



Historical Sources in Punjab State Archives Chandigarh: A Study

Dilbag Singh

Research Scholar

Department of History

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

E-mail: dilbagsingh0006@gmail.com

Abstract: *History is a study of facts, their analysis and interpretation. History consists of a corpus of ascertained facts. Historical sources lead to the establishment of historical facts. The sources for the study can be primary and secondary. Archives is a place where the records, public or private (primary sources), are stored. An archive is the treasure house of valuable material and information. In this paper I have tried to provide information on the important historical sources which are available in Punjab State Archives. A brief history, meaning and role of the archives in promoting communal harmony and national integration have also been described. Punjab State Archives has been the biggest repository of archival material in North India. It contains a vast quantum of source material pertaining not only to the past history of Punjab but also to the freedom struggle of India.*

ARCHIVES: Archives are organized bodies of records, including papers, books, maps, manuscripts, typescripts, accounts, minute books, sound recordings and other documentary materials. The word archives is derived from Greek word *archeion* (office building), which has two fold meaning. Firstly it is a seat of government or administration. Secondly it is place where the records public or private, are stored. Finally it is a document itself. In their capacity as collection of sources, archives have dual nature and use. They perpetuate the memory of the rights and activities of their creator and assist them in maintaining their rights and planning their actions. They also furnish information on the political, social, economic, cultural and other developments of the past, which cannot be fully understood by the scholars unless they have access to the rich store of human experience embodied in the archives.¹

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

Archives under government control, known as public archives, is usually preserved very rigidly under the seals of secrecy. It is partly to share the reputations on susceptibilities of officials still living and partly to ensure the safety of the documents. However, in a democratic set up it will be desirable that such documents should become automatically available to the researchers after some time. It is quite evident that public archives are more important than the private. They include records of Central, State and Local Governments. The scope of the archives has widened these days, as they are supposed to preserve not only

government records but also private papers and newspapers.²

ROLE OF ARCHIVES IN PROMOTING COMMUNAL HARMONY

India is a land of diverse communities and religions. Archives can play an effective role in bringing communal harmony among the different religious communities. Archives are the treasure houses of valuable material and information which throws light on the common history of mankind. As history is the record of past experience and interactions so it explains the common roots of all religious, social and cultural values and political institutions. Archives provide necessary information for communal harmony and help to identify the common heritage and common feelings and thereby help to bridge invitational gap between the people of various communities and religion, a fundamental requirement for promoting communal harmony.³

ROLE OF ARCHIVES IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Archives can effectively play role in national integration. Archives are the repositories of valuable materials which throw light on the history of mankind. History explains common roots of culture, how variations in culture occur, the common values which people shared at one time and the common origins of their social traditions and political institutions. Knowledge of such facts considerably helps in the formation of national identity. The historical material lying in archives can explain the common dangers and challenges which the people of a nation might have faced. It also explains the development of distinctness of regions and communities.⁴

National archives and private archives in many parts of the world have been growing and developing. Several national and international organizations provide information and advice for archives.⁵ Presently, near about 200 public archives are available in the world. These national archives are maintained by the nations. The national archives of United Kingdom is very important and popular in the world.⁶

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA



It is located at Janpath Road, New Delhi. The National Archives of India contains the records of the supreme Government of India, under the British East India company, under the British Crown and since Independence.⁷ With the transfer of the national capital from Calcutta (Kolkata) to New Delhi in 1911, Imperial Record Department (IRD) shifted to the present building in 1926. After independence, The IRD was rechristened as National Archives of India and Head of the organization was designated as Director of Archives from Keeper of Records. Dr. S.N. Sen, who succeeded A.F.M. Abdul Ali and held office till 1949. With the passage of time most Indian states have set up their own State Archives.⁸

PUNJAB STATE ARCHIVES (CHANDIGARH)

Punjab State Archives is located at 3-Dakshin Marg, Archives Bhawan, Sector 38-A, Chandigarh-160036. It was shifted from Patiala to Chandigarh in 1983-84, later shifted it to the present building in 1995.⁹

HISTORY OF PUNJAB STATE ARCHIVES

The Punjab State Archives was located at the historical Baradari Palace which was erected during the reign of Maharaja Rajinder Singh of Patiala State in 1875. In 1966, the Punjab Government allotted this building to the Archives at the behest of Shri Dharam Vira, the Governor of Punjab.¹⁰

The Pepsu Archives was established at Patiala in 1948. Prof. S.N. Banerjee was the first Director of Archives. After the partition of the Punjab, the Punjab Record office was opened at Simla in 1948. Dr. G.L. Chopra was its first Keeper of Records. After the merger of Pepsu with the Punjab in 1956, both the offices were integrated and renamed as the Punjab State Archives.¹¹

