation of a more prosperous life for both their children.

Melu acknowledges that altering their occupation might not change others' perceptions about their caste. When discussing his brother's choice to work as a laborer in the city with Pavittar Singh, Melu expresses his dilemma: 'Sardarji, I have stopped him from taking up a job in the city. But he says he doesn't want to work in the hadda-rori. Moreover, he has got a wife who belongs to a superior caste than ours. She says that she feels disgusted with the stink of the animal skin and will stay with him only if he leaves this kind of work. She has made him leave his ancestral work...People still call him the son of Bhagta, a chamar from *hadda rori*'. This narrative illustrates the complexities and challenges faced by Dalits as they navigate societal expectations and attempt to carve out new paths beyond traditional occupations.

In 'Rehmat Masih Mattu di Jiwani', Jagar, employed as a sweeper in a school, candidly reveals that despite transitioning to a different occupation, his circumstances remain unaltered. His caste continues to shadow him in his new role. He recounts an incident where the headmaster, belonging to an upper caste, admonished him, stating, 'O Chura...clean properly, otherwise I will send you back home' (Marat Rutt 15). Similarly, another character in the story, Rehmat, reflects on the impact of reservation in securing government employment. However, he laments that despite this achievement, upper caste individuals within the workplace refuse to accept them, subjecting them to constant humiliation and exploitation based on their caste identity. He articulates, 'Brother, our destiny is burdened with the legacy of servitude, confined to handling filth and dirt. While we may have secured employment, the societal mindset mirrors the era of India's colonization' (Marat

Rutt). Furthermore, Rehmat highlights that discrimination persists not only from upper-caste individuals but also within their own community. Individuals belonging to the Ravidasia caste consider themselves superior to Valmiki and Majhabi Sikhs, thereby further accentuating the caste faultlines in Punjabi society.

The portrayal of caste as a source of humiliation in contemporary Punjab, where Dalits are gradually securing jobs through reservation, is exemplified through the character of Kulbir Singh Mann. Rehmat shares with a friend that he initially perceived Kulbir to be a member of the Jatt community due to his surname. However, upon visiting Kulbir's village, Rehmat discovers that Kulbir is, in fact, a Dalit who had been identifying himself as a Jatt. The revelation is made by the sarpanch, a Jatt himself, who informs Rehmat that there is no Master Kulbir in their caste from his village but does exist in the locality referred to as 'Chamraali', associated with the Chamars.

Thus, Rasoolpuri skillfully portrays poverty, social inequality, and the denial of land rights as critical issues affecting modern Dalits in contemporary Punjabi society. For him, factors such as caste, religion, landlessness, and the absence of political power are all significant contributors to the victimization of the Dalit community. Moreover, it is suggested that the lack of resources, particularly access to land, profoundly influences their lifestyle choices and career opportunities. Rasoolpuri depicts them as unfortunate individuals who face a lack of social honor due to their class and caste. By articulating the existential concerns of Dalit characters, Rasoolpuri's fiction emerges as a form of protest literature, aiming to sensitize people to the harrowing experiences and injustices of the Dalits' past.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research delves into the nuanced portrayal of caste, religion, and the Dalit community in contemporary Punjabi fiction, specifically examining select short stories penned by Bhagwant Rasoolpuri. Through an exploration of Rasoolpuri's literary works, particularly 'Dhool' and others, the paper seeks to unravel the multifaceted dynamics shaping the lives of Dalits in present-day Punjab.

Rasoolpuri's narratives serve as a distinctive lens through which to scrutinize the evolving landscape of Dalit identity and assertion. The research unfolds the intricate layers of Rasoolpuri's storytelling, emphasizing the significance of caste as a pervasive and impactful element in the lives of Dalits. The analysis sheds light on how caste, far from being a relic of the past, continues to exert its influence in contemporary society, permeating various aspects of daily life and perpetuating social hierarchies.

Furthermore, the exploration of religion within Rasoolpuri's stories unveils the complex interplay between faith and identity for Dalits. The narratives present a vivid picture of Dalits navigating through various religious conversions in their quest

for equality and inclusion. The struggles depicted underscore the persistent challenges faced by the Dalit community, not only in transcending caste-based discrimination but also in seeking acceptance within different religious frameworks.

The thematic exploration of landlessness emerges as a central motif, underscoring the economic and social vulnerabilities of Dalits. Rasoolpuri's narratives deftly navigate the historical and contemporary dimensions of Dalit struggles for land rights, illustrating the formidable challenges posed by societal structures and power dynamics. The juxtaposition of traditional occupations and changing aspirations within the Dalit community adds another layer to the narrative, showcasing the multifaceted nature of their identity.

The research also probes into the political dimension of Dalit assertion, situating narratives against the backdrop of panchayat elections. This unique lens offers insights into the evolving socio-political landscape, depicting Dalits as assertive individuals challenging historical norms. The paper highlights instances of resistance, confrontation, and a growing sense of agency among Dalit characters, symbolizing a departure from the historical passivity associated with their community.

Bhagwant Rasoolpuri's select short stories, offer readers a nuanced understanding of how caste, religion, and socio-economic factors intersect in shaping the experiences of the Dalit community in contemporary Punjab. Rasoolpuri's storytelling serves not only as a literary endeavor but also as a sociocultural commentary, inviting readers to reflect on the persistent challenges faced by the Dalit community and the evolving contours of their identity and agency in a changing societal landscape.

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Contours of Women's Identity, Dependence and Liberation in Medieval Punjabi Devotion

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Abstract

Devotional movements in medieval India played a significant part in shaping social identities. Punjab was no difference where Sikh Gurus, Bhaktas and Pirs flared up the subaltern voices and protested against social inequalities. Social disabilities imposed on the women through the concept of 'menstruating pollution', widowhood and Sati were condemned. Nevertheless, the protest limited itself to enabling women only overcome certain censures only. The woman remained confined to the broader framework of patience, submission and obedience. A self-willed woman was 'lustful' who was destined to wander aimlessly. Even in Qissa literature the only recourse was the killing of 'women protagonist' who brought infamy to the house or clan. The dwells on devotional texts with an understanding that the latter reflected the social realities and played a vital role in shaping and legitimizing the status of women in the socio-cultural milieu. It further aims to deconstruct the language and its dynamics in imagining the gender relations in society of medieval Punjab. In this process, the paper will bring forth the extent of both liberation and control a women's identity reflected in the devotional realm of medieval Punjab.

Keywords: Punjab, Devotion, Women Identity, Qissa, Sati.

Introduction

Inequality exists at various levels in a given social structure. A class struggle constituted the basic premises of the Marxist model where control over the resources created discontinuities in social realities resulting in a sharp division between the 'bourgeois' and 'proletariat'. Women's subjugation was referred to within the class struggle with similar ends. The emergence of cultural studies with rising concern in the 'mentalities of history' opened a new vista in gender studies.¹ Women's experiences were no longer studied within existing material conditions but as to how women's experiences dwell on their surroundings, cultural dominators, and their perception of world. This effort has resulted in a better understanding of conventional theoretical perspectives that have relegated women to a marginal status.

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It has been argued that the feminine world is a close reflection of the masculine universe. This new insight has demonstrated that women were never given access to those cultural spheres which might have empowered them to create a 'voice of their own'. One could not but agree that 'Women lack organic solidarity, hence the paradox of their situation: they belong at one and the same time to the male world and male symbols'.²

Women studies in Indian academia, for long have revolved around Altkerian notion in which both the supporters and the critics have endeavored to address a prosperous period for women. Altekar points towards a better condition of women in India when compared to other contemporary civilizations in the world. Access to religious rights, educational rights, and property rights were taken as significant variables to highlight the active participation of women in ancient Indian society.³ Blaming the foreign incursion, it has further argued that degeneration in the position of women in India started with Islamic invasions which acted as a counter force against the freedom of women.⁴ Ancient text censoring women pollution and denial of participation in various rituals coupled with the need to guard the chastity of a 'menstruating girl' are dismissed as simple social concerns.⁵ She was not equally welcomed like a male progeny.⁶ Thus, it was still assumed that the position of women was satisfactory. The settlement of communities also resulted in the strengthening of patriarchal ideas which aimed at regulating women's movement to ensure purity of progeny. Women became a *kshetra* (a territory) where a man could sow his seed to ensure the continuity of his lineage.⁷ It is further argued that women are not critically represented in Brahmanical literature because of the axiomatic idea that Aryans were always patriarchal.⁸ There is a lacuna of not contextualizing women in their diversified roles i.e., *ganikas*, *pratiganika*, *rupavijaya*, *bandhkari* as widows, unmarried upper-class women, aged, and ascetics.⁹ The homogenous identity of a wife, mother, and daughter has failed to underline the currents of both women's consciousness and their varying roles in society. One could acknowledge the liberating role played by various devotional saints in the medieval period. Devotional movements in medieval India took the form of a voice for the lower caste and women. These two positions constituted the fullest forms of dependency or loss of personal identity. These metaphors of desire echoed the language of social and patriarchal subjugation, thus the devotional saints wanted to reflect their total devotion towards their deities through words like *das*, *chakar*, *shudra*, *suhagan* and *nari*.¹⁰ Hence echoing the social consciousness where these entities were without any personal rights, their subjugated position was elevated in the devotional realm where their dependence and devotion towards the deity made them achieve the highest stratum of society in contrast to the scriptural priests who could not create the personal bond with the divine.

Devotional Currents in Medieval Punjab

Punjab, the region between river Indus and Jamuna, was a favored land route connecting the Indian subcontinent with the rest of Asia.¹¹ The topography of Punjab, thus, remained, a key consistent in the writing of Islamic writers. Its rivers, deserts and mountains all acted both as a conduit as well as obstruction. The emergence of Islam under Prophet Muhammad in Mecca and its success in Persia in the second half of the seventh century opened the land of Punjab to Islamic incursions. With Islam, came various mystical ideas and Sufism remained the most influential.¹² The first Sufi formal treatise was composed by Al-Hujwri in Lahore. Apart from Lahore, Multan, Hansi, Pakpattan, Sehwan, and many other medieval towns witnessed the arrival of Sufi saints.¹³ Early medieval Punjab had already witnessed the emergence of vernacular in devotional trends through *jogis* and *naths*. Jogi-Sufi interaction as a result remained the first hinge that paved the way for the indigenous Bhakti movement which reflected the sensibilities of mystical undercurrents.¹⁴

One of the foremost Sufi *silsila* in Punjab belonged to the Gazrunia *silsila* of Iran wherein Shaikh Saifuddin Gazruni established his Khanqah in Uch. In Multan, another prominent *silsila* the Suhrawardis was established under Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya.¹⁵ The most prominent and popular branch of Sufi *silsila* in Punjab was the Chistis. Shaikh Moinuddin Chishti visited Lahore before settling in Ajmer to perform 'austerity for forty days' (*chillah*) at the grave of Al Hujwri.¹⁶ However it was Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj -i-Shakkar who appealed to the sensibilities of Punjab. Shaikh Farid employed vernacular language in his sayings making him the first Punjabi poet. His composition is also included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*.¹⁷ Another significant feature of Bhakti-Sufi interaction was a strong protest against social inequalities and discrimination. Textual orthodoxy was condemned and purity of mind was stressed.¹⁸ The doors of devotion were opened for all.¹⁹ Women also witnessed increased participation and their hordes in *khanqahs*, *dargah* and *nathwara* increased giving birth to local devotional compositions.²⁰ Shaikh Farid equated women and men in the eyes of the divine and stressed the need for inner piety to be worthy of divine grace.²¹ Venularization of devotional composition paved the way for the rich literary traditions in Punjab. Not only hagiographical writings but a new genre of *Qissa-Kaav* was also introduced in Punjab. *Hir-Ranjha*, *Sassi-Punnu*, *Sohni Mahiwal*, *Mirza Sahiba*, and many more were composed not merely to narrate the eternal martyrs in love but also to depict the socio-cultural sensibilities of the region. Waris's *Hir* deserves special mention because it catered to the sensibilities of the people up to recent times.²² These love tales also became an inevitable part of Sufi devotional writings.

The arrival of Guru Nanak in mid mid-fifteenth century enriched the voices of protests against superstition, social inequalities, and orthodoxy. He condemned the outward demonstration of spirituality and refused to accept the social hierarchies

based on caste, creed, and class. He further brought devotion to the masses when he settled in Kartarpur and started cultivation in the field. His success widened the reach of his teachings. Gradually, new religious places, institutions (*manji* and *masand*), and symbols (*Miri* and *Piri*; *Khalsa*) fired the emotions of the disciples known as the Sikhs. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* remained the most sacred text of the Sikhs. It is worth mentioning that the Holy Granth not only contained the sayings of six Sikh Gurus but also included the compositions of many bhakti saints and Sufis.²³ The writing of Bhatt Brahman was also included in the sacred text. Apart from the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the *Janam Sakhis* (the life records of Guru Nanak Dev), the *Vaars* of Bhai Gurudas's and the *Dasam Granth* remained important sacred texts of the Sikhs.

Ideating Women through Devotional Texts

Religious ideas play a significant role in influencing the mentalities of societies. It legitimizes various forces at play. Devotional movements, thus played a vital role in influencing the social process in medieval Punjab. It strove to achieve harmony while attacking social inequalities. It empowered the conscience of the downtrodden while interpreting the dependent role in the higher devotional echelon. However, critical studies of these teaching in altering social inequalities deserve new insights. Periphrastically, women have been a part of writings that originated from the male perspective. One can trace some fluidity in women's identity, but its fundamental quintessence remained the same. Socially defined roles of women on the whole remained unchanged. The tone of devotional literature catered primarily to her domestic duties and her primary duties towards her husband, father, and son. Her movement in the society remained her identity within or outside primordial '*lakshmanrekha*'.²⁴

Text reflects the sensibilities of contemporary society. The metaphors, figurative grounds, or speeches, addressed to the Almighty, also mirror the social realities. Punjabi medieval devotional literature also derives strength from the metaphoric use of the common analogies between God and Master; husband and lord, master, and lover, and soul as wife entrusted with devotional, loyalty and service towards her husband (the Almighty).

Woman as a Wife

As a virtuous wife, a woman is destined to attain glory and salvation. Many a time, devotional writings symbolized the devotion of a wife towards her husband which overrode all other worldly considerations. To express the ineffable urge for union with the divine, humans have resorted to the relationship most intimate to them; that of the bride and the bridegroom(husband-wife).²⁵ This woman could express the feelings of yearning, self-abasement, and surrender to the transcendent.²⁶ She understood that her husband's abode is her final destination. Furthermore, staying in the will of the lord (*nadar*) made the bride a *suhagan*.²⁷ The annihilation egotism (*ha-umai*) and self-conceitedness (*vadaa-ee*) could cement the total surrender.²⁸

Additionally, she adhered to sweet speech, had a humble life, and remained obedient. Most importantly patience or contentment was the pivotal attribute to reaching the transcendent.²⁹ The true status of being married remained the status of being completely immersed in the persona of her husband.³⁰ She was advised to ornament herself. Her bodily adornment like bracelets (*kankan*), embroidered tassels (*dor*), vermilion (*sindoor*), and anklets, represented her bridal status.³¹ It was proclaimed that even if she was ‘hunchbacked and short’, but loved her master, she remained beautiful.³²

Widowhood is the opposite of *Suhag*. It was a misfortune that a woman could avoid being *sati*. But vernacular devotional text condemned the burning of a widow. A true wife might die in shock but not through forced burning. At the same time, dependence of the woman on her dead husband prevailed and she was considered chaste if she lived her widowhood in remembrance of her husband.³³ A widow, defying the authority of her husband offering her body to the other was denounced as licentious.³⁴

Woman as Mother

The power of procreation made her an important cog in the evolution of society. Her body thus remained not merely her own but a social space that had a vital role to perform. Motherhood of a woman is praised across devotional texts: ‘From mother's blood and father's semen is created the human form’³⁵ and ‘First, the son was born, and then, his mother’.³⁶ Literature also compares a humble servant of the lord and a mother with her son. The hymn records, ‘As the mother is rejuvenated upon seeing her son’.³⁷ She is expected to take care of her child through every trial and tribulation and adorn him with love and care ‘and as the mother loves her son, o does Nanak constantly remember the Lord in meditation’.³⁸ Woman, thus, emerges as the only medium between the non-existence and existence in a cycle of life. It is only God who surpasses her and remains independent of a feminine medium. All other forms of life have taken shape through her womb. So, she became both sacred and essential. Devotional movements consented to her ‘motherhood’ because it brings forth even the saints.³⁹

As a mother, a woman is expected not merely to be loving but also patient and forgiving. She must not take anything to her heart in case she is offended. Thus, her qualities of being a mother must inculcate forgiveness, humility, love, and lightheartedness, essentials of a woman in society. One can thus understand how the nourisher of life in her womb bestows two vital roles in shaping the identity of a woman. As a creator, she becomes sacred, and as ‘all bearing’ mother she learns the value of forgiveness, humility, and the ability to put others before her ‘own joys’ even when faced with the wrong in her life.⁴⁰ Further the mother is revered and celebrated for the ability to nourish her child before herself.⁴¹

Women as Daughters

The daughters are primarily identified within the confines of the home and under the tutelage of their fathers. The primary duty of the father remains the marriage of his daughter. Even as a daughter, she is constantly reminded that her true place remains in her husband's house and not her father's. In a way, the right of a father over her daughter is considered merely as a caretaker where she was trained in ways for pleasing her husband.⁴² Dowry also constituted an important part of a daughter's life. However, dowry is metaphorically employed to convey the true significance of taking 'Naam' where a daughter urges her father to give name of the God in dowry other than any materialistic commodity.⁴³ Besides daughter is termed as the one who would finally leave.

A Public Woman.

Strong duality in the identity of a woman exists within the household and outside. A public woman signifies a woman who is nonconformist when it comes to her duties within a house. Public space also constitutes a domain where one is entitled to varied occupations and status. One must be aware that social space is not a physical entity but a domain conceived by communities. It further constituted a combination of various social actors engaged in socio-cultural behaviour, ideas, status, and strategies of interaction and sharing roles. Furthermore, spatial practices imply spatial choices, which are connected to the disposition of habitus and associated forms of capital.⁴⁴ A woman who broke the set ideals of a wife, daughter, or sister remains a deviant and was without any worth and honour.⁴⁵ This deviant nature resulted in the wife being termed as *duhagan* (discarded wife), who is not aware of her husband. She was considered unchaste who adorned herself for other men and left her husband unattended.⁴⁶ She was addressed as *kaman* (lustful), and *kulkhani* (destroyer of the clan).⁴⁷ A honourable wife should, on the other hand, adhere to modesty (*seel*) and self-discipline (*sanjam*) to attain honor (*sobha*).⁴⁸

Qissa literature evolved in Punjab also constituted an important part of devotion. One could witness strong social currents in Qissa literature to study the contours of women who refused to obey the established norms. The vulnerability of women made it the stage of agony in society. The females in the legends could only lament the plight of the other female who dared to cross the boundaries of the household. In Qissa Hir, the boundaries of the house are recorded as *trinjan*. She is reminded of good women's behaviour. The instructions thus given to her were, 'at home among the friends of the spinning wheel and to move in modesty with downcast looks and to look after the modesty of the family'.⁴⁹ The deviant nature of a woman is a disgrace to the clan and family. The mother of Sohni cursed her fate that she had given birth to her who could so easily compromise their honor.⁵⁰ She desired to save the honour while wishing for the death of Sohni.⁵¹ In a similar vein, Hir refuting the authority of her father while refusing to marry was admonished by

the Qazi, who reminded her of the *shariat* and advised her to put on 'the veil of modesty'.⁵² Defiance of such a warning could only result in death.⁵³

Veil of Modesty and Limits of Contestations

Women's identity remained fundamentally static over the period. Even when one can underline the voices of protest in medieval devotion, one cannot ignore the limit to her protest. Devotional texts vehemently opposed social inequalities like caste. Discrimination based on birth was rejected. Gender on the other hand, remained a distant dream. Even when a woman is eulogized as a good mother, chaste wife, and obedient daughter, her own identity is subdued under the hues of her responsibilities as the bearer of a clan, household, and social 'honour'. She was expected to be patient and subservient and in conformity to the idea that her husband's house was the final salvation in her life. As a result, her status was confined to her roles as daughter, wife, mother, and widow. As devotional literature being the reflector of the society, the metaphors, and figurative grounds are assimilated. It dwells on the existing social realities to create symbols and examples to help humanity attain the transcendent (God). As a daughter, the woman is reminded of her real home, when she is not married. The notion that the real home of a daughter is where her husband resides. The second identity pertains to being a wife in which she diligently submits to the will of the husband. This wife symbol could express the feelings of yearning, self-abasement and surrender to the transcendent. There are various instances, where a bride is called *suhagan*, when she abides by the will of her husband and is adored by him. She adopts sweet speech with total obedience. Most importantly patience or contentment is the pivotal attribute to reach the transcendent and acceptance from the husband. Thus, being a *suhagan* does not simply reflect her status of being married but her complete submission to her husband. Women are pivotal in running the creation as all but the Divine comes through her. She gives birth to Kings.⁵⁴

Qissa literature also records the existence of strong women who dared to stand against social norms. The movement of a strong female is shown in the text. Waris Shah enables his readers to study patriarchy, ingrained in the character of medieval society, which pervaded every nook and corner. Hir was subjected to her father Chuchak Syal's command and then religious functionaries the Qazi. Hir was reminded that she must confine herself to private spaces as a modest woman. Thus, the warning to Hir was a religious dictate which every modest girl must follow. It was better for Hir to 'put on the veil of modesty' or face dire consequences. Similar fates awaited Sohni and Sassi who were condemned for crossing the boundaries of household.

It is essential, therefore, to underline the limit of contestation which was acceded to women in Punjabi devotion. Devotional movement flared the sensibilities of the marginalized against caste and Brahmin's hegemony. At the same time, the tone of rebellion failed to attain its logical conclusion, especially in the case of

women. The movement, with the passage of time, contoured into patriarchal norms. Despite the rejection of Sanskrit rituals and language and the eulogization of manual labour, the liberation of women could not be achieved. Writings of Saint Kabir, Ravidas, Sain, Sadhna (all belonging to the lower sections of caste) were included in the Adi Granth. Women's voices, on the contrary, remained absent. The devotional realm allowed women to participate in a new religious milieu but the language of protest was missing. The female imagery was employed by the males. The sanctity of women in the household and devotion towards their husbands is marked and rejection of self-willed women is nuanced through words like *kulakhini*, *kamini*, and *koochajje*. Even in the Qissa literature, the protagonist, if she is a woman, is not given leverage as compared to her counterparts. For example, the eccentricities of Ranjha were the outcome of his loss of love i.e., Hir whereas Hir was condemned and questioned for non-conformist behavior at many places by other characters (mother, father, brother, friends, religious figures, clan etc).⁵⁵ Thus, the writings in essence catered to patriarchal sensibilities where the extent of a woman's protest resulted only in her repudiation, condemnation, and killing. A woman who remained a challenge to the societal norms risking infamy to her clan and faced her destiny only through her elimination because the girl who was a blot on the honour, *destroy households as vices of son and foul tongue may. The law allows the killing of such and men of honour will not desist.*⁵⁶

Endnotes

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- ¹ 'Mentalities' refers to the approaches to the intellectual history. Hutton believes that the problem of culture is closely related to the world view of the communities and thus 'the common ground for the historians of the mentalities is boundary between structured and unstructured domains of human experience in the civilizing process'. For details see Patrick H. Hutton, 'The History of Mentalities: The New Map of Cultural History', *History and Theory*, Vol. 20, 1981, pp. 237-259.
 - ² H.M. Parshley, Eng. Tr, *The Second Sex*, London: Vintage, 1997, p. 608.
 - ³ For details see A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, Benaras: The Culture Publication House, 1938.
 - ⁴ Romesh Chunder Dutt, *A History of Civilization in Ancient India, Delhi*: Vishal Publishers, 1972, pp. 168-69.
 - ⁵ G. Buhler, Eng. Tr., *The Laws of Manu*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886, p. 179
 - ⁶ A.S Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, India: The Cultural Publication House, p. 4
For details see Shakuntala Rao Shastri, *Women in the Vedic Age*, Calcutta: The Associated Advertisement and Promotions Ltd, 1954.
 - ⁷ For details see Kumkum Roy, *The Power of Gender and the Gender of Power: Explorations in Early Indian History*, India: OUP India, 2010.
 - ⁸ Suvira Jaiswal, *The Making of Brahmanic Hegemony: Studies in Caste, Gender and Vaisnava Theology*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2016, p. 95.
 - ⁹ *Ibid*, p. 128.

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- ¹⁰ Kumkum Sangari, 'Mirabai and the Spiritual Economy of Bhakti', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 25, 1990, p. 1470.
- ¹¹ Surinder Singh, *The Making of Medieval Panjab: Politics, Society and Culture c. 1000- c. 1500*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, p. 28, 2020.
- ¹² Ibid, p. 11.
- ¹³ Surinder Singh and Ishwar Dayal Gaur, *Sufism in Punjab: Mystic, Literature and Shrines*, Delhi: Aakar Books, 2009, pp. 50-60.
- ¹⁴ Surinder Singh, *The Making of Medieval Panjab: Politics, Society and Culture c. 1000- c. 1500*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2020, pp. 127-129.
- ¹⁵ Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, Ed. *Medieval India: Essays in Diplomacy and Culture*. New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2009, p. 105.
- ¹⁶ Surinder Singh, *The Making of Medieval Panjab: Politics, Society and Culture c. 1000- c. 1500*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2020, p. 147.
- ¹⁷ Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 104
- ¹⁸ S.A.A Rizvi, *The Wonder that was India*. London: Pan Macmillan Ltd, 2005, p. 315.
- ¹⁹ Anna Savoava, *Muslim Saints of South Asia: Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*, Oxon: Routledge Curzon, 2001, p. 2.
- ²⁰ J.S. Grewal, Ed. 'Sufism in Medieval India', *Religious Movements and Institutions in Medieval India* Vol. VII, 2006, p. 349.
- ²¹ Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, Ed. *Medieval India: Essays in Diplomacy and Culture*, New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2009, p.112.
- ²² Waris Shah, a famous Chishti Saint, c. 1722- c. 1798 CE, was born in Jandiala Sher Khan. Hir remained his widely acclaimed text in Punjabi language. A Sayyid by birth, he was the descendant of Sayyid Muhammad Al Makki. See Sayyid Maqsood Naqvi, Ed. *Riaz Al-Ansab*, Izhar Sons Printer, 1991, p. 684; Ishwar Dayal Gaur, *Society, Religion and Patriarchy: Exploring Medieval Punjab through Hir Waris*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2009, P. 89.
- ²³ The hymns associated with fifteen bards (also known as Bhats, they differ in number according different authors) of Sikh court in Punjab and fifteen non-Sikh saint poets also known as bhagats (devotees) who lived between the twelfth and the sixteenth century in northern and northwestern parts of Indian subcontinent. Gurinder Singh Maan, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 4.
- ²⁴ In Ramayana, *Lakshman Rekha* denotes a boundary drawn by Lakshman, the younger brother of Lord Ram around Sita for her protection. Ravan could abduct Sita because she crossed *Lakshaman Rekha*. The legendry line might also symbolize the boundaries between domesticity and public life of a woman. Muktilakhi Mangharam, 'Rama, Must I Remind You of Your Divinity?' Locating a Sexualized, Feminist, and Queer Dharma in the Ramayana'. *Diacritics*, Vol. 39, p. 81.
- ²⁵ Nikky Gurinder Kaur Singh. (1993). *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 90; Sri Guru Granth Sahib: 483, 788, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1960 (hereafter cited as SGGS).
- ²⁶ *sejai kant na avi nit nit hoe khuar; tan man saupe kant kao tao nanak bhog karei*. SGGS, 21, 31, 788.
- ²⁷ *Nit ravai sohagani sachi nadar rajae*. SGGS 54. The idea of *suhaag* can also be made clear from the context of Shaykh Musa, who particularly self-assumed the title of *sada suhaag* which literally means forever or eternal bride. *Suhagan* which refers to a happily married lady, the one

- who achieves the love of her beloved or husband. In Indian social and cultural context, it denotes a woman whose husband never dies in her lifetime, and thus she never becomes a widow. In devotion, married women classified in two categories- *suhagan* refers to lucky woman, who enjoys union with her husband (God), as opposed to *duhangan*, the unlucky one, whose love remains unfulfilled or who is deserted by her husband. For details see Tanvir Anjum, 'The Perpetually Wedded Wife of God: A Study of Shaykh Musa "Sada Suhag" as the Founder of Sada Suhagiyya Silsilah', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol 39, 2015, pp. 428-429.
- ²⁸ *Haumai khoe kare sigar; chhod vadai apne khasam samavai*. SGGS, 357.
- ²⁹ *Mitha boleh niv chaleh sehahi ravai bhatar; sahj santokh sigai mitha bolni; agiakari sada sohagan aao meli kartar; Dhiraj Dhari bandhavai kaman*. SGGS, 31, 17, 785, 359.
- ³⁰ A woman, who had dyed herself in the colour of her husband, was regarded as truly married (*suhagan*), (*laal ratee sach bhai vasee bhaa-ay ratee rang raas*). She did not spend a single without her husband, who had firmly established himself in her consciousness. The woman who slept in the arms of her husband was hailed as a chaste wife (*suhagani*). The wife who slept without her husband was mightily cursed (*kulakhni*). The one who remained awake was fortunate. Surinder Singh, *Medieval Punjab in Transition: Authority, Resistance and Spirituality c1500-c.1700*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2022, pp. 251- 253; Also, Nityasumangali in the culture of devadasi (slave of God). A devadasi is a *nitya-su-mangali*, i.e., an ever-auspicious woman. The reason being she is married to God and God is immortal. Saskia C. Kersenboom, *Nityasumangali: Devadasi Tradition in South India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987, pp. xv; Mirabai in one of her writing claims that the marriage with a mortal or *jag suhaag* as *mithya* or useless and illusory and real *suhaag* is with an immortal. 'Him whom the snake of death will not devour; Kumkum Sangari, 'Mirabai and the Spiritual Economy of Bhakti', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 25, 1990, pp. 1464-1475.
- ³¹ *Har dor kankan ghane kar thaki sigar; math gundain patia bhariai maag sandhure*; SGGS, 19, 937, 558.
- ³² *Laturi madhuri thakur bhai oh sundar har dhul mili*. SGGS, 527.
- ³³ *Nanak satiyan janian j birhe chot maran...Bhi so satiya jainian seel santokh rahen*. SGGS, 787.
- ³⁴ *Jio tan bidhva par kao dei*. SGGS, 226.
- ³⁵ *mā kī raktu pita bidu dhārā*. SGGS, 1022.
- ³⁶ *pahilaa poot pichhairee maa-ee*. SGGS, 481.
- ³⁷ *poot paykh ji-o jeevat maataa*. SGGS, 198.
- ³⁸ *ji-o maat pooteh hayt. har simar nanak nayt*. SGGS, 838.
- ³⁹ *Dhan Dhan so jannee jin guroo jani-aa maa-ay*. SGGS, 310 It is interesting to note that Abul Fazl in his construct of Akbar's genealogy submits that though Akbar highlighted how with the birth of Akbar, the whole of Timur lineage became divine. Thus, it was the progeny in the form of Akbar which made the womb his mother sacred and not vice versa as any women which carries Akbar for nine months must be pure and divine. For more details see-Ruby Lal, 'Settled, Sacred and All-Powerful: Making of New Genealogies and Traditions of Empire under Akbar', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, 2001, pp. 941-958.
- ⁴⁰ *sut apraaDh karat hai jaytay. Jannee cheet na raakhas taytay. raam-ee-aa ha-o baarik tayra*. SGGS, 478.
- ⁴¹ *ji-o jannee sut jan paaltee raakhai nadir majhaar. Antar baahar mukh day giraas khin khin pochaar....* SGGS, 168.
- ⁴² *Bira bira kar rahi bir bhae bairae. Bir chale ghar apnai bahin bireh jal jae. Babul kai ghar betri bali balai nehi*. SGGS, 935.
- ⁴³ *Har prabh mere babula har devhu daan mai dajo*. SGGS, 78-79.
- ⁴⁴ The concept of habitus or social space given by Bourdieu. He conveys- habitus is not an attribute

- of an autonomous individual, but of a person who is positioned in a social space and whose value, power, and trajectory within that social space. The power status can only be understood in a relational sense, concerning other habit uses within the social space. D. Reed-Danahay, *Bourdieu and Social Space and Mobility, Trajectories and Emplacements*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2019, pp. 7-8. The definition also includes the idea of dispositions that are possessed due to life experiences. The life experiences of women are deliberately made private. When it comes to exercise such an idea i.e., public space becomes absurd and prominently scandalous. One can argue in favor of Foucault's idea related to the derangement of morals. Michel Foucault, Tr., *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Richard Howard, London: Routledge, 2001, p. 61.
- ⁴⁵ *Pir bin kia tis dhan sigara, par pir rati khasam visara, jio besua putt baap ko kahiai tio fokat kar vikara he.* SGGs, 1029.
- ⁴⁶ *Suhey ves duhagani par pir ravan jae, pir chhodia ghar apnai mohi dujai bhae.* SGGs, 785.
- ⁴⁷ *Sohey ves kaman kulkhani jo prabh chhod par purakh dhare piar.* SGGs, 786.
- ⁴⁸ *Peiai sahure baho sobha pae tis puj kare sabh saisar.* SGGs, 786.
- ⁴⁹ *Charkha dah k apne ghari bahiye...nivi nazar hayao de naal rahiye...sharam mapiyan di vall dhiyaan dhariye...* Jeet Singh Seetal, *Heer Waris*. Delhi: Aarsi Publishers, 2014, p. 46.
- ⁵⁰ *Jo likhiya lekh naseeb mere, aij liya taithin jholi pa dhiya...bhath piya tera nijj jamna ni, patt satiyo ee sadi laah dhiya.* Dewan Singh & R.L Ahuja, Ed. *Sohni Mahiwal*, Jalandhar: New Book Company, 1976, p. 97.
- ⁵¹ *j kar maut away tere jehiyan nu, mappey liyonde shukar baja dhiya.* Ibid. P. 92.
- ⁵² *Qazi mehkame wich irshaad kita, mann sharah da hukam j jeewana ai...chadar naal hayao de satar keeche.* Jeet Singh Seetal, *Heer Waris*, Delhi: Aarsi Publishers, 2014, p. 70.
- ⁵³ *Qazi akhya khauf khudai da kar, maapey jind chadey chae marange... maarey sharam de khoon guzarangey.* Jeet Singh Seetal, *Heer Waris*, Delhi: Aarsi Publishers, 2014, p. 48.
- ⁵⁴ *So kio manda akhiai jit jameh rajan.* SGGs, 473.
- ⁵⁵ *Tusa sahware jae araam kita, asin dhoye han sool angariyan nu.* Jeet Singh Seetal, *Heer Waris*, Delhi: Aarsi Publishers, 2014. Ranjha himself refused to elope with Hir before marriage but repeatedly complains that he has become Jogi for her sake while she is happily married. Sukhdev Singh Dhanju and Priya Saroj, 'Medieval Patriarchal Mindset in Waris Shah's Heer Epic', *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 8, 2020, p. 101.
- ⁵⁶ Ishwar Dayal Gaur, *Society, Religion and Patriarchy: Exploring Medieval Punjab through Hir Waris*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2009, p. 213.

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Urban Survival: A Case Study of Hissar

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**Sonia

From the earliest times all societies have had specific spaces to meet the needs of commerce, manufacture, administration, and cultural elements of society. These spaces emerged to serve as urban places, towns and cities. Varied factors came together to create urban settlements and these places impacted the vicinity in several ways. Urban centres act as economic, political and socio cultural nodes and have a varying span of life.¹ Some exist for centuries, while others come into being for a few decades. There are thus, significant breaks in the urban chronology and individual towns grow and decline at different paces. The present paper attempts to look at the various factors that contribute to the sustenance of an urban space over a long period of time in order to understand the urban process and its complexities. The town in focus is Hissar, located in present day Haryana, about one hundred and sixty kms west of Delhi.² Founded in c.1350 by Firuz Tughlaq, the town has survived as an urban unit for our 650 years.³ The reasons for its continued existence over time while many other towns faded away or disappeared from the map, is the focus of the paper.

In the 14th century the Hissar area was a dry sandy belt with some cultivation and large herds of cattle.⁴ It was good for hunting, a favourite activity of rulers and administrators. After the conquest of Delhi by Muhammad Ghori, Qutab-ud-din Aibak was appointed the Governor of the area. In 1290 the region was under the control of Shams-ud-Din, and later the Khaljis.⁵ The beginning of construction of canals in this area was initiated in 1355-56. Firuz Shah took 10% of the yield as *sharb* or water rate and began excavation near the Sirmur hills extending it to Hissar and Hansi.⁶ Two canals Rajab Wah and Ulugh Khani were cut from the Yamuna to bring water to Hissar.⁷ Another canal came in the town from Bidhai and a large tank near the royal palace stored water for royal use.⁸ Some smaller canals were dug for short distances to the south of the town and the streams Joiya and Choya were full in the rainy season.

