

## **Social – Cultural and Religious Heritage of Bathinda City**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Human beings are the production of social heritage. Through the experiences of their social lives, they attain maturity. These collective activities are the result of his antiques. The substantiality and authenticity of these values are not only upon the origin of any heritage but also based on the dynamic character, being liberalist and the speed of the development. The culture of Bathinda city carries importance among all these aspects. The modern Punjab is divided into three main regions: the Majha, the Doaba, the Malwa. It is a measure of the social-cultural and religious significance of the Malwa region that old historical towns are found here in such abundance. To mention a few of them, the towns of the Bathinda, Patiala, Sirhind etc. Bathinda is one of the oldest cities of the Malwa region of Punjab. It is located about 321 kilometers in North-West in Delhi. Multan is approximately 330 kilometers towards West from here. In earlier times the way from Multan to Delhi is through Bathinda. It is basically in the middle. We can glimpse the history about seventeen hundreds years ago of this City. The story behind the name of this city and its existence is linked to its historical fort which was built about 1800 years ago, by the ancestor of Bineyapal who's name was Raja Dab. This fort which is believed to exist since the arrival of Muslim rulers, is a centre of attraction for invaders from past time, and in this era sailors are astounded towards this. In past time Bathinda was called by a name "Small Desert" and some historian said it as a backward city. In different periods this city confronted many fluctuations. The daughter of emperor Iltutmish named Raziya Sultana was the first woman to sit on Indian royal throne, who was imprisoned in this fort due to her failure. Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji took a shelter in a forest (Lakhi Jangle) of this city while the conflict with the Mughal. Bathinda was also the capital of Hindu emperor Jaipal who faced numerous wars with the king of Ghazni named Sabuktegin and his son Mahmud Ghanvi. According to a scrutiny the history of existence of human is said to be as old as of Australia. In 40 B.C. People started living here in mud slums since they started to live in the Central Asia. According to Gazetteers of Bathinda, the intimation of Pre-Harappan era, Harappan era and Later-Harappan era has been found from the nearby places of this City. It is suspected that the river Sutlej flew with the fort. It had been known with different names at different times including Udbhandpur, Tabar-Hind, Gobindgarh, Bhatinda etc. The memories of imprisonment of princess Raziya Sultana by Altunia and later her marriage with him, all are still in the minds of people. And all these are playing a pivotal role in maintaining the touch of people with the culture. After being a part of the Muslim family, Bathinda was associated with the Royal family of Patiala. In 1754 A.D Phul –Bansi Baba Ala Singh took over the rule on Bathinda. When Bathinda was under the ruling of Patiala family the cultural care and development were at the pre-eminent of this City. The idea of the affluence of any city's heritage can be known by the people of that area. The process of social change is graphically at work in the socio-cultural life of the people of Bathinda city as it is noticed in the other cities of Punjab. Although these changes are somewhere fast and somewhere slow. The way of the people living is not same as it used to be in the past. The living standard, dressing style and eating habits of the people of Bathinda city changes with the trend. The population of Bathinda city has been a mixture of communities mainly such as Hindus, Sikhs and Jains. At present Hindu religion is in majority. Sikhism is second popular religion in this city. The population of this city (Religion Wise) during the year 1881-1931 remained as following:-

Population of Bathinda city (Gobindgarh) from 1831-1931 (Religion wise):-

Year of Census	Total Population	Hindus	Sikhs	Moham- mdans	Christians	Jains
1881	5084	2062	1384	1632	-	6
1891	8536	4416	1220	2873	1	26
1901	13185	7624	1270	4218	43	30
1911	15037	7756	2280	4766	184	43
1921	20154	10717	2849	6418	170	-
1931	22771	11026	3598	7743	229	60

At present, According to the District Census Hand Book of 2011, Hinduism is the first popular religion in this city with 178,939 ( 62.61 %) followers. Sikhism is in this city with 100,139 ( 35.04% ) followers. Muslims with 3194 ( 1.12% ) and Jainism by 734 ( 0.26% ), Christianity by 944 ( 0.33% ). Buddhist by 93 ( 0.03%), near about 0.57% stated ‘ no particular religion and other around 119 ( 0.04% ) population has in this city.

With the passage of time this town was formed a District headquarter in 20 August 1948. After that the businessmen, employees, traders and workers from different communities settled here in a large number. Because of different communities of , people do not have the same social and religious ceremonies. However, no doubt that many items are common in them all. But in certain things there are major differences, as for example the marriage ceremonies dissimilar in method and mode. Hindu performs the ritual of washing the mother’s breasts. This ceremony performs by a sister of the new born child or any other girl. This done, the child is made to suck the mother’s milk. Mundan ceremony is also performs in the Hindus, after the appearance of the first tooth of the child. Whereby he is given a clean head shave. Now a days these are performed at a fairly mature age also. In Sikhs after the birth of a child, there is hardly any pre-delivery ceremony. However, Hindu performs a ceremony of ‘Simat’ at seven month after pregnancy. This is also known as ‘Ritan’. In Sikh after the birth of a child, only few simple ceremonies like ‘Gurhti Dena’ this means putting ‘gur’ or sweets into the new born baby’s mouth before the mother feed. Sometime the naming ceremony of the child is held in some of the Sikh families, but it is not common with all the Sikh families. Now the most of Sikh families adopt the easy way to performs this ceremony. Pathi ( reciter of Guru Granth Sahib ) read a hymn from the Holy Book on the request of related family and suggest the first letter for the name of the child. In this way, parents have the freedom to choose any name beginning with the proposed letter. The ceremony of ‘Lavan’ is performed in Hindus. They performs this ceremony around Vedi specially. The ceremony is performed by a Brahman Priest. The Sikh marriage is called ‘AnandKarj’ and is performed in the midst of Holy recitations from the Guru Granth Sahib. The Lavan are there as same in the case of Hindus, but the Sikh Lavan are taken around their Holy Book and not the Vedi. The people of Bathinda city celebrate almost all those festivals which are celebrated in other areas of the Punjab State such as Diwali, Holi, Dussehra, Ram Lila, Baisakhi, Ram Navmi and Janam Ashtami. Some other festivals and religious days are celebrated in this city such as Durga Puja, KarvaChauth, Navratrasand Teeyan. Teeyan is a festival purely of women and is held in the month of Sawan. The fair of Baisakhi is celebrated with great pump by the people of Bathinda city. On this day people take dip in the holy Sarovar at Gurdwara Haji Rattan. Most people of this city also visit historical Gurdwara at Damdama Sahib Talwandi Sabo. The birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, is the most important festival of the town. A Kavidarbar is held on the same day in the evening at civil line Gurdwara situated at Guru Nanak Public School. Both Sikhs and Hindus take very active part in it. Dussehra festival is celebrated every year on the ground of MahavirSanatanDharam Sabha Public School. Ram lila is also held at many other places in the city. The birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira is celebrated in the month of Chet in the city.

The Hindus are sub-divided into followers of Durga, Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. Among the Sikhs, a few Namdharis, Nirankaris and Radha Swamis do exist here but their numbers are negligible. The land of Bathinda is proud to be a habilitation of Saints. The feet of Sikh Guru’s has been put in this city. To maintain the real identity of Bathinda, the writers, journalists, social workers, artists and many other prominent persons are giving their great contribution. For the overall development of Bathinda city many associations such as ‘Sahara Jan Sewa’ Vivekanand Study Circle’ ‘

S. Sobha Singh Art Society' etc. are playing their active role. Due to their efforts at present this is reaching at peak. We should not only be proud on history but also on present of Bathinda city.

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