The Punjab State Archives is, in no way, less valuable repository of historical material than the archives of other states in the country. It contains vast quantum of source material pertaining to the past history of the Punjab. In spite of the partition of the country in 1947 and the consequent division to the government records preserved in Lahore, the joint efforts of the Punjab Government and the archives authorities have resulted in the acquisition of enormous rich and rare historical materials. For the study of the past two centuries of the Punjab history this State Archives provides immensely useful sources, most of which are not available anywhere else. No scholar undertaking research project on this period of the regional history can afford to do without the Punjab State Archives.¹²

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL SOURCES IN STATE ARCHIVES

1. PEPSU RECORDS

After the formation of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) in 1948, the record of the eight States pertaining to different departments such as Education, Finance, Foreign and Political, Home, Ijlas-i-khas, Military Law etc., were centralized in the fort record repository at Patiala. Since the merger of PEPSU with the Punjab in 1956 those have been made a part of the Punjab State Archives.

2. THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES (NARENDRA MANDAL)

The records of the Chamber of Princes (Narendra Mandal) were brought to Patiala by its Chancellor, then Maharaja of Patiala on its dissolution after the India's attainment of Independence. It relates to the formulation of the proposals about the formation of the Chamber of Princes in 1921, its constitution, procedure, functions of its various committees and conferences.¹³

3. KHALSA DARBAR RECORDS

These are the original government documents of the Kingdom of Lahore from Maharaja Ranjit Singh upto the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849. These records have been brought from Lahore in 1947 after the partition of Punjab as a share of Punjab (India). Originally Khalsa Darbar Records comprise 132 bundles of loose sheets which have since been arranged and bound in handy volumes. These include

- i. Daftar-i-Fauj Records relating to army. These are mostly payrolls of army personnel.
- ii. Daftar-i-Mal Records relating to general revenue-land revenue and taxes etc.
- iii. Daftar-Jagirat Records relating to the Jagirs granted to various persons.
- iv. Daftra-i-Toshakhana Records relating to royal wardrobe and kin privy purse.

These records are written in Persian (Shikasta style). Prof. Sita Ram Kohli prepared the catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records in two volumes which was published by the Punjab Government Lahore in two volumes.¹⁴

4. DISTRICT RECORDS (VERNACULAR FILES)

These records consist of about 21,000 files in Urdu and Persian of several districts and relate mostly to judicial and revenue matters during the nineteenth century. The District Records,



Gazetteers of various Districts, Land settlement Reports, Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab and its Dependence, Punjab Jail Reports, Reports on the Administration of Civil and Criminal Justice in Punjab, Reports on Police Administration in Punjab, Punjab Irrigation Reports, Reports on Punjab Famines etc. are among the precious primary sources preserved in the archives which supply comprehensive material on various aspects of the administration of Punjab under British rule. Similarly, the records of various native States such as Patiala, Jind, Nabha, Kapurthala, Malerkotal, and Faridkot, Gazetteers of all these States, Amblala Agency Records and Reports on the Administration of the Native States in the Punjab, throw a flood of light on the internal administration of these Princely States, their relations with the English East India Company, the working of the British Paramountcy and the Praja Mandal Movement in these States.¹⁵

5. BHANDARI COLLECTION

The collection comprises official and private correspondence several distinguished members of Bhandari family of Batala in Gurdaspur district who served of the Lahore Darbar at different places in the Cis-Sutlej territories from 1809, when the British Agency was established at Ludhiana to the final annexation of the Punjab, in 1849. It consists of more than 4,000 documents in Persian.¹⁶

6. MIAN CHATTAR SINGH COLLECTION

This collection consists of 69 documents relating to the Jagir disputes between Maharaja Gulab Singh ruler of Jammu and Kashmir states and the descendents of his brother Raja Dhian Singh. Mian Chattar Singh, being one of latter, collected these documents to support the claim of his party. They cover the periods from approximately 1837 to 1899.¹⁷

7. HAQIQAT-i-HAL DEHAT SUBHA DELHI

These reports deal with about 400 villages of the Delhi territory and cover a period approximately from 1878 to the end of the 19th century. They contain a lot of useful information regarding the history of these villages and social and economic conditions prevailing therein.