Hissar was thus, provided with ample water for survival and growth. Firuz Tughlaq cut a 150 mile canal from the Yamuna and provided much needed water to the area, thereby ensuring its development with boosted cultivation, increased trade and settling of people. The *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* describes the founding of the town Hissar Firuza in some detail.⁹ The place had certain specific advantages.

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It was located on a major trade route from Khurasan, Multan to Delhi. It was a suitable starting point for hunting expeditions and had ample opportunities for hunts and the Sufi *dera* in the vicinity may have been an added factor.¹⁰ Firuz Tughlaq therefore, selected this spot for his new town and had a fort constructed within which was a palace, *baradari*, Masjid, Darbar hall or Diwani-i-Aam and a *hammam*. Many nobles and Amirs built *havelis* around the fort and thus, a new town emerged. This fort city was walled, had four gates and many shops, Mosques and tombs.¹¹

Firuz Tughlaq appointed administrators and sent troops to protect this new town. Tatar Khan was appointed Governor in 1359. The Sultan sent several slaves, some placed under the charge of Amirs and Maliks. Hissar was the headquarter of a strong garrison at the time. As the town gained importance it was made into a separate *shiq* and the adjoining *iqtas* were attached to it. Malik Dilah was appointed the first *shiqdar* of Hissar Firuza. In 1408 Qwam Khan was made Governor and in 1420 it was conferred on Mahmud Hassan. In 1434, Iqbal Khan was assigned the *iqta* of Hissar. In the reign of Bahlol Lodhi the Hissar area was under Muhabbat Khan, in 1485 under Nizam Khan and later Sikander Lodhi was the Muqta of Hissar Firuza. The town was thus significant in the 15th century.

Hissar functioned as an important economic, administrative and cultural space by the 15th century. There were numerous Mosques and tombs in and around the town pointing to the gradual growth in the area of the town. In this phase polity played a significant role in the founding and early growth of Hissar Firuza.

Hissar also developed its economic base. Cultivation improved with the increase of canal irrigation becoming *do-fasli*. Wheat, Moth, Bajra, Jowar were sown as well as tobacco, cotton, pepper, fodder and vegetables.¹² The cash crops point to trade in agricultural products to some degree. The Suleman Road that passed through the town from Multan to Delhi allowed Hissar to act as a trade centre for the area.¹³ Ghi (Clarified butter) produced here was part of the trade items and became significant by the 16th century.¹⁴ Manufacturing activity included goods in leather and wood, recorded as 'artistic'. Leather bowls for *hukkas*, ornamental woodwork and furniture were produced here.¹⁵ The wooden carving was specially appreciated. The contribution of the rulers in the emergence of Hissar was further supplemented by the growth of its economic base and allowed its continuation over time.

At the time of Babar's invasion Hissar was a strategic centre of Ibrahim Lodhi's kingdom. In 1525 Hamid Khan was the Governor, and a Kotwal managed the urban settlement according to contemporary sources.¹⁶ After the Battle of Panipat in 1526, the area of Hissar was handed over to Humayun, which points to its importance at the time.¹⁷ In 1540 Sher Shah Suri drove out Humayun who later regained the territory in 1555.¹⁸ It was assigned to Akbar with Abul Maali to help in the administration.¹⁹ During Akbar's region it was the headquarters of a *sarsar* in the

suba of Delhi. Hissar Firuza had 27 *mahals* and four *dasturs*. It continued to be an administrative centre. In 1560 Hissar Firuza was assigned in *jagir* to Khwaja Muzaffar Ali and later to Munim Khan.²⁰ In 1562 it was declared Khalisa and is said to have rich and fertile lands. It was the *jagir* of the crown Prince and visited by the Emperor on several occasions.²¹

In the Mughal period too, Hissar continued to extend itself. In the reign of Humayun a Jama Masjid was built in 1535 by Amir Muhammad and a group of tombs with the special blue tiles from Multan also appeared.²² The *Ain-i-Akbari* describes the city of Hissar having two forts. Akbar ordered the excavation of the then choked canal of Firuz Tuglaq and deepening and widening was carried out in it to supply regular water.²³ The *darogha* was instructed to build bridges and bunds wherever necessary. A project for the Chitang stream was taken up in Shahjahan's reign to provide water to the drought marred Hissar region in 1635.²⁴ In 1694 the Mosque and tomb of the *faqir* Bahlol Shah was constructed and called Danasher.²⁵ From the 16th to 18th century the town continued to grow with support from the Emperors as provision of water permitted agricultural pursuits and increased trade in agricultural products.

In this phase the town was not confined to the old walls but had extensive suburbs stretching across the east and south east of the town.²⁶ Though housing *katcha* was the suburbs reflect the growing population of Hissar. A variety of people lived here as is evident from the Saini Mohalla, Pathan Mohalla, and Dogra Mohalla.²⁷ Several *ghats* also existed. Once again the interest of the rulers contributed to the growth of the town, as they remained concerned about the proper functioning of administration through this headquarter.

On the economy front the town continued to export ghi (Clarified butter) in every direction. By the 16th century this activity had increased and ghi (Clarified butter) was distributed through the trade channels.²⁸ During the time of Akbar a mint was established at Hissar Firuza adding to its functions.²⁹ By the 17th century another item was added on the trade 'list'- cattle, of good breed.³⁰ Balkrishan Brahman records the 'export' of domestic animals from Hissar and Hansi. Traders bought cattle in large numbers, around 300-600, at a time at around Rs. 7.5 each.³¹ This became one of the special 'products' of Hissar, along with ghi (Clarified butter). The town therefore, further increased its economic base and continued to grow upto the 17th century.

In the 18th century the fortunes of Hissar were somewhat undermined by the political activity in the vicinity. The struggle for power among the Mughals, Sikhs and Marathas created an environment of destruction and decline. As the central authority became weak, Hissar became an arena for perpetual duels. From 1707-1737, Nawab Shahdad Khan of Kasur was the Nazim of Hissar.³² After 1748 Ala Singh became significant in the area and occupied Sirhind and Hissar.³³ Later the

Ramgarhias established themselves at Hissar.³⁴ In the 1750's the Bhattis were active in the area and in 1761 the Bhatti chief became the Nazim.³⁵ With the victory of the Sikhs in the area, Raja Amar Singh captured the town and plundered it.³⁶ In 1781 Raja Jai Singh was appointed Nazim. The political upheaval of the 18th century led to the emergence of George Thomes, an adventurer who carved out an independent area, including Hissar from 1797-1802.³⁷ After his death, the Marathas appointed a Nazim.

The political instability led to fluctuation in agriculture, refusal to pay revenues and travellers to this area observed a lack of cultivation and arid state of land and lack of revenue rates. The 18th century must have brought about a decline in the town of Hissar and its economic activities. With the arrival of the British to this area in 1803 a new phase of growth was seen in the town along with new administrative arrangements. Initially, Nazims were appointed to look after this area till 1810. This region was now part of the Presidency of Bengal with a resident at Delhi to administer Hissar and other areas.³⁸ In 1820 the north western district was subdivided into two: northern and western- the western district with headquarters at Hansi included Hissar. In 1832, the headquarter was shifted to Hissar and added to the Delhi division.³⁹ The administration status of Hissar thus, continued and helped the town to gain in function. Several government departments like police, PWD, canal, post and telegraph, cattle farm, agriculture and railway set up offices in the town. With this development, the size of Hissar increased with a new Civil Line located to the south as a residential area for government officers.⁴⁰ The district Katcheri and church were constructed here and the railway station was close by.⁴¹ Other additions included the Civil Hospital, Municipal Park, King Edward Memorial Hall with a library, dispensary, jail and dak bungalows.⁴² The town administration was re-structured and municipal government introduced in 1867.⁴³ The Municipality raised income from octroi, *tehbazari*, water tax, cycle tax, licenses and sale of manure, and later added income tax, terminal tax, house rent and fines.⁴⁴ Expenditure was mainly on establishment, water, public safety and electricity. This local body managed the activities and needs of the town.

By the late 19th and early 20th century, a Model town, several temples and 16 *dharmshalas* were functioning, rail and road network were increased and this growth was reflected in the growing population of the town.⁴⁵ From 14,000 people in 1868, Hissar housed 60,000 residents by 1961.⁴⁶ The administrative developments account for its sustenance over time and the increase in its size. Hissar was a centre for social and political activity. The Arya Samaj, Muslim Institute, Anjuman-i-Islamia and Central National Mohammedan Association were active in the town, adding to its functions and activity.⁴⁷

With this new lease of life the economy of the town also improved. The linkages with other towns and even other regions gave a boost to trade and

manufacturing. Import of goods to the town had doubled in colonial time and exports too expanded contributing to the growth of Hissar. Colonial presence and communication networks allowed for this increase in commercial activity. In the early 19th century Hissar was producing *chadars* and *ghaghras* in dark indigo, orange silk cloth with mirror work in addition to traditional wood and leather manufactures. New industrial activity also emerged. Two cotton spinning and pressing units, were established by 1915, 70 units for food and beverages, 7 units of confectionery and bakery products, 3 for edible oil, 5 for aerated and mineral water, an ice factory, and 2 ice cream factories were also set up. Textile related work included cotton pressing and baling as well as spinning units, a cord and rope factory and 8 units of weaving.⁴⁸ In 1955 the Hissar Textile Mills were established employing about 1200 persons.⁴⁹

Other manufactures included wooden manufacturing units for furniture and fixtures that were 13, printing and publishing 12 units, leather work 67 units, and 7 chemicals and soap units too were functioning. An iron and steel unit and 15 units for brass, bell metal and aluminium were also set up. There were 6 units for hardware, pipes buckets, screws and cutlery. Hissar had 21 units for machinery and electrical equipment, over 400 for maintenance and service of bicycles and motor vehicles and 30 units for jewellery making. In the colonial time a variety of small scale industrial units emerged, some related to the traditional economy- leather, wood-to newly introduced industries of iron and steel, machinery and transport equipment. With time bicycles, radios, microphones, electrical apparatus and chemical products too came to be manufactured.⁵⁰ The economic base thus, expanded under colonial rule and stimulated further growth and expansion of the town. It's Population of the town too increased many fold.

In its long journey of 650 years, Hissar gradually developed into a larger town. It took over the land and villages in the vicinity growing in size as well as importance. Firuz Tughlaq created the nucleus of the new town in the mid-14th century with a fort, place, Diwan-i-Aam, Masjid, and Hammam. His nobles built their *havelis* around the nucleus and gradually markets, shops, Mosques and tombs as well as residential areas emerged in the walled town. In the Mughal period, Humayun added a Zama Masjid with the blue tiles of Multan adding a unique building in the urban centre. In the 17th century the Mosque and tomb of Faqir Bahlol Shah was added. Hissar thus, continued to grow in size and function attracting a larger number of people for further growth.

The colonial phase saw even more development and expansion of the town. The early 19th century saw the construction of a church, civil lines, Katcheri, Dak Bungalow, Railway station, King Edward Memorial Hall, a Hospital and a dispensary. The growing population added temples too. Roads and rail network contributed to the increase in the size of the town. From a new small urban centre

established by Firuz Tughlaq the town of Hissar expanded to a much larger unit by the 19th century and continues to grow even today.

In the six century journey of the urban settlement –Hissar Firuza-what remains uppermost is its survival over this long period of time? From a small town upto the late 18th century it grew to a larger town from the mid-19th century and has become one of the major regional towns today. Among the factors responsible for its growth are largely polity and economy. In fact the very selection of the site and its early development was due to Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq. He constructed canals for provision of water, changing the very geography of the area, a fort-palace as the nucleus and encouraged his nobles to build *havelis*. Creating a *shiq* headquarter here also added to its status as an administrative centre. The early growth of Hissar was largely due to political factors. Economy played a subsidiary role through trade. Consequently, Sher Shah elevated Hissar to a sarkar headquarter which it remained in the Mughal period. Later rulers, like Aksar and Shah Jahan ensured that the canals were de-silted and cultivation continued in the area. Hissar thus benefitted from the consistent interest of the rulers and its administrative status.

Political activity did impact the town adversely from the mid-18th century due to the triangular struggle for control between the Sikhs, Mughals and Marathas. Yet polity again brought it back to life. The British took control of the area in 1803 and Hissar was created as a district headquarters. The town therefore, continued to develop in the urban hierarchy. The introduction of new means of communication by the colonial authorities boosted its trade and manufactures. Polity clearly, contributed to the foundation and continuation of the town. The growing administrative status of Hissar too was beneficial for its growth.

Economy played a larger role in the continuation of the town, specially in the colonial phase. In the pre-colonial period some craft items in leather and wood had been produced adding to the trade activities-Ghi (clarified butter), agricultural products and cattle. Some cloth and embellished *chadars* were made in the 18th century. Form the mid-19th century and early 20th century a range of new industrial activity further expanded the town and created a strong economic base. From a class IV town in 1868 Hissar became a class III town in 1921 and class II by 1961. It is presently an urban agglomeration and classified as class I town. From about 14,000 persons in 1868, the population had risen to 2.6. lakhs by 2001, a 300% increase.⁵¹ Hissar has come a long way on its urban journey and has survived as an urban centre due to factors related to polity and economy.

Hissar is an example of the overriding role of polity in the process of urbanization. From its inception to the early 20th century polity determined the fortunes of the town. Economy played a secondary role in the medieval period but became an important factor in the colonial time. The 20th century gave economy a more significant role in the process of growth and polity took a backseat. A town that

does not have contributive factors like polity, economy, or technology fail to prosper and grow. A constant improvement in administrative status, concern of state and its policies allow the urban centre to grow and flourish. Polity creates a conducive environment of urban development. The absence of administrative headquarters or shift of government offices impacts a town negatively and impedes growth. Economic factors are significant in creating a solid base to the urban space. Towns that develop their economy with trade and manufacture- have a better chance of survival over a long period of time. Hissar gained from the interest of rulers, continuous administrative function and presence of administrators in longer numbers. It's economy too developed and expanded to cover new activities and adopted new technology with time. It therefore, enabled the town to have a strong economic base which added to its growth and functioning over the years. Hissar thus survived for over 650 years. Hissar is presently an urban centre bursting at its seams, dealing with challenges and urban problems that probably need another political stimulus to solve its urban crises as has been its story from its origin.

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DECOMANIA: STUDY OF PUNJAB'S AND MUMBAI'S CANVAS

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Abstract

A style of design that initially developed in France soon before World War I is known as Art Deco, or simply Deco came to being into all sorts of visual arts. Simple, clear lines with a modern appearance are characteristic of the style, as are geometric or stylized ornaments derived from representational forms. Despite the fact that Art Deco subjects were rarely mass-produced, the style's defining characteristics (such as simplicity, planarity, symmetry, and unvarying repetition of elements) revealed admiration for the modern society of the industrial age and for the imbibed design qualities of machine-made objects. The Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs, a showcase for innovative ideas staged in Paris in 1925, gave rise to the style. This paper discusses the art deco style buildings in India where we study the monuments of the city of Patiala namely, the Phul cinema and the Central state library and the façade of the Government Ayurvedic college while comparing it to its counterpart buildings in the city of Mumbai, namely the Eros cinema and while in the end we shall discuss the ways that these monuments should be protected in today's time and management requirements are in place for some of the monuments of Mumbai and how we can help the conservation of the buildings of Patiala while using the existing policies in every way for the buildings in need.

Keywords: Art deco, Cinema, Mumbai, Patiala.

INTRODUCTION

The movement of Art Deco took its name, short for *arts décoratifs*, from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes held in Paris in 1925.¹ Influence of the movement trickled into India when it was still under the British Empire and took its place among the city's skyline through buildings such as cinemas, office spaces, libraries and residences. The characteristics of this movement were quite stark and clear, these were rounded corners, nautical features and frozen fountain. Sophistication and modernity was the main idea behind these which set the Art Deco apart from their counterparts.² While the style draws heavily from antiquity, it was considered way ahead of its time and some the initial designs came from Bauhaus school. The style combines all sorts of geometrical motifs, this sets it apart with the less ornamental and plain finishes.

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ART DECO AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The city of Mumbai saw the emergence of art deco buildings such as the Eros Cinema and the New India Insurance Building in 1938 and 1936, respectively. These buildings are part of the huge ensemble that makes part of the art deco buildings in Mumbai that makes the city to have second largest number of such structures after Miami.³

WM Namjoshi, the designer of Phul cinema at Patiala, was also one of the prominent architects who were doing similar art deco buildings in Mumbai. We see that in Mumbai this style of architecture came in the year 1930 and onwards, while the similar toned down counterparts were seen in Patiala at a later period of 1950's , with the central library being made in 1956. The beauty of these buildings was the fact that they were connected to the cultural context of India while preserving the characteristics of the Art deco period.

There is also a tonal difference between the buildings of both the cities, while Mumbai displayed vivid characteristics, the structures in Patiala has toned down elements of the art deco period, making them examples of subtle growth of the style in this area. The city of Patiala was among the first cities to see this design wave in northern India, whereas Mumbai was the first to see this growth in the country, making the two cities have a connection through these buildings.



Building in Mumbai portraying the art deco period elements.



A cinema building in Patiala displaying elements of art deco.



1. Image of the main tower of the library building. Image by author.

left side of the elevation from the main tower side, it has four pillars and the central three portions are used as glass entrance doors while the two corners have geometrical jallis for ventilation. The top slabs of both the foyers are totally identical in ornamentation, with horizontal long flutes in the most modern fashion. The tower can still be seen from the flyover that connects old bus stand to the Dukhniwaran Gurudwara.

CENTRAL STATE LIBRARY, PATIALA

While studying the central state library, the tower of the building comes across as a huge landmark in the much green area surrounding the building. The tower (Image 1) is a huge tall block, which has three central ribs of windows, which are joined at top with the clock in the upper part of the tower. The motifs on the side of the window go till the bottom part of the clock and turn towards each side like three wings of the tower.

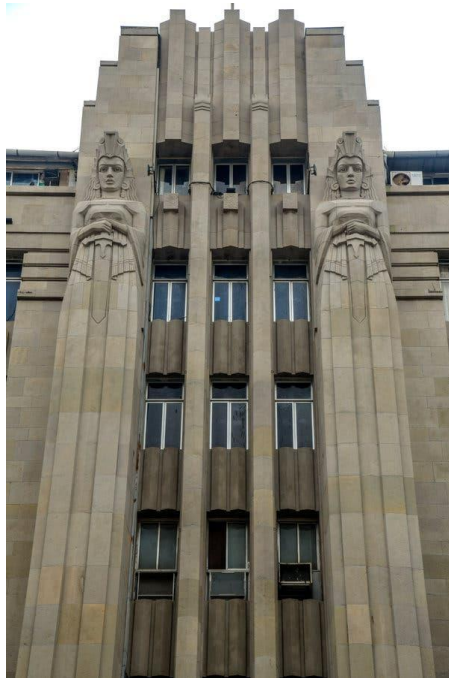
The tower on the bottom has a foyer that has two pillars framing the entrance and making it important. There is another shaded foyer on the



2. Image of the foyer left side face from tower. Image by author.



3. Image of the foyer below the tower. Image by author.



4. Image of the tower with the top detailing. Image by Atul Loke for New York Times.



5. Image of the back elevation. Image from Google Street View.



6. Image of the building's sculptural reliefs. Image by Atul Loke for New York Times.

The pillars are also similar in the ornamentation wherein both have bands and two strips on bottom; it's only the colour combination of the pillars that make them look different from one another. A similar structure that can be studied in the city of

Mumbai, is the New India Insurance Building. The front elevation has a vertical tower that has the three ribbed windows similar to the central library tower in Patiala. The ornamentation however is quite elaborate in Mumbai; we can see heavy sculptural reliefs designed by N.G. Pansare, which idealizes workers: farmers, potters, women spinning cotton and carrying pots of water. ⁴ (Image 6) The projections at roof have the similar horizontal flutes as seen in the foyers of the central library at Patiala.

The front tower is flanked by two vertical towers which have two classical style figures near the top. (Image 4) The back elevation also has a combination of both vertical flutes and the projections at roof have the horizontal flutes in them, balancing the vertical towering windows and the columns between them. (Image 5)

The building's function being an office building brings us to the fact that these structures were mostly solid, almost classical but was set apart from their other counterparts which exuded old Hollywood that the buildings were mostly cinemas. The city's art deco is similar to Miami's laid back 'tropical deco', rather than being like New York's Jazz.⁵



7. Front elevation of the building. Image by author

PHUL CINEMA, PATIALA

Phul cinema was originally designed by WM Namjoshi, the architect behind the liberty and New Empire building in Mumbai. The cinema is a one of kind building in the city with the architecture being totally modern and having all the characteristics of the art deco period.

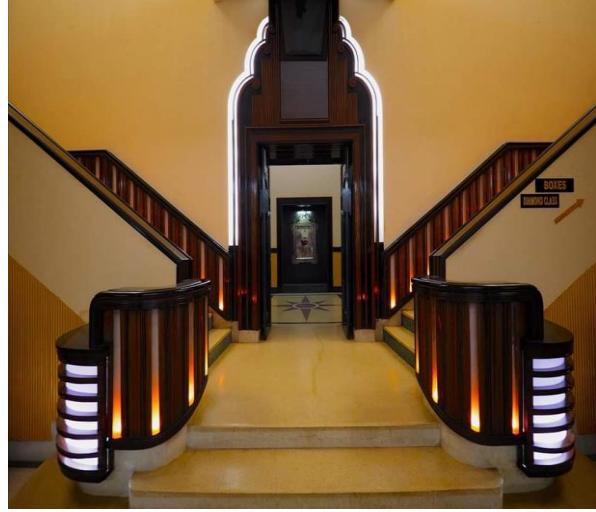
The structure stands tall with the fluted circular tower flanked by two identical blocks on both sides. The porch is a curvilinear horizontal member in the whole vertical scheme of things; it brings about a balance to the verticality of the design.

The interiors of the cinema exude old Hollywood style which is typically characteristic of the art deco period. The internal treatments, (Image 8) are similar to

exterior, with vertical motifs being the central play element. The hexagonal pillar can be seen having the metal work on top with two different finishes. The floor stonework pattern can also be seen playing with the straight lines that go along the shape of the room, while the central flooring has a two colour combination bringing the attention to the centre rather than the sides.



8. Interior of the building. Image by author



9. Interior of the building. Image by author



10. Eros Cinema. Image by Google street view.

The Eros cinema is defunct since 2016, even though there have been talks to revive the structure after doing some renovation without harming the heritage status of the building. The front elevation is decorated with red sandstone, the pillars in the foyer and the foyer has the same effect as seen in structures studied above, the verticality of the whole building is balanced by the thick huge foyer and the horizontal flutes in the pillars. The staggering effect of the red sandstone is another feature that is also seen in the central library tower and New India Insurance buildings.



11. Eros Cinema. Image by Google street view.



12. Eros Cinema. Archival image from national archives.

The motifs on the top of the central tower have zigzag flutes on the railings and have octagonal motifs on the top terrace walls on each face of the tower. The verticality of the tower is further enhanced by the vertical columns in the elevation and the tower.

GOVERNMENT AYURVEDIC COLLEGE

The façade of this building gives us a similar look as seen in the buildings of art deco period. The straight columned projections on the face bring in the vertical drag to the structure; however the horizontal porch is what brings the balance to the whole scheme (Image 13). The central porch is flanked by two identical buildings on each side. The side structures have lot of vertical punctures in the name of windows on both ground and first floor.



13. Whole building block. Image from Google view.



14. Front façade. Image from Google view



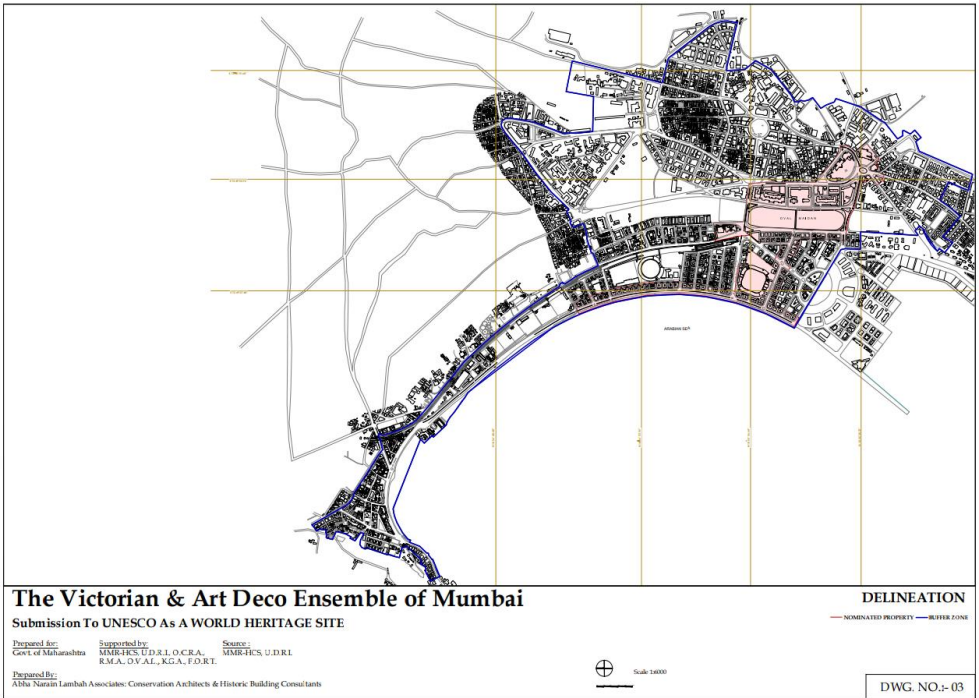
15. Side façade. Image from Google view.

The further closer inspection and study of the front porch reveals that the porch is two horizontal bands with distance between them. The porch is supported by pillars that seem to pierce through the horizontal slabs and go up to the red block on top. The colour combination keeps the building to the simplest form. The side elevation of the building shows the amalgamation of the horizontal porch with the side structure. It also emphasises on the importance of the porch in respect to the rest of the block on site.

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION STRATEGIES

On 30 June 2018, the ensemble of the buildings in Mumbai were recognized officially as world heritage site by UNESCO world heritage committee, Mumbai is believed to have second most art deco buildings in world after Miami.⁶

The ensemble matches the criteria number ii and iv, the total property area is 66.34 hectares and the buffer zone is 378.78 hectares. The legal protection of the property and buffer zone is based on the statute of the Government of Maharashtra, most importantly the Heritage Regulations for Greater Bombay 1995, Regulation No. 67 (DCR 67). Under this regulation, buildings of the property are listed as Grade I, IIA, IIB or III. The property and its buffer zone fall within the two heritage precincts: Fort Precinct and Marine Drive Precinct.⁷ The group of art deco buildings in Mumbai still retains a high degree of integrity in visual, spatial and planning terms; the wider settings of the properties in the urban landscape are more vulnerable to the urban development pressures.



16. Map 1480 from UNESCO.

Most of the buildings have also retained the authenticity in terms of architecture, decorative motifs, design, scale and material. The art deco structures in Patiala also need to have similar protection and management strategies where the structures are protected with essential buffer zones around them and time to time conservation for the buildings is provided by the government.

The two criteria's which have been selected for the city of Mumbai need to be understood deeply so that they can help preserve and acknowledge the city's ties with the art deco era. Criterion (ii) exhibits the exchange of important European and Indian human values over a span old time.⁵ This criterion is essential as it explores and approves the presence of art deco buildings in the city, which came and expanded the city's architectural scene. Criterion (iv) reflects upon the developments of architecture and urban planning over two centuries.⁵ This criterion is very crucial for all historic cities such as Patiala as it discuss and talks about the city's growth over the years and how it has brought the city to its present status. The presence of a certain style of architecture in a city's fabric reflects upon the cultural heritage of the city. The historic properties can be treated with four different approaches – preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction.⁸ These guidelines can be further elaborated and revised on a micro level as per the need of the city or a certain building in particular. These design solutions can be provided by a committee setup by the local municipal government comprising of architects and urban planners who

will after analysing the problems faced by the people while using the city, with conservationists also part of this team, help provide solutions for the heritage structures of the city.

These designs solutions need to follow the same principles of buffer zones and more pedestrian areas as done in the city of Mumbai. The protection of the visual integrity of the buildings can be preserved by helping retain the original structures and other art symbols such as murals, frescoes, stained glass and other ornamental details.

CONCLUSION

In the Art Deco style, the importance pertains not only to the external but also the interior spaces and designs also contribute towards the importance of this style. It is seen that the documentation of these structures is not centralized or easy to locate, furthermore the funding for restoration and protection of deco structures is very less and needs more preservation awareness at the local level.

By improving the conservation rules and bylaws, every city can help in saving Art Deco, not just as structures but as a means to preserve the artistic, economic and political histories. Seen through the glimpses of these case studies, it is clear that Art deco has clear and identifiable characteristics that articulate and express themes of modernity, but at the same time, flexible enough to incorporate the local symbolism in its forms and details. Historic preservation makes urban connections clear and concrete, and allows us to engage with our past in ways that help us articulate and anticipate our future plan in an elaborate way.

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Impact of Climate Crisis on Food Grain Production, Unemployment Rate and Health of Women - A comparative study of Punjab and West Bengal

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**Pratishtha

Abstract

Climate change is becoming a growing concern and the impact is both short term such as cyclones, floods, landslides as well as long term such as adverse impact on agriculture, water resources, biodiversity and human settlement. The detrimental effects of climate change are not similar for all as we see women being more severely impacted as compared to men primarily because they are dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. Furthermore, for women in rural areas it becomes a nightmare to secure food, water and other resources with limited mobility thereby making them more vulnerable. According to the report of India Meteorological Department (IMD), Sundarbans is the cyclone capital of India which is located at the edge of West Bengal and Bangladesh. The unusual monsoon season especially during June to September 2019 increased the hardships as the risk of floods and cyclone intensified with eight tropical cyclones in the year 2019 (Global Climate Risk Index 2021). This research paper attempts to look at the impact of climate crisis on women's livelihood and health for which it will be examining the condition of female workers engaged in agriculture. It will examine how climate crises affected unemployment rate, average wages, production of food grain and adversely impact the health of women especially pregnant women. The rate of unemployment among rural females increased more in comparison to rural males. The livelihood of women in Punjab and West Bengal was also impacted as the production of food grain (rice) decreased as well as the average wages also observed a decline. The result of the same could be seen on the health of rural women as a result of increase in inflation rate and rise of food insecurity. Moreover, the situation of Punjab in terms of food grain production, unemployment rate and health of women is also compared with West Bengal.

Keywords: *Climate Crisis, Global Climate Risk Index 2021, Food Grain Production, Unemployment Rate, Sundarbans, West Bengal, Rural Females, Livelihood, Punjab.*

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Introduction

Climate crisis has emerged as a global threat and has become an emergency due to its devastating consequences. It becomes important to address the issue as it has become a recurrent phenomenon with rising temperature, extreme weather conditions, melting glaciers, forest fire, rise in the sea level, heavy rainfall, floods, cyclone and droughts that have adversely affected the economy. These climate shocks often lead to horrible experiences for those affected making them feel insecure and threaten their lives. The impact of crises is also seen on the economy's GDP, hampering every phase of daily routine through decrease in labour productivity, increasing food insecurity and water scarcity. In the long term, it hampers the opportunities for human development and their capabilities.

The effect of climate change could be seen on overall human development through following means (United Nations Development Programme, 2007):

- 1. Food Security and Agricultural Production:** Climate change affect the agricultural production and food security as it impacts the temperature, rainfall and availability of water in various areas where water is essential for carrying out agricultural activities. According to the report of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), approximately three-quarter of the world population which is earning less than US\$ 1per day directly or indirectly depends on agriculture. The variations in drought and rainfall in different parts of the world creates huge losses in the food production and leads to loss of revenue as a result of which the income of many households also gets hampered. The impact of climate on food security and agricultural production could be such that it results in acute malnutrition among the 600 million people by the 2080s according to the report of UNDP (United Nations Development Programme, 2007).
- 2. Increased Exposure to Climate Disasters and Rising Sea Level:** Due to the melting glaciers, there is a rapid increase in the sea level which increases the risk of being displaced because of flooding. Therefore, increase in the temperature could also result in becoming the cause of displacement due to flooding and soil erosion. The extreme weather condition such as droughts and floods are dominant driver for climate related disasters. The rise in temperature leads to warmer seas which increases the risk for more violent tropical cyclones. In contrast, a drought affected area will adversely impact the livelihood and thereby degrading the health and nutrition of the people living in drought prone areas (United Nations Development Programme, 2007).
- 3. Water Insecurity and Scarcity:** The melting glaciers and the changes in run-off patterns of water leads to changes in flow of water for irrigation purposes and also makes water scarcity a prominent issue for human settlement. The distribution of water resources could be affected by 2⁰-3⁰C rise in the global temperature thereby creating ecological problems by increasing the floods and decreasing the flow of

water for irrigation purposes. This shows that even small incremental risks can have huge repercussions and can also lead to adverse human development setbacks. The report by UNDP states that the number of people who are facing the scarcity of water in the world by around 1.8 billion (United Nations Development Programme, 2007).

4. **Biodiversity and Natural Ecosystem:** Climate crisis is also creating transformations in ecological system as due to the warming of sea water, the coral reefs are also undergoing the process of bleaching. Moreover, the increased acidity in oceans is also becoming a threat for the marine ecosystem. The increase in the temperature above the threshold of 3⁰C would increase the risk of extinction of many species by 20-30 percent (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). Moreover, the changes in the marine ecology as well as the biodiversity will negatively affect the population which is largely dependent upon fish for livelihood as well as nutrition.
5. **Public Health:** Climate shocks are creating huge impact on public health due to heatwave and extreme winter and summer conditions adversely affects the health conditions particularly in developing countries due to limited capacity of public health systems to deal with situation of climate crisis. The climate change creates an ecological imbalance which creates the risk of infectious diseases especially for the poor population. According the UNDP report, there are around 350-500 million cases of malaria with 1 million fatalities every year. Through this it can be analysed how severe the consequences of climate change could become. In developing countries, around 28 percent children are categorised as underweight due to under nutrition which explains that are the other factors discussed above are interlinked and can impact each other. Child mortality is another area of concern as approximately 10 million children die each year due to poverty and malnutrition which is why it becomes important to take into consideration the long-term impact of climate change demanding an urgent addressal of Millennium Development Goals (United Nations Development Programme, 2007).

It is important to understand the five factors stated above cannot be viewed in isolation to one another as each of these are inter-linked and the changes in one could lead to multiplicative effect on the other which is not only ecological but also economic and social. Therefore, in long run these minor changes become plausible and the risk associated with the climate change also increases. The factors which convert these risks into vulnerability include high concentration of poverty, disparities in human development, lack of climate defence infrastructure and limited access to insurance. The climate change makes poor people that are exposed to climate risk even more vulnerable as they have limited access to resources making them more prone to malnutrition. The inequalities among countries on the basis of socio-economic conditions is also another factor which

makes the countries with higher level of inequalities to suffer more in comparison to more just societies due to the climate change. Moreover, the impact of climate change is different for various countries as a result of lack of proper infrastructure to cope with the detrimental impacts of the climate change as the rich countries are able to overcome the impact of climate change as they have mechanisms in place for dealing with the situation of crisis. Furthermore, adding on to infrastructure, insurance also plays a mitigating the risk of climate change without substantial decrease in the consumption and revenue (United Nations Development Programme, 2007).

Table: The 10 most affected countries in 2019							
Ranking 2019 (2018)	Country	CRI score	Fatalities	Fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants	Absolute losses (in million US\$ PPP)	Losses per unit GDP in %	Human Development Index 2020 Ranking
1 (54)	Mozambique	2.67	700	2.25	4930.08	12.16	181
2 (132)	Zimbabwe	6.17	347	2.33	1836.82	4.26	150
3 (135)	The Bahamas	6.50	56	14.70	4758.21	31.59	58
4 (1)	Japan	14.50	290	0.23	28899.79	0.53	19
5(93)	Malawi	15.17	95	0.47	452.14	2.22	174
6 (24)	Afghanistan	16.00	191	0.51	548.73	0.67	169
7 (5)	India	16.67	2267	0.17	68,812.35	0.72	131
8 (133)	South Sudan	17.33	185	1.38	85.86	0.74	185
9 (27)	Niger	18.17	117	0.50	219.58	0.74	189
10 (59)	Bolivia	19.67	33	0.29	798.91	0.76	107

Source: Eckstein et al.,2021

In India, monsoon season usually lasts from June to Early September; however, in the year 2019 due to the climate change, the monsoon conditions were longer than usual. The surplus rain than the usual increased the hardships of the people. During June to September 2019, heavy rainfall resulted in the floods thereby leading to displacement of around 1.8 million people and the death of around 1800 people across 14 states (Eckstein et al., 2021). Moreover, the economic damage was approximately US \$10 billion as it impacted around 11.8 million people. In the year 2019 itself a total of eight tropical cyclones were witnessed which was one of highest reported cyclone season. Out of the eight cyclones, six of them were the most severe (Eckstein et al., 2021). According to Global Climate Risk Index 2021, India ranked 7th among the top 10 most affected countries in 2019 with around 2,267 fatalities and losses of US\$ 68,812.35 million. India ranks 131st as per the Human Development Index 2020

ranking (Eckstein et al.,2021). Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the impact of climate change on overall economy in general and climate shock affected countries in particular.

Exploring the site of research:

1) Punjab:

According to India Meteorological Department’s Journal; ‘Mausam’, the increase in average temperature due to climate change is predicted to reduce yield of all major crops in Punjab by 2050, with the highest loss of 13% being projected for maize followed by 11% for cotton, 5% each wheat and potato and over 1% loss for rice compared to the current levels (Mohan, 2023). Another study conducted by Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) reveals that the productivity of crops has decreased with the increase in the average temperature in most of the crops which will further result in the increase of yield loss to 24 % from 13 % for maize and 24 % from 11% for cotton and increase to 3% from 1% for rice (Mohan, 2023). The data collected by PAU also shows a decline in the overall rainfall by 107mm during June to September and by 257mm during May to October (Mohan, 2023).



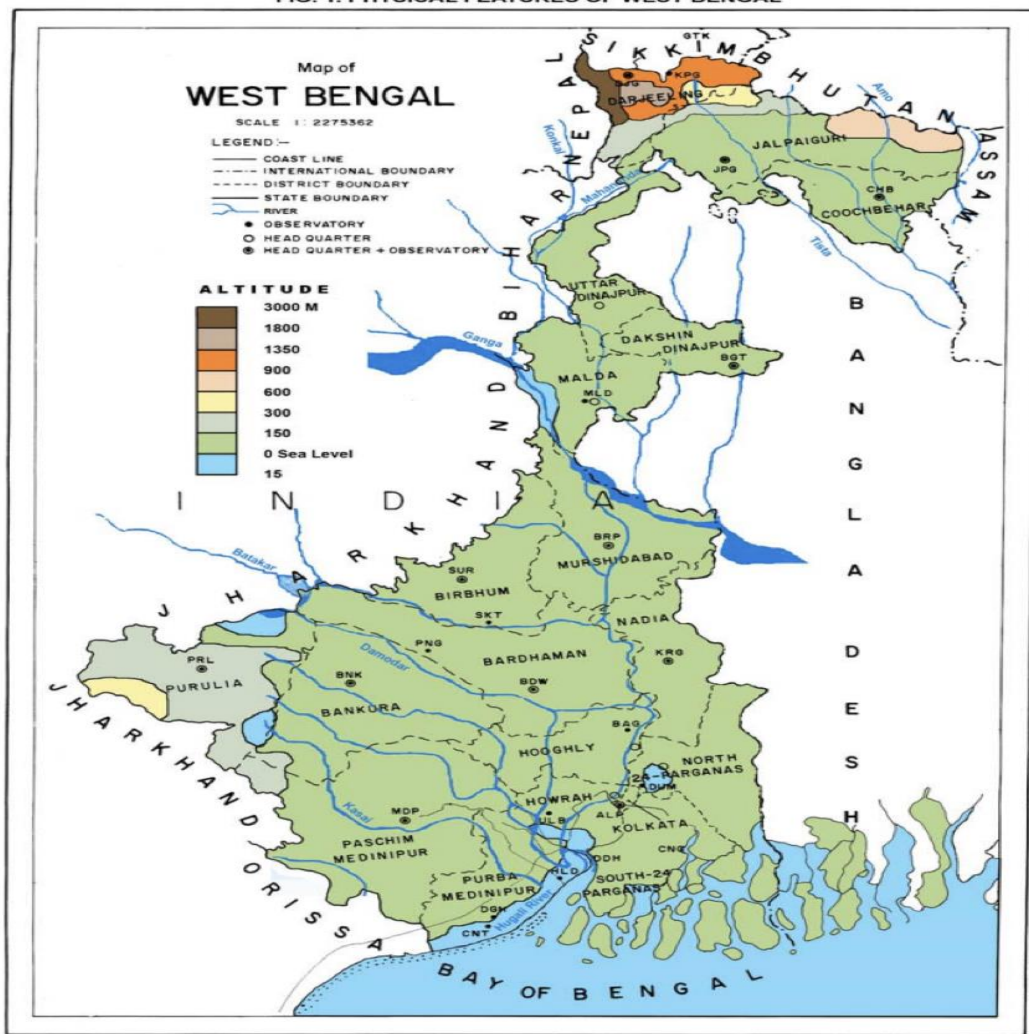
Punjab map. Map of Punjab - State, Districts Information and Facts. (n.d.).
<https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/punjab/>

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Punjab produces 10% of the country's food grain and is heavily reliant on agriculture because of which it is also known as India's Bread Basket. Due to the effects of climate change it may witness a decline in the yield by 13 % for Kharif crops and by 1 % for Rabi crops by the year 2050 (Kumar, 2023). Since Punjab is a major agricultural productive region, the impact of climate change can also be seen on the livelihoods of farmers and can have wider implication on food security (Kumar, 2023).

2) West Bengal and Sundarbans-Cyclone Capital of India

Sundarbans is located in the Ganga-Brahmaputra plains and is also the largest mangrove forest in the world which is surrounded by Bangladesh in the east and West Bengal in the west. The mudflats, brackish water and tidal conditions characterize the ecosystem of Sundarbans. The unsustainability in tourism activities has resulted into huge loss of biodiversity, environment pollution and generated huge amount of industrial waste which is negatively impacting the society at larger level (Action Aid Association, 2022). Moreover, climate change is posing a threat to the Sundarbans ecosystem due to increased frequency of cyclones which negatively impacts the forest and also lead to increase in salinity of water making fresh water unavailable. This is because the subtle changes that are happening due to the climate change is becoming difficult to assess. Due to the coastline of 7516 kms, the Indian sub-continent is among the most affected region in the world due to tropical cyclones. Out of 13 coastal states, five states are more prone to cyclone disasters. The tropical cyclone in the Indian sub-continent mostly occurs in the month May-June and October-November (Kiran, 2020). Due to highest number of cyclone being reported in Sundarbans delta, it has been referred as the cyclone capital of India. Recently, different cyclones have impacted Sundarbans such as Sidr (2007), Aila (2009), Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), Sagar (2018), Titli (2018), Luban (2018), Fani (2019), Hika (2019) and Bulbul (2019) causing severe destruction and recurring occurrence of such events make it even more troublesome for the lives of human settlement. Moreover, the year of 2019 was even more deadliest as the Sundarbans was hit by deadliest tropical cyclone Amphan which also coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic making the lives of the people living in Sundarbans even more vulnerable (Sengupta, 2020). Due to the cyclone Amphan, the estimated losses went upto Rs 1 Lakh Crore which is around 61 percent of the revenue receipts (1.6 lakh crore) of the state. In West Bengal, around 80 people were killed due to the severity of cyclone Amphan (Kiran, 2020).

FIG. 1. PHYSICAL FEATURES OF WEST BENGAL



Source: Jagdish, 2022

Due to the climate change, the impact of natural disasters such as cyclones and floods has increased globally. According to the report of Action Aid Organization, the severity of these cyclonic storms over the last 120 years has been increased by 20 percent in the Bay of Bengal. Among the adjoining areas to the Sundarbans ecosystem, West Bengal is the state which is most affected due climate change related disasters primarily due to being surrounded by low lying mangrove forests in the south-eastern region. However, other adjoining regions that are in significantly surrounded by Mangrove forest, the loss and damage to property and life is reduced as Sundarbans provide as a barrier against high waves and storms (Action Aid Association, 2022). According to the report of Action Aid Association (2022), the coastal environment of West Bengal is most diversified among the maritime states.

Methodological Approach

The study is primarily based on secondary data obtained from the Government of India reports. The main sources of data are India Meteorological Department, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, State Action Plan On Climate Change- West Bengal: 2017-2020, Annual Flood Report: 2019-20, National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) and Handbook of Statistics on Indian States, Reserve Bank of India. The time period for the study is from 2005-06 to 2020-21 by specifically looking at the climate change activities from 2015-16 onwards. The overall objective of this paper is to analyse the impact of climate change on food grain production, unemployment rate and health of women by particularly looking at poor rural women in West Bengal and Punjab.

Climate Crisis and its Gendered Impact

In the year 2010, Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) conducted a research on health care system in West Bengal. It was found that among the women of age group 15-59 years, the number of women reporting general ailment were more in comparison to men. The study found that women were more susceptible to health related problems such as arthritis, asthma and also to vision related issues (Action Aid Association, 2022). When one talks about effect of climate crisis on health, it is not only restricted to physical health but also its impact could be seen on mental health. Further the impact of climate change on mental health is comparatively higher among the women than men as lot of cases of women suicide were observed in the government hospitals of Sundarbans (Action Aid Association, 2022). It is important to understand that the vulnerability of women to mental disorders is linked with multiple burdens perpetuated in form of poverty, domestic violence, lack of access to proper medical treatment.

The dependency of poor rural families on food, water and shelter makes them the most vulnerable in the society which accounts for more than 90 percent of the world's population (Action Aid Association, 2022). Furthermore, poor women are worst affected because of the social role assigned by the society which makes them responsible for fetching water and securing fuel and food thereby increasing their dependence on fuel and water and exposing them to the risks of climate hazards.

The poor rural women face triple burden during climate crisis due to poverty (being a poor), socio-economic (inhabiting in rural area) condition, and based on gender (being a woman). Moreover, in the situation of climate crisis the condition of poor rural women deteriorates due to following reasons (Action Aid Association, 2022):

- Lack of insufficient water resources
- Deprivation of locally available renewable resources
- Depletion of natural resources results in long distance travelling for collection of necessities

- Increased incidences of sexual assault
- Increase in socio-economic stress
- Deepening of gender inequalities due to under-representation of women at levels of economic decision making
- Lower social status and power
- Limited access and control over resources.

In the area which is prone to floods or cyclone such as Sundarbans, it is more likely for women to lose their lives in comparison to men due to restriction in mobility and difficulty in swimming in a sari. According to the UNDP study (2011) of 140 disasters between 2005 and 2009, it was found that during disasters the death of women were four times more than men (Action Aid Association, 2022). Moreover, the gender based stereotypes and patriarchal control further worsen the situation of women.

Findings and Discussion

a) Food Grain Production

In West Bengal, particularly in rural areas, agriculture is a crucial source of livelihood. West Bengal constitutes 8 percent of India's population which is primarily dependent on agriculture and rice is the staple food grown in West Bengal. There are 23 districts in West Bengal in which the majority of people are engaged in agriculture and main crop production happens for rice (Jagdish, 2022).

The agriculture sector and food grain production is impacted by extreme weather conditions such as rainfall trends, increase in temperature, occurrence of cyclones, droughts and other climatic hazards. Therefore, it becomes important to understand the variation in climate change to look at its repercussions on food grain production. In West Bengal, out of the 23 districts, 9 districts- Burdawn, Haora, Hugli, Jalpaiguri, Maldah, Puruliya and North and South Dinajpur show a decline in rainfall trend so the impact of drought can be seen on the agricultural productivity (State Action Plan On Climate Change- West Bengal: 2017-2020, 2020).

On the contrary, what is interesting to note is that the situation of coastal district is totally opposite as the districts like South 24 Parganas, West and East Midnapur where due to the increased rainfall, the situation of floods has increased thereby hampering the overall agricultural productivity of West Bengal (State Action Plan On Climate Change- West Bengal: 2017-2020, 2020). This opposite trend of drought and flood at the same time in different districts of West Bengal make the situation even worse in terms of agricultural productivity which is also a sign of increasing instances of climate change.

Weather Events	2015-16	2017-18	2019-20
No. of Floods	July 29th to 31st, 2015: Haora, Puruliya Burdwan, Bankura, South 24 Pargana, Jalpaigurhi August 1st to 4th, 2015: Haora, Burdwan, East and West Midnapore, Bankura, North and South 24 parganas, Nadia, Puruliya, Hooghly, Birbhum	July and August, 2017 in North Bengal. June- July 2018 in Cooch, Behar, Hooghly, Howrah, Kolkata, Nadia, North and South 24 Parganas	July and August 2019-20 in North and South Bengal.
No. of Cyclones	'Komen' during 31st July to 1st August over Gangetic West Bengal	Daye (2018), Gaja (2018), Titli (2018), Phethai (2018)	Fani (2019), Bulbul (2019), Amphan (2020)
Source: India Meteorological Department (2018), State Action Plan On Climate Change- West Bengal: 2017-2020 and Annual Flood Report: 2019-20			

Punjab

In the year 2015-16 the production of rice in Punjab was **11823.0 thousand tonnes**, followed by **11586.2 thousand tonnes** in 2016-17. Further the year 2019-20, again observed a decline in food grain production to **11779.3 thousand tonnes** from **12821.6 thousand tonnes**.

West Bengal

In the year 2015-16 the production of rice in West Bengal was **15,953.9 thousand tonnes**, followed by **15302.5 thousand tonnes** in 2016-17 and further decreasing to 14967 thousand tonnes in the year 2017-18. Further the year 2019-20, again observed a decline in food grain production to **15,881.4 thousand tonnes** from **16,242.2 thousand tonnes**.

Through the data on occurrence of extreme weather conditions and the production of food grain, it becomes evident that there is significant impact of climatic change on the production of food grain in both Punjab and West Bengal.

TABLE: STATE-WISE PRODUCTION OF FOODGRAINS - RICE

State/Union Territory	(Thousand Tonnes)					
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Andhra Pradesh	7488.7	7452.4	8166.2	8234.7	8658.9	7882.9
Arunachal Pradesh	204.0	220.0	233.3	240.0	244.7	247.1
Assam	5125.1	4727.4	5283.7	5220.6	4984.6	5214.8
Bihar	6802.2	8239.3	8093.1	6155.5	6298.0	6747.0
Chhattisgarh	5789.4	8048.4	4930.8	6526.9	6774.8	7161.2
NCT of Delhi	17.3	17.3	16.8	16.8	16.8	19.7
Goa	115.1	113.2	103.0	98.8	90.4	87.3
Gujarat	1702.0	1930.0	1890.9	1912.1	1983.1	2145.7
Haryana	4145.0	4453.0	4523.4	4516.1	4824.3	4424.9
Himachal Pradesh	129.9	146.6	114.8	114.9	143.8	140.5
Jammu & Kashmir	646.4	572.2	513.1	615.8	587.0	581.5
Jharkhand	2882.2	3841.8	4078.0	2893.9	3012.8	2752.9
Karnataka	3021.0	2604.8	3017.1	3431.0	3634.5	4291.7
Kerala	549.3	437.1	521.3	578.3	605.6	633.8
Madhya Pradesh	3546.7	4226.8	4123.9	4494.7	4778.2	4413.8
Maharashtra	2593.0	3109.5	2730.8	3275.7	2897.6	3291.7
Manipur	338.8	430.4	607.8	401.6	385.5	602.2
Meghalaya	301.1	203.0	304.6	202.0	303.4	295.8
Mizoram	62.1	61.5	59.6	60.0	60	62.2
Nagaland	318.8	336.7	349.6	356.7	363.3	367.4
Odisha	5875.4	8325.9	6551.3	7733.7	8360.4	8810.3
Puducherry	43.9	52.2	42.5	63.3	59.4	50.0

Punjab	11823.0	11586.2	13381.8	12821.6	11779.3	12783.6
Rajasthan	369.8	452.7	450.9	453.2	480.5	634.0
Sikkim	13.1	19.7	17.6	17.2	16.1	16.2
Tamil Nadu	7517.1	2369.4	6638.9	6130.9	7171.1	6881.2
Telangana	3047.0	5173.4	6262.2	6670.0	7427.8	10217.1
Tripura	794.8	814.6	812.1	793.2	810.2	803.1
Uttar Pradesh	12501.0	13754.0	13274.0	15545.3	15517.9	15520.0
Uttarakhand	639.1	630.0	646.7	617.6	658.4	714.9
West Bengal	15953.9	15302.5	14967.0	16242.2	15881.4	16524.4
ALL INDIA	104408.2	109698.4	112757.6	116477.8	118870.3	124368.3
.: Not Applicable.						
Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.						

b) Unemployment Rate

The impact of climate change could also be seen on the unemployment rate as the increased incidences of floods and cyclones also affect the livelihood of the people worst affected especially the poor rural women who are primarily dependent upon agriculture for their source of livelihood. Furthermore, when the frequency or magnitude of the climate change effect becomes severe then the climate hazard becomes a disaster as it decreases the number of jobs and thereby forcing people to migrate to other regions in search of new opportunities (Maitre et al., 2018). The climate change related disasters negatively impact the economy and decreases the GDP which results in loss of capital and destruction of jobs. According to International Labour Organization (ILO), due to environment related hazards between 2000 to 2015, around 23 million working life were lost annually (Maitre et al., 2018). This is also evident due to the rising temperature which results in increasing heat stress, negatively impact the heat stress and lower labour productivity rate.

In addition to climate-related disaster like floods or cyclone, the occurrence of Covid-19, a global pandemic, resulted in women losing \$800 billion income in one year globally. Around 64 million jobs were lost specifically for women at global level which was more for women as compared to men (Oxfam International, 2021). Women working in low paid work as workers observed a sharp decline in wages and also lost jobs due to pandemic thereby resulting in making their situation even worse off. The repercussions of this global pandemic could also be observed on women in Punjab and West Bengal who witnessed a sharp increase in the unemployment rate.

Punjab

Farmers who are primarily dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood are affected more by climate related disasters. Poor rural women farmers are the most vulnerable of them all. This is because out of the three-quarter of rural working women engaged in agriculture, very few have the ownership of farms or are recognised as farmers themselves which makes them more prone to extreme weather conditions (Torgalkar, 2022). Many women farmers who are poor and lack knowledge, find it even more difficult to secure jobs or get access to any government subsidies or aid programmes. In the event of climate crisis, it is seen that agriculture becomes a female dominated sphere as the males migrate to urban areas in search of jobs and often leaving women all by themselves thereby negatively impacting women (Torgalkar, 2022).

Through the following data it can be seen that the impact of climate change is visible in the unemployment rate of men and it affected women more. The unemployment rate of men increased from **22 in 2011-12 to 74 in 2017-18** and further increased to **76 in 2018-19**. For women the results are even more shocking as the unemployment rate increased from **13 in 2011-12 to 103 in 2017-18**. This shows that the impact of climate crisis is more severe for women as unemployment rate increased nearly **8 times** resulting in many poor rural women to losing their jobs.

Year	STATE- WISE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN PUNJAB: USUAL STATUS (ADJUSTED)	
	Male	Female
2004-05	33	49
2009-10	28	22
2011-12	22	13
2017-18	74	103
2018-19	76	83
2019-20	74	64
2020-21	58	74

Source: RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian States

West Bengal

If one sees in the context of West Bengal, the period of 2019-20 was worst hit for women due to prominent cyclones such as Daye (2018), Gaja (2018), Titli (2018), Phethai (2018), Fani (2019), and Bulbul (2019) followed by heavy floods thereby leading to loss of jobs and resources (Sengupta, 2020). The unemployment rate of men increased from **40 in 2018-19 to 49 in 2019-20** and for women it increased from

14 in 2018-19 to 28 in 2019-20. This shows that the impact of climate crisis is more severe for women as it doubled the unemployment rate resulting in many poor rural women to lose their jobs.

Year	STATE- WISE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN WEST BENGAL : USUAL STATUS (ADJUSTED)	
	Male	Female
2004-05	22	33
2009-10	17	28
2011-12	28	24
2017-18	43	17
2018-19	40	14
2019-20	48	28
2020-21	37	17

Source: RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian States

c) Health of Women:

The climate change impacts women differently than men because in the event of crisis women face issues due to lack of mobility, patriarchal roles and limited access to resources which further deteriorates their health. This becomes evident through the following data of National Family Health Surveys on pregnant women aged 15-49 years who are anaemic. It can be seen that the effect of back to back cyclones, floods and onset of Covid-19 pandemic could be seen on the health of women.

Punjab

The percentage of women aged 15-49 years who are anaemic increased from **41.6 percent** in 2005-06 to **42%** in the year **2015-16** and further increased to **51.7 percent** in 2019-21. Furthermore, the impact of the anaemia could also be seen on the maternal mortality ratio which increased from **122** in 2014-16 to **129** in 2016-18.

West Bengal

The percentage of women aged 15-49 years who are anaemic increased from **53.6 percent** in 2015-16 to **62.3 percent** in 2019-21. Furthermore, the impact of anaemia could also be seen on the maternal mortality ratio which increased from **98** in 2016-18 to **109** in 2017-19.

TABLE: STATE-WISE PREGNANT WOMEN AGED 15-49 YEARS WHO ARE ANAEMIC

States/UTs	(Per cent)		
	NFHS 3 (2005-06)	NFHS 4 (2015-16)	NFHS 5 (2019-21)
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	61.4	53.7*
Andhra Pradesh	58.2	52.9	53.7
Arunachal Pradesh	51.8	37.8	27.9
Assam	72	44.8	54.2
Bihar	60.2	58.3	63.1
Chandigarh	-	-	-
Chhattisgarh	63.1	41.5	51.8
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	-	62.3	60.7
Delhi	29.9	46.1	42.2
Goa	36.9	26.7*	41*
Gujarat	60.8	51.3	62.6
Haryana	69.7	55	56.5
Himachal Pradesh	38.1	50.4	42.2
Jammu & Kashmir	55.7	46.9	44.1
Jharkhand	68.5	62.6	56.8
Karnataka	60.4	45.4	45.7
Kerala	33.8	22.6	31.4
Ladakh	-	79.3	78.1
Lakshadweep	-	39*	20.9*
Madhya Pradesh	57.9	54.6	52.9
Maharashtra	57.8	49.3	45.7
Manipur	36.3	26	32.4
Meghalaya	58.1	53.3	45
Mizoram	48.3	27	34
Nagaland	-	32.7	22.2
Odisha	68.1	47.6	61.8

Puducherry	-	26	42.5
Punjab	41.6	42	51.7
Rajasthan	61.7	46.6	46.3
Sikkim	62.1	23.6	40.7
Tamil Nadu	54.7	44.4	48.3
Telangana	-	48.2	53.2
Tripura	57.6	54.4	61.5
Uttar Pradesh	51.5	51	45.9
Uttarakhand	50.8	46.5	46.4
West Bengal	62.6	53.6	62.3

*: Based on 25-49 unweighted cases. - : Not available.

Notes: Anaemia is identified with Haemoglobin <11.0 g/dl (grams per decilitre). As NFHS uses the capillary blood for estimation of anaemia, the results of NFHS-5 need not be compared with other surveys using venous blood.

Source: National Family Health Surveys (NFHS), various rounds.

TABLE: STATE-WISE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO

Year	2007-09	2010-12	2011-13	2014-16	2016-18	2017-19
Andhra Pradesh	134	110	92	74	65	58
Assam	390	328	300	237	215	205
Bihar	261	219	208	165	149	130
Chhattisgarh	-	-	-	-	159	160
Gujarat	148	122	112	91	75	70
Haryana	153	146	127	101	91	96
Jharkhand	-	-	-	-	71	61
Karnataka	178	144	133	108	92	83
Kerala	81	66	61	46	43	30
Madhya Pradesh	269	230	221	173	173	163
Maharashtra	104	87	68	61	46	38
Odisha	258	235	222	180	150	136

Punjab	172	155	141	122	129	114
Rajasthan	318	255	244	199	164	141
Tamil Nadu	97	90	79	66	60	58
Telangana	-	-	-	81	63	56
Uttar Pradesh	359	292	285	201	197	167
Uttarakhand	-	-	-	-	99	101
West Bengal	145	117	113	101	98	109
Others	160	136	126	97	85	77
All-India	212	178	167	130	113	103

- : Not Available.

Note: Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is derived as the proportion of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births reported under the SRS.

Source: Special Bulletin on Maternal Mortality, Sample Registration System, Office of Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

Conclusion

The impact of climate change could be seen on production of food grains, unemployment rate, and health of women as in the year 2019-20, food grain production declined to 15,881.4 thousand tonnes from 16,242.2 thousand tonnes in West Bengal. However, in the year 2015-16 the production of rice in Punjab was 11823.0 thousand tonnes, followed by 11586.2 thousand tonnes in 2016-17. Further the year 2019-20, again observed a decline in food grain production to 11779.3 thousand tonnes from 12821.6 thousand tonnes. Further, the unemployment rate of men increased from 40 in 2018-19 to 49 in 2019-20 and for women it increased from 14 in 2018-19 to 28 in 2019-20 in West Bengal. In Punjab, the unemployment rate of men increased from 22 in 2011-12 to 74 in 2017-18 and further increased to 76 in 2018-19. For women the results are even more shocking as the unemployment rate increased from 13 in 2011-12 to 103 in 2017-18. In West Bengal, the percentage of women aged 15-49 years who are anaemic increased from 53.6 percent in 2015-16 to 62.3 percent in 2019-21. Furthermore, the impact of anaemia could also be seen on the maternal mortality ratio which increased from 98 in 2016-18 to 109 in 2017-19 in West Bengal. In Punjab, the percentage of women aged 15-49 years who are anaemic increased from 41.6 percent in 2005-06 to 42% in the year 2015-16 and further increased to 51.7 percent in 2019-21. Furthermore, the impact of anaemia could also be seen on the maternal mortality ratio which increased from 122 in 2014-16 to 129 in 2016-18.

It is concluded that the severity of impact of climate change is increasing and its impact

could be seen differently for women and men. This is important as the impact of the same climate change disaster could be seen differently among the countries because of ability to mitigate the risk of climate change. Further while implementing policies it is crucial to take into consideration the impact of the same on poor rural women as they are the worst impacted due to climate related disasters.

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The Construction of an Ideal Sikh Identity in Bhai Vir Singh's *Sundri and Bijay Singh*

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Abstract

Bhai Vir Singh's works have often been studied in relation to the construction of Khalsa Sikh identity because of his close association with Singh Sabha Movement. A critical study of his earliest novels Sundri (1898) and Bijay Singh (1900), however, presents the construction of an ideal Sikh identity for both the genders, at times varying from the principles of Tat Khalsa and on occasions fraught with internal disruptions. The internal ruptures become visible when the distinct religious identity being carved in the newly emerging genre of novel in Punjabi language is viewed in contrast to the shared piety in the popular genre of Qissa.

I

Bhai Vir Singh, also known as the father of modern Punjabi Literature, is credited with writing the first novel in Punjabi language in the last decade of nineteenth century. Being a prominent proponent of Singh Sabha Movement, his works have been studied in relation to the demarcation of a distinct Sikh identity. *Sundri*, the first Punjabi novel, appeared in 1898 and was followed by *Bijay Singh* in 1900. *Sundri* has been analyzed by several critics for gendered construction of religion and for propagating Khalsa Sikh identity. However, when studied along with *Bijay Singh* Bhai Vir Singh's demarcation of an ideal Sikh identity comes forth. These novels, when studied as historical fiction in the milieu of socio-historical context of the religious reform movements, bring forth the difficulties in the task of construction of a distinct religious identity rejecting the notions of shared piety among religious communities in Punjab.

The novels demand to be studied in conjunction with the great amount of work produced on the social milieu of Punjab of late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the experience of colonialism in the region, and the literary climate of the province in order to understand the emergence of earliest historical novels written in Gurmukhi. The social climate of Punjab of the late nineteenth century was fraught with religious reform movements. While some trace the reason of origin of these movements to counter the missionary propaganda being carried under the colonial

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state, others point to the need for reform within different religions under the influence of modernity. Kenneth W. Jones has written extensively on the socio-religious reform movements among all three major religious communities (Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs) of Punjab.¹ These movements aimed at reforming their particular religions of certain practices considered deformed and irrational as well as at constructing clear and rigid boundaries and thus creating homogenous religious communities. The tension between the relations of Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha, as vividly portrayed by Jones, is critical in understanding the novels of Bhai Vir Singh and the presentation of Hindu and Sikh characters in these novels.²

A great amount of scholarly work on Bhai Vir Singh, attempts only at drawing connections between his novels and Tat Khalsa principle. However, attention has been paid recently to the use of history in the novels by Anshu Malhotra in reading *Sundri* as ‘a curious hybrid of novelistic, historical, and genealogical storytelling’³ and in invoking Murphy’s work on ‘imaginary history’ in her reading.⁴ Anne Murphy’s work foregrounding the role of representation of history to build a certain account in the memory of people through genres like *Gurbilas* aiming at the continuous and repeated construction of Sikh Identity is equally important for understanding the mode of historical fiction employed in the two novels.

II

It has long been argued whether the coming of novel in India was the result of colonial intervention or the continuation and extension of earlier prose writings in Indian languages. The novel in Punjabi appeared during the colonial rule but it cannot be regarded as a colonial enterprise. Farina Mir’s *The Social Space of Language* highlights the literary scene of Punjab under colonial times and the effects of colonial government’s policies on the Punjabi language and the production of literature in it. The state support for Punjabi language and literature was negligible and the popular genre of *Qissa* in Punjabi literature continued thriving in the market during nineteenth century.⁵ This hints at the reason for the late production of novel in Punjabi in comparison to other Indian languages. In addition to *Qissas*, print was also the medium for the production of tracts by religious reform movements during that time.

The novel in fact came out of the hand of one of the prominent members of Singh Sabha Movement who had earlier published various tracts in his newspaper *Khalsa Samachar*. The tracts and novels of Bhai Vir Singh worked for the construction of a separate Sikh Identity. While some scholars credit the construction of Sikh Identity to Singh Sabha Movement, there are others who trace the process of construction of Sikh Identity to earlier times and argue that the process of construction of Sikh Identity has been a continuous one. Anne Murphy in her book *The Materiality of the Sikh Past* says, ‘It is through means of transmission both

textual and material that the past is made present and, simultaneously, the community created through the representation and mediated experience of the remembered past'.⁶ The material objects as well as the textual productions about Sikh history played an equal role in 'the production of past as history, out of memory'.⁷

Murphy traces the textual productions describing Sikh history to seventeenth and eighteenth century. An interesting genre of history writing namely Gurbilas, focusing on the lives of Sikh Gurus, flourished in the eighteenth century. Murphy analyses Sainapati's *Gursobha* and shows how the text presents Sikh past out of memories related to Gurus.⁸ The earliest Punjabi novels written by Bhai Vir Singh can be seen in alignment with the genre of Gurbilas. Though the novels do not talk about lives of Gurus, they work for the presentation of Sikh past by setting the novels in the historical time between the demise of tenth Sikh Guru and the formation of Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The novels present that time of Mughal rule when Sikh persecutions carried out by Mughals were at their highest.

The use of history in the novel forms a crucial aspect for the construction of Sikh Identity. The use of history in the genre of novel was in continuation with the tradition of Gurbilas and tracts produced by Singh Sabha Movement. But the appropriation of history for this new novelistic genre was specifically aimed at representing the Sikh past and history and to preach and teach the Sikhs of nineteenth century. In the novel *Bijay Singh* the author himself says, 'Very limited accounts of Sikh sagas, achievements, acts of valour and acute physical suffering have been written. Whatever little has been recorded, is hidden in the History books and not easily accessible to readers, hence, the Sikhs know too little of their past to take pride in it'.⁹ These earliest historical novels thus served the purpose of the presentation of a distinct Sikh past, teaching Sikh norms of behaviors and constructing a separate Sikh Identity by making past accessible for common readers.

III

The plot of the novel *Sundri* is set around the time of the first Sikh holocaust¹⁰ of 1746 and *Bijay Singh* is set in the time following the holocaust and the death of Mir Mannu. In fact, there are various cross references in the novels. *Sundri* tells the story of a young Hindu girl Saraswati, who is abducted by a Mughal soldier on her wedding day. After her rescue by her Sikh brother, when her parents and husband refuse to accept her, she decides to devote her life to the service of Sikh community and converts to Sikhism. The story follows her service to other members of her community, her trials at being abducted by Mughals again, her brave fight against Mughals, and her giving up her life instead of giving up her faith. The novel *Bijay Singh* tells the story of Bijay Singh, his wife Sheel Kaur and their son. Bijay Singh is again a convert from Hinduism who decides to embrace the Sikh way of life. The novel follows the trials of Bijay Singh and Sheel Kaur at the hands of Mir Mannu

and his wife Murad Begum. It is again a tale about staying true to one's faith without giving up to hardships or temptations.

Both the novels follow almost similar plot lines which focus on showing hardships suffered by Sikhs under the Mughal rule. These novels emerge as didactic tales demonstrating the lives of courageous Sikhs who suffered hardships with fortitude, setting moral example for Sikhs of contemporary times. In the preface to *Sundri*, the author himself writes, 'the purpose of writing this book is that by reading about these old events, the Sikhs should get inspiration to become firm in their faith'.¹¹ At various times in the novels the author reprimands the Sikhs of contemporary times for forsaking noble virtues of their ancestors and beckons them to follow the example of Sikh characters in the novels. The basic plot line and interruptions by author in the text hint at the genre of novel still being in its infancy or as Anshu Malhotra calls the first novel in Punjabi as 'a peculiar experiment in storytelling'.¹²

IV

Gurpreet Bal notes, 'Sundri is both a social and literary phenomenon. The prime motivation behind its writing was reformist'.¹³ According to her, the reformist aspect of the novel worked for the creation of gender and religious identities. She writes, 'Bhai Vir Singh constructs gender in a religious-historical context in which the Sikh intellectual leadership perceives a crisis within community caused not only of western forces, but also from other religious communities'.¹⁴ Sundri has been presented as an ideal Sikh woman who is religious and at the same time well learned in martial skills. She decides to forsake the life of worldly comforts and marital bliss and chooses instead to serve her community. She does not serve the community only by cooking food and attending the wounded but also by fighting valorously in wars whenever the need be. A feminist reading of the texts would focus on the attempts made in the novels to control women's sexuality and to teach them to be chaste and pure. Christine Fair talks about Sundri's decision to forsake marital life and devoting her life for the service of her community. She is of the view that female characters of Bhai Vir Singh's novels were the role models for contemporary women and taught them the value of chastity. According to her, one of the aims of translation of these novels into English, the second life of novels in her language, was to restrain sexuality of the diasporic Sikh women.¹⁵ Fair says, 'The heroines of these novels are conveyances by which female sexuality is checked and subordinated to the needs of the Panth'.¹⁶

Gender has been the locus of most of the reform movements. Even India's construction as a nation has been viewed in terms of construction of the nation through redefining the role of women. No doubt, reformation of women was the central aspect of the socio-reform movements but the reformation in the case of these novels is more nuanced than just simple controlling of sexuality. The novels even

taught Sikh men to be chaste and through the example of Bijay Singh, not giving into the temptations of Murad Begum, Bhai Vir Singh commands Sikh men to keep their 'mind pure'.¹⁷ In fact, the reformation of gender here was essential in alignment to the reformation of religion and the construction of separate religious identities. Anshu Malhotra in her work *Gender, Caste, and Religious Identities* rightly notes, 'particularly for the Sikh reformers, it was essential to change the cultural practices of women, if a religious community was to be made bounded and less permeable'.¹⁸

In order to create a separate identity for Sikhs it was essential for the leaders of Singh Sabha Movement to purge shared rituals and customs out of Sikh community, and it is for that very reason that women were targeted as they were the majority participants in those rituals. In the novel *Sundri*, Bhai Vir Singh in one of his didactic musings says,

O Sikh Women of Today! Leading a life of comfort and luxury! . . . look at your lives and judge for yourselves whether your actions are proving harmful for the whole community or not. Every time you turn your back on your religion and your Gurus, you not only do a disservice to yourselves but set a bad example for your children. You prefer to pray to stones, idols, trees, 'Pirs', even at graves, and neglect the straight path of Sikhi. Your children will grow up confused and completely mixed up like you, with the head of a Sikh, the torso of a Brahmin, and the lower part of a Muslim.¹⁹

The Singh Sabha movement aimed at delineating a separate Sikh identity which was not 'mixed up'. This was made possible by demarcating clear boundaries between Sikhs and members of other religious communities. Also, it was not the case with Singh Sabha Movement alone. Kenneth W. Jones in his book *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* has clearly shown that similar movements were working for other religious communities as well, Arya Samaj for Hindus and Ahmadiyya for Muslims. Jones explains the characteristics of these movements when he writes, 'authority was based on scriptures that were no longer considered to be properly observed, on a reinterpretation of doctrines, or on scriptural sources arising from the new religious leader's message'.²⁰

The socio-religious reform movements aimed at redefining their individual communities by separating their characteristics from the other communities. Also, the leaders of these movements participated in heated arguments and pamphlet wars condemning other religions. In another article, Jones describes in detail the fight among Arya Samajis and Singh Sabha Movement which resulted in the leaders of Singh Sabha Movement emphatically declaring 'Hum Hindu Nahin'. Jones says that while the identity of Sikhs was being defined, it had been clearly declared what Sikhs were not i.e. Hindus.

The novels of Bhai Vir Singh then participate in demarcating lines between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs by clearly specifying the 'un-Sikh Behavior'²¹ in which

women of the community actively participated. The common traditions were labeled to be superstitious and not part of the Sikh community formed by the Gurus. Harjot Oberoi views this purgation as a systematic effort made by Singh Sabha Movement. He says, 'Freed . . . from idolatory, polytheism, the pervasive influence of Muslim pirs, Brahminical presence in rituals, . . . the protagonists of this new idiom could now convincingly claim that Sikhs were independent, homogeneous, and separate religious community without any relation to Hinduism or Islam'.²² The earliest novels thus diverged from the popular genre of *Qissa*, which represented the actual norms and behaviors of Punjabis of all the religious communities and their participation in the norms of 'shared piety'.²³ The novel also differed from *Qissa* in being written in Gurmukhi script alone which by that time came to be associated with Sikhs. The *Qissas* on the other hand were produced in Punjabi written in both Shahmukhi²⁴ and Gurmukhi script. The shift in the themes and language from *Qissa* to these earliest novels is clearly indicative of the social and political scene of those times.