1. Naqool-i-Shaqajat;
2. Maras Lajat;
3. Naqool Parwanajat;
4. Tarjama-I-Chitihiat;

These volumes comprise orders, instructions and demi-official letters issued by the resident at Delhi, political agents and political assistants in the Cis-Sutlej territories to other British officers, Punjab Chiefs, Nobles and

neighboring Indian Princes in Northern India. These records contain valuable information about political changes in general and expansion and consolidation of the British rule in the region.¹⁸

8. RUCHI RAM SAHNI MANUSCRIPTS

The collection consists of typescripts of the incomplete and unpublished "History of My Own Times" by the late professor Ruchi Ram Sahni for the period 1878-1941. They contain valuable information about the political events of that period¹⁹

9. BRITISH FILES IN ENGLISH

These files pertaining to different districts for the years 1820-1931 refer to mutiny, boundary disputes, territorial changes, pension claims, grants for religious instructions etc.²⁰

10. DIVISIONAL RECORDS

These records relating to the years 1822-1907 consists of correspondence of Commissioner and Superintendent, Ambala, Delhi and Hissar Divisions with the Government of Punjab in different departments and also with the Deputy Commissioners of respective districts.²¹

11. MATERIAL ON FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN PUNJAB

The material relating to the Punjab's role in freedom struggle of 1857 is lying in the Punjab State Archives. Similarly the officials records of the different Divisions and Districts regarding the Kuka activities are available in the State Archives. The documents in the files provide primarily the official version of the policies and events and contain valuable materials from the then British Government's point of view, but a close examination of the scores of evidences, if studied against the background of the circumstances, can go a long way in unfolding the historical truth. One great hurdle that stands in the way of a thorough study of these records is their undecipherable or not easily decipherable character of the old English language. The omission and mistakes of spellings of names and places have made the documents at places unintelligible and vague.

Material in the forms of diaries, memoirs, narratives of events and reports by contemporary Civil and Military officers and their relations and their friends were generally written or compiled from a partisan's point of view. And they attempted to glorify the activities of the British Government Administration and Soldiers. Minutest details of the sufferings of British officers or their henchmen have been given most enthusiastically and in intensely pathetic words while the chivalrous activities and organizing capabilities of Punjabis



who were nick-named as "Shodahs", "Badmashes", etc., were suppressed.

The Punjab State Archives also have some of the papers on Akali Movement such as papers of Ruchi Ram Sahni, Babbar Akali Movement and particularly on the Jaito struggle and the part played by the eminent leaders of Indian National Congress. The material collected by the PEPSU Regional Committee on history of Freedom Movement in India has proved to be a mine of information in respect of large number of freedom fighters of the Punjab. Hundreds of files of the State record, pertaining to different movements, such as Praja Mandal Movement, Kisan Movement, and the activities of political leaders in erstwhile Princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Malerkotla, Jind, Kapurthala, Kalsia, Faridkot and Nalagarh, are available in the archives. These files contain police reports of various events and the activities of political workers, correspondence between the

State officials and the Agent to the Governor-General for Punjab States, copies of propaganda posters and pamphlets newspaper clippings and a host of other valuable material. A careful perusal of official files and other documents can help a scholar to write a dependable and faithful account of the freedom movement in this part of the country.²²

REFERENCE LIBRARY

The reference library which comprises more than 24,000 books, about 600 manuscripts and 368 maps affords ample facilities and scope for the scholars and other interested visitors who frequently visit the Punjab State Archives in order to obtain information on historical subjects and advanced studies. A large number of these books are rare and out of print and are of immense value for the study of history. New books are being purchased in order to facilitate the research scholars.²³

LIST OF IMPORTANT HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS, DOCUMENTS AND PAINTINGS MANUSCRIPTS

IN PERSIAN

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Ain-i-Akbari by Abul Fazi	Institutes of Akbar	Bishambar Dass.	1834 A.D.
Akbarnama Vol. I & II by Abul Fazal.	History of Mughal Dyansty upto 47th year of Emperor Akbar's reign (1603 A.D.)	Suraj Bhan	1705 A.D.
Akbarnama Vol. III by Abul Fazal.	-do-	--	1637 A.D.
Akbarnama by Abdul Fazal	History of Akbar upto - his death in 1605 A.D.	--	1610 A.D.
Alqab Nama	Roster of titles applicable to dignitaries & high officials of Lahore Darbar	--	--
Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri, Vol III by Mutamad Khan.	History of Emperor Jahangir	Mohd. Muqadas Ibn Mohd. Kazim.	1747 A.D.
Lub-ul-Tawarikh Narain Kaul Aziz	History of Kashmir from earliest times up to the accession of Maharja Gulab Singh.	--	1846 A.D.
Makabat-i-Rajab Ali by Rajab Ali	Demi-official correspondence of Sayed Rajab Ali throwing light on political condition of the times.	--	1826-1832 A.D.
Maraslajjat Vol. I by Rajab Ali	Copies of notable State communication on behalf of British Govt. Addressed to the rulers, prominent personages & function aries.	--	1839 to 1843 A.D.
Sanadat was Muahidat by Rajab Ali.	Copies of Sanads & letters of agreements granted to the Cis-Sutlej Sikh Chiefs by Mughals & the British Govt.	--	--



Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Ain-i-Akbari by Abul Fazi	Institutes of Akbar	Bishambar Dass.	1834 A.D.
Sher Singh Nama By Mohd. Naqi Peshawari	Brief history of Punjab after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with a detailed account of the murder of Maharaja Sher Singh	--	1844 A.D.
Siyahat-i-Kashmir (Kashmir-Nama by Ganeshi Lal)	Account of Journey to Kashmir by some prominent British officials & return journey to Simla	Shambhu Nath	1847 A.D.
Tarikh-i-Nama (Part I & II)	Detailed history of the Sikh rule in Punjab especially that of the post Ranjit Singh period 1839-1949 A.D.	-	-
Twarikhi-i-Ahwal-i-Sikhan by Khushwaqat Rai	History of Sikhs from Guru Nanak Dev to 1811 A.D.	Dilsukh Rai	1839 A.D.
Tarikh-i-Kalan Kashmir by Mir Ahmad	Voluminous statistical history of Kashmir written during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.	-	-
Tazkira-i-Khandan-i-Rajahat Phulkian.	History of Phulkian Chiefs with particular emphasis on Patiala State.	-	-
Tuzak-i-Timuri	Instructions about State craft	-	1851 A.D.
Umdat-ut-Tawarikh Daftars I & II by Sohan Lal Suri	Detailed history of the Sikhs (1469 to 1830 A.D.)	-	-
Zafarnama by Guru Gobind Singh	Letter of Guru Gobind Singh to Emperor Aurangzeb & Manajat-i-Baba Nanak Sahib	Raja Ram Kaul Tota	1872 A.D.
Adi Granth	Holy book of Sikhs.	-	1666 A.D.
Dabistan-i-Mazahib by Mohsin Fani	A treatise on comparative study on religions	-	-
Upanishads	Persian translation of upanshads.	-	1730 A.D.
Tuhfa-i-Bikram by Alai-ud-din	A treatise in sexology	-	-

IN URDU

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Baghawat-i-Kuku	Account of Kuka Insurrection at Malerkotla	-	1885 A.D.
Census Report of Patiala State 1881 A.D.	-	-	-
Twarikh-i-Wakari by Gulam Bhikh Jalandhri	Detailed history of Tehsil Ludhiana	-	1882 A.D.
Alaf Laila	Collection of fairy tales	-	-

IN GURMUKHI (PUNJABI)

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Ain-i-Akbari by Abul Fazl	Translated into Punjabi	-	-
Hukamnama by Guru Gobind Singh	Copy of letter issued by Guru Gobind Singh to Khalsa Sangat	-	1707 A.D.
Bhagwat Gita	18 chapters in Punjabi	-	-
Janam Sakhi by Bhai Bala	Biography of Guru Nanak Dev	Ram Singh	1799 A.D.



	also Contains other Sakhis		
Makke di Gosht	Discussion of Guru Nanak Dev with Qazi of Macca	-	-
Sheerin Farhad by Hasan	Love story of Sheerin Farhad in Poetry	Ram Singh Tapi	1849 A.D.
Chanak Rajneeti by Kautalya	Hindi Versian of Arthshastra	-	1762 A.D.

IN ENGLISH

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Diary of H.H. European Tour	Journal of the European Tour of H.H. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala from August 23, 1930 to March 6, 1931	-	1931 A.D.

IN ARABIC

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Tarikh-i-Gulshon-i-Khulfa	History of Caliphates	-	-

IN SANSKRIT

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Mahabharat	Text of Mahabharata written on Palm leaves	-	-

IN SHARDA

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Padam Puran	Padam Puran written in Palm leaves	-	6th or 7th Century A.D.

IN HINDI

Title & Author	Contents	Scribe	Year
Ramayan by Tulsi Das	A religious book of Hindus	-	-

PAINTINGS

- i. Auspicious star of the Punjab instituted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
- ii. Ahmad Shah Abdail
- iii. Raja Teja Singh.
- iv. Seals of the Lahore Darbar (Large Size)
- v. Ram Singh Kuka in Malerkotla with Sahahid Sikhs.
- vi. Treaty between East India Company & Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia.
- vii. Indian Merchants (Shahukar with Maneems and Bahis)
- viii. Officers of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry.²⁴

The Punjab State Archives is not only valuable repository of historical material for research scholars but also information centre of national history for common people. It explains the development of distinctness of regions and communities. It contains vast quantum of source materials pertaining to the past history of the Punjab. For the study of past two centuries of the Punjab history this State Archives provide immensely useful sources, most of which are not available anywhere else. No scholar undertaking research project on this period of the regional history can afford to do without the Punjab State Archives.

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