V

This process of construction has been carried out in the novels not just through condemnation of shared rituals and practices but also by portraying Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim characters in a certain light. The Sikh characters have been presented as ideal human beings exemplifying the noble virtues of benevolence, strength and courage. They undergo all the hardships inflicted by Mughals but stay firm to their faith. Their love for their religion and community exceeds their love for their lives. They are kind towards common masses of other religious communities and their fight is against the cruel rulers. Sikhs in both the novels are always on the move, taking refuge in the forests because of the threat posed to their lives by Mughal rulers. However, their taking sanctuary in the forests does not reflect on their characters as a sign of cowardice. Instead, they fight valorously against Mughals whenever such circumstances arise, always proving themselves to be brave and courageous by coming out victorious from the battles.

Hindu characters in both the novels are presented as either cowards who cannot fight against oppression or opportunists motivated by greed of money and power. The common Hindu masses suffer oppression at the hands of Mughal rulers as well as Muslim population but are not courageous enough to raise their voice against oppression. Sikh characters in these novels help Hindu population at various times even if they themselves get hurt in the process. Then, there are characters like Lakhpat Rai who act as informants of Mughal rulers. In the novel *Sundri*, it has been shown that Lakhpat Rai was responsible for the mass killings of Sikhs done under the rule of Mir Mannu. In order to seek personal vengeance, he got a huge number of Sikhs murdered through Mughals. The character of Pandit in *Bijay Singh* presents another Hindu character that is avaricious of money and power. In order to fulfill his

selfish motives, he cheats Bijay Singh and his family, informs about their location to Mughal soldiers and plans to get them killed but is unsuccessful in his attempts and pays heavily in the end for his misdeeds. These Hindu characters show Hindus' compliance with Mughals and their opportunistic nature.

Also, Hindu community is presented as orthodox. Various members of the community are out casted on the basis of doubt that they have defiled their religion. In the novel *Sundri*, Dharam Kaur is banned from entering into Hindu community by orthodox Brahmins, after her rescue from a Mughal by Sikhs. She along with her husband then converts to Sikhism. Also, the protagonists of both the novels are converts from Hinduism who adapt Sikh way of life because of it being the purest path of worshipping God. Bhai Vir Singh's presentation of Hindus converting into Sikhism can be seen as a jibe taken at the *shuddhi* ceremonies performed by Arya Samajis to convert Sikhs into Hinduism.²⁵

Muslim characters in the novel have been portrayed as cruel oppressors. Mughal rulers, blinded by power and money, turned unjust to the masses. Even common Muslim folks take advantage of their position in the novels and are indifferent towards the harsh treatment inflicted towards Hindus and Sikhs. The portrayal of Mughal rulers in the novels can be seen in accordance with the character of colonial rulers during Bhai Vir Singh's times. Mughal rulers' insistence on converting Sikhs into Islam can be seen as symbolic of the activities carried out by Christian missionaries. Along with marking differences of Sikhs from Hindus and Muslims, these novels also taught Sikhs to protect their faith from the missionaries. As Bhai Vir Singh says in *Bijay Singh*, 'The Singhs and Singhnis of today should take a lesson from Sheel Kaur's resoluteness in her faith. Curiously, the enmity of the Mughals did not do as much harm to the Sikhs of those days, as is being done by representatives of other religions today . . . Do not get taken in by their love. Their gifts, their sweet words, their respectful treatment of you will swallow your identity completely'.²⁶

In the novel *Bijay Singh*, Sheel kaur tells her son, 'to consider someone as good or bad according to his caste is not acceptable in our faith . . . a person is good or bad according to his actions; sinful acts make a person evil'.²⁷ But critics have read the portrayal of different religious communities in the novels not to be innocent and bias free. Bhai Vir Singh's portrayal of different religious communities have often been viewed as part of his project of defining Sikh identity as different from other communities and upholding Sikh values in contrast to Hindu and Muslim way of life. However, one explanation could be that the genre of novel being in its infancy, the characters emerge as types and not as well rounded and full-fledged persons in their own right and these novels remain to be the didactic tales not well developed in the form and style.

VI

The construction of Sikh identity in these novels has been viewed in alliance with the Tat Khalsa identity promoted by Singh Sabha Movement. The Singh Sabha Movement promoted the Khalsa identity for Sikhs which they acquired after a certain rite of passage which then set certain conventions to be followed, for example not cutting hair. The Sahajdhari Sikhs, on the other hand, did not follow these principles of outer appearance. The non-recognition of Sahajdhari Sikhs by Singh Sabha was the topic of long debates. Tat Khalsa identity was exclusive of Sahajdhari Sikhs. Christine Fair views the character of Sheel Kaur, a Sahajdhari Sikh as a 'narrative trope intended to gloss the very serious Singh Sabha question to where the Sahajdhari should be located in the Khalsa panth'.²⁸

Bhai Vir Singh's Sikh community presented in these novels, however, is inclusive of Sahajdhari identity. The Sikh identity demarcated from Hindus and Muslims and purged of so-called superstitious beliefs is in alliance with Tat Khalsa Identity promoted by Singh Sabha Movement. But Bhai Vir Singh dissents from Tat Khalsa by presenting a Sikh community in the novels which is inclusive of Sahajdhari Sikhs. The character of Sheel Kaur in *Bijay Singh* and Kaura Mal in *Sundri* are presented as equal members of Sikh community. Kaura Mal²⁹ has been called 'a true Sikh'³⁰ in the novel. Bhai Vir Singh creates an inclusive Sikh community in these novels. Also, his Sikh community is a utopian one and is free of all the differences of castes. Anshu Malhotra has clearly shown in her work *Gender, Caste, and Religious Identities* the existence of caste among Sikhs. However, Bhai Vir Singh's Sikh community in these novels is free of caste distinctions. 'All Sikhs are alike. There is no distinction between a Jat or Khatri... Had there been caste, there would not have been such bravery. This is the result of unity and friendship among them'.³¹ These novels thus present a utopian Sikh community and an ideal Sikh.

VII

Bhai Vir Singh's construction of a distinct Sikh Identity, however, is at times fraught with ruptures from within the novels and the characteristics defining Sikhs at times are ambiguous. It is the case in certain situations when certain characteristics of being a Sikh remain ambiguous. For example, in *Sundri* members of Sikh community hunt animals and eat their meat when they run out of other food sources. Meat eating was prohibited by Singh Sabha Movement and a Sikh was supposed to follow this norm. Even in a later novel by Bhai Vir Singh titled *Satwant Kaur* the narrator says that a Sikh is not allowed to eat flesh of any other creature. This hints at the obscure task of clearly defining Sikh identity.

There is also a rupture in the novels in the sense that the novels feature characters which they otherwise aim to exclude from the utopian Sikh community. The character of fakir in the novels hints at the shared beliefs which were supposed to be renounced by an ideal Sikh. The character of the fakir seems to disrupt the

purpose of the novel and his character most righteously belongs to the genre of *Qissa*. In the novel *Sundri*, Bijla Singh disguises himself as a fakir in order to rescue Sundri. This fakir is shown singing in Arabi and Farsi and certain couplets from the *Qissa* of *Hir Ranjha* before moving to singing Bani of Guru Nanak. The secular choice of material hints at the shared devotional practices prevalent among people. In the novel *Bijay Singh*, the protagonist is rescued and taken care of by a Muslim fakir named Sabar Shah. These fakirs are presented as personalities whom everyone else fears as well as revere. The character of fakir does not fit well in Bhai Vir Singh's scheme as it disrupts the well demarcated, ideal and utopian Sikh community. Malhotra while talking about characters disguising as Fakirs in *Sundri* says, 'In this scenario of changeable identities the question that arises is how 'essential' are religious identities? To put it another way, confused significations of religious identities throw to doubt the idea of their immutability, even for Sikhs'.³²

VIII

Bhai Vir Singh's novels thus function for the creation of a well demarcated Sikh Identity separate from Hindus and Muslims though there remain certain elements in the novels which hint at the ambivalence in the process of such construction. Also, Bhai Vir Singh constructs an ideal image of Sikh man and woman, who are equally brave, valorous, strict adherents of faith, and upholders of virtue of chastity. The Sikh community presented in the novels is a utopian casteless community exclusive of other religions but inclusive of all Sikhs. These novels participated well in the process of construction of Sikh Identity carried out by Singh Sabha Movement, at times propagating the characteristics of Tat Khalsa and at other times diverging from it. These earliest novels emerge as didactic tales preaching Sikhs the value of remaining true to their faith by presenting them with the image of an ideal Sikh.

Endnotes:

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3. Anshu Malhotra, 'Bitter Sweet Imaginings: Form, Gender, and Religion in Bhai Vir Singh's *Sundari*,' *Sikh Formations*, 18 Feb. 2020, doi:10.1080/17448727.2019.1674519, p. 2.
4. *Ibid.*, p.5.
5. Farnina Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010, p. 62.
6. Anne Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representations in Sikh Tradition*, Noida: Oxford UP, 2013 p.12.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

9. Bhai Vir Singh, *Bijay Singh*, Translated by Bimal Kaur, New Delhi: Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, 2014, p. 93.
10. The rule of Mughal emperor Mir Mannu is considered to be the time of the highest number of Sikh persecutions. Mir Mannu was infamous for the atrocities committed against Sikhs. In 1746 a large number of Sikhs were mass persecuted, and the event is therefore referred to as Sikh holocaust (Chotta Ghallughara).
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13. Gurpreet Bal, 'Construction of Gender and Linguistic Identities in the First Punjabi Novel *Sundari*,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 41, no. 32, Aug. 12-18, 2006, pp. 3528-3534, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/4418570.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 3529.
15. There have been varied views regarding Fair's reading of the novel. While Mohinder Singh considers Fair's statement general and repudiates any such aim behind the translation of novels, Doris R. Jakobsh considers Fair's classification of first and second life of novel useful and extends the argument by referring to the adaptation of novel into an animated movie as its third life.
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21. Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994, p. 309.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
23. Farina Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010, p. 151.
24. Perso-Arabic Script used for writing Punjabi.
25. Kenneth W. Jones, 'Ham Hindu Nahin: Arya Sikh Relations, 1877-1905,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 32, no. 3, May 1973, pp. 457-475, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2052684, p. 463.
26. Bhai Vir Singh, *Bijay Singh*, Translated by Bimal Kaur, New Delhi: Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, 2014, p. 79.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
28. C. Christine Fair, 'The Novels of Bhai Vir Singh and the Imagination of Sikh Identity, Community, and Nation,' *Academia*, https://www.academia.edu/2881815/The_Novels_of_Bhai_Vir_Singh_and_the_Imagination_of_Sikh_Identity_Community_and_Nation, p. 118.
29. Anshu Malhotra in her essay "Bitter Sweet Imaginings" has thrown light on Bhai Vir Singh's ancestry. Though not mentioned in the novel *Sundri* itself, Malhotra points to the fact of Kaura

- Mal being Bhai Vir Singh's ancestor. She is of the view that insertion of Kaur Mal's character is Bhai Vir Singh's coming to terms with his past and justification of the actions of his ancestors.
30. Bhai Vir Singh, *Sundri*, Translated by Bimal Kaur, New Delhi: Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, 2013, p. 72.
 31. ---, *Bijay Singh*, Translated by Bimal Kaur, New Delhi: Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, 2014, p. 36.
 32. Anshu Malhotra, 'Bitter Sweet Imaginings: Form, Gender, and Religion in Bhai Vir Singh's *Sundari*,' *Sikh Formations*, 18 Feb. 2020, doi:10.1080/17448727.2019.1674519, p. 19.

ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਦੌਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ: ਇੱਕ ਪੜਚੋਲ

*ਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ

**ਬਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਿਰਕ

ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਸ਼ਹਿਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਉਭਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਵਪਾਰਕ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਰੂਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਭਰਦੀ ਹੈ।¹ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਬਜ਼ਾਰ ਲਈ ਪੈਦਾਵਰ ਉਹ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਰੁਤਬੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।² ਇਸ ਜ਼ਜ਼ਬੇ ਦੇ ਤਹਿਤ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਾਦਰ ਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਛੋਹ ਨੇ ਸੋਨੇ 'ਤੇ ਸੁਹਾਗੇ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ। 1947 ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਅਤੇ 1966 'ਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਖੇਤਰਫਲ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਬੇਸ਼ੱਕ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤ ਸੁੰਘੜ ਗਿਆ ਪਰ ਖੇਤੀ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਤੋਟ ਨਾ ਆਉਣ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਖੇਤੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੋਜ਼ੀ ਰੋਟੀ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਵਸੀਲਾ ਸੀ ਉੱਥੇ ਜਿਆਦਾਤਰ ਉਦਯੋਗ ਵੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਖੇਤੀ ਉਪਰ ਹੀ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ 73 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਅਤੇ 16 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀ ਆਬਾਦੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਿਰਬਾਹ ਖੇਤੀ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੈਦਾਵਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ।³ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਖੇਤੀ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੀ ਆੜ ਹੇਠ ਬੋਹਲਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹਥਿਆਉਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ। ਸੱਤਾ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਰਤ ਚੂਸਣ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਲਮੇਰਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਹੈ। 1857-58 ਵਿਚ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਭੂਮੀ ਕਰ 150.30 ਲੱਖ ਪੌਂਡ ਸੀ ਜੋ 1936-37 ਤੱਕ ਵਧ ਕੇ 230.90 ਲੱਖ ਪੌਂਡ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।⁴ 1934-35 ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਕੁਲ 10 ਕਰੋੜ 65 ਲੱਖ ਦੀ ਆਮਦਨੀ ਦਾ 65.5 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਬਿਆਨੇ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ।⁵ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਫ਼ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਦਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਬੋਝ ਢੋਹ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਗ਼ਦਰ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸਤਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ 'ਤੇ ਭਾਰ ਦਾ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਤੁਸਾ ਭੋਲਿਓ ਮੂਲ ਨਾ ਖਬਰ ਲੱਗੀ, ਕੀਤਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡੀਆਂ ਦਾ।

ਖੱਟੀ ਤੁਸਾ ਦੀ ਖੂਹ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਂਦੀ, ਮਿਲਦਾ ਸੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪੰਝੀਆਂ ਦਾ।⁶

ਨੈਹਰਾਂ ਖੂਹਾਂ ਜ਼ਮੀਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮਾਲਕ, ਕਾਹਦੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਭਰੋ ਲਗਾਨ ਵੀਰੋ।

ਉਲਟਾ ਚੋਰ ਕੋਤਵਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਪਿਆ ਡਾਟੇ, ਜ਼ਬਰਨ ਮੰਗਦੇ ਤੀਣਾਂ ਲਗਾਨ ਵੀਰੋ।⁷

1944-45 ਵਿਚ 32.4 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਏਕੜ ਖੇਤੀ ਰਕਬੇ 'ਚੋਂ 16.5 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਏਕੜ 'ਤੇ ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਸਹੂਲਤਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਸਨ।⁸ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਇਸ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਵੱਲ ਸਾਰਥਕ ਕਦਮ ਪੁੱਟੇ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਦਾ ਪੇਟ ਭਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਚਾਵਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਰੁੰਬਲਾਂ ਹਰ ਸਾਲ ਲਗਾਨ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਛ ਲਈਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਅੱਧੀ ਸਦੀ (1901-1947) ਦੌਰਾਨ ਲਗਾਨ ਵਿਚ 250 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਵਾਧਾ⁹ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਚਰ ਗਿਆ। ਇੱਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਦਾ ਬੋਝ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਕੰਡ ਭੰਨਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਆਫ਼ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੈਰਾਨ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ।

*ਸਹਾਇਕ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਚੰਡੀਗੜ

** ਸਹਾਇਕ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਜੀ.ਐੱਚ. ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਗੁਰੂਸਰ ਸਧਾਰ।

ਪਲੇਗ ਦੀ ਮਾਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਨਸੀਬ ਨਾ ਹੋਈਆਂ। ਮਹਾਂਮਾਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਵੀਹ ਲੱਖ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਕਾਰਨ (1901-1911) 2.2 ਫੀਸਦੀ ਆਬਾਦੀ ਘੱਟ ਗਈ ਸੀ¹⁰: ‘ਦੇ ਕਰੋੜ ਬੰਦੇ ਸੋਲਾਂ ਸਾਲ ਅੰਦਰ, ਦੁਖ ਭੁਖ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹਲਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ’।¹¹ ਲੰਮਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਮਲਕੀਅਤ ਨੇ ਭੋਇ ਵਿਕਣੇ ਤਾਂ ਬਚਾਈ ਰੱਖੀ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਵਿਚਲਾ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਰੁਜ਼ਨਾਉਂਦਾ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ। ਬੇਗਾਰ ਦੀ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ’ਤੇ ਮੁੜਕਾ ਡੋਲਣ ਦੇ ਹਾਣ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਵੰਸ਼, ਸਲਤਨਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਜਰੂਰ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਪਰ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਘੁਣ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਖੋਖਲਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ।

ਲੁੱਟ ਦੇ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਨੇ ਅੰਨਦਾਤੇ ਦੇ ਝੋਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਤਾ ਕਮੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਣ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਬੰਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਨੇ ਹਲ ਵਾਹਿਕ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਕੀ ਸੌਂਪ ਕੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ। ਆਰਥਿਕ¹² ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਨਕਸ਼ੇ ’ਤੇ ਉਭਾਰ ਹੋਇਆ।¹³ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਨਬਜ਼ ’ਚੋਂ ਦਰਦ ਟੋਹਣ ਦੇ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕੀਤੇ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ’ਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਖੇਤੀ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਅਪਣਾਈਆਂ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਤੋਂ ਹਲ ’ਤੇ ਟਿਕਾਉਣਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਚਣੌਤੀ ਸੀ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਐਲਾਨ ’ਤੇ ਇਕ ਲੱਖ ਵੀਹ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਜਮ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋਏ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਿਕੰਦਰ ਪੋਰਸ ਦੇ ਯੁੱਧ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੇ ਤੀਰ ਕਮਾਨ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਸਨ।¹⁴ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਐਲਾਨਾਮੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਸ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਿਰਿਆ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ। ਬੋਰਡ ਆਫ ਕੰਟਰੋਲ (1849-53) ਦੁਆਰਾ ਨਕਦੀ ’ਚ ਲਗਾਨ ਵਸੂਲਣ ਦੇ ਦੂਰਗਾਮੀ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਨਿਕਲੇ। ਹੈਨਰੀ ਲਾਰੈਂਸ ਦੀ ਅਸਹਿਮਤੀ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਬਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਜਾਨ ਲਾਰੈਂਸ ਦੀ ਪਿੱਠ ਥਾਪਤੀ। ਨਵੀਂ ਹਕੂਮਤ, ਨਵੀਂ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ, ਨਵੀਂ ਤਕਨੀਕ, ਨਵੇਂ ਬੀਜ, ਅਤੇ ਨਵੀਂ ਮਸ਼ੀਨਰੀ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਬਰੂਹੀਂ ਦਸਤਕ ਦਿੱਤੀ। 1929 ਵਿਚ 14207 ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ 7120 ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਸੰਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਯਾਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਜਿਆਦਾਤਰ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਅਜੇ ਵੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਮਸ਼ੀਨਰੀ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਇਸਤੇਮਾਲ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ।¹⁵ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਫਸਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਮੰਡੀ ਲਈ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਕਰਨ ਲੱਗਾ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਹੇਠ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੁਨਾਫੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਖਮਿਆਜ਼ਾ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੱਧ ਭੋਗਿਆ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਯੁੱਧਾਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨੀ ਖੇਤੀ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਪਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਿੰਗੇ ਆਯਾਤ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਕੰਗਾਲ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਉਪਜੇ ਮੰਡੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਤਮ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਤੋੜ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਕਪਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਮਾਨਚੈਸਟਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਿੱਲਾਂ ’ਚੋਂ ਧੂੰਆਂ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਲੱਗਾ। ਹੌਲੀ-ਹੌਲੀ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਰੋਜ਼ਮਰਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਵੱਲ ਝਾਕਣ ਲੱਗੇ। ਨਿੱਜੀ ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਦੇ ਹੱਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਲਪੇਟ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਕ ਤੰਦਾਂ ਦਮ ਤੋੜ ਗਈਆਂ। ਕਪਾਹ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਯਾਤ 0.24 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਮਣ ਤੋਂ 2.1 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਮਣ ਜਦਕਿ ਅਨਾਜ ਤੇ ਦਾਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਯਾਤ 14.0 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਤੋਂ 40.80 ਮਣ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਨਿਰਯਾਤ ਦੀ ਕੁਲ ਕੀਮਤ 71 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ 522 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਹੋ ਗਈ।¹⁶ 1872 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ 4 ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਯਾਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜੋ 1918-19 ਵਿਚ ਵਧ ਕੇ 2437 ਲੱਖ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।¹⁷ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅੰਦਰ ਅਨਾਜ ਦੀ ਬੁੜ ਵੱਲ ਗੋਰੀ ਅਫਸਰਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਨੇ ਕਦੇ ਤੱਕਿਆ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਅੰਕੜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਖੇਡ ਅੰਦਰ ਭੁੱਖੇ ਪੇਟ ਦੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਾਈ ਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਬਹੁਤਾਤ ਬੋਹਲਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਘਰੀਂ ਦਾਣੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਬਚਦੇ।

ਖੇਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਐਗਰੀ ਹੋਰਟੀਕਲਚਰ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ (1851), ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ (1906) ਅਤੇ ਲਾਇਲਪੁਰ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਐਗਰੀਕਲਚਰ ਕਾਲਜ (1909) ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ। 1868 ਤੇ 1887 ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਤਹਿਤ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ।¹⁸ ਪਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਨਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਨਤੀਜਨ 19ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰ ਤੱਕ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਕਰਜ਼ੇ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਹੇਠ ਆ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਖੇਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਤ੍ਰਾਸਦੀ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਸੀ। 1911 ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ 300 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਦਾ ਕਰਜ਼ਾ ਸੀ ਜੋ 1937 ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ 1800 ਕਰੋੜ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।¹⁹ ਕਈ ਥਾਵਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਡਰਾਉਣੀ ਸੀ। 1901 ਵਿਚ ਮੁਜ਼ਫਰਗੜ੍ਹ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚਲੇ 164 ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਸਿਰਫ਼ 1 ਕਿਸਾਨ ਹੀ ਕਰਜ਼ੇ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਸੀ।²⁰ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਾਂਗ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਕਰਜ਼ੇਦਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਜਗਰ ਨਿਗਲ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ। 1919 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਖੇਤੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਸਿਰ 'ਤੇ 75 ਕਰੋੜ ਦਾ ਕਰਜ਼ਾ ਸੀ।²¹ 1920 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ 80 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਕਰਜ਼ੇਦਾਰ ਸੀ।²² ਸਭਿਅਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਦਮਗਜ਼ੇ ਮਾਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਅਸਭਿਅਕ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਰਤੂਤਾਂ ਲਾਲੇ ਦੀ ਰੱਤ ਨਿਚੋੜ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ। 1929 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ 1359 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਕਰਜ਼ ਸੀ ਜਦ ਕਿ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਤੋਂ ਔਸਤ ਸਲਾਨਾ ਆਮਦਨ 900 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਸੀ²³: ਦਾਹੜੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਮੁੱਛਾਂ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਵਿਆਜ ਦੀ ਔਸਤਨ ਦਰ 15 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਸੀ ਤੇ 1925 ਈਸਵੀ ਤਕ ਕੁਲ ਵਿਆਜ ਦੀ ਸਲਾਨਾ ਰਕਮ 13 ਕਰੋੜ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਬਣਦੀ ਸੀ।²⁴ ਕੋਹਲੂ ਦੇ ਬੈਲ ਵਾਂਗ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਚੱਕਰਵਿਊ ਵਿਚ ਫਸ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਨਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਇਆ,
ਕੱਤੇ ਦੀ ਕਪਾਹ ਵੇਚ ਕੇ।
ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਨ ਛੁਡਾਈਏ,
ਬੰਦ ਫਿਰ ਬਣ ਜਾਣਗੇ।²⁵

ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦਾ ਆਕਾਰ ਦਿਨ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਿਨ ਸੁੰਘੜ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਆਮ ਤਿੰਨ ਮੈਂਬਰੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਲਈ ਰਹਿਣ ਸਹਿਣ ਤੇ ਲਗਾਨ ਭਰਨ ਲਈ 24 ਏਕੜ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ 'ਚ 92 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਕੋਲ 25 ਏਕੜ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਸੀ।²⁶ 1921 ਵਿਚ 50 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਤਾਂ 5 ਏਕੜ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਘੱਟ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਸੀ।²⁷ ਅੰਨਦਾਤਾ ਕੁੱਲੀ, ਗੁੱਲੀ ਤੇ ਜੁੱਲੀ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਸੱਖਣਾ ਸੀ: 'ਰੋਟੀ ਕੱਪੜਾ ਮਿਲੇ ਨਾ ਮੂਲ ਸਾਨੂੰ, ਨੰਗ ਭੁੱਖ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਗੁਵਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ'।²⁸ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਹਲਾਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ਿਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਕਰਜ਼ਾ ਲੈਣ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਰਸਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਬਚਦਾ। 1933-34 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਬੈਂਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਰਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕੁਲ ਰਕਮ 90 ਲੱਖ 84 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਰੁਪਏ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਰਕਮ ਦਾ 13.63 ਫੀਸਦੀ ਹਿੱਸਾ (12 ਲੱਖ 38 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਰੁਪਏ) ਜ਼ਿਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਦੀ ਅਦਾਇਗੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ।²⁹ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ 12 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਜ਼ ਲਗਾਨ ਦੀ ਅਦਾਇਗੀ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ 11 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਜ਼ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਖਰੀਦਣ ਲਈ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ।³⁰

ਮੇਹਨਤ ਕਰੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਖਾਵੇ ਬੈਠ ਲੰਦਨ, ਉਲਟਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਹੈ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਆਇਆ।
ਤੈਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਤੇ ਖਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੁੜਦੀ, ਕਰਜ਼ਾ ਚੁਕਕੇ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਤਾਰ ਆਇਆ।³¹

ਬਾਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਸਬਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਹਾਲਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਮਾੜੀ ਸੀ। 1930 ਦੇ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕੇਵਲ 13 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਭੂਮੀ ਮਾਲਕ ਹੀ ਕਰਜ਼ੇ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਸਨ ਜਦਕਿ ਯੂ.ਪੀ. ਵਿਚ 40 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ, ਬਿਹਾਰ ਤੇ ਉੜੀਸਾ ਵਿੱਚ 35 ਤੋਂ 60 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ 41 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਸਨ। ਔਸਤਨ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਸਿਰ ਕਰਜ਼ ਦੇ ਹਿਸਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਬਾਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਸੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਕਰਜ਼ਾ 628 ਰੁਪਏ ਸੀ ਜਦਕਿ ਬਿਹਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ 189 ਰੁਪਏ, ਯੂ. ਪੀ. ਵਿਚ 104 ਰੁਪਏ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤ ਵਿਚ 199 ਰੁਪਏ ਸੀ।³² ਇਸ ਸਭ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਇਹ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ 1901 ਤਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ 4

ਲੱਖ 13 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਏਕੜ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਵਿਕ ਗਈ ਜਦਕਿ 1919 ਤੱਕ ਢਾਈ ਕਰੋੜ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਏਕੜ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਗਹਿਣੇ ਪੈ ਗਈ ਸੀ।³³ ਜਿਵੇਂ-ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਕਰਜ਼ ਜਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਦਾ ਗਿਆ ਉਵੇਂ-ਉਵੇਂ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਧੰਦਾ ਜਵਾਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਗਿਆ। ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਖਰੀਦੋ ਫਰੋਖਤ ਦੀ ਵਸਤੂ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਗਿਆ। 1885 ਵਿਚ ਇੱਕ ਏਕੜ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ 30 ਰੁਪਏ ਸੀ ਜੋ 1916-17 ਵਿਚ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ 227 ਰੁਪਏ ਹੋ ਗਈ।³⁴ ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਜਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਧੰਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ।³⁵ ਲੁੱਟ 'ਤੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਮਾਣ ਰਹੇ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੀ ਵਾਸਤਾ ਸੀ? ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਅੰਦੋਲਨਕਾਰੀ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੀ ਭਾਗੀਦਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਉਮੀਦ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ।³⁶ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਧੰਨੇ ਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੀਰੂਵਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਤੂਤਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਖੂਹ ਉਜਾੜ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਬੂਟੇ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਗੀ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਸਿਉਂਕ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਲਾਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ 'ਤੇ ਕੁੰਡਲੀ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਬੈਠੀ ਰਹੀ: ... ਸ਼ਾਹ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਚੱਟੇ ਰੁੱਖ ਮੁੜ ਹਰੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਏ: ਉਤੋਂ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਦਾੜੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਾਲੇ ਕਾਂ।

ਭੁਖੇ ਮਰਨ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਤੇ ਰੁਲਣ ਦਰ ਦਰ, ਹੋ ਗਏ ਜਿਸਮ ਤੀਲਾ ਘੱਟ ਘੱਟ ਕਰਕੇ।

ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰ ਕੁਝ ਪੈਣ ਨਾ ਦੇਣ ਪੱਲੇ, ਕਿਰਤੀ ਮਰਨ ਖੱਟੀਆਂ ਖੱਟ ਖੱਟ ਕਰਕੇ।³⁷

ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੱਧਦੀਆਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੈਰ ਕਾਸ਼ਤਕਾਰਾਂ ਅੰਦਰਲੀ ਮਾਲਕੀ ਭੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਬੇਜ਼ਮੀਨਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਮਾਲਕ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਖੇਤੀ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਉਸਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹੀ ਰਿਹਾ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਰੁਤਬਾ ਗਵਾਚ ਗਿਆ। 1875-76 ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਕੁਲ 44 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਸੀ। ਮੌਰੂਸੀ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਸਬਤ ਗੈਰ ਮੌਰੂਸੀ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ। 1932-33 ਵਿਚ 47 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਤੇ ਗੈਰ ਮੌਰੂਸੀ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਜਦਕਿ 1926-27 ਵਿਚ 8.3 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਰਕਬੇ 'ਤੇ ਮੌਰੂਸੀ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਖੇਤੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।³⁸ ਇਹੀ ਹਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਿਆਸਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਹਲ ਵਾਹਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਰਜਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਅਰੰਭਿਆ।

ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ Land Improvement Loans Act (1883) ਅਤੇ Agriculturists Loans Act (1884) ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤੇ। ਪਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੰਦਹਾਲੀ 'ਚੋਂ ਨਾ ਨਿਕਲ ਸਕਿਆ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਰਾਇਲ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਨ ਐਗਰੀਕਲਚਰ ਦੀ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਾਫ਼ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ “ਕਰਜ਼ਾਈਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਨਾਲ ਨਜਿੱਠਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਸਾਧਨ ਬੁਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਸਫਲ ਰਹੇ”। ਅਖੀਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਖਿਸਕਦੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ 1900 ਈਸਵੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਭੂਮੀ ਇੰਤਕਾਲ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਿਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਗੈਰ ਕਾਸ਼ਤਕਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਕਾਸ਼ਤਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਖਰੀਦ ਸਕਦਾ।³⁹ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਕਿੱਤੇ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਕਾਸ਼ਤਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਗੈਰ ਕਾਸ਼ਤਕਾਰ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਵੰਡ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਜਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਮੋਰੀਆਂ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਤਕਦੀਰ ਨਾ ਬਦਲੀ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਗ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਜ਼ਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਲੈ ਲਈ।⁴⁰ ਸੋਧ ਅਤੇ ਵਜੂਦ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਕਦਮ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਬੁਰ ਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਲਗਾਨ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਰਕਮ ਉਗਰਾਉਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਉੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ ਲਗਾ ਕੇ ਮੋਟਾ ਲਾਭ ਵੀ ਕਮਾਇਆ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪਾਲਕ ਦੇ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਹੇਠ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੰਗਾਲ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। 1943-44 ਵਿਚ ਕੁਲ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਲਗਭਗ 10 ਕਰੋੜ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਸੀ।⁴¹ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ ਲਗਾਨ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਕਠੋਰ ਸੀ। ਅਨਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਡਿੱਗਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਪਾਬੰਦ

ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। 1920 ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਉਚੇ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਨ ਤਾਂ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ 10 ਰੁਪਏ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਏਕੜ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਦੀ ਆਮਦਨ ਦਾ 1/6 ਤੋਂ 1/7 ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਸੀ। ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੀਵੇਂ ਪੱਧਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਸ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਦੀ ਦਰ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 1931 ਵਿਚ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਈ ਜਗ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਹਿਰੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ।⁴² 1907 ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਤਕ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਹਿਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਆਈ ਲਾਗਤ ਹੀ ਵਾਪਿਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਬਿਆਨੇ ਮਾਲੀਏ ਤੋਂ ਸਲਾਨਾ 7 ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਲਾਭ ਵੀ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗਾ।⁴³ 1945-46 ਤਕ ਕੁਲ ਲਾਭ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਨਹਿਰੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੇ ਅਸਿੱਧੇ ਖਰਚ ਦਾ 4 ਗੁਣਾ ਸੀ।⁴⁴ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਲਈ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਉਸ ਭੇਡ ਵਰਗਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਮਾਲਿਕ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਨ ਤੇ ਮਾਸ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਨਕਦ ਲਗਾਨ, ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਰਾਓ ਚੜਾਓ, ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਰੋਪੀਆਂ: ਹੈਜ਼ਾ, ਕਾਲ, ਪਲੇਗ ਆਦਿ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਗੁਰਬਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖਰ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਹਲਾਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਲਦ ਅਤੇ ਬੀਜ ਖਰੀਦਣ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ੇ 'ਤੇ ਦਸਤਕ ਦੇਣੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਸੀ। 1869 ਦੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੱਖਣ ਪੂਰਬ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ 40 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਧਨ ਗਵਾ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ।⁴⁵ ਖੇਤੀ-ਬਾੜੀ ਸਹਿਕਾਰੀ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਇੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੀ ਵਧੀ। 1921 ਵਿਚ 6605 ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਸਹਿਕਾਰੀ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 196,691 ਸੀ ਜਦਕਿ 1931 ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 16279 ਹੋ ਗਈ ਜਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ 499,314 ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸਨ। ਪੇਂਡੂ ਕਰਜ਼ੇ ਹੇਠ ਹੋਈ ਜ਼ਮੀਨੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਦਾਲਤੀ ਮੁਕੱਦਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ। 1868 ਵਿਚ ਸਿਵਿਲ ਮੁਕੱਦਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 1,51,827 ਸੀ ਜੋ 1883 ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ 2,72,601 ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਸ਼ਾਹਕਾਰੇ ਵਾਂਗੂੰ ਵਕਾਲਤ ਦਾ ਕਿੱਤਾ ਵੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਿਸਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਹੋਇਆ।⁴⁶ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ 2.50 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਲੋਕ ਤੇ ਬਾਲਿਗ ਅਦਮੀ ਵਸੋਂ ਦਾ ਲਗਭਗ 40 ਹਿੱਸਾ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਗਵਾਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਲਾਨਾ ਅਦਾਲਤ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸਲਾਨਾ 3 ਤੋਂ 4 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਇਹ ਅਦਾਲਤਾਂ ਖਾਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ।⁴⁷ ਮਹਿੰਗੇ ਅਦਾਲਤੀ ਮਕੜੀ ਜਾਲ ਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਿਆ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਖਾਲੀ ਝੋਰੇ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਹੀ ਲੁਟਾ ਬੈਠਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਅਸਮਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਡਿੱਗ ਕੇ ਖਜੂਰ 'ਤੇ ਲਟਕਣ ਵਰਗੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਆਦਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਗੋਲਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਬੇੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਵੀ ਵੱਟੇ ਪਾਏ: 'ਮੈਂ ਗੱਜ ਕੇ ਮੁਕੱਦਮਾ ਜਿੱਤਿਆ, ਹੋਇਆ ਕੀ ਜੇ ਭੋਂ ਵਿਕ ਗਈ'।⁴⁸

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਭੱਵਿਖ ਦੇ ਮਾਡਲ ਹੇਠ ਵੈਰਾਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਈ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਹਿਰੀ ਬਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਕਿਸਾਨੀਦਾ ਦਮ ਘੁੱਟਣ ਲੱਗਾ। ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਜ਼ਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਰੀ ਜ਼ਰਮਾਨੇ ਉਗਰਾਹੇ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗੇ। ਅਖੀਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲੈਂਡ ਕਲੋਨਾਈਜ਼ੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਿਲ (1906) ਤਹਿਤ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੇ 25 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਵਾਧੇ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਸਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਤੋੜ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਕਿਸਮਤ ਦੇ ਚੱਕਰਵਿਊ 'ਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਕੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ 1907 ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਰੋਹ ਦਾ ਬਿਗਲ ਵਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਪਗੜੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਜੱਟਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਨੇ ਦਰਸਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਪੰਜਾਬ 'ਤੇ ਅਜੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਰੰਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਫਸਲੀ ਰੰਗ ਦੀ ਹਰੇਵਾਹੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਹਰਿਆਲੀ ਲਿਆ ਸਕੀ ਸੀ।⁴⁹ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਨੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਭੁਲੇਖਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਬੁੱਕਲ ਖੋਲ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਝੰਗ ਸਿਆਲ ਦੇ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਬਾਕੇ ਦਿਆਲ ਦੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ 'ਪਗੜੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਜੱਟਾ' ਇਸ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਤਰਾਨਾ ਬਣੀ। ਕਵਿਤਾ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਆਂਕਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਪੱਗੜੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਓ ਜੱਟਾ, ਪਗੜੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਓਏ।

ਫਸਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾ ਗਏ ਕੀੜੇ, ਤਨ ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਲੀੜੇ।

ਭੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਖੂਬ ਨਚੋੜੇ, ਰੋਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਬਾਲ ਓਏ।
ਪੱਗੜੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਓ ਜੱਟਾ...

ਅਖੀਰ ਗਵਰਨਰ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰਨ ਇਸ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਦ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਇਸ ਜਿੱਤ ਦਾ ਸਿਹਰਾ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਫ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਹੁਕਮਰਾਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਲੁੱਟ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਥੰਮੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ। ਸ. ਅਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੀ ਤਕਰੀਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ “... ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਕੋਈ ਸੌਖੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਖਤ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੱਟ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਮੀਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਹੀ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਾਜ ਤੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਹਨ। ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਹਾਕਮ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਾਮੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਬੇਨਤੀਆਂ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਮ ਭਰੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਘ੍ਰਿਣਾ ਯੋਗ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਾਮੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ। ਡਿਪਟੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਰ, ਪੁਲਸ ਕਪਤਾਨ ਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅਫ਼ਸਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਨੌਕਰ ਜਾਂ ਖਿਦਮਤਗਾਰ ਹਨ”।⁵⁰ ਇਹ ਮਾਈ ਬਾਪ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਮਿੱਥ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਵੰਗਾਰ ਸੀ।

ਗੁਰਬਤ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਫੌਜ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣਿਆ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਜੰਗ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਗਭਗ ਅੱਧੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੀ। ਲੜਾਈ ਦੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਹਰ 25 ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਆਦਮੀਆਂ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇੱਕ ਫੌਜੀ ਸੀ, ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਦਰ 500 ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇੱਕ ਸੀ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਤੇਜ਼ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ 1,80,000 ਏਕੜ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਵਧੀਆ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਲੜਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਫ਼ਸਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਰੱਖੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ 15,000 ਏਕੜ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਫੌਜ 'ਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਨਾਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਰੱਖੀ ਗਈ।⁵¹ ਜੇਕਰ ਅੰਕੜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਿਸਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ 71.5 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਫੌਜੀ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ।⁵² ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਬੜੀ ਚਲਾਕੀ ਨਾਲ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਉੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਯੁੱਧ ਦੇ ਮੈਦਾਨਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਵੀ ਬਾਖੂਬੀ ਇਸਤੇਮਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਮਿਸਾਲ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਯੁੱਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਲੁਕੀ ਛਿਪੀ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ। ਯੁੱਧ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੇ 22 ਮਿਲਟਰੀ ਕਰਾਸ ਇਨਾਮਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ 14 ਇਕੱਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਆਏ।⁵³ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ 225 ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਜੰਗ ਦੇ ਯੁੱਧ ਫੰਡ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਸੂਲੇ।⁵⁴ ਪਾਈ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਲੁੱਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਕਰਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਘੱਟ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਬਾਕੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸਹਿ ਨਾਇਕ ਭਾਈ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਯੂਰਪ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਂ ਜੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਉਹ ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੂੰਹ 'ਤੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਰਾਗੜ੍ਹੀ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਯਾਦਗਾਰਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਸਿੱਧ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਸਨ।⁵⁵ ਇਹੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਸਵਾਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ: ‘ਸੱਤ ਸੱਤ ਰੁਪਏ ਤੇ ਵੇਚਦੇ ਹੋ, ਹੀਰੇ ਜੇਹੀ ਬੇਕੀਮਤੀ ਜਾਨ ਵੀਰੋ।’⁵⁶ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਹੇਠ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਹਲ ਵਾਹਿਕ ਤੋਂ ਮੁੜ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਿਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਬੜੇ ਕੂਟਨੀਤਿਕ ਢੰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਵਸੀਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਜ ਕੇ ਲੁੱਟਿਆ। ਫੌਜ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਉਪਰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਆਸਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। 1928-29 ਵਿੱਚ ਪੈਨਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਰਕਮ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋਈ। ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਲੰਧਰ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦਾ ਸਲਾਨਾ ਮਾਮਲਾ 18 ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਜੇ ਪੈਸਾ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੇ ਫੌਜ ਤੋਂ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਇਆ ਉਹ 25 ਤੋਂ 30 ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਸੀ। ਫੌਜੀ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਮਾਇਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਕਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਇਸ਼ਾਰੇ ਲਈ ਕਾਫੀ ਹੈ: ‘ਵਸਣਾ ਫੌਜੀ ਦੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਬੂਟ ਸਣੇ ਲੱਤ ਮਾਰੇ’।⁵⁷ ਉੱਤਮ

ਖੇਤੀ, ਮੱਧਮ ਵਪਾਰ ਤੇ ਨਿਖਿੱਧ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਅਤੀਤ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਈ।

ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਨਾਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਪਰਤਾਂ ਹਨ। ਖੇਤੀ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੱਢੀਆਂ ਨਹਿਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਸੇਮ ਦੀ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਵੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ। 1946-47 ਵਿਚ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ 13 ਜ਼ਿਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ 2 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਏਕੜ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਸੇਮ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਸੀ। ਨਹਿਰੀ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਸੀ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਜ਼ਿਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚਲੀ 2.4 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਏਕੜ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ 1 ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਏਕੜ ਰਕਬਾ ਵਾਹੀ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਜ਼ਮੀਨੀ ਸੇਮ ਨੇ ਕਪਾਹ ਦੇ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਉਪਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਬੁਰਾ ਅਸਰ ਪਾਇਆ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਦੂਸ਼ਿਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਮਲੇਰੀਆ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਮਹਾਂਮਾਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਫੈਲਾਓ ਹੋਇਆ। 1925-30 ਵਿਚ ਬੁਖਾਰ ਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਲੇਰੀਏ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਮੌਤਾਂ ਕੁਲ ਮੌਤ ਦਰ ਦਾ 2/3 ਸਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਮੌਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਰ ਉਪ ਮਹਾਂਦੀਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਸੀ।⁵⁸ ਭੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਾਰਤਕ ਵਿਚ ਉਲੇਖ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ 'ਲੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਰੋਟੀ ਖੁਣੋ, ਲੀੜੇ ਖੁਣੋ ਹਰ ਸਾਲ ਮਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਵੈਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ...'।⁵⁹ ਭੂਮੀ ਲਗਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਕਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਚੱਕਰ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਪਾਦਕ ਕੋਲ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਜੋਗਾ ਅਨਾਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਬਚਦਾ। ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰਨ ਉਹ ਵਪਾਰਕ ਫਸਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਜਾਉਂਦਾ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਖਾਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮੀ ਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਹੀ ਸੀ।⁶⁰

ਯੂਰਪ ਵਿਚ 14ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਵਿਦਰੋਹ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮੁਗਲਾਂ ਵੇਲੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਵਿਦਰੋਹ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਘੇਰਾ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ 200 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ 77 ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਵਿਦਰੋਹ ਹੋਏ।⁶¹ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਅੰਦੋਲਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਜਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਨੀਲ ਵਿਦਰੋਹ ਦੀ ਦਾਸਤਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਨੀਲ ਦਰਪਣ ਰੁਮਾਂਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਰ੍ਹੇ ਰੱਖ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੰਦਾਂ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬੌਧਿਕ ਵਰਗ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਚਿਣਗ ਲਾਈ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਕਲਮ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਬਣਿਆ ਇਹ ਇੱਕ ਲੰਮਾ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਉਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸਵਾਲ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਲ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਬਿਪਨ ਚੰਦਰ ਦਾ ਮਤ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤੀ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਵਿਦਰੋਹ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਲੜੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਦਰੋਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਾਇਰਾ ਤੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।⁶² ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਭੁੱਲ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤੀ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਜ਼ਿਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਤਾਮਾ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਨੇ 1930 ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪੂਰਨ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ? ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਦਰਦ ਦੇ ਫੋੜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਆਪ ਮੁਹਾਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਦੇ। ਬਿਨਾਂ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਕੱਚੀ ਗੜ੍ਹੀ ਕਿਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਗਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦੀ। ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਤਾਂ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਵਰਤਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਹ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜ਼ਿਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਾਨ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਅਦਾਇਗੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਹਾਨੀਕਾਰਕ ਹੈ।⁶³ 1930 ਦੇ ਸਿਵਿਲ ਨਾ ਫੁਰਮਾਨੀ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾਨ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਅਦਾਇਗੀ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਸਵਾਲ ਵੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖਧਾਰਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਮੁੱਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖੋਂ ਪਰੋਖੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ? ਸੁਮਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 1937 ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਬਣੇ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਮੰਡਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗਿਆ। ਇਥੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਗੱਲ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸੱਤਾ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਵੀ ਲੜ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਬਿੱਲੀ ਸਰਾਣੇ ਦੁੱਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੰਮਣਾ। ਬਿੱਲੀ ਗੋਰੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਭੂਰੀ, ਬਿੱਲੀ ਤਾਂ ਬਿੱਲੀ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਤੀ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਜੋ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਝਲਕਾਰਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ 'ਤੇ ਸੰਵਾਦ

ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਕ ਸੱਥ ਥੱਲੇ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਕਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਦੀਵੇ ਜਗਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਭਰਮ ਸਿਰਜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਬਾਲਟਰਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਗੁਹਾ ਦੀ ਟਿੱਪਣੀ 'ਤੇ ਗੌਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਦੇਖਣੇ ਪੈਣਗੇ। ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਣਹੋਂਦ ਦੀ ਆੜ ਹੇਠ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈਣੀ। ਇਹ ਧੁੰਦਲੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪੰਨਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਹਾਸੀਆਂਗਤ ਹੀ ਬਣੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ।

1929 ਦਾ ਮਹਾਨ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਮੰਦਵਾੜਾ ਚਾਰ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਕ ਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਮਦਨ ਅੱਧੀ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਣ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਦਾ ਭਾਰ ਘਟਾਇਆ ਨਾ ਗਿਆ। ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਅਭਿਆਨਾ ਘੱਟ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਗੈਰ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਮੈਂਬਰ 1 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੀ ਰਾਹਤਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਗਵਰਨਰ ਇਨ ਕੌਂਸਿਲ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੇਵਲ 36 ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੀ ਰਾਹਤ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ।⁶⁴ 1929 ਦੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਮੰਦਵਾੜੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਲਗਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਕਟੌਤੀ ਫਸਲੀ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਨਿਗੁਣੀ ਸੀ। 1931 ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਭਾਰਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਏਕੜ 'ਚੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਆਮਦਨ 8 ਰੁਪਏ ਹੈ ਜਦਕਿ ਲਗਾਨ ਤੇ ਭੂਮੀ ਕਰ ਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਇੱਕ ਏਕੜ 'ਤੇ 11 ਰੁਪਏ 8 ਆਨੇ ਬਣਦੀ ਸੀ।⁶⁵ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ 19ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰਲੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਤੋਂ 1920 ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਤੱਕ ਲਗਭਗ ਦੁੱਗਣਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।⁶⁶ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਰ, ਕਿਰਾਇਆ, ਲਗਾਨ ਘੱਟ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਪੁਰਜ਼ੋਰ ਮੰਗ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਲਗਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਮਦਨ ਕਰ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ 1924-25, 1930-34, 1938, 1939 ਅਤੇ 1946 ਵਿਚ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਚਲਾਏ ਗਏ।⁶⁷

20ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਏ ਗ਼ਦਰ, ਨਾ ਮਿਲਵਰਤਨ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲਹਿਰ, ਬੱਬਰ ਲਹਿਰ ਤੇ ਸਿਵਿਲ ਨਾ ਫੁਰਮਾਨੀ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਨੇ ਸਰਗਰਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਭਾ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੇ ਮਾਲੀਏ ਤੇ ਅਭਿਆਨੇ ਘੱਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਏ ਸਗੋਂ 1928 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਈ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਾਮਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾ ਸੰਪੰਨ ਸਮਾਜਵਾਦੀ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਵੀ ਲਿਆ।⁶⁸ 1926 ਵਿਚ ਬਣੀ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਰਸਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ 'ਸਾਡਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਕਾਮਾ' ਦੇ ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਹੇਠ ਗ਼ਰੀਬ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਦੇ ਮਸਲੇ 'ਤੇ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ।⁶⁹ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅੰਦਰ ਯੂਨੀਨਿਸਟ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਹੱਥ ਠੋਕੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਧੁਨਾ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਨੱਚਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਪੋ. ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਨਰਾਇਣ ਦੀ ਟਿੱਪਣੀ ਬੜੀ ਅਹਿਮ ਹੈ ਕਿ "ਯਾਦ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਬਣਾਵਟ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਤਬਦੀਲੀਆਂ ਆਮ ਜਲਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਂਹਾਂ ਉਲਾਰ ਕੇ ਲੈਕਚਰ ਦਿੱਤਿਆ ਜਾਂ ਧੌੜਲੇਦਾਰ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਣ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀਆਂ। ਹਕੂਮਤ ਸੱਭੋ ਜਾਣਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਜਾਣ ਬੁੱਝ ਕੇ ਭੋਲੀ ਬਣੀ ਬੈਠੀ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਇਉਂ ਆਖੇ ਕਿ ਕੰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੂੰ ਤੁਨ ਕੇ ਬੈਠੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਭੋਲੀ ਬਣੀ ਬੈਠੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ, ਜਦ ਤਕ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਕੰਨ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਣ ਲਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਠ ਖਲੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਵੇਲੇ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਬ ਜਾਂ ਜਾਤ ਦਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। ਛੋਟੇ ਜ਼ਮੀਦਾਰ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹੋਣ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ, ਇਕੋ ਬਲਾ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹਨ।"⁷⁰ 1920 ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਹਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ 1936 ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਕੁਲ ਹਿੰਦ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ।⁷¹ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਦੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੀ ਉਥੇ ਹੀ ਵੱਧ ਸੀ ਜੋ

ਖੇਤਰ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਲੰਘ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ।⁷² 1944 ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਲਗਭਗ 1,36,811 ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ।⁷³ ਲਾਲੋ ਇਕਜੁੱਟ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਭਾਗੋਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਗਾਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਬਿਟ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅੰਦਰ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਤਰਸਯੋਗ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਭੰਨੇ ਉਹ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉਹ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਮਦ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਚਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੁੱਟਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡੀ ਪਰ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤ ਬਜਿੰਦ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਅਪਣੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਲਈ ਲੜਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਬੇਸ਼ੱਕ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਖਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਦੂਣ ਸਵਾਏ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਵੱਲ ਸੀ। ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਪਰੋ ਕੇ ਕਿਰਤ ਨੇ ਖੇਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਪਾੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਲਿਆ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਡੀਆਂ ਚੁੱਕ (ਬਚਪਨ) ਕੇ ਹਲਾਂ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਤੁਰਨ ਦੀ ਜਾਚ ਸੀ।⁷⁴ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਤੰਗਲੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਦਾਣਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੂੜੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਅੱਡ ਕਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰ ਭਰਦੀ ਰਹੀ। ਦੇਸੀ ਤੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਤੋਕਾਂ ਰਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਖੂਨ ਚੁਸਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਪਰ ਉਹ ਭੂਤਰੀ ਸਰਸਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਛੱਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਗਵਾਉਂਦੇ। ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਸਵਾਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਤੀ ਗੋਰੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਲਈ ਵੰਗਾਰ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਦੋ ਧਾਰੀ ਸੀ। ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਲਈ ਲੜ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਉੱਥੇ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਲਈ ਪਿੜ ਮਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਡਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਗੋਰੇ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਭੁਰੇ ਦੇ ਬਹਿ ਜਾਣ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਪਰਿਵਤਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣਾ। ਉਹ ਸੋਕੇ ਤੇ ਡੋਬੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਹਿਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਪੁੰਗਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਗਵਾਉਂਦਾ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਹੱਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੱਕੀ ਹੈ ਹੋਈ ਚਾਬੂ
ਵਿਹਲੜ ਵੱਗ ਨਾ ਖੇਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੜਨ ਦੇਣਾ।
ਨਰਮ ਦੋਧਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੂਹੇ ਪਿੰਡਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ,
ਅਸੀਂ ਲੁੱਟ ਦਾ ਤਾਪ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਨ ਦੇਣਾ।⁷⁵

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ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ

*ਨਾਇਲਾ ਆਜ਼ਮ ਕਾਜ਼ੀ

ਪੰਜਾਂ ਦਰਯਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਤੇ ਮਨਮੋਹਣੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜਿਹਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਸੱਪਤ ਸਿੰਧੂ ਜਾਂ ਸੱਤ ਦਰਯਾਈ ਧਰਤੀ ਆਖਿਆਂ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ, ਐਡੀ ਬਖ਼ਤਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਭਰੀ ਏ, ਜਿਹਦੇ ਚੱਪੇ ਚੱਪੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਝਾਂਜਰਾਂ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਨੱਚਦੀ ਦਿਸਦੀ ਏ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਇੱਕ ਅੰਗ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਨਸ਼ੰਗ ਰੂਪ ਲੁੱਡੀਆਂ ਪਾਂਦਾ ਦਿਸਦਾ ਏ। ਸਿੰਧ ਵਲਾਇਤ ਆਰੀਆ ਜੱਟ ਦੇਸ਼ ਪੂਰੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਾਣ ਪੀਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਸਹਿਣ ਦੇ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਪੂਰੇ ਜਗਤ ਤੋਂ ਨਵੇਕਲਾ ਏ ਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਰੰਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੰਗਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਏ। ਧਰਤੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਸੋਨੇ ਦੀ ਚਿੜੀ ਵਾਂਗੂੰ ਵੱਡ ਮੁੱਲਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਏ। ਇਸੇ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਇਸ ਭਾਗਵੰਤ ਧਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੂਝਵਾਨਾਂ, ਸੂਝੀਹਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਾਧੂਆਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਫਕੀਰਾਂ ਧਰਤੀ ਆਖਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਵੇਕਲੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਗਣ ਧਰਤੀ ਵੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਹਿਆ ਏ। ਕਾਰਨ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਵੇ ਪਈ ਪਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਇਸੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੋਈ ਅਤੇ ਲੱਗ ਭੱਗ ਪੂਰੇ ਜੱਗ ਦੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਢ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਬੱਝਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਜੇ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਆਖ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਪਈ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਨਿਸਾਰਾ, ਉਸਾਰਾ ਤੇ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਇਸੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਆਖਣੀ ਕੁਥਾਂ ਨਾ ਹੋਸੀ ਨਾਲੇ ਇਹ ਆਖਣ ਵੀ ਸੋਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਨੇ ਸੱਚ ਏ ਪਈ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਰੰਗ। ਰਹਿਤਲ ਵਸੇਬ ਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਨਸਾਰੇ ਤੇ ਪਸਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੰਧੂ ਵਲਾਇਤ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਨੇ ਪੂਰੋਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਕਲਾਵੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਨੇ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਧਾੜਵੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਪਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਜੋਧਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਸੂਰਮਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮਿਆ ਤੇ ਕੁੱਛੜੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲ ਪੋਸ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਜੂਹ ਦੀ ਬਸਤੀ ਬਸਤੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਅੱਲਾ ਦੇ ਵਲੀਆਂ, ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਤੇ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਸਤਾਨੇ ਨੇ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਜੁਲਮ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਘੁੱਪ ਹਨੇਰਿਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਦੀਵੇ ਜਗਾਏ। ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਲੱਥ ਜਾਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਿੱਠੇ ਬੋਲਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੁਰਾਹੇ ਪਈ ਹੋਈ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਜਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੇ ਪਾਇਆ।

ਸਿਆਣੇ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਚਾਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਨਫ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਨੂਰਾ ਪੱਸਰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਏ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਦੋਖੀ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਵੱਢਾ ਟੁੱਕੀ ਦੇ ਕੋਝੇ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਧਿਆਨੇ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਏ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਲਿਕ ਸੱਚਾ ਉਸ ਪੱਸਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਨੂਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਾਵਨ ਲਈ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੁੱਕਰੋਂ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਸੂਰਜ ਚਾੜ੍ਹ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਏ। ਸਗਵਾਂ ਇੰਜ ਹੀ ਪੰਦਰਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਈਸਵੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਭਰੀ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਧਰਤੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਨਫ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਘੁੱਪ ਹਨੇਰਿਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਗਵਾਚੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਕਾਮਿਲ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇਵਨ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਸੁਭ ਹਸਤੀ ਸਿਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਹ 1469 ਈਸਵੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਬਹਿਲੌਲ ਲੋਧੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਤਲਵੰਡੀ ਰਾਏ (ਅੱਜ ਦੇ) ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਨਮੇ ਤੇ 1539 ਈਸਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਖੇ ਉਹਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਬੁੱਤ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਘਰਾਨੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਅੱਖੂ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੀ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਉਲਾਰ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਿਖਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਸੀ।

*ਖੇਜਾਰਥੀ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਲਾਹੌਰ (ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ)

ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਵਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਿਲਤ ਇਲਮਾਂ ਅਰਬੀ, ਫਾਰਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਬੱਸ ਚੋਖੀ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਚੇ ਗਏ ਅਦਬ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਨੀਝ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੀ ਸੁਰਤ ਸੰਝਾਨ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣਾ ਲਿਆ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਇਲਮ ਅਤੇ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਦਾ ਭਾਰ ਹੋਲਾ ਨਾ ਕਰ ਸਕੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਧਿਆਨ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਾਲਾਂ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਪੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਿਆਨ ਅਪਣੇ ਜੱਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਤੀ ਧੰਦੇ ਵੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਪਰ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਲਖਾਰੀ ਸਣ ਉਹ ਵਪਾਰੀ ਕਿੰਜ ਬਣਦੇ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਇਨਸਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੱਚੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੁੱਚੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹੱਟੀ ਖੋਲਣ ਦੇ ਰੀਝਵਾਨ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਹਲਾ ਕਰ ਜਾਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਵੀ ਸਦਾ ਫੈਜ਼ ਵੰਡਦੀ ਰਹਿਵੇ। ਨਾਲੇ ਉਹ ਇੰਜ ਦਾ ਸੌਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਇੱਛਆਵਾਣ ਸਣ ਜਿਹਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਕਦੀ ਘਾਟਾ ਪੈਣ ਦੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਨਾ ਰਹਿਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਹਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਕੂੜ ਜਾਂ ਫਰੇਬ ਦਾ ਮਾਸਾ ਵੀ ਰਲਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਝੰਡਾ ਉਚੇਰਨ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਤੇ ਆਏ ਸਨ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੱਕ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਨਾਅਰੇ ਮਾਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਤੇ ਜੱਗ ਮਾਇਆ ਨੂੰ ਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਵੱਲ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਉੱਕਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਖਾਂਦਾ। ਇਸ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਉਹ ਦੁਨੀਆਦਾਰੀ ਵੱਲ ਕੰਡ ਕਰਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਾ ਜੱਪਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ।

ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਪੰਥ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕਈਆਂ ਦੇਸਾਂ ਪਰਦੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ, ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਟੀਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਪਰਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਵੰਨ ਸਵੰਨ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਵਰਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਥੋੜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਗੋਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਨੀਝ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਪਰਖਿਆ। ਉਹ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਵੀ ਗਏ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਂ ਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ, ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ, ਪੰਡਤਾਂ, ਮੋਲਵੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਇਲਮੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਇੰਜ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਲਮ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਬੋਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਚੋਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਮਨ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਸੌਦਾ ਅਪਣੀ ਝੋਲੀ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ। ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਨੀਝ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਸੁੱਚੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ, ਇੱਕ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ, ਲੋਕ ਪਿਆਰ ਅੰਦਰ ਧਰਮੀ ਨਖੇੜੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਫਿਕਰ ਦਾ ਉਚਾਨ ਨੀਵਾਨ ਇੱਕ ਜੋ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਪੰਥ “ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ” ਦਾ ਨੀਂਹ ਪੱਥਰ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਉਹ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦੇ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਇਖਲਾਕੀ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਲਨਹਾਰ ਵੀ ਸਣ। ਉਹ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਸੇਬ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਰੀਝਵਾਨ ਸਣ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਆਪ ਧੜਾਪੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤੇ “ ਚੰਗਾ ਜੱਗ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਨੀਏ ਆਪ ਕੋਲੋਂ” ਦੀ ਫਲਾਸਫੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਸਿਖਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਧੁਰਾ ਬਣਾ ਲਿਆ। ਉਹ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਸੇਬ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਨਾ ਦੇ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ ਸਨ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਲਾਲਚੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਭੀ ਹਾਕਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਂ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਸੋਚ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਲਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਜੋਧਿਆਂ ਵਰਗੀ ਉਹ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਤਾ ਭਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਿਹਨੇ ਉਤਰੀ ਲਿਹੰਦੇ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਤਗੜੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਇੱਤਹਾਸ ਉਤੇ ਡੂੰਘਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਾਇਆ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਬੁੱਤ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਘਰਾਨੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਅੱਖ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੀ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਇੱਕ ਖੁਦਾ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਦੇ ਹੱਕੇ ਸੱਚੇ ਪਰਚਾਰਕ ਸਣ।

ਕੋਈ ਸੂਫੀ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ, ਤਬਕੇ, ਜਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਗੂ ਨਈਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਲਈ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਏ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਦਾ ਬੁਹਾ ਹਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਹਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਲਈ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਏ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹਨੇ ਆਪੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੱਖ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਵੀ ਇੰਜ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ ਸਭਾਹ ਦੇ ਅੱਲਾ ਲੋਕ ਜੀ ਸਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਚੋਲਾ ਪਾਕੇ ਫਕੀਰੀ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਟੀਚਾ ਬਣਾ ਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਭਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਏਕਤਾ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਨੇਕੀ ਦੀ ਰਾਹੇ ਪਾਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਉਹ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਤੀਰਥ ਅਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦਰਗਾਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਪੁੱਜ ਕੇ ਸੂਫੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਾਧੂਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਵਰਤਨ ਵਧਾਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੱਕ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਕਲਾਮ ਵੱਲ ਝਾਤੀ ਪਾਇਆਂ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ

ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਏ ਪਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੱਕ ਧਰਮ ਲਈ ਨਈਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਲਈ ਏ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਅਮੁੱਲੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹਰ ਕੌਮ, ਨਸਲ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਭੰਡੀ ਨਈਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੱਕ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਦੂਏ ਦੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਕਢੇ। ਉਹ ਇੱਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਣ ਜਿਹਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਖਾਵਨ ਪੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਠਣ ਬੈਠਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਭੁੱਖਾ ਨਾ ਸੰਵੇਂ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਵੇਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਇੰਨਸਾਨਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਰੰਗ ਬਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਵੰਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੁਆੜੇ ਪਾਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੱਥੇ ਕਾਲਕ ਮਲੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਣ ਜੋ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਨਈਂ ਸੀ ਲੱਗਦੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਾਹਿਰੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਭੇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸਰੀਆਂ ਮੰਦੀਆਂ ਰੀਤਾਂ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਰਿਵਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਚੇਰਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਰਨਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸੇਧ ਵਖਾਈ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇ “ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਏ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਏ” ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮੀ ਵੰਡ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਅਪਣੀ ਕਾਢ ਏ ਜਿਹਦੀ ਰੱਬ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਲੋੜ ਨਈਂ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕੋ ਖੁਦਾ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਤੀਕਰ ਅੱਪੜਾਇਆ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਲਾਮ ਤੇ ਝਾਤੀ ਪਾਈਏ ਤਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਸਾਂਝ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਦਿਸਦੀ ਏ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੱਕੇ ਸੰਗੀਆਂ ਬਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਰਹਿਣ ਇਸ ਸੱਚ ਤੇ ਪੱਕਿਆਈ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਰ ਲਾਦਾ ਏ।

ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਅਪਣਾ ਅੰਤਲਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਤੀਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਜੂਹ ਦੇ ਢੇਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾ ਬਸ ਚੇਲੇ ਸਨ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਹਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਲੜਨ ਮਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ । ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਪਿਆਰ ਦਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਹਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਪੁਆੜੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਿਲਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਗਲ ਦੀ ਪੱਕਿਆਈ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਏ। ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੀ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਨੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਏ ਪਈ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਬੜਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਦੇ ਨੇ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਹਲਾ ਕਰ ਜਾਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਖੀਆਂ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਵੱਡੇ ਜਾਣੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਈਂ ਲਈ ਰਾਹ ਵਖਾਊ ਨੇ। ਇਲਮੀ ਅਦਬੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਲਿਖਾਰੀਆਂ, ਕਵੀਆਂ, ਖੋਜਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਖਾਂਦਿਆਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀਰਿਆਂ ਮੋਤੀਆਂ ਵਰਗੇ ਅੱਖਰ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੇ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ, ਜੀਵਨ ਫਲਸਫੇ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਚੋਖੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਏ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਿਆਲਕੋਟ ਦੇ ਜੰਮਪਲ ਉਰਦੂ ਤੇ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਦੇ ਜੱਗ ਜਾਣੇ ਕਵੀ ਡਾ. ਇਲਾਮਾ ਇਕਬਾਲ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ” ਜਾਂ “ਮਰਦੇ ਕਾਮਿਲ” ਆਖਿਆ। “ਬਾਂਗੋ ਦੱਅਰਾ” ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਨਜ਼ਮ ਉਹਦਾ ਪੱਕਾ ਪੀਛਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਏ। ਵੇਖੋ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਮ “ਨਾਨਕ” ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਸ਼ੇਅਰ:

ਫ਼ਿਰ ਉਠੀ ਆਖਿਰ ਸਦਆ ਤੌਹੀਦ ਕੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸੇ
ਹਿੰਦ ਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਮਰਦੇ ਕਾਮਿਲ ਨੇ ਜਗਾਇਆ ਖੁਆਬ ਸੇ ।

ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਦਾ ਲਾਂਘਾ ਖੁੱਲਣਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਸੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਬੜਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਸੁਭ ਕਾਰਜ ਏ, ਇਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਤੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਪਾਸਿਉਂ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਢੇਰ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅੰਦਰ ਵੱਸਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਪੱਕਾ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ ਪਈ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਦੀ ਜੂਹ ਨੇੜੇ ਦੇ

ਵਸਨੀਕ ਪਿੰਡ ਗੱਖੜਵਾਲੀ, ਤਹਿਸੀਲ ਪਸਰੂਰ ਜਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਸਿਆਲਕੋਟ ਦੇ ਵਾਸੀ, ਜਗ ਜਾਣੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵੀ, ਕਿੱਸਾ ਕਾਰ, ਖੋਜਕਾਰ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਕਾਰ, ਪਤਰਕਾਰ, ਜੁਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਉਘੇ ਜਾਣੂ, ਤੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਚੋਖੀ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਆਪਸੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਨੇਹੇ ਲਈ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੱਖਦਿਆਂ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੱਸਾਂ (ਗੀਤਾਂ) ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਪਰਾਗਾ ਗੁਰਮੁੱਖੀ ਲਿੱਪੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਰਚਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਨੂੰ 2020 ਈ, ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਮਾਨ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਜੱਸ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜਲੰਧਰ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਦੇ ਨਾਮੀ ਅਖ਼ਬਾਰ “ਰੋਜ਼ਵਾਰ ਅਜੀਤ” ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੌ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਜੱਸਾਂ ਤੇ ਪੱਸਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਪਰੇਮ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਨੂੰ ਰਚ ਕੇ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਰਹਿਤਲ, ਵਸੇਬ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਂ ਰੰਗਤ ਚਾੜ੍ਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਸੇਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁੱਢਲੀਆਂ ਕ੍ਰਦਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਵੇਕਲੀਆਂ ਸਿਨਫਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਤੇ ਮਨਮੋਹਣੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਚੋਲਾ ਪਵਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਹਵੇਂ ਲਿਆ ਧਰਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਆਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੇ ਨਵੇਕਲੇ ਢੰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੇ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੀਂ ਪਈਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਨਫਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੇੜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਬਸ ਤੋੜ ਸੱਟਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਸਗੋਂ ਸੌਖੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੱਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਾਇਰੀ ਤੁੱਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਤੁੱਲ ਤੇ ਲਿੱਖ ਕੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਫੀਆਨਾ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਪੱਥਰ ਤੋੜ ਅਕੀਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦਾ ਸਰਨਾਵਾਂ। ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ ਆਪੂੰ ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਈ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰੀ ਇਸ ਖਿਆਲ ਨਾਲ ਦਿਲੋਂ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਹਨ ਪਈ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ ਦੂਆਂ ਪਾਸੇ ਵੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਫਿਕਰ ਫਲਸਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੱਕ ਧਰਮ, ਫਿਰਕ ਜਾਂ ਕੌਮ ਲਈ ਨਈਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਪੂਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਜਿਹਨੂੰ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਇੰਜ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ:

ਉਹ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਨਕਾਨੇ ਵੱਸਦਾ ਸ਼ਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਾਲਨਹਾਰ
ਹਰ ਹਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੀਨੇ ਲਾਵੰਦਾ ਹਰ ਹਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਦਾ ਪਿਆਰ ²

ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਸੁਨੇਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਮੁੱਲੀਆਂ ਤਸ਼ਬੀਹਾਂ, ਇਸ਼ਤਆਰਿਆਂ, ਰਦੀਫਾਂ ਕਾਫੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਨਾ ਸਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਐਡੇ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ ਢੰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੀਕਰ ਅੱਪੜਾਵਨ ਦਾ ਆਹਿਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਪਈ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਰ ਗੀਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੋਲ ਬੁਲਾਰੇ ਆਪ ਮੁਹਾਰੇ ਬੁੱਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਦੇ ਨੇ ਤੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਬੰਜਰ ਭੋਇੰ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਖੁਦਾ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਅੰਦਰ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਖੇਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਤਰੌਕਾ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਮੁੜ ਹਰਾ ਭਰਾ ਕਰ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਨੇ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੰਧੂ ਹੋਰੀ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਵਚਾਰ “ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ” ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇੰਜ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

“ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਦਾਨਸ਼ਵਰ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਖ਼ਾਸੀਅਤ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ, ਸਕਾਫਤ, ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਸੇਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਦਰਾਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਰਚ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਜਾ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਹੀ ਵਜ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਈ ਰੂਪਕਾਰਾਂ/ਸਿਨਫਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਖਿਆਲਾਤੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਿਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਤਖ਼ਲੀਕ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੇ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸਨੇ “ਜੱਸ” ਸਿਨਫ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਫੀਆਨਾ ਖਿਆਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ

ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਕਾਵਿ-ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਇਸੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੇ ਅਖ਼ੀਰਲੇ ਅਠ੍ਹਾਰਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਕ਼ਤ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀਆਂ ਕਥਾਵਾਂ, ਅਖਾਣ, ਟੋਟਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਉਕਤੀਆਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿਹਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੱਕੇ ਤੌਰ ਵੱਸੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ “ਜੱਸ” ਰੂਪਾਕਾਰ ਵਰਤਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਖ਼ਿਆਲਾਂ, ਕਥਾ ਅੰਗਾਂ, ਅਖ਼ਾਣਾਂ, ਟੋਟਕਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਉਕਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਢੁਕਵਾਂ ਰੂਪਾਕਾਰ ਹੈ”।³

ਇਸ ਲਿਖਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ, ਤਾਲੀਮਆਤ, ਸਿੱਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਪਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅੰਦਰ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਤੇ ਅਕੀਦਤ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੋ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਨਮ ਭੂਮੀ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਥਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੂਹਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਚਾਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਦੀ ਬਾਸ਼ਨਾ ਖਿੰਡੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਪੈਰ ਪਾਇਆਂ ਹੀ ਰੋਗੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਰੋਗ ਮੁੱਕ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਤੇਰ ਮੇਰ ਮੁੱਕੀ ਹੋਈ ਦਿਸਦੀ ਏ। ਉਸ ਮੁਹੱਬਤੀ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰੀ “ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਕਾਫੀ” ਦੇ ਸਰਨਾਵੇਂ ਹੇਠ ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਾਰੇ ਇੰਜ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

ਇਹ ਵਿੱਛੜਨ ਰੋਗ ਹਟਾਨੇ ਨੂੰ
ਆ ਚੱਲੀਏ ਰਲ ਨਨਕਾਨੇ ਨੂੰ
ਨਨਕਾਨੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਾਹੀ ਵੱਸਦਾ
ਪਰ ਉਹ ਅਪਣਾ ਭੇਤ ਨਾ ਦੱਸਦਾ
ਅੰਦਰ ਬਹਿ ਕੇ ਉਹੋ ਹੱਸਦਾ⁴

ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਜੱਸ ਦਾ ਸਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਲਾਮ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਤੁੱਕ ਦੇ ਤੁੱਲ ਤੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਉਤਰਦਾ ਏ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਾਫੀ, ਜੱਸ ਤੇ ਗੀਤ ਦਾ ਸਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਰਤ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਫਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਚੋਖੀ ਅਕੀਦਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਬਿਆਨਿਆ ਏ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਜੋ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ 70 ਸਾਲਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਵੱਲ ਝਾਤ ਪਾਵੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਹਿਣੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਕਿਤੇ ਫਰਕ ਨਈਂ ਦਿਸਦਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਜੋ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਵਿਖਾਇਆ ਉਹੋ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਪਨੇ ਕਲਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਪਣੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੜੀ ਘੱਟ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਏ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਖੁਦਾ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਉਸ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨਾਂਵੇਂ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੇ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਰਚੇ ਇਸ ਗੀਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

ਨਾਨਕ ਉਲਫਤ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਈ
ਭੁੱਬ ਦੀ ਬੇੜੀ ਬੱਨੇ ਲਾਈ
ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਆਨ ਵਖਾਈ
ਉਹਨੇ ਦੱਸਇਆ ਇੱਕ ਉੱਕਾਰ
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਹੈ ਬੱਲਕਾਰ
ਵਾਜੇ ਵੱਜਦੇ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ⁵

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੱਗ ਤੇ ਆਵਨ ਤੋਂ ਅਗਦੂੰ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਅੰਦਰ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਦੋ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਅਠਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਤੋਂ ਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਵੱਸ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਰਹਿਨਾਂ ਦਿਨੋਂ ਦਿਨ ਔਖਾ ਹੋਂਦਾ ਲਗਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਖੁਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਮੰਨਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦੇ ਦਾਅਵੇਦਾਰ ਸਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅਨਗਿਣੇ ਬੁੱਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਾਠ ਤੇ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਜ਼ਮਾਨੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਬੁੱਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ, ਨਿੱਕੀਆਂ ਜਾਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਤੇ ਝੂਠ ਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਾਮ ਤੋਂ ਹੱਟ ਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਅਰਾ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਇਨਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਥੋਂ ਦੀ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਰਸਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਜ਼ਖ਼ਮਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਨਾ ਬੱਸ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਦੇ ਫੱਹੇ ਰੱਖੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਪਿਆਰ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਖੁਦਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨ ਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੇ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਖੁਦਾ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਉਹ ਸਬਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜੋ ਅੱਵਲ ਦਿਨ ਤੋਂ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਆਖ਼ਿਰ ਤੀਕਰ ਰਹਿਵੇਗਾ, ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਖੁਦਾ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਜੋਗ ਨਈਂ। ਉਹਦੀ ਭਗਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਲਈ ਦੁਹੰਆਂ ਜਹਾਨਾ ਅੰਦਰ ਭਲਾ ਏ, ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੇ ਬੁੱਤ ਨਾ ਪੂਜੀਂ ਪੱਥਰ ਭਾਗ ਨਾ ਲਾਏ
ਜੋ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਵਕਤ ਵੰਜਾਏ ਲਾਭ ਕਦੀ ਨਾ ਪਾਏ
ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਿਕ ਇੱਕੋ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਸੀਨੇ ਲਾਏ
ਜੋ ਦੂਈ ਵੱਲ ਪੈਰ ਹੈ ਪਾਂਦਾ ਕੀਕਣ ਉਸ ਧਿਆਏ
ਅੰਦਰ ਬਾਹਿਰ ਉਸਦਾ ਹੋਵਨ ਜੋ ਸਮਝੇ ਸੋ ਪਾਂਦਾ
ਜਿਹਨੂੰ ਲਟਕ ਹੈ ਉਸਦੀ ਲੱਗਦੀ ਨਾ ਪੀਂਦਾ ਨਾ ਖਾਂਦਾ
ਉਹਦੀ ਭਗਤੀ ਬਾਝੋਂ ਇਥੇ ਨਾਹੀਂ ਮੂਲ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰਾ
ਉਹੋ ਵੈਹਿਲੀਂ ਫਸਿਆਂ ਤਾਈਂ ਫੜ ਕੇ ਪਾਰ ਲੰਘਾਏ 6

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਇੱਕ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਜਦੋਂ ਚਾਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਅਫਰਾਤਫਰੀ, ਜੁਲਮ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਤਵਾ ਪਿਆ ਤੱਪਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ, ਹਮਦਰਦੀ, ਇਨਸਾਫ ਰਵਾਦਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਈਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਮਰਤ ਪਿਆਰ ਸਖਾਇਆ
ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਬੂਟਾ ਲਾਇਆ
ਅਲਫੋਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਭੇਤ ਦਸਾਇਆ
ਨਫਰਤ ਰੋਗ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਮੁਕਾਇਆ 7

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਇੱਕ ਖੁਦਾ ਦੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਵਾਹਦਤ ਉਲ-ਵਜੂਦ ਦੇ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਤਬਕਿਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਵੰਡੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਮੰਨਣ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਇੱਕੋ ਈ ਹੋਕਾ ਸੀ ਪਈ ਰੱਬ ਇੱਕ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਵਨ ਲਈ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਲੂਕ ਠੀਕ ਕਰੋ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਨੂੰ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰੀ ਇੰਜ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

ਦੁਨੀਆ ਉਤੇ ਸਭਨਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਰੱਬ ਸਮੋਏ
ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੇ ਭੇਤ ਹੈ ਇਥੇ ਪਾਂਦਾ ਕੋਏ
ਖਾਲਿਕ ਖਲਕ ਸਮਾਏ ਇਹ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਜਾਏ

ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸਾਰੀ ਅਪਣੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਤੰਬੂ ਤਾਣੇ
 ਕਿਹੜਾ ਉਹਦੇ ਹੋਵਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਭੇਤ ਪਛਾਣੇ
 ਆਸ਼ਿਕ ਉਹਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੇ ਹੰਜੂਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਰੋਏ ⁸

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਸਬਰ ਕਰਨ, ਜਰਨ ਜਰਾਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਪੱਲੇ ਪਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਨਫਰਤ, ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਤੇ ਸਾੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਾਵਨ, ਆਪੋ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਿਆਰ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਨਾਲ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੂਜਬ ਰੱਬ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਇਨਾਤ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਪਿਆਰ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਉਤੇ ਰੱਖੀ ਏ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਏ ਪਈ ਉਹ ਜੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਦੇ ਦੀਵੇ ਜਗਾਏ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋਅ ਮਰਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਅਗਲੇ ਜਹਾਨ ਦੇ ਹਨੇਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਾ ਕੇ ਉਹਦੇ ਲਈ ਚਾਨਣ ਰਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੱਧਰ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇ:

ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੇ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦਾ ਬੱਸ ਮੁੱਲ ਪਿਆਰ
 ਹੈ ਇਹੋ ਪੱਕਾ ਆਸਰਾ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ
 ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਰੱਬ ਨੇ ਸੀ ਜਗਤ ਬਨਾਇਆ
 ਸੁੰਜੀ ਹੇਜ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਪਾਣੀ ਲਾਇਆ
 ਜੱਗ ਬਨਾ ਕੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਦਾ ਮੁੜ ਬੂਟਾ ਲਾਇਆ
 ਜਾ ਫਲਿਆ ਸੀ ਬੂਟਾ ਖਲਕਤ ਫਲੂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਏ ⁹

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਮੂਜਬ ਬੱਸ ਮੰਦਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਟੱਲ ਖੜਕਾ ਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਮਸੀਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਿਰੇ ਮੱਥੇ ਰਗੜ ਕੇ ਰੱਬ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਨਈਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਦੇ ਤੀਕਰ ਅੱਪੜਨ ਲਈ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਨੇਰ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹਦੀ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਦੀਵਾ ਜਗਾਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਏ। ਅੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਜੋ ਕਰਨਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਏ ਤੇ ਦੁਨਯਾਵੀ ਲਾਲਚ ਲੋਭ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਦਕ ਦੇ ਝਾਂਵੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਰਗੜ ਕੇ ਨਫਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਗੀ ਮੈਲ ਕੁਚੈਲ ਨੂੰ ਧੋ ਮਾਂਜ ਕੇ ਮਨ ਵਸਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਮਹਿਲ ਉਸਾਰਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਹੱਕੀ ਸੱਚੀ ਜਾਤ ਦਾ ਅਰਫਾਨ ਨਸੀਬ ਹੋ ਸੱਕਦਾ ਏ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੁਰਾਹੇ ਪਈ ਹੋਈ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਰਾਹੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

ਜਿੱਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਛੇ ਰੋਂਦਾ ਸੋਈ ਸਭਨਾਂ ਦੁਖਦੀ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਗੋਈ
 ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਚਾਹਿਤ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਫਿਰਦਾ ਸਿਰਦੇ ਉਤੇ ਨਵੀਂ ਨਰੋਈ
 ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਉਹਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਪਕਾਵੇ ਗੁਰੂਦਵਾਰ ਮਸੀਤੇ ਜਾਵੇ
 ਈਕਣ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਵਕਤ ਵੰਜਾਵੇ ਖਾਲੀ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਖੜਕਾਵੇ
 ਮੰਦਰ ਜਾਵੇ ਟੱਲ ਖੜਕਾਵੇ ਉਹਨੂੰ ਫੇਰ ਸਮਝ ਨਾ ਪਾਵੇ
 ਉਹਦੇ ਭੇਤ ਰਬਾਣੇ ਤਾਈਂ ਜੋ ਨੀਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਸਮਝੇ ਸੋਈ
 ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੇ ਪੰਧੂ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਬੰਦਾ ਸਮਝਣਹਾਰਾ
 ਡੁਬਦੇ ਵੇਖਣ ਮੁੜ ਨਾ ਸਮਝਣ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਇਥੇ ਡੁੱਬਣਹਾਰਾ ¹⁰

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ, ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਰਤਾਂ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਅਪਣੀ ਥਾਂ ਬਨਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਏ। ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਭਾਂਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡਾ ਏ ਜਾਂ ਨਿੱਕਾ, ਅਮੀਰ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਗ਼ਰੀਬ ਨਿਮਾਣਾਂ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਹਰ ਇੱਕ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਵਾਂ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਨਿਰਪੱਖ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖਾਂ ਦਰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਰਦ ਵੰਡਾਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਇਸੇ ਸਚਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਮਿਲੀ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅੱਖ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੀ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ, ਫਿਰਕਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਜਾਤ ਕੁਜਾਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਵੰਡਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਲਾਂਭੇ ਰੱਖ ਕਿ ਲੋਕਾਈ

ਨੂੰ ਤਸਬੀ ਦੇ ਮੋਤੀਆਂ ਵਾਂਗੂੰ ਪਰੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਭਾਈ ਬਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਨਾਲ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੱਚੀ ਸੁੱਚੀ ਯਾਰੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਦੀ ਏ।

ਬਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਤਾਈਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਹਬੱਤਾਂ ਪਾਲੇ
ਪਰਮਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਫਰਕ ਨਾ ਪਾਈਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਨ ਵਖਾਲੇ ¹¹

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕੰਡ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਵਰਜਦਿਆ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਰਾਹੇ ਪਿਆਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਮੱਤ ਦਿਤੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਪਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਉਚਾਣ ਨਿਵਾਣ ਆਪੂੰ ਲੰਘਣੇ ਚਾਹੀਦੇ ਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਔਖਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੱਥਾ ਲਾਣ ਦਾ ਹੌਂਸਲਾ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਏ। ਵੇਲਾ ਕਿੰਜ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਮੱਥਾ ਲਾਣ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਏ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਜ ਦੀ ਕਰਤ ਕਮਾ ਕਿ ਇਥੋਂ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਏ ਜੋ ਉਹਦੀ ਕਰਤ ਉਹਦੇ ਉਹਲਾ ਕਰ ਜਾਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਵੀ ਉਹਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਦੀਆਂ ਸੋਚਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਨੂਰ ਮਨਾਰਾ ਬਨਾਈ ਰੱਖੇ। ਇਹੋ ਹੀ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਨਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਵੇਖੋ:

ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰ ਦਮ ਆਖਦਾ ਤੂੰ ਕਦਮ ਵਧਆ
ਜੀਵਨ ਪੰਧੁ ਹਨੇਰ ਦਾ ਕਰਤਾਂ ਥੀਂ ਚਮਕਆ ¹²

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ “ਸੱਚਾ ਸੌਦਾ” ਵਾਲੀ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਵੀ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਹਬੱਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੀ-ਮਿਸਾਲ ਏ। ਉਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਦਰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਮੁਕਾਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਢੇਰ ਚੰਗਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਲਈ ਹੇਜ ਪਿਆਰ ਕੁੱਟ ਕੁੱਟ ਕਿ ਭਰਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਜਦ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਘਰੋਂ ਵਣਜ ਵੱਟੇ ਲਈ ਲਿਆਂਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਫਕੀਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਭੁਖ ਮੁਕਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਉਹ ਫਕੀਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਜ ਖਾਂਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖ ਕਿ ਡਾਢੇ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਹੋਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਕਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ “ਸੱਚਾ ਸੌਦਾ” ਆਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜਨਮ ਭੂਮੀ ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਾਠ ਲਈ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਸੱਚਾ ਸੌਦਾ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇ:

ਨਾਨਕ ਨੇ ਸੌਦਾ ਤੋਲਿਆ ਸਭ ਸੱਚੇ ਸੱਚ ਅਲਆ
ਉਹ ਟੁਰਿਆ ਬੋਝਾ ਝਾੜ ਕਿ ਸਭ ਫਕੀਰਾਂ ਹੱਥ ਫੜਆ
ਉਸ ਚੌਲਤ ਵੰਡੀ ਆਣ ਕਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਫਿਕਰਾਂ ਝਾਤੀ ਪਆ
ਮੁੜ ਕਾਹਦਾ ਸੌਦਾ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਜੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੋਲ ਰਹੇ
ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਰੂਪ ਹਯਾਤ ਦਾ ਜੱਗ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਬੋਲ ਕਹੇ ¹³

ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਹਬੱਤਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਥਕਾ ਦੇਂਦੀਆਂ ਨੇਂ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਵਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਕੁਝ ਪੱਲੇ ਵੀ ਨਈਂ ਪੈਂਦਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸਾਰੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਰੱਖਣ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਝਾਕੀ ਵੇਖਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਸਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਗਲੇ ਜਹਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਪਧਾਰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੰਜ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸਾਰੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਝਮੇਲਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਝਾ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂਕਿ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਇੱਕੋ ਸੱਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਲਾਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦੀ ਰਾਹੇ ਟੁਰਨ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇਂ, ਉਸ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦੀ ਰਾਹੇ ਟੁਰਿਆਂ ਕਦੀ ਘਾਟਾ ਪੈ ਹੀ ਨਈਂ ਸਕਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਕਤੀ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਥੋੜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਰ ਕੇ ਅਗਲੇ ਜਹਾਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਦਾ ਰਹਿਣਾਂ ਸੁੱਖ ਖੱਟ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਏ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਨੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਕੀਕੀ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਫੇ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਜ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ:

ਇਸ਼ਕ ਕਮਾਈਏ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਬੱਨੇ ਲਾਏ
 ਇਹ ਨੇੜੇ ਕਰਦਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਫਰਮਾਏ
 ਖਾਲਿਕ ਤੇ ਮਖਲੂਕ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਵਿੱਥ ਮੁਕਾਏ
 ਮੁੜ ਮਾਲਿਕ ਅੰਦਰ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਵਾਸ
 ਇਹ ਦੁਨੀਆਚਾਰੀ ਜੀਵਣਾ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਸ
 ਇੱਕ ਲਾਵੇ ਫੁੱਲੁ ਕਿਆਰੀਆਂ ਇੱਕ ਸੁੰਘੇ ਬਾਸ ¹⁴

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨਾ ਬੱਸ ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੇਕੀ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਦਿਤਾ ਏ ਸਗੋਂ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਬੜੇ ਨਵੇਕਲੇ, ਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਤੇ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਸਣ। ਉਹ ਧਰਮੀ ਫਿਰਕੇ ਬਾਜ਼ੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਰੋਧਤਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਤੇ ਰਲ ਬੈਠਣ, ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ, ਬਰੋਬਰੀ ਤੇ ਏਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਉਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਵੰਡ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਚੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਪੱਕੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਉਹ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਧਰਮ ਤਿਆਗ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਨਈਂ ਸਨ ਦੇਂਦੇ, ਸਗੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ, ਫਿਰਕਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਾਤਾਂ ਕੁਜ਼ਾਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡੇ ਹੋਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਪਿਆਰ ਤੇ ਅਮਨ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ ਸਨ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜ਼ਵਾ ਹੋਰੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਇੱਕੋ ਸੋਚ ਤੇ ਮੁਹਬੱਤ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਜ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇਂ।

ਵਰਕਾ ਨਫਰਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਪਾੜੂ ਉਹਨੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਫਿਕਰ ਦਾ ਜੁੱਗ ਵਖਾਲਣੇ ਨੂੰ
 ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਦੀ ਫਤਿਹ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਹੋਈ ਆਇਆ ਜੱਗ ਤੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਸਖਾਲਣੇ ਨੂੰ ¹⁵

ਧਰਮ ਅਧਰਮੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਨਫਰਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਰ ਮੁਕਾਏ
 ਇੱਕੋ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮਾਲਿਕ ਸਾਡਾ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਆਖ ਸੁਨਾਏ ¹⁶

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਕਈ ਲੰਮੇ ਪੰਧੂ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਤੇ ਸਦਾ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਜੋੜਨ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਲਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਥਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਹੀ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਈ ਜਿੱਸਰਾਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦਾ ਸਿਰਜਨਹਾਰ ਇੱਕੋ ਰੱਬ ਏ, ਇੰਜ ਈ ਸੱਭੇ ਜ਼ਾਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਉਸਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਵੀ ਉਸਦੇ ਹੀ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਪਈ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਾਤ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਨਈਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਉਹਦੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਨੇਂ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਆਖਿਆ ਪਈ ਉਸ ਰੱਬ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਹਦੇ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਏ। ਇਸ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਬਣਕੇ ਸੋਚਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਉਹ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਸੋਚਣ ਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਨਫਰਤ ਨਈਂ ਪੁੰਗਰੇਗੀ ਤੇ ਇੰਜ ਵਸੇਬ ਅਮਨ ਚੈਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਦਾ ਖੇਤਰ ਬਣਿਆ ਰਹਿਵੇਗਾ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜ਼ਵਾ ਹੋਰੀ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਬਾਰੇ ਇੱਕ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

ਫਰਕ ਨਾ ਪਾਵੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਜ਼ਾਤ ਕੁਜ਼ਾਤਾਂ ਦਾ
 ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਰਸੁ ਲੱਖ ਸਫਾਤਾਂ ਦਾ ¹⁷
 ਉਸ ਵੈਰ ਮੁਕਾਇਆ ਧਰਮ ਚੋਂ ਹੱਕ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਕਰੇ ਪੁਕਾਰ
 ਉਹ ਹਰ ਹਰ ਅੰਦਰ ਬੈਠ ਕਿ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੈ ਵੇਖਣਹਾਰ ¹⁸

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਬਨਾਈ ਜ਼ਾਤ ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਫਰਕ ਤੇ ਫੂਤ ਛਾਤ ਦੀ ਲਾਹਨਤ ਦੇ ਬੜੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਕੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਆਰੰਭਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਉਚੀ ਜ਼ਾਤ ਦਾ ਸਦਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਦ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ

ਸਮਾਜ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦੁਰਕਾਰਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੀਵੀਂ ਜਾਤੀ ਹੋਣ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਇਜ਼ੱਤ ਨਈਂ ਸੀ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਲ ਨਈਂ ਸੀ ਬਿਠਾਲਦਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਹਰ ਮਾੜੇ ਦੁਬੜੇ, ਨਿਮਾਣੇ ਨਿਤਾਣੇ ਤੇ ਨੀਵੀਂ ਜਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਸੀਨੇ ਲਾਈ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਜ ਦੁਨੀਆਦਾਰੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਮਾਲੀ ਜਾਂ ਜ਼ਾਤਾਂ ਗੋਤਾਂ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਪਾਏ ਗਏ ਫਰਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਖੇਧੀ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਸਭੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਝੇ ਰਿਵਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੱਜ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਭ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਕੱਠੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਲੀਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਦੇ ਜਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਆਖਦੇ ਨੇਂ:

ਜਾਤ ਕੁਜਾ ਤੋਂ ਫਰਕ ਨਾ ਪਾਵੇ
 ਨੇਰੀ ਵਸਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਰੁੱਸਨਾਵੇ
 ਹਰ ਹਰ ਤਾਈਂ ਸੀਨੇ ਲਾਵੇ
 ਅਮਰਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਤਾਰਾ
 ਮੇਟੇ ਰੰਗ ਨਸਲ ਦੇ ਝੇੜੇ
 ਉਲਫਤ ਦੇ ਉਹ ਪੰਧੁ ਨਬੇੜੇ
 ਸੁੱਤੀ ਅੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਨ ਉਘੇੜੇ
 ਉਸਦੇ ਬਾਝੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਚਾਰਾ
 ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਰੂਪ ਨਿਆਰਾ
 ਧਰਮ ਅਧਰਮੀ ਵੈਰ ਮੁਕਾਵੇ
 ਹਿਰਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਚਾਨਣ ਲਾਵੇ
 ਹਰ ਹਰ ਤਾਈਂ ਕੋਲ ਬਠਾਵੇ
 ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਦੇਵੇ ਰਹਿਮਤ ਦਾ ਬਾਰਾ
 ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਰੂਪ ਨਿਆਰਾ ¹⁹

ਉਹਨਾਂ ਗਿਆਨ ਵੰਡਦਿਆਂ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਨਈਂ ਸੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੱਠਿਆਂ ਬਿਠਾ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਸਦ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਲੋਕੀ ਬੈਠਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਇਹੋ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਪਈ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੇ ਤੋਂ ਚੰਗਾ ਕਿਸਰਾਂ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਕਿੰਜ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੀਕਰ ਅੱਪੜਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਏ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਧੁ ਕੀਤੇ ਤੇ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਲੇ 18 ਸਾਲ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੰਘਾਏ। ਗੁਰੂਦਵਾਰਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਨਾਰੋਵਾਲ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੱਕਰਗੜ੍ਹ ਤਹਿਸੀਲ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਨਿੱਕੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਵਸਤੀ ਕੋਠੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਰਾਵੀ ਦਰਯਾ ਤੋਂ ਥੋੜੀ ਵਾਟ ਤੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਤੋਂ 120 ਕਿਲੋਮੀਟਰ ਦੀ ਵਾਟ ਤੇ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਲੇ ਵਰਹੇ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਖੇ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਲੀ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਆਰਾਮ ਥਾਂ ਹੋਣ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਸਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਹ ਇੱਕ ਤੀਰਥ ਅੱਸਥਾਨ ਹੈ। ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਵੇਲੇ ਗੁਰੂਦਵਾਰਾ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਵੰਡ ਮਗਰੋਂ 56 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੀਕਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਪਣੇ ਇਸ ਗੁਰੂਦਵਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਡੀਕਵਾਨ ਬਣੇ ਰਹੇ। ਉੜਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ 550ਵੀਂ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ-ਗੰਢ ਦਾ ਜਸ਼ਨ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਰਾਹਦਾਰੀ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਜੋ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਬੜਾ ਚਾਵਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਵੇਲਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸੇ ਜੁਹ ਦੇ ਵਸਨੀਕ ਹੋਣ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਰਾਹਦਾਰੀ ਖੁਲ੍ਹਣ

ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਚਾਅ ਵਾਲਾ ਵੇਲਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਇਸ ਰਾਹਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਖੱਲ੍ਹਣ ਦੇ ਚਾਅ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ “ਲਾਂਘੇ ਦਾ ਗੀਤ” ਨਾ ਦੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ:

ਵੇਖੋ ਰਲ ਮਿਲ ਗਾਵਨ ਸਈਆਂ
ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਖੁਬਰਾਂ ਲਈਆਂ
ਉਜੜੀ ਵਸਤੀ ਪਰਤ ਵਸਾਈ
ਦੁਨੀਆ ਅੰਦਰ ਪਈ ਦੋਹਾਈ
ਮਾਲਿਕ ਮੁੜ ਕਿ ਰੋਣਕ ਲਾਈ
ਦੂਰੋਂ ਆਣ ਕਿ ਤੱਕਿਆ ਕਈਆਂ
ਵੇਖੋ ਰਲ ਮਿਲ ਗਾਵਨ ਸਈਆਂ
ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਖੁਬਰਾਂ ਲਈਆਂ
ਅਮਰੋਂ ਵਆ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਵੱਧੀ
ਨੇੜੇ ਵੱਸਤੀ ਲੋਆ ਹੈ ਲੱਗੀ
ਕਰਤਾਰਪੂਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੋਨਕ ਲੱਗੀ
ਦੁਨੀਆ ਅੰਦਰ ਧੁੱਮਾਂ ਪਈਆਂ
ਵੇਖੋ ਰਲ ਮਿਲ ਗਾਵਨ ਸਈਆਂ
ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਖੁਬਰਾਂ ਲਈਆਂ ²⁰

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਇਧਰ ਉਧਰ ਭਟਕਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਾਤ ਦੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਤੇ ਮਾਰਫਤ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਸ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਰੱਬ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੇ ਦਿਲੋਂ ਭਾਲਨ ਤੇ ਉਹਨੂੰ ਰਾਜੀ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੇ ਗੁਰ ਦੱਸੇ।

ਵਿੱਚ ਦਿਲ ਦੀ ਨੇਰੀ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਦੀਵਾ ਬਾਲ
ਦੂਰ ਨਾ ਜਾਣੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਬੱਸ ਨਾਨਕ ਚਿੱਤ ਬਿਠਾਲ ²¹

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦੀ ਨਾਪਾਇਦਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਬੇਸਬਾਤੀ, ਨੇਕ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਲਕੀਨ ਤੇ ਦੁਨਯਾਵੀ ਮਾਲ ਦੌਲਤ, ਐਸ਼ ਇਸ਼ਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਦੌਲਤ ਕਮਾਨ ਦਾ ਸਬਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜੋ ਜੀਂਦੇ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਮਰਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਦੁੰਗਾਂ ਜਹਾਨਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਦੀ ਭਲਿਆਈ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਬਣ ਦੀ ਏ:

ਬੰਦਿਆ ਜੱਗ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਦੀਵੇ ਬਾਲ
ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੇ ਬਾਝ ਅਮਲ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਈਂ ਜਾਨਾ ਨਾਲ
ਦੁਨੀਆ ਅੰਦਰ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਖੱਟਣਾ ਉਹ ਹੀ ਉਤਕ ਖਾਣਾ
ਜਿਹਨੇ ਚੰਗੀ ਕਰਤ ਕਮਾਣੀ ਜੱਗ ਤੇ ਨਾਮ ਕਢਾਣਾ ²²

ਦੌਲਤ ਮਾਲ ਖੁਜ਼ਾਨੇ ਇਥੋਂ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਨਾਲ ਲਧਾਵੇ
ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਵਨ ਲੱਗਿਆਂ ਇਥੋਂ ਖ਼ਾਲੀ ਹੱਥ ਹੀ ਜਾਵੇ
ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖੇ ਕਰਤਾਂ ਕਰੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਹੀ ਪਾਰ ਲੰਘਾਵੇ ²³

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਖਿੱਲਰੀ ਹੋਈ ਸਮਾਜੀ ਤੇ ਅੰਨ੍ਹੇ ਧੰਨ ਦੀ ਕਾਣੀ ਵੰਡ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਾਵਨ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਇਸ ਗਲ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਸਨ ਪਈ ਤਗੜੇ ਮਾੜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਰੱਤ ਨਚੋੜ ਨਚੋੜ ਕੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਖੁਜ਼ਾਨੇ ਭਰੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨੇ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਬਨਾ ਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਵੈਰ

ਪਾਲਦੇ ਨੇ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੌਲਤ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਕਾਣੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੀ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਨੇ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਕ ਕ੍ਰਦਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਤ ਪਾਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਦੇਸ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੁੱਖ ਦਰਦ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸੀਬਤਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਸ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਵਧੀ:

ਨਫਰਤ ਦੇਸ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਚੋਂ ਕੱਢੂ ਉਹਨੇ ਸੋਚਾਂ ਭੈੜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੰਦੀਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ
ਹੂੰਬ ਨਫਰਤਾਂ ਦੇਸ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਸੁਥਰਾ ਜੀਵਨੇ ਦਾ ਰੱਖਨ ਚਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ²⁴

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰਲੇ ਸਾਹ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀਤੇ। ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਤੀਕਰ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਲੋਂ ਮੰਨ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਚੋਖੀ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਅਤੇ ਅਕੀਦਤ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ, ਇਹੋ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਪਈ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਿਆਂ ਮਰਨ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਅਕੀਦੇ ਮੂਜਬ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਪੁਆੜਾ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੱਲ ਅਗਲੀ ਫਜਰ ਨੂੰ ਮਰਨ ਮਾਰਨ ਤੇ ਅੱਪੜਣ ਦਾ ਡਰ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਵਾਪਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ “ਚਾਦਰ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ” ਦੇ ਸਰਨਾਵੇਂ ਹੇਠ ਨਜ਼ਮੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੰਜ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਏ:

ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਜਦ ਉਹਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਗਲੇ ਜਗਤ ਪਧਾਰੇ
ਰੌਲਾ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਬਹਿ ਗਏ ਉਥੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਈ ਵੰਡਣਹਾਰੇ
ਮੁਸਲਮ ਆਖਣ ਬਾਬੇ ਤਾਈਂ ਇਥੇ ਹੈ ਦਫਨਾਨਾ
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਆਖਣ ਅਸਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਥੇ ਹੈ ਸੱਸਕਾਰ ਕਰਾਣਾ
ਮਰਨ ਮਾਰਨ ਤੇ ਤੁੱਲੇ ਹੋਏ ਆਖੀ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਹਾਰਨ
ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਤਿਤਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾਪੇ ਦੇਵੇਂ ਭੜਕਾਂ ਮਾਰਨ
ਆਖਣ ਫਜਰੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਅਜਮਾਈਏ ਜੋ ਜਿੱਤਸੀ ਲੈ ਜਾਵੇ
ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਬੈਠ ਸਿਰਾਣੇ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਵੱਢਣ ਆਵੇ
ਢਲਦੀ ਰਾਤ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਮੁੜ ਕੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇਆ
ਉਹ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਲੇ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਝਗੜਾ ਇੰਜ ਮੁਕਾਇਆ
ਚਾਦਰ ਥੱਲੇ ਫੁੱਲੂ ਸੀ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ ਜੋ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੰਡੇ
ਅੱਧੋਂ ਲਾਹ ਕੇ ਚਾਦਰ ਵੰਡੀ ਅਕਲੀਂ ਬੀਜੇ ਕੰਡੇ
ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਦਫਨਾਵਨ ਮੁੜ ਕਿ ਚਾਦਰ ਚ ਫੁੱਲੂ ਪਾਏ
ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਵੀ ਸੱਸਕਾਰ ਚਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਅੜੀ ਵਖਾਏ
ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਸਣ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਸਭ ਦੇ ਸਾਂਝ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲੀ
ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਉਹਲੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਅਪਣੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਮਾਲੀ ²⁵

ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿੱਖੇ ਗਏ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਜੱਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਾਇਜ਼ਾ ਲੈਣ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਨਿੱਤਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਈ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਸ ਦਿਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਜੇ ਉਹ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਵੀ ਸਰਨਾਵੇਂ ਲਈ ਕਲਮ ਚੁੱਕਦੇ ਨੇਂ, ਸੋਚ ਤੇ ਫਿਕਰ ਦੀ ਡੂੰਘਿਆਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਡੁੱਬ ਕੇ ਮਨ ਖਿੱਚਵੇਂ ਢੰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਰਤ ਕਿ ਬੜੀ ਦਿਆਨਤ ਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਸਰਨਾਵੇਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਜ ਬਿਆਨਦੇ ਨੇ ਪਈ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਉਣ ਨਈਂ ਦਿਸਦੀ, ਇੰਜ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਲਿਖਤ ਨੂੰ ਰਚ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਫਿਕਰੀ ਤੇ ਫੱਨੀ ਕਾਬਲੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਮਨਵਾਇਆ ਏ। ਨਸਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਲਾਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਨਕਾਰੀ ਲੱਭ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਏ ਪਰ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਸੌਖਾ ਕੰਮ ਨਈ

ਸੀਂ ਜੋ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਬੜੇ ਸੁਚੱਜ ਨਾਲ ਕਰ ਵਿਖਾਇਆ ਏ। ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਯਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਲਿਖਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਨੇਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਮਾਨੇ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਰੋਕਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਰਲਾ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਿਆਨਣ ਢੰਗ ਇਨਾ ਸਾਦਾ ਤੇ ਰਵਾਂ ਏ ਪਈ ਇੱਕ ਵਾਰੀ ਇੱਕ ਤੁਕ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਿਆਂ ਅਗਲੀ ਤੁੱਕ ਦੀ ਰਦੀਫ ਅਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਬਣਦੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਰਦੀਫ ਦਾ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਖ਼ਿਆਲ ਰਖਿਆ ਏ ਤੇ ਬੜੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ ਢੰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦੀਆਂ ਜੁਲਦੀਆਂ ਰਦੀਫਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਲਿਖਤ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਰ ਚੱਨ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਸ ਪਰਾਗੇ ਨੂੰ ਰਚਨ ਲੱਗਿਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਰਾਗ ਜਾਂ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਤੁੱਲ ਦੇ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਨਈਂ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਖਣ ਮੂਜਬ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਹ ਜੱਸ ਗੋਂ ਕੇ ਲਿੱਖੇ ਨੇਂ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਿਖਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਪਕੇਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਕ ਸਾਂਝ ਦੇ ਜਜ਼ਬਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਵਾਰ ਵਾਰ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਏ। ਜਿੱਸਰਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਅੱਖ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਸਨ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਸਲਾਮੀ ਦੇਂਦਿਆਂ ਇਸ ਲਿਖਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਕੌਮਾਂ, ਧਰਮਾਂ, ਦੇਸਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕਾਇਨਾਤ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਫਲਸਫੀਆਨਾਂ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਇਰੀ ਦਾ ਬਾਣਾ ਪਵਾ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਏ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਏ ਪਈ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਉਤੇ ਸੱਚੇ ਦਿਲ ਨਾਲ ਅਮਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਸਮਾਜ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਬੁਰਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕੋ ਹੱਕੇ ਸੱਚੇ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਆਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ, ਇੱਕ ਦੂਏ ਦਾ ਆਦਰ ਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਏ ਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਮਿੱਕ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਨ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਬਨਾ ਦਈਏ। ਇਹੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਏ।

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4. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ, 10
5. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 12
6. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 117
7. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 7
8. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 137
9. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 141
10. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 157
11. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 9
12. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 29
13. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 19
14. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 131
15. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 6
16. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 9

17. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 16
18. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 3
19. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 4-5
20. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 106
21. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 29
22. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 125
23. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 117
24. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 18
25. ਇਹਸਾਨ ਬਾਜਵਾ, ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਰ ਉਰਾਰ 106-107

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ

(ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ ਵਿਰਚਿਤ “ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ”)

*ਪੁਸ਼ਪਿੰਦਰ ਜੋਸ਼ੀ

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ ਜਗਤ ਦੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਵਰਗ ਦੇ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੰਨੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਨਾਲ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਯੁਵਾ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਣੀ ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ-(1)

ਗੁੜੁ ਕਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਾਵੈ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਸੁ ਪਾਈਐ।
ਭਾਠੀ ਭਵਨੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕਾ ਪੋਚਾ ਇਤੁ ਰਸਿ ਅਸਿਉ ਚੁਆਈਐ॥

ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ :

ਗੁੜੁ ਜ਼ਾਨਰੂਪੰ ਚ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਤਾਮਧੂਕ:ਸੁਕਸ਼ਮੰਠਿ ਵਿੰਨ੍ਤਾਤੁ ਕਰੀਰਸ੍ਯਚੂਰ੍ਣਮ੍।
ਭੀਰਿਸ੍ਯ ਚੁਲ੍ਲ੍ਯਾਂ ਕੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਲੇਪੰਤਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਤ੍ਯਤੇ ਵੈ ਸਦਾਨੰਦਸਾਧਵੀ॥¹

ਅਰਥਾਤ : ਗਿਆਨ ਰੂਪੀ ਗੁੜੁ ਨਾਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਰੂਪੀ ਮਉਏ ਦੇ ਫੁੱਲ, ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਿੱਕਰ ਰੂਪੀ ਛਿਲਕਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ, ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਭੱਠੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਨਾਲ ਲਿੱਪ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪੀ ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕੱਢ ਲਓ।

ਜਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਕਵੀਆਂ/ਆਚਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ/ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਰਵ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਤ ਹੋਏ ਬਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਸਕੇ। ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ, ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਰੂਪੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਧਾਰ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਅਤੇ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਏ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਲਾਹੇਵੰਦ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਸੰਗਿਕ ਹਨ।

ਇੱਥੇ ਜੇਕਰ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਅਤੇ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਲਿਖੇ ਜਾ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਨ², ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਸਥਾਰਪੂਰਵਕ ਚਰਚਾ ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਪੱਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਾਵਿ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਦੋ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ: (1) ਵਿਸ਼ਨੂੰ ਦੱਤ ਵਿਰਚਿਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ (2) ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ ਵਿਰਚਿਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਕਾਵਿ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ³ ਦੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ/ ਲੱਛਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਨੁਪਾਲਣਾ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

*ਸਹਾਇਕ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਲੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ-147002

ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਪੱਤਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ ਵਿਰਚਿਤ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ, ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਪੁਰਸਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ, ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ, ਧਰਮ, ਨੀਤੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ ਦੇ ਉੱਚ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦੇ ਲੱਭਯ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਸ਼ਠਿਤ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ 01 ਜਨਵਰੀ, 1944 ਨੂੰ ਰੁਦਰ ਪ੍ਰਯਾਗ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਵਾਰਾਣਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਈ। ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ ਨੇ ਅਧਿਆਪਨ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਵੇਸ਼ਵਰਾਨੰਦ ਵੈਦਿਕ ਸ਼ੋਧ ਸੰਸਥਾਨ, ਸਾਧੂ ਆਸ਼ਰਮ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰਪੁਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ। ਇੱਥੇ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਜਿਕਰਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਪਰ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ‘ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ’ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ 25 ਸਾਲ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਲੱਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ‘ਚੰਡੀ ਸ਼ੋਰਯ ਸਤਵ’ ਅਤੇ ‘ਜਪੁਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ’ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਜਨਮੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦਾ ਇੰਨਾ ਡੂੰਘਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਉਤੇ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਉਹ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮ ਗਿਆਨ ਤੋਂ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਇੱਛਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਚਿੰਤਕ ਦਾ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਨਾਲ ਪਰਿਚੈ ਕਰਵਾਉਣਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣਾ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਵੀ ਹੈ।

ਜੇਕਰ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ 24 ਸਰਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਇੱਕ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਜੀਵਨ, ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਦਾਸੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰਪੂਰਵਕ ਵਰਣਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਉਦਾਸੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਉਲੇਖ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੱਛਣ ਪੂਰਨ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਘਟਿਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਬਿੰਬ ਦੀ ਨਿਵੇਕਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੁਤੀ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਾਵਿ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਲੰਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਸੇਮਵਾਲ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਲੰਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਵਜੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਮਾਹਿਰ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਦਾ ਆਰੰਭ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਰੌਚਕ ਸਾਰ ਅਲੰਕਾਰ⁴ ਨਾਲ ਇੰਝ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ;

अस्ति पञ्चनन्दे देशे सर्वलोकेषु विश्रुते । तलवण्डीत्यधिष्ठानं पावनं साधुसेवितम् ॥
 तत्र चैकः पवित्रात्मा द्विजदेवार्चनप्रियः । सुमतिः साधुवृत्तात्मा कालूरामोऽभवत्पुरा ॥
 तस्यासीत् साधुवृत्तस्य पत्नी पतिपरायणा । नाम्ना तृप्तेति विख्याता रूपशीलगुणान्विता ॥⁵

ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਲੇਖ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ, ਸਾਧੂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੇਵਿਤ, ਲੋਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਤਲਵੰਡੀ ਨਾਮ ਦੀ ਨਗਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ ਵਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰਪੂਰਵਕ ਵਰਣਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਉਪਾਧਿਆਏ ਨੂੰ ‘ਓਮਕਾਰ’⁶ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਪੁੱਛਣ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਰੌਚਕ ਵਰਣਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਓਮਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੇ ਸਰਲ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਉਪਾਧਿਆਏ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਝ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ;

ओंकारार्थं नानकोऽसौ गुरुं झटिति पृष्टवान् । चिरायपि गुरुस्तस्य यदार्थं नोक्तवान् तदा ॥
 नानको जन्मना योगी व्याख्यातुमुपचक्रमे । श्रूयन्तां गुरवः सर्वमोंकारार्थं समासतः ॥⁷

ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਓਮਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਉਪਾਧਿਆਏ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਲੂ ਰਾਮ ਕੋਲ ਲੈ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਬਾਲਕ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਬੁੱਧੀਮਾਨ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਅਤੇ ਤੱਤਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਸੂਖਮਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਰਥ ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ। ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੂਰਜ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਰੂਪੀ ਹਨੇਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ;

ओंकारार्थं समाकर्ण्य नानकेन ह्युदीरितम् । उपाध्यायः स तं नीत्वा कालूराममथब्रवीत् ॥
 अयमत्यन्तमेधावी सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्ववित् । न मया पाठनीयोऽस्ति न चान्येन तथा भुवि ॥
 भविष्यति तथा चायं सर्वलोकस्य सद्गुरुः । संहरिष्यति चाज्ञानं यथा ध्वान्तं दिवाकरः ॥⁸

ਬੁਲਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਤੇਜ਼ ਤੋਂ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਸੀ ਜਦ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਸੱਪ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਛਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਘਟਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਇਹ ਘਟਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਆਪਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਬਾਲਕ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਬਾਲਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਜਗਤ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਮੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ।⁹ ਇਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਕਵੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਬਾਲ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ 53 ਸ਼ਲੋਕਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਰਨਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਬਾਲ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਕਰੁਣਾ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਨਾਲ ਓਤ-ਪ੍ਰੋਤ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੰਝ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਕਾਲੂ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ 20 ਰੁਪਏ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵਪਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇੰਝ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ 20 ਰੁਪਏ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵਪਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਥੋਂ ਚੱਲ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੱਠ ਸਾਧੂ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਭੁੱਖੇ-ਭਾਣੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਸ਼ਾ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਰੁਣਾ ਭਾਵ ਨਾਲ ਭਰ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਸੋਚਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਭੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਮਿਟਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਇਸ ਕੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਲਾਭ ਦਾ ਸਰਵੋਤਮ ਸਾਧਨ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਭੁੱਖੇ ਸਾਧੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੋਜਨ ਕਰਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਅੱਜ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਧੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਭੁੱਖ ਮਿੱਟ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਵਰਗਾ ਲਾਭ ਦਾ ਸੌਦਾ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੁੱਲ 64 ਸ਼ਲੋਕ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਕਰੁਣਾ ਭਾਵ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰਪੂਰਵਕ ਵਰਨਣ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।¹⁰

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਵੀ ਨੇ ਤੀਸਰੇ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਰਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਲ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਲਗਾ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਬੜਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਵਰਨਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

अथैकदा तेन नदीं गतेन जलान्तरे सङ्कलितः समाधिः ।
 तत्रैव तस्थौ न स निर्जगाम सूर्यो यथा ह्यब्धिगतो दिनान्ते ॥¹¹

ਇਸੇ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਸਜਿਦ ਵਿਖੇ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਮ ਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਕਠੋਰ ਵਚਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇੱਥੇ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਮ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਸਹਿਜਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਰੀਰ ਨਾਲ ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਕਰ

ਰਹੇ ਹੋ, ਮਨ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ।

तिष्ठन्तमेव प्रवरं गुरुणां मोहम्मदो वीक्ष्य भृशं चुकोप ।
पप्रच्छ चैनं वचनैः कठोरैः कथं त्वया नात्र कृतः प्रणामः ।।
स निर्भयस्तत्र जगाद शान्तो मोहम्मदं मन्दधियं मनोज्ञः ।
त्वया शरीरेण कृतः प्रणामः परन्तु सत्येन हृदा न नूनम् ।।¹²

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਰੀਰ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ, ਮਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਮ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ;

शरीरमात्रेण कृतः प्रणामः कृता स्तुतिः केवलमत्र वाचा ।
मनोरथश्चापि न पूरितो यो व्यर्थं त्रयं नूनमिहास्ति लोके ।।
विधीयते यो मनसा न धर्मो नाप्नोति तस्येह फलं मनुष्यः ।
तस्मात्प्रणामो मनसा सहैव कार्यः शरीरेण न केवलेन ।।¹³

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਤੀਸਰੇ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ 79 ਸ਼ਲੋਕਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਯਵਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਅਧਿਆਤਮ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਤੇ ਤਰਕਪੂਰਵਕ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੁਗਲ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਮ ਕਰਨ ਲੱਗ ਪਿਆ।¹⁴

ਚੌਥੇ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੁੱਲ 35 ਸ਼ਲੋਕ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਹ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਸਥ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਉਲੇਖ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗ੍ਰਹਿਸਥ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੁਗਲਖੋਰੀ, ਅਹੰਕਾਰ, ਕੁਟਿਲਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੀਚ ਆਚਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੁਖੀ ਹੋਇਆ।

पिशुनता पशुता च मदान्धता कुटिलता कटुता कुविचारता ।
इति विलोक्य गुरुः स जने जने हृदि विषादमतीव तदान्चभूत् ।।¹⁵

ਪੰਜਵੇਂ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਤਨੀ ਸੁਲਖਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਕੁਝ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ : ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਸ਼ ਲਈ, ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਲਈ ਯਾਤਰਾਵਾਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ।

अहमज्ञाननाशाय सत्यसंस्थापनाय च ।
यात्रां चरितुमिच्छामि लोककल्याणहेतवे ।।
तत्र बाधा भविष्यन्ति तवागमनसंभवाः ।
यात्रां चरितुमिच्छामि लोककल्याणहेतवे ।।¹⁶

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਛੇਵੇਂ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਗਏ ਤਾਂ ਉੱਚ ਵਰਗ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਠਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਿਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਵੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਮਝਊ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਿਚਲਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਏ।¹⁷

ਸੱਤਵੇਂ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਮੂਲ ਮੰਤਰ ਦਾ ਉਲੇਖ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

स च शिष्यत्वमापन्नान् ओंकारमक्षरं परम् ।
उपादिदेश तान्सर्वान् मन्त्राणां मन्त्रमुत्तमम् ।।

ततो विसृज्य सर्वान् तान् सत्यं सर्वत्र रक्षितुम् ।

शिष्यान् नवान् स्वकीयान् हि स्वयं चैव ययौ ततः ॥

ਇਸ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਾਬਰ ਦੇ ਅਤਿਆਚਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ ਖੜ੍ਹਨ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੈਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਡਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗ ਸਕਦਾ;

तथापि नानको तस्मान्न भीतो व पलायितः ।

वैरशून्यस्य भीतिस्तु कथं स्याज् जगतीतले ॥¹⁸

ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸੱਚ ਨੂੰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਠੱਗ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਣੂ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਸਦਾ ਸੱਚ ਹੀ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ।¹⁹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਮਾਰਗ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਨੇਹ ਕਰੋ, ਪਾਪ ਕਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡੋ।

व्यज हिसां कुरु स्नेहं सर्वभूतेषु सदा ।

जहि पापमहोरात्रं स्मर नित्यमनित्यताम् ॥²⁰

ਨੌਵੇਂ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੋਧੀ ਵੰਸ਼ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਧਰਮ ਨੀਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਦ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਨਗਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਮਹਾਤਮਾ ਜੀ ਆਏ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਰਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਧਾਨ ਪੁੱਛੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਸਰਲਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਉੱਤਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਰਾਜਾ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਲਈ ਕਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਕ ਚੰਗੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸੰਕਲਪਨਾ ਲਈ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੇ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਕਰਤੱਵ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਰੱਖੇ। ਇਸ ਨੌਵੇਂ ਸਰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੁਲ 26 ਸ਼ਲੋਕ ਹਨ।

ਕਵੀ ਸੋਮਵਾਲ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਉਪਮਾ ਅਲੰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਅਦਭੁੱਤ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਗੋਚਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਰਾਤ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਉਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਨਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਅਨਿਆਇ ਨਾਲ ਕਮਾਈ ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਨਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ;

इदानीं पश्य वत्सेयं क्षणदा क्षीयते तथा ।

अन्यायोपार्जिता लक्ष्मीः सर्वतः क्षीयते यथा ॥²¹

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਪਰੋਪਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਦਾ ਉਲੇਖ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਪਰੋਪਕਾਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ²² ਜਿਹੜੇ ਅਧਰਮੀ ਲੋਕ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਬੁਰਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ;

परोपकारेण च वर्धतेऽयं धर्मो मनुष्यस्य सदा सहायः ।

एवं ह्यधर्मः परपीडनेन वृद्धिं प्रयात्येव दुरन्तकारी ॥²³

ਸਾਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਚਰਿਤਮ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਟ ਸਥਾਨ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਹੜਾ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ

ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਸਹਿਜਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟਤਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਰਥ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਇਹ ਮਹਾਂਕਾਵਿ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ।

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5. ਸੇਮਵਾਲ, ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ, *ਗੁਰੁਨਾਨਕਦੇਵਚਰਿਤਮ੍*, 1.1–3, ਪ੍ਰ.ਅ. ਸਪਰਥਿ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ, ਚਠੀਗੜ੍ਹ, ਪ੍ਰ. 2
6. “(ਸੰਖਿਪਤ ਰੂਪ ਓਅੰ) ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦਾ ਵਾਚਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੈ। ਵੈਦਿਕ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਤ ਸਾਹਿੱਤ ਤੱਕ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਖੁੱਲ ਕੇ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਮਾਂਡੂਕਯ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿੱਤ ਵਸਤੂ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਬ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਮਈ

ਦੱਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਭੂਤ, ਭਵਿੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਤ੍ਰੈਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਸਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਵੀ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਛਾਦੋਗਯ ਉਪਨਿਸ਼ਦ (2/23/3) ਵਿੱਚ ‘ਓਅੰਕਾਰ’ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਬ-ਵਿਆਪਕ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਓਅੰ ਨੂੰ ਤ੍ਰੇਦੇਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੂਚਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕਲਪਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਿੱਤੇ ਕਿੱਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਤਿੰਨ ਅਵਸਥਾਵਾਂ (ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤ, ਸੁਪਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਖੋਪਤੀ) ਦਾ ਵਾਚਕ ਵੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਿਆ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਤੋਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦੇ ਵਾਚਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਜੋਂ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੇ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ, ਵਿਲੱਖਣ, ਅਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਤਿਖਮੁਕਤ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ ਤੋਂ ਅਤੀਤ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ।”

ਡਾ. ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੱਗੀ, ਸਾਹਿੱਤ ਕੋਸ਼ ਪਾਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਿਕ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ, ਪਬਲੀਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਿਊਰੋ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, ਚੌਥਾ ਸੰਸਕਰਨ, 2016, ਪੰਨੇ 29-30

7. ਸੇਮਵਾਲ, ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ, *ਗੁਰੁਨਾਨਕਦੇਵਚਰਿਤਮ੍*, 1.13-14, ਪ੍ਰ.ਅ. ਸਪ੍ਰਥਿ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ, ਚਠੀਗੜ੍ਹ, ਪ੍ਰ. 4
8. *Ibid.*, 1.22-24, ਪ੍ਰ. 6-7
9. *Ibid.*, 1.35-41, ਪ੍ਰ. 9-10
10. एवं पित्रा समादिष्टो लाभज्ञो नानकस्तदा । सर्वा मुद्राः समादाय सुलाभाय गतस्ततः ॥
लाभार्थं गच्छतस्तस्य मार्गोऽरण्यं समागतम् । तत्रैव गच्छता तेन साधवोऽष्टौ विलोकिता ॥
ये चासन् बहुभिर्बहिः पीडिता परया क्षुधा । तान् विलोक्य स लाभार्थी परमां करुणां ययौ ॥
चित्तै च चिन्तयामास साम्प्रतं करवाणि किम् । बुभुक्षां कथमेतेषां नाशयाम्यद्य सत्वरम् ॥
पित्रादेशं पुनः स्मृत्वा लाभे तात मतिं कुरु । यस्यास्ति परमो लाभः स लोके श्रेष्ठ उच्यते ॥
क्षुधार्तानां हि साधूनां यद्यद्य क्षुद् विनश्यति । अस्मात् परं न पश्यामि लाभं कमपि भूतले ॥
Ibid., 2.5-10, पृ. 14, 15
11. *Ibid.*, 3.3, पृ. 27
12. *Ibid.*, 3.32-33, पृ. 37
13. *Ibid.*, 5.49-50, पृ. 42
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, 4.34, पृ. 66
16. *Ibid.*, 5.49-50, पृ. 80
17. तस्य शूद्रगृहे वासो नानकस्य महामतेः । नारोचताभिजातेभ्यः श्रेष्ठश्च विशेषतः ॥
विरोधं कृतवन्तस्ते यथेष्टं किन्तु नानकः । सर्वत्र समबुद्धित्वाद् व्यचलन मनागपि ॥ । ष्टपकण्ण6.5, 6, पृ. 76
18. *Ibid.*, 7.17, पृ. 91
19. स त्वं सत्यव्रतो भूत्वा नित्यं सत्यं समाचर ।
तत् त्वां पाता सदा सत्यं न चान्यः कोऽपि भूतले ॥ *Ibid.*, 8.32, पृ. 108
20. *Ibid.*, 8.33, पृ. 109
21. *Ibid.*, 11.3, पृ. 144
22. यस्मिन्त्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद् विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः क शोक एकत्वमनु पश्यतः ॥ *यजुर्वेद*, 40.7
23. ਸੇਮਵਾਲ, ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ, *ਗੁਰੁਨਾਨਕਦੇਵਚਰਿਤਮ੍*, 15.12, ਪ੍ਰ.185

ਮਿਆਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਸ਼ਾਨਿਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ (ਬਾਣੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ)

*ਰਾਜਵੀਰ ਕੌਰ

ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਲੱਭਤ ਹੈ। ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਦਾ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੁੱਖ ਕੋਟੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ, ਨਿਆਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਹੈ। ਮਾਨਵੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਧਰਮ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ (Theology) ਬਲਕਿ ਮਾਨਵ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ/ਮਾਨਵ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ (Anthropology), ਸਮਾਜ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ (Sociology) ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਿ ਮਾਨਵ ਜੀਵ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ (Human Biology) ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਸ਼ਾਖਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਵਾਚੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।¹ ਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਾਰਣ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਵ ਬਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਭੇਦਭਾਵ ਤੇ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਦੇ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੋੜਤਾ ਹੈ। ਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਇੱਕ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਦੂਜੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਾਨ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸੱਚ, ਤੱਥ, ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਸਹੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਰਭੈ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ ਹੈ।¹ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਅਮੀਰ, ਨਿਵੇਕਲੀ ਤੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਮੁੱਲਵਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਮਸਲਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਤੇ ਪਛੜੇ ਅਤੇ ਬੁਝੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਨੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਖੰਡਨ ਸੀ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਦੇ ਮੰਤਵ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਇਆ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸਰੋਤ ਜਨਮਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਦੀ 'ਜਨੇਉ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕਥਾ' ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਲੋਂ ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ 'ਖੰਡੇ ਦਾ ਪਾਹੁਲ' ਛਕਾ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਰਜਾ ਦੇਣ ਤੱਕ ਦੇ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਭਿੰਨ ਅੰਗ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਨ। ਆਪਣੇ ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਪੱਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਵਰਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਜਦੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਬਾਨੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਆਗਮਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਉਦੋਂ ਭਾਰਤਵਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਆਂ ਖੰਭ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਉੱਡ ਚੁੱਕਿਆ ਸੀ। ਚਾਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਝੂਠ ਤੇ ਜੁਲਮ ਦਾ ਬੋਲਬਾਲਾ ਸੀ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਥੰਮ੍ਹ ਸਚਾਈ, ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ, ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਆਦਿ ਢਹਿ-ਢੇਰੀ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਘੋਰ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਨ੍ਹੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਨਵੀਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਲੀ ਲਈ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕੀਤੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜੁਲਮ, ਵਧੀਕੀ ਤੇ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਲੀ ਲਈ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੈਰਾਨੀਜਨਕ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਸਾਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

*ਸਹਾਇਕ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਲਾਅ ਕਾਲਜ, ਝੰਜੋੜੀ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਨਿਆਇ, ਤਪਾਵਸ, ਸੱਚ, ਧਰਮ ਆਦਿ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸੱਚ ਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਈ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ, ਇਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ, ਫਰਜ਼ ਆਦਿ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।¹

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਿਆਂ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਸਹਿਜ ਗੁਣ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਮੂਲਮੰਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਥੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ‘ਸੱਤ’ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ‘ਸੱਤ’ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਵ ਸਦਾ ਸਥਿਰ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਨ ਦੀ ਸੀਮਾ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਹੈ।¹ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦਾ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ:-

ਸਚਾ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਚੁ ਤਪਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-723)

ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੋ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਸਮਾਨਤਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਦਾ ਆਪਸੀ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਦੀ ਸਖਤ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਹਾ:-

ਹਕ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-141)

ਅਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ/ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਪੂਰਨ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਪੂਰਨ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ-ਪਸੰਦ ਹੈ:-

ਗਰੀਬਾ ਉਪਰ ਜਿ ਖਿੰਜੈ ਦਾੜੀ ॥ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮਿ ਸਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਸਹਿ

ਸਾੜੀ ॥੧॥ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥

ਅਪੁਨੇ ਦਾਸ ਕਉ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-199)

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਸ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਬ-ਸ਼ਕਤੀਮਾਨ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਸੱਚਾ ਨਿਆਂਪੀਸ਼ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਭੈਅ-ਭੀਤ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੀ ਸੱਚਾ ਨਿਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸਦਾ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਵੀ ਸੱਚਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸਦਾ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਵਰਗਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਸੰਸਾਰਕ ਨਿਆਂਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਗੁਣੀ/ਸਦਾਚਾਰੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਸਰ ਇੱਕ ਅਪਰਾਧੀ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੀ ਅਦਾਲਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਾਰਜਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਖਾਮੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਚ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ਚੌਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਅਦਾਲਤ ਦੇ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਚ ਸਕਦਾ। ਕੋਈ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਦਾਲਤ ਤੋਂ ਭੱਜ ਕੇ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ?!

ਮਾਣਸਾ ਕਿਆਹੁ ਦੀਬਾਣਹੁ ਕੋਈ ਨਸਿ ਭਜਿ ਨਿਕਲੈ ਹਰਿ ਦੀਬਾਣਹੁ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਥੈ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

ਸੋ ਐਸਾ ਹਰਿ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਭਗਤਾ ਕੈ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਰਹਦੇ ਖੁਦਹੇ ਆਇ ਸਭਿ ਭਗਤਾ ਅਗੈ ਖਲਵਾਇਆ ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-591)

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਈਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੰਡੀਆਂ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਏਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਲਿਆਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਧਰਮ, ਜਾਤ, ਵਰਣ, ਅਮੀਰ-ਗਰੀਬ, ਉਚ-ਨੀਚ ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਇਹ ਮੰਨਣ ਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉੱਚਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਉੱਚ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਰੋਪੀ ਤੇ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਈ ਜਾਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਭਾਡਾਂ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਵੀ ਇਕੋ ਹੈ, ਭਾਂਡੇ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਵੀ ਇਕੋ ਹੈ, ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਮਦਰ ਇਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਫਰਕ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋਇਆ? ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਜਨਮ, ਜਾਤ, ਰੰਗ, ਵਰਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੁੱਛਦਾ।¹ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ:-

ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-349)

ਬਾਣੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਸੀ। ਨੀਵੀਆਂ ਜਾਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਫਰਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਛੂਤ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਵੰਡੇ ਹੋਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿਚ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਉਠਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਕਾ ਹੀ ਨਕਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਉਸਦੀ ਅਦਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਉੱਚਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਨੀਵਾਂ, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਮੀਰ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਗਰੀਬ। ਉਸਦਾ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਸੱਚਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਡੀ ਜਾਤ ਨੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ। ਕਰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਵ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ‘ਚੰਗੇ ਕੰਮ’ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ ਸਗੋਂ ਚੰਗੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ-ਭਗਤੀ/ਨਾਮ-ਸਿਮਰਨ ਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ

ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮ ਨਹ ਪੁਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ॥

ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਾਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-1330)

ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦਾ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਨੀਵੀਂ ਜਾਤ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਉੱਚ ਪਦਵੀ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਰਵੀਦਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੀਵੀਂ ਜਾਤ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਉਸਤਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉੱਚੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇੰਝ ਉਸਦੀ ਅਦਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਆਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਮਾਲਕ ਅਤੇ ਨੌਕਰ ਬਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਬਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਰੁਤਬੇ ਜਾਂ ਆਹੁਦੇ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਦੇ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਬਾਣੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਕਰਮ ਰੂਪੀ ਬੀਜ ਬੀਜਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਉਹੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੀ ਦਰਗਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਢਦੇ (ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦੇ) ਹਾਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਰਚਨਾ ‘ਜਪੁਜੀ’ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ:-

ਪੁੰਨੀ ਪਾਪੀ ਆਖੁਣ ਨਾਹਿ॥

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਣਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਲੈ ਜਾਹੁ॥ ਆਪੇ ਬੀਜਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਹੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਆਵਹੁ ਜਾਹੁ॥ (ਪਾਉੜੀ 20, ਜਪੁਜੀ)

ਚੌਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਵੀ ਫਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੀ ਦਰਗਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਾਰੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣੀਆਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਲਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਕਰਮ ਹੀ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ:-

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੇਹਾ ਕੋ ਬੀਜੇ ਤੇਹਾ ਕੋ ਖਾਏ॥
ਗਲਾ ਉਪਰ ਤਪਾਵਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ਇਸੁ ਥਾਪੀ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਏ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-308)

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਰੁਤਬੇ ਤੇ ਅਹੁਦੇ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਨਿਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਵਾਜਬ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਮੀਰ ਤੇ ਗਰਬਿ ਦੇ ਭੇਦ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਟਾ ਕੇ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਗਰਬਿ ਲਾਲੇ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਤਰਖਾਣ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਦਸਾਂ ਨਹੁੰਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ, ਦੇ ਘਰ ਜਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਜੀਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਮਲਿਕ ਭਾਗੇ ਜਿਸਨੇ ਗਰੀਬਾਂ ਦਾ ਖੂਨ ਦੂਸ ਕੇ ਦੌਲਤ ਇਕੱਠੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਦੇ ਛੱਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਭੋਜਨ ਛੱਕਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਵਡਮੁੱਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਮਿਟਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੀਲ-ਪੱਥਰ ਜੋ ਨਿਬੜਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਤੀਜੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਲੰਗਰ-ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਚਲਾ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਮੀਰ ਤੇ ਗਰਬਿ, ਹਰ ਧਰਮ, ਵਰਗ ਤੇ ਜਾਤ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਭੇਦ- ਭਾਵ ਦੇ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਭੋਜਨ (ਲੰਗਰ) ਛਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਉੱਦਮ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਅਨਿਆਂ/ਨਾਇਨਸਾਫ਼ੀ ਤੇ ਇਕ ਕਰਾਰੀ ਚੋਟ ਸੀ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਦੀਰਘਕਾਲੀਨ ਸੀ।¹

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਆਗਮਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਆਰੰਭਤਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਦਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਭੈੜੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਸੀ। ਇਸਤਰੀ ਜਾਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਰਦ-ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੈਰ ਦੀ ਜੁੱਤੀ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਲਤਾੜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਗੈਰ- ਨਿਆਂਇਕ ਸੋਚ ਦਾ ਜ਼ੋਰਦਾਰ ਖੰਡਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਰਦ ਦੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦੇ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿਚ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਰੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਗਾਰਿਆ:-

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ॥ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ॥
ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨ॥ ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥
(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, 473)

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਔਰਤ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਅਥਾਹ ਸੀ। ਔਰਤ ਹੀ ਜੀਵ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਰਵਸ਼ਕਤੀਮਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੀ ਔਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਔਰਤ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਮਰਦ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਤੋਂ ਦੁਜੈਲਾ ਹੈ ਭਾਵ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਹਨ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਜੀਵ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਔਰਤ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਵੀ ਉੱਚਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਕੇਵਲ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਜੀਵ (ਔਰਤ ਤੇ ਮਰਦ) ਔਰਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਵਚਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਕੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਬਖੂਬੀ ਨਿਭਾਇਆ। ਸਾਰੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਪੂਰਵ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਸਾਮੀ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਔਰਤ ਦੀ

ਤ੍ਰਿਸਕਾਰਤ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਬਲਕਿ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਵੀ ਦਿਵਾਇਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਤਨੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਮਹਿਲਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਸ ਇੱਜ਼ਤ ਮਾਣ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਵਿਧਵਾ ਔਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਤੀ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਤੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਅਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਸਲ ਸਤੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ ਜੋ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸਤੀ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਬਦਲ ਦਿੱਤੇ :-

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨ ਜੋ ਮਤਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ, ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ
ਜਾਣੀਅੰਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ॥ (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-787)

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਔਰਤ ਨੂੰ 'ਈਮਾਨ' ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਵਡਿਆਇਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਮਰਦ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਮ ਪਿੱਛੇ 'ਸਿੰਘ' ਲਗਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਉੱਥੇ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਕੌਰ' ਦਾ ਖਿਤਾਬ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ 'ਚੰਡੀ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ' ਵਿਚ ਔਰਤ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਦੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੁਰਗਾ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਸਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਹਲੂਣਿਆ। ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਰੂਹਾਨੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਖਿਤਾਬ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੋਤੀ-ਜੋਤ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 40 ਸਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕੀਤੀ। ਬੀਬੀ ਭਾਨੀ, ਬੀਬੀ ਦਾਨੀ, ਬੀਬੀ ਅਨੋਖੀ, ਬੀਬੀ ਅਮਰੋ, ਮਾਤਾ ਗੰਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਈ ਭਾਗੋ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਦਾ ਖਾਸ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਔਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਮਾਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਾਰੀ ਰੂਪਕਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ, ਨਿਮਾਣੀ, ਨਿਤਾਣੀ ਤੇ ਲਿਤਾਣੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਔਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਦਵਾਇਆ। ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ ਔਰਤ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਉਪਰ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਕਾਰਿਆ ਤੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਰੁਤਬਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀਵਾਦ ਸਗੋਂ ਅੰਤਰਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀਵਾਦ ਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ-ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਵੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਇਕੋ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਸਥਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਹਰ ਧਰਮ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਜਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਭਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹਨ। ਕਿਸੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਹ ਸੋਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਆਰੰਭ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਤੇ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ। ਵੇਈਂ ਨਦੀ ਦੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜੋ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਉਹ ਸਨ:-

ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਹਿੰਦੂ, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ।

ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵੱਖਰੇਵੇਂ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਜ਼ਬਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਧਰਮ ਮਨਵਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਚਾਹੇ

ਉਹ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹੈ ਚਾਹੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ, ਉਹ ਇਕ ਨਕੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਬਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਨਿਆਂ ਪੂਰਨ ਰਾਜ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਇਕ ਹੁਕਮਰਾਨ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਕਰਤੱਵ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਦੇਵੇ। ਹਾਕਮ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਧਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧ ਹੈ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੁਕਮਰਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਗਰੀਬਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੁਲਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਤੇ ਭੈਅਭੀਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਲਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਨਾ ਤੇ ਲੋਧੀ, ਸੂਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਵੰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਾਸਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਰਾਜ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਅਰਾਜਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਦਾ ਬੋਲਬਾਲਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਰਿਸ਼ਵਤ ਦਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਨਿਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ:-

ਰਾਜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਹਥਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ-350)

ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਬਰ ਦੇ ਵਾਰ-ਵਾਰ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ, ਆਰਥਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਹਾਲਤ ਬਹੁਤ ਦਰਦਨਾਕ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਅਸਰ ਹੋਇਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਿਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ:-

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਡਰਾਇਆ ॥ ਆਪੈ ਚੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਝਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਚਤਾਇਆ ॥ ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਣੇ

ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨਾ ਆਇਆ ॥ ੧ ॥ (ਆਸਾ, ਪੰਨਾ-360)

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਹਾਕਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਡੱਟ ਕੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਪਰ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਅਕਬਰ ਜਿਹਾ ਉਦਾਰਭਾਵੀ ਹਾਕਮ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਸਦਾ ਕਰਤੱਵ ਜਤਾਂਦਿੰ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ, ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਪਰਜਾ ਦੀ ਭਲਾਈ ਹਿਤ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਆ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਕੱਟੜਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਭੈ-ਸਾਂਝੀ ਵਾਲਤਾ, ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਹਰਾ ਲਾਇਆ। ਪੰਜਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੀ ਸੰਪਾਦਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਪਕੇਰਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਫ਼ਕੀਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਜ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਮਸਤ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਨੌਂਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਇਆ ਜਦ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੀਸ ਦਾ ਬਲੀਦਾਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਐਸੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਮਿਲਣੀ ਨਾਮੁਮਕਿਨ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ, ਜਾਤ, ਨਸਲ ਤੇ ਇਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਕਿ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀਅਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਰ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ੋਰਦਾਰ ਖੰਡਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ 'ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ' ਦੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਮਲੀ ਜਾਮਾ ਪਹਿਨਾਇਆ। 'ਖਾਲਸੇ' ਤੋਂ ਭਾਵ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹਨ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ, ਰੰਗ, ਨਸਲ, ਧਰਮ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ, ਲਿੰਗ-ਭੇਦ ਦੇ ਵਿਤਕਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ-ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਔਰਤ-ਮਰਦ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ ਪਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਬਾਟੇ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਾਇਆ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ, ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਕਾਰੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ-ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ‘ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼’ ਦੀ ਰੱਖੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਤੁੱਲ ਸੀ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਹੁ-ਪੱਖੀ ਧਾਰਕਿਮ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਨੈਤਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸੁਤੰਤਰਤਾ ਦੀ ਵਡਮੁੱਲੀ ਲੀਹ ਪਾਈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੇ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ, ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਨਕਸ਼ਾ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਰੋਗ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਨਿਕਾਸ, ਅਰੋਗ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਸਾਂਝੀਵਾਲਤਾ ਤੇ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਚ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਨਰੋਈ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਲਈ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ –ਪੂਰਨ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਘਾੜਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਣ ਦੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਬਣਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਅੱਜ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਉੱਨਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਕੁਝ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਏ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਉੱਥੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਦੁਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਅਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਵੀ ਉਪਜੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਖੇੜਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੱਸੇ ਮਾਰਗ ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਕੁਰੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ, ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਕਮੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਿੱਝ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦੇ ਭਲੇ ਨੂੰ, ਸਦਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਖਿਮਾ, ਮਿਤ੍ਰਤਾ ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਏ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਸਿਰਜ ਸਕੀਏ ਜੋ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਮਾਨਵ ਜਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਭਲੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੇ।

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ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਣਿਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ (ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ)

*ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ

ਧਰਨਿ ਗਗਨ ਨਵ ਖੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੂਪੀ ਰਹਿਓ ਭਰਿ ॥
ਭਨਿ ਮਥੁਰਾ ਕਛੁ ਭੇਦੁ ਨਹੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਅਰਜਨੁ ਪਰਤਖੁ ਹਰਿ ॥¹

ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਮੰਡਲ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਇਲਹਾਮੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ (1563-1606 ਈ.) ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦੀ ਪੈਗੰਬਰੀ ਲੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਮੁਕੱਦਸ ਰਹਿਬਰ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕਾਇਨਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਂਤੀ ਦੇ ਮੁਜੱਸਮੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਥੇ ਉਹ ‘ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਬੋਹਿਥ’ ਅਤੇ ‘ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਤਾਜ’ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਤਿਕਾਰੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਥੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਧਰਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) ਅਤੇ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਧਰਮ ਸਥਾਨ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ) ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਯੋਗ ਹਨ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਲਈ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਸ੍ਰੋਤ ਹੈ। ਕਲੁ ਭਟ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਯੋਗ ਮਾਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ² ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜ ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਿੱਤ ਕੇ ਸਹਿਜ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਾਲੇ³ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਖ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਿਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਰਸ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ⁴ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਧ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ 2312 ਸਬਦ⁵ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਪਰਮ ਸੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੜੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਅ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ 551 ਸਲੋਕ⁶ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਦੈਵਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖਮਾਨ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਲੋਕ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਲੋਕ ‘ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਟਪ ਵਜ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਛੰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਐਸੇ ਵਜ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਛੰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਦੋਹੇ ਯਾ ਦੋਹੇ ਦੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ’।⁷ ‘ਭਾਰਤੀ ਕਾਵਿ ਪੱਧਤੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਛੰਦ ‘ਦ੍ਰਿਪ੍ਰਥ’ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ‘ਦੋਹੜਾ’ ਜਾਂ ਬ੍ਰਿਜ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ‘ਦੋਹਾ’ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ‘ਦੋਹਾ’ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਸਲੋਕ (ਡਖਣਾ-ਸਿੰਧੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ) ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।’⁸

ਪ੍ਰਸਤੁਤ ਪੇਪਰ ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਣਿਤ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ‘ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ’ ਲਫਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਨਾਲ ‘ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ’ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜ ਕੇ ਵੇਖਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ‘ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ’ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਅ ‘ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ’ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਹੈ। ‘ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਜ਼ਮਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਤਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਵਕਤ ਆਮ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤਿਕ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਇਕ ਬਣਾਉਟੀ ਜਹੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਿਤ ਸੀ ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ‘ਗਾਥਾ’ ਜਾਂ ‘ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ’ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ।

* ਅਸਿਸਟੈਂਟ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਸਕੂਲ ਆਫ ਰਿਲੀਜੀਅਸ ਸਟੱਡੀਜ਼, ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਟੇਟ ਓਪਨ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ।

ਇਹ ਸਾਧਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਡੇਰਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਿੰਦ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਝੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਵਖੋ ਵਖਰੇ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਕਰਣਿਕ ਵਖੇਵਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਮਸਲਨ, ਕਰਤੇ ਹੈਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਆਦਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਤਿਕ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ‘ਕਰੰਤਿ’ ਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਦੇ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ।⁹ ਭਾਈ ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਭਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ‘ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ’ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ, ਪਾਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਇਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਹੈ।¹⁰

ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਸ਼ਟ ਜੀਵ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ¹ ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕਾਇਨਾਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ:

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਸਬਾਈ ॥
ਮਾਣਸ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਦੀਈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥¹¹

ਡਾ. ਗੁਰਸ਼ਰਨ ਕੌਰ ਜੱਗੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਤੱਤ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਤੱਤ ਮਨਿਆ ਹੈ।¹² ‘ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵ-ਸੰਕਲਪ ਅਦਵੈਤਵਾਦ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਜੁਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਥੇ ਦਵੈਤ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਜੀਵਾਤਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਜਮੀਨ ਆਸਮਾਨ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਰ ਦਰਸਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਥੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਸਟ ਅਦਵੈਤਵਾਦ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦਾ ਅੰਸ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ।’¹³

‘ਸਲੋਕ ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫’ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕਤਾ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ 67 ਸਲੋਕ ਹਨ। ‘ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਾਥੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਰਾਮ-ਨਾਮ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕ ਸਾਥੀ ਨੂੰ ਭੁਲਾ ਕੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ-ਵਾਸਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਿਆ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਸੂਝ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਸਾਧ-ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਦਾ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।’¹⁴ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਨਿਮਨ ਪੱਖ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ-

1. ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀਆਂ:

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਦੋ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਤ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਸਰੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅਧੀਨ ਗ੍ਰਸੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀਆਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹਨ:

1.1 ਸੰਤ/ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ

ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਸ਼ਟ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸਦਾਚਾਰੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ:

1.1.1 ਸੁਭਾਅ

ਸੰਤ ਸੁਭਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਅਤੇ ਵੈਰੀ ਇਕ ਸਮਾਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਿਤਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਿਆਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਸਹਣ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੰ ਸਮ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਸੁ ਦੁਰਜਨਹ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਭੋਜਨ ਅਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰੇਣ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਆਵਧ ਹੋਇ ਉਪਤਿਸਟਤੇ ॥¹⁵

ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੰਤ ਸੁਭਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਦਾ ਹੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਅਪਮਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਹ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖੀ ਵਸਦੇ ਹਨ।¹⁶ ਉਹ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਦਿਖਾਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨਮੁਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ-

ਸਿਆਮਲੰ ਮਧੁਰ ਮਾਨੁਖੰ ਰਿਦਯੰ ਭੂਮਿ ਵੈਰਣਹ ॥

ਨਿਵੰਤਿ ਹੇਵੰਤਿ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਚੇਤਨੰ ਸੰਤ ਸ੍ਰਜਨਹ ॥¹⁷

1.1.2 ਗੁਣ

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਦੇ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਚਿਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ 'ਸਾਧ ਸੈਨਾ' ਇਕ ਅਜਿੱਤ ਸੈਨਾ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕੋਲ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਸੰਜੋਅ, ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਸ਼ਸਤ੍ਰ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰ-ਸ਼ਬਦ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਢਾਲ ਹੈ:

ਸੈਨਾ ਸਾਧ ਸਮੂਹ ਸੂਰ ਅਜਿੱਤੰ ਸੰਨਾਹੰ ਤਨਿ ਨਿੰਮ੍ਰਤਾਹ ॥

ਆਵਧਹ ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਰਮਣੰ ਓਟ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਕਰ ਚਰਮਣਹ ॥¹⁸

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੂਰਮਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਿਲਾਪ ਦਾ ਰਸਤਾ ਹਾਥੀ ਘੋੜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਹ ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਰੂਪੀ ਵੈਰੀ ਤੇ ਨਿਡਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਂ ਚੋਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਿੱਤ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ-

ਆਰੂੜਤੇ ਅਸ੍ਰ ਰਥ ਨਾਗਹ ਬੁਝੰਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮਾਰਗਹ ॥

ਬਿਚਰਤੇ ਨਿਰਭਯੰ ਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਸੈਨਾ ਧਾਯੰਤੇ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਕੀਰਤਨਹ ॥

ਜਿਤਤੇ ਬਿਸ੍ਰੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਹ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਸੁੰ ਕਰੋਤਿ ਪੰਚ ਤਸਕਰਹ ॥¹⁹

1.1.3 ਸੰਤ ਦੇ ਛੇ ਲੱਛਣ

ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸੰਤ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਛੇ ਲੱਛਣ¹ ਦੱਸੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੁਣ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖਮਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਛੇ ਲੱਛਣ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹਨ:

- (ੳ) ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਣਾ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਬ-ਵਿਆਪਕ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਰਤੀ ਜੋੜਣੀ।
- (ਅ) ਸੁਖਾਂ-ਦੁਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਸਮਾਨ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਵੈਰ ਰਹਿਤ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਿਉਣਾ।
- (ੲ) ਸਾਰੇ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਦਰਦੀ ਰੱਖਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜ ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ।
- (ਸ) ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸਿਫਤ ਨੂੰ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਦਾ ਆਸਰਾ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਕਮਲ ਦੇ ਫੁੱਲ ਵਾਂਗ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ਰਹਿਣਾ।
- (ਹ) ਸੱਜਣ ਅਤੇ ਵੈਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਸਮਾਨ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਭਗਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨੀ।
- (ਕ) ਕੰਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪਰਾਈ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਨਾ ਸੁਣਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਪੇ ਭਾਵ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕਰਨਾ।

1.2 ਮਨਮੁਖ

ਮਨਮੁਖ, ਸੰਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਦੂਜੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਮਤ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਜਨਮ ਅਜਾਈਂ ਗਵਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਸਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦੇ ਇਹ ਪੱਖ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ:

1.2.1 ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਭਾਅ:

ਮਨਮੁਖ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਧਨ ਚੁਰਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਘਨ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਦੀ ਭੁੱਖ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਸੂਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਪਰ ਦਰਬ ਹਿਰਣੰ ਬਹੁ ਵਿਘਨ ਕਰਣੰ ਉਚਰਣੰ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਅ ਕਹ ॥
ਲਉ ਲਈ ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਅਤਿਪਤਿ ਮਨ ਮਾਏ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਤ ਸਿ ਸੂਕਰਹ ॥²⁰

1.2.2 ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ

ਮਨਮੁਖ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਸੱਖਣਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਫਿਟਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਪਾਤਰ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਜੁਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਭਟਕਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਗੁਰ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਹੀਣਸੁ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਪ੍ਰਿਗੰਤ ਜਨਮ ਭ੍ਰਸਟਣਹ ॥
ਕੂਕਰਹ ਸੂਕਰਹ ਗਰਧਭਹ ਕਾਕਹ ਸਰਪਨਹ ਤੁਲਿ ਖਲਹ ॥²¹

2. ਮਨੁੱਖ ਉੱਪਰ ਮਾਇਆ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ

ਮਨਮੁਖ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਵਾਲੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅਧੀਨ ਆ ਕੇ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਭੁੱਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹੋਛੀ ਮਤ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨਾਸ਼ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਦਾਰਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੋਹ ਵਿਚ ਲੀਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਦੇ ਕਲੋਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਸਤ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਉੱਪਰ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਵਾਨੀ, ਤਾਕਤ, ਮਹਿਲ-ਮਾੜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਪਦਾਰਥਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।²²

ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅਧੀਨ ਨਾ ਸਮਝ ਮੂਰਖ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਕਿ ਉਸਦੇ ਸੁਆਸ ਘਟ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੁਢਾਪਾ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ:

ਅਚੇਤ ਮੂੜਾ ਨ ਜਾਣੰਤ ਘਟੰਤ ਸਾਸਾ ਨਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਤੇ ॥
ਛਿਜੰਤ ਮਹਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ ਕਾਂਇਆ ਕਾਲ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਗ੍ਰਾਸਤੇ ॥
ਰਚੰਤਿ ਪੁਰਖਹ ਕੁਟੰਬ ਲੀਲਾ ਅਨਿਤ ਆਸਾ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਬਿਨੋਦ ॥
ਭ੍ਰਮੰਤਿ ਭ੍ਰਮੰਤਿ ਬਹੁ ਜਨਮ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਸਰਣਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰੁਣਾ ਮਯਹ ॥²³

3. ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਸ਼ਮਾਨਤਾ

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਕੱਚੇ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਪਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਲਹੂ-ਚੰਮ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਪਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕੰਧ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੌਂ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਥੰਮ੍ਹੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ-

ਕਾਚ ਕੋਟੰ ਰਚੰਤਿ ਤੋਯੰ ਲੇਪਨੰ ਰਕਤ ਚਰਮਣਹ ॥
ਨਵੰਤ ਦੁਆਰੰ ਭੀਤ ਰਹਿਤੰ ਬਾਇ ਰੁਪੰ ਅਸਥੰਭਨਹ ॥²⁴

ਇਹ ਸਰੀਰ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਰੂਪ ਨਾਸ਼ਵੰਤ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਬਲ ਘਟਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਮਿਥੁੰਤ ਦੇਹੰ ਖੀਣੰਤ ਬਲਨੰ ॥²⁵

ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸਰੀਰ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਾਲਾ ਨਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਅਸਥਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਂ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਨਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ

4. ਪੰਜ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ

ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੰਜ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਪਤਨ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਕਾਮ, ਕ੍ਰੋਧ, ਲੋਭ, ਮੋਹ ਅਤੇ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸਭ ਬੁਰਾਈਆਂ ਦੀ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮੋਹ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਅਜਿੱਤ ਸੂਰਮਾ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸਿਰਫ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੀ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਿਸ੍ਟੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ:

ਹੇ ਅਜਿੱਤ ਸੂਰ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਾਮੰ ਅਤਿ ਬਲਨਾ ਬਹੁ ਮਰਦਨਹ ॥
ਗਣ ਗੰਧਰਬ ਦੇਵ ਮਾਨੁਖੰ ਪਸੁ ਪੰਖੀ ਬਿਮੋਹਨਹ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੰ ਨਮਸਕਾਰੰ ਸਰਣਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗਦੀਸੂਰਹ ॥²⁶

ਥੋੜੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਸੁੱਖ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਕਾਮ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਜਪ-ਤਪ ਖਤਮ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਨਰਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਹੁੰਚਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।²⁷ ਝਗੜੇ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਜੀਵ ਨੂੰ ਦਇਆ ਤੋਂ ਸੱਖਣਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਦਰਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਨਚਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨੀਚ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।²⁸ ਲੋਭ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਡੁਬੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਕੇ-ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਕੀ ਸ਼ਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਯੋਗ ਅਨੁਚਿਤ ਕਾਰ-ਵਿਹਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।²⁹

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਅਧੀਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਮਿਤਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੈਰੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਦੇ ਗੇੜ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਦੁਖ ਭੋਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜੀਵ ਲਾ ਇਲਾਜ ਰੋਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਿਆ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਣ ਦਾ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਰੂਪ ਵੈਦ ਦਾ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ:

ਹੇ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਮੂਲੰ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੰ ਪਾਪਾਤਮਾ ॥
ਮਿਤ੍ਰੰ ਤਜੰਤਿ ਸਤ੍ਰੰ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੰਤਿ ਅਨਿਕ ਮਾਯਾ ਬਿਸੂਰਨਹ ॥
ਆਵੰਤ ਜਾਵੰਤ ਥਕੰਤ ਜੀਆ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਬਹੁ ਭੋਗਣਹ ॥
ਭ੍ਰਮ ਭਯਾਨ ਉਦਿਆਨ ਰਮਣੰ ਮਹਾ ਬਿਕਟ ਅਸਾਧ ਰੋਗਣਹ ॥
ਬੈਦੰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸ੍ਵਰ ਆਰਾਧਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ॥³⁰

5. ਮਨੁੱਖ ਲਈ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ

ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਗੋਚਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹਨ:

5.1 ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਾਇਆ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ

ਪਦਾਰਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੋਹ ਵਿਚ ਬੱਝਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਮੈਲੀ ਮਤ ਵਾਲਾ ਜੀਵ, ਜੋ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੀ ਖਾਤਰ ਭਟਕਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ-

ਅਨਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਵਿਤੰ ਅਨਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਚਿਤੰ ਅਨਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਆਸਾ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰੰ ॥
ਅਨਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੇਤੰ ਅਹੰ ਬੰਧੰ ਭਰਮ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਲਨੰ ਬਿਕਾਰੰ ॥

ਫਿਰੰਤ ਜੋਨਿ ਅਨੇਕ ਜਠਰਾਗਨਿ ਨਹ ਸਿਮਰੰਤ ਮਲੀਣ ਬੁਧੰ ॥
ਹੇ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕਰਤ ਮਇਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਤਿਤ ਉਧਾਰਣ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਮਹ ॥³¹

5.2 ਸੰਸਾਰਕ ਮਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ

ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਅਪਮਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਸਦਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ:

ਤਿਰਸਕਾਰ ਨਹ ਭਵੰਤਿ ਨਹ ਭਵੰਤਿ ਮਾਨ ਭੰਗਨਹ ॥
ਸੋਭਾ ਹੀਨ ਨਹ ਭਵੰਤਿ ਨਹ ਪੋਹੰਤਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੁਖਨਹ ॥
ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਾਮ ਜਪੰਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਹ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਸੁਖ ਬਾਸਨਹ ॥³²

5.3 ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ: ਸੰਸਾਰ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ

ਕੂੜ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ, ਜਿਥੇ ਮਹਾਂ ਅਸਾਧ, ਪੰਚ ਚੋਰ, ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਡਰ ਅਤੇ ਭਟਕਣਾਂ ਹਨ; ਹਉਮੇ ਦੀ ਫਾਹੀ ਜੀਵ ਦੇ ਗਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ; ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਦੀ ਅੱਗ ਲੱਗੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ, ਤੋਂ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦਾ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪਾਰ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।³³

5.4 ਮਹੱਤਵ:

ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਕਈ ਅਸੰਭਵ ਅਤੇ ਔਖੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਿਤਾਣਾ ਹੰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਰੂਪੀ ਪਹਾੜ ਨੂੰ ਤੋੜ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਵੀ ਮੌਹ ਦੇ ਚਿਕੜ ਤੋਂ ਤਰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਨਿਆਸਰੋ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਵੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਮਸਕੰ ਭਗਨੰਤ ਸੈਲੰ ਕਰਦਮੰ ਤਰੰਤ ਪਪੀਲਕਹ ॥
ਸਾਗਰੰ ਲੰਘੰਤਿ ਪਿੰਗੰ ਤਮ ਪਰਗਾਸ ਅੰਧਕਹ ॥
ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗੇਣਿ ਸਿਮਰੰਤਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਰਣਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ॥³⁴

ਜਦੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਰੋਗ ਨਾਸ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ।³⁵

6. ਮਨੁੱਖ ਉਪਰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦਾ ਸਰੂਪ

ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦਾ ਪਾਤਰ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਾਲ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਸਰੂਪ³⁶ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ:

- (ੳ) ਬੁੱਧੀ ਵਿਚ ਤੱਤ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
- (ਅ) ਸੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਟਿਕਾਣੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਖੇੜੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।
- (ੲ) ਹੰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਤਿਆਗ ਨਾਲ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀਆਂ ਵਸ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।
- (ਸ) ਹਿਰਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਸ਼ੀਤਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
- (ਹ) ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਦਾ ਗੇੜ ਮੁੱਕ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
- (ਕ) ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਅੰਦਰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਸਿਫਤ ਸਲਾਹ ਦੇ ਵਾਜੇ ਵਜਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਸਹਸਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਸਲੋਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਭਿਵਿਅਕਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਅਨੁਪਮ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ-ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਸ਼ਮਾਨਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਸਾਗਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਸਲੋਕ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਪੱਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਉੱਚ ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਦੈਵੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖਮਾਨ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

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 ॥ ਅਨਿਕ ਸਾਸਨ ਤਾਤੰਤਿ ਜਮਦੂਤਹ ਤਵ ਸੰਗੇ ਅਧਮੰ ਨਰਹ ॥ - ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1358
 31. ਹੇ ਲੋਭਾ ਲੰਪਟ ਸੰਗ ਸਿਰਮੋਰਹ ਅਨਿਕ ਲਹਰੀ ਕਲੋਲਤੇ ॥ ਧਾਵੰਤ ਜੀਆ ਬਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰੰ ਅਨਿਕ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਬਹੁ ਡੋਲਤੇ ॥
 ਨਚ ਮਿਤ੍ਰੰ ਨਚ ਇਸਟੰ ਨਚ ਬਾਧਵ ਨਚ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਤਵ ਲਜਯਾ ॥ ਅਕਰਣੰ ਕਰੋਤਿ ਅਖਾਦ੍ਰਿ ਖਾਦ੍ਰਿ ਅਸਾਜ੍ਰੰ
 ਸਾਜਿ ਸਮਜਯਾ ॥ - ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1358
 32. ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1356
 33. ਉਦਿਆਨ ਬਸਨੰ ਸੰਸਾਰੰ ਸਨਬੰਧੀ ਸ੍ਰਾਨ ਸਿਆਲ ਖਰਹ ॥ ਬਿਖਮ ਸਥਾਨ ਮਨ ਮੋਹ ਮਦਿਰੰ ਮਹਾਂ ਅਸਾਧ ਪੰਚ
 ਤਸਕਰਹ ॥ ਹੀਤ ਮੋਹ ਭੈ ਭਰਮ ਭ੍ਰਮਣੰ ਅਹੰ ਫਾਂਸ ਤੀਖੁਣ ਕਠਿਨਹ ॥ ਪਾਵਕ ਤੋਅ ਅਸਾਧ ਘੋਰੰ ਅਗਮ ਤੀਰ ਨਹ
 ਲੰਘਨਹ ॥ ਭਜੁ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਸਰਣ ਉਧਰਣ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ॥ - ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1356
 34. ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1359
 35. ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੰਤ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੋਪਾਲਹ ਸਗਲੁੰ ਰੋਗ ਖੰਡਣਹ ॥
 ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗੇਣਿ ਗੁਣ ਰਮਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਣਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰਹ ॥ - ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1359
 36. (ੳ) ਕਿਰਪੰਤ ਹਰੀਅੰ ਮਤਿ ਤਤੁ ਗਿਆਨੰ ॥
 (ਅ) ਬਿਗਸੀਧਿ ਬੁਧਾ ਕੁਸਲ ਥਾਨੰ ॥
 (ੲ) ਬਸਿੰਤੁ ਰਿਖਿਅੰ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਮਾਨੰ ॥
 (ਸ) ਸੀਤਲੰਤ ਰਿਦਯੰ ਦ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸੰਤ ਗਿਆਨੰ ॥
 (ਹ) ਰਹੰਤ ਜਨਮੰ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸ ਲੀਣਾ ॥
 (ਕ) ਬਾਜੰਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਣਾ ॥ ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1355

ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ

*ਲਖਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ

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ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ‘ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ’ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨੀ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬਿੰਬਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਇ, ਖਾਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਸੱਤਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਪਾਸਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ‘ਪਦ’ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਵੀਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਨ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਖਾਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ ਲਈ ‘ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ’ ਨੂੰ ਮੋਕਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਧਰਾਤਲੀ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਤੱਕ ਮਹਿਦੂਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ, ਉਸ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਧਰਾਤਲੀ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਮਾਨਵੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਸਰੋਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯਤਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੀਵਨ, ਸਮਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਕ ਜੀਵੰਤ ਬਿੰਬ ਦੀ ਸਿਮਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੈ-ਸਿਰਜਿਤ ਬਿੰਬਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਦਲਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯਤਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਬਿੰਬ ਸਿਰਜਣ ਦੇ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਦਾਵਲੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਣ ਇੱਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਕਾਰਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਬਣ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦਾ ਅਜੋਕਾ ਬਿੰਬ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਗ ਵਜੋਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਦਵੰਦਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਤਾ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਸਥਾਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਵਿਹਾਰਿਕ ਪਾਸਾਰ ‘ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ’ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ‘ਤੇ ਖੁਦ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਬਿੰਬ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਵਿੱਚ ‘ਮੀਰੀ’ ਪਦ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ‘ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ’ (ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਪਦ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ) ਵਜੋਂ ਹੋਣੀ, ਇੱਕ ਕਾਰਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

*ਖੇਜਾਰਥੀ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਜਵਾਹਰ ਲਾਲ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ

ਅਮਨਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਬਿੰਬ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ, ਇਸ ਬਿੰਬ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਨੂੰ ਚਿੰਤਨੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਲੱਭਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਲਈ ਉਹ 'ਮੀਰੀ' ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੰਨਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਸਦੇ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਪਾਸਾਰਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਪਰਤਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਪਾਠਕ ਅਗੇ ਖੋਜ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਸੂਖਮ ਸਤਹਿ (ਮੈਂ ਤੇ ਪਰ) ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਥੂਲ ਸਤਹਿ (ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜ) ਤੱਕ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਸੋਚਣ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸੂਤਰ ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਆਸ-ਪਾਸ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਸਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ-ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਰੱਖ, ਇੱਕ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੱਜੋਂ ਸਵੀਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ, ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਇਸਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ ਖੋਜਣ ਦਾ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਸੁਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ।

ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੇ ਕੁੱਲ ਪੰਜ ਅਧਿਆਇ ਹਨ। ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ਿਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੇਖਕ ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਕਾਰਜ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਕਾਰਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕਾਰਜ ਦੀ ਸਾਰਥਿਕਤਾ ਦੱਸਦਿਆਂ, ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜ ਅਧਿਆਇਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡਣ ਦੀ ਉਥਾਨਕਾ ਸਿਰਜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕਾਰਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹ ਪੰਥਕ ਹਾਲਾਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕੀ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਏ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ ਉਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ-ਆਤਮ ਉਸਾਰਨ ਦੇ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ 'ਪਰ' ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਲਈ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਆਧਾਰ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਜਦੋਂ 'ਵਿਚਾਰ' ਦੀ ਬਜਾਇ ਨਿਚੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ 'ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ' ਨੂੰ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਇੱਕ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਆਨ-ਮੀਮਾਂਸਕੀ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਈ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸਿਰਜਣ ਦੀ ਘਾੜਤ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਅਹਿਮ ਕਾਰਜ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਸਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੁੜ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਕ ਬਿੰਬਾਂ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਤੱਥਾਂ, ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਪਰਤਾਂ, ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਤਮਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ, ਚਿੰਤਨੀ ਖੱਪਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਤਮਗਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ।

ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਲੱਭਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਇਸਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿੱਚਲੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਤਮਕ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਇੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਗਿਆਨ-ਮੀਮਾਂਸਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ-ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਪਏ ਵਰਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਮੰਡਨ ਲਈ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਵਿਧਾਵਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੁਰਾਣ, ਹਦੀਸ ਤੇ ਸਾਖੀ ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਸਵੈ-ਸਿਰਜਣ ਦਾ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਇਕਹਿਰਾ ਨਾ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਏ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਹ ਸੰਸਥਾਤਮਕ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਦਿੰਦਿਆਂ, ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ-ਦੂਜੇ 'ਤੇ ਆਸਰਿਤ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਸਾਬਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਧਰਮ-ਮੀਮਾਂਸਕੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਅਗਲਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਜੇ. ਡੀ. ਕਨਿੰਘਮ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ-ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਮੰਤੀ ਕਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਥਨ 'ਤੇ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਸਿੱਧੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ।

ਲੇਖਕ, ਕੰਨਿਘਮ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾਂ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਇਸ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਥਨ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੁੱਕਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਦੋ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ। (ਮਨਮੁਖ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ) ਦੇ ਵਰਗੀਕਰਣ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਿਆ ਦਿੰਦਿਆ ਉਹ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਆਤਮ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਪਕੀਪਣ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਦਕਿ ਸਾਮੰਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਰਾਜਕ ਅਭਿਆਸਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਲਬਰੇਜ਼ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਕੰਨਿਘਮ ਦੇ ਕਥਨ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਪੱਛਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਪਰੀ ਬੌਧਿਕ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲੀ ਸਮਝ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਬੌਧਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਮੰਨਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਮੰਤੀ ਈਸਾਈਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਤ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ 'ਰਾਜ' ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਇਹ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਾਮੰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸੱਤਾ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦਾ ਚਿੰਤਨੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਲਸ਼ਣ ਸੁਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਧਰਮ 'ਤੇ ਪਏ ਇਸਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਰੂਪ ਉਹ ਹਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਹਿਬੂਬ ਤੇ ਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੇਖੋਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੱਭਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਕੰਨਿਘਮ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੁੱਧਤਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਰਤਾਂ ਫਰੋਲਦਾ, ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਏ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਖੋਜ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹ ਅਰਵਿੰਦ ਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੰਡੇਰ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਤੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਡੀਕੋਲੋਨਾਈਜੇਸ਼ਨ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਸਾਰਥਿਕਤਾ ਦੱਸਦਿਆਂ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ (ਸਾਮੰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ) ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਭਾਵਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਅਸਿੱਧੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਾਲਾ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਪਰਦੀਆਂ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਭਾਵਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਇੱਥੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਚਿੰਤਕ ਸ਼ਾਂਤਾਲ ਮੂਫ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ 'ਦ ਪੋਲੀਟੀਕਲ' ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੈ, ਇੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਮੰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਕਾਲ ਮਿਸਲ ਕਾਲ ਹੈ, (ਜੋ ਉਸ ਲਈ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਤੀਗਤ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ) ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਾ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਮੀਰੀ ਪੱਖ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਆਪ-ਹੁਦਰੀ ਵਿਹਾਰਕੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਾਲ ਬਦਲ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਪਰਦਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ-ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਦੱਸਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯਤਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਵਿਹਾਰਕੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਬੋਲਬਾਲਾ ਭਾਰੂ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ 'ਦ ਪੋਲੀਟਿਕਲ' ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਤੇ ਮਨਨ ਕਰਨ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੀ। ਲੇਖਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ 'ਦ ਪੋਲੀਟਿਕਲ' ਦਰਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕੀਕਰਣ ਦੇ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਅਸਲ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਘਾੜਤ ਹੋਣੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਹ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਤਮਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਉਭਾਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਸੰਭਾਵਿਤ ਖੇਤਰ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਇੱਥੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ ਹੁੰਦੀ 'ਚਰਚ ਤੇ ਰਾਜ' ਦੀ ਬਹਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯਤਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਇਸ ਬਹਿਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਪਾਠਕ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਖਿੱਚਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ 'ਜਨਤਕ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਜੀ' ਦੇ ਵਰਗੀਕਰਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੰਨਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਨਿਰਪੱਖਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਅਗੇ ਉਹ ਧਰਮ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਤੋਂ 'ਮੀਰੀ' ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਗੁਰਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਸ-ਪਾਸ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ, ਪਾਠਕ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪਦਾਵਲੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਮੀਰੀ, ਅਕਾਲ ਆਦਿ ਵੱਲ ਸੋਚਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਦੇਖੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚਲਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਆਲੋਚਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਪਾਠਕ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਰ-ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦ ਨਾਂ ਤਹਿਤ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਗਿਆਨ-ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ ਪੱਧਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਜਾ, ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਮਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ ਦੱਸਦਿਆਂ, ਇੱਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ-ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਨਵਾਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਪਾਠਕ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਵਰਗੀਕਰਣ ਦੇ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਗਿਆਨ-ਮੀਮਾਂਸਕੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਸਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣੂ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਵਰਗੀਕਰਣ ਦਾ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਆਤਮਗਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਨਿਰਪੱਖਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਧਰਾਤਲ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਸਜਗਤਾ ਹੇਠ ਜਾਂ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਈ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਲੇਖਕ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੋਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ-ਵਿਆਪੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ, ਵਿਹਾਰਿਕੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧਾਭਾਸ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਇਸ ਵਰਗੀਕਰਣ ਦੇ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਧਾਰ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੌਲਿਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਖੋਜ ਕਾਰਜ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਤਮਗਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਮੰਥਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਸਰੋਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਲੇਖਕ ਲਈ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਯਤਨ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਹੀ ਸਫਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਸੂਖਮ ਸਤਹਿ ਤੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ 'ਆਤਮ' ਦੀ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਹਾਰਿਕਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਭਿਆਸਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਪਈ ਆਤਮ ਦੀ ਮਉਲਣ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਚਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਲੇਖਕ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਆਤਮ ਸਤਹੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਵਾਪਰਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਲਈ ਜੇਕਰ ਆਤਮ ਦੀ ਮਉਲਣ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਪਾਸਾਰਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਫੈਲਣ ਦਾ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ, ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਿਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਾਨੂੰ 'ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ' ਦੇ ਅਸਲ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

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