

### **Demography: Sharp Decline in Sikh Population?**

The first census of religions by UPA government (led by BJP) revealed significant figures about the population structure of Punjab. The rate of growth of Hindus in Punjab (during the decade 1991-2001) was 28 per cent, while the rate of growth of Sikhs was 14.2 %. Thus showing a startling imbalance.

If the trend continues for another 30 years Hindus will supersede Sikhs as majority. SAD, which has virtually sold away its wisdom (*bivek*), self-Honour (*anakh*) and political vision (*dur dristi*) to the BJP and RSS. It has reduced itself from a front-runner regional party of India to a politically-myopic B-team of BJP, while other regional parties (which were earlier coalition partners of BJP) deserted the BJP to safeguard the interests of their region/ community. The examples are TDP of Andhra Pradesh, Janta Dal United, Lok Janshakti Party and National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir, among others.

But the Akali Dal remains glued to the BJP in Punjab. As a result BJP has strengthened its cadres and vote bank in the urban Punjab, at the cost of the Akali Dal, jumping from just 2 assembly seats in 2001 elections, to over 40 seats recently, all due to the increased and intensified activities of RSS and its affiliated organisations (over 400 in number) full-timely active in Punjab. Paradoxically the Sikh voters in urban areas also voted for BJP, taking it as a coalition partner of SAD. The RSS remains anti-Sikh and anti-Punjab and is directly working on the long-term strategy, to emaciate the Sikh Culture and ethos. Ample proof is available which points toward their systematic strategies to ensure maximum settlement of people from UP and Bihar by providing free travel in trains to Punjab and establishing slums for them.

The increasing population of outsiders in Punjab is destined to be dangerous to the interests of the Sikh Nation as well as politically harmful to interests of all the political parties of Punjab, except BJP. If Muslims in Kashmir act to expel people from Bihar and UP (as they did last year, after an incident of rape and murder of a girl, by Bihari migrants) or when Sikhs awake and try to save their mother state, Punjab - the richest state from the unwanted army of outsiders, then BJP and RSS make it a big issue. But when the member of RSS - Shiv Sena launched an anti-North Indian movement ('Maharashtra for Marathis' movement). The RSS kept shrewdly silent.

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### **Happy Tidings from Guru's Blessed Daughter**

I am glad to hear that your wish to publish what you so charmingly refer to as my "Inspirational Experience" in the June issue of *The Sikh Review*. Thank you most heartily for doing so! If all goes according to plan, I will have a visit shortly from the person who will teach me to tie my *Keski*, and it would be a real pleasure for me to let you know what transpires. The privilege of being able to share this most meaningful experience with you (albeit via e-mail) makes it even more special for me!

Thankfully, the radiation treatments (for my illness) have ended and I am now undergoing a period of tests and evaluations. With the Guru's Grace, if the results are satisfactory, my return to work could happen as early as May 2008.

I just cannot tell you how wonderful it makes me feel to hear that I have been in your thoughts! Please know that your prayers and goodwill (as well as those of *The Sikh Review* team and the Calcutta *Sangat*) are always such an immense blessing and

valued source of support.

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### **The Power of Steel Kara**

Mr. Roger H. Barnsley's experience (SR: issue of February 2008) makes interesting reading. Let me share my own experience.

While posted in Jaipur in 1964, I once went to a popular restaurant for dinner. I was alone and in that large hall, there was only one other diner. His table was far off from mine, but after a while he volunteered to join me. I welcomed him.

Wearing a KARA he introduced himself as a Rajput, having retired from the erstwhile Jaipur Army. To satisfy my curiosity as to why he was wearing *Kara*, a Sikh custom.

He explained that the *Kara* had saved him from becoming an apostate.

In 1911, when King George V visited India for his coronation, he was invited by Maharaja of Jaipur, for a polo match. And on the evening prior to the match, there was a state banquet at the Palace where all ministers & senior officers, including himself, were to be present.

It was then reported that the team accompanying His Majesty King George V included his own cooks, and, as per their custom, beef dishes would be served at the banquet. Since refusal of any dish would be considered bad manners this gentleman was very upset. It was against his religion, and he did not want to violate his religious belief. At the same time, he did not want to face the wrath of the Maharaja.

He then noticed that, amongst the bodyguards of the King, the commanding Officer was a Sikh belonging to the Sikh Regiment. When this Rajput explained his predicament to the Sikh officer, he put him at ease and told him not to worry. The Sikh officer explained that he and most of his colleagues did not take beef, and for them, separate provision had been made.

Since most waiters in that party were from UK, they could not distinguish between the Sikhs and Rajputs, **as they all had turbans and beards**. To tide over this situation, the army officer had issued strict instructions to the waiters that no beef dishes were to be served to those who were wearing iron bangles [*Kara*] on their right hands. The Sikh officer gave him a *Kara* and he was thus saved from a grave sacrilege.

From that day onwards, this Rajput gentleman continued to wear the *Kara*.

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I would like to express my views on the article: "Sowing Seeds of Sikhism in the West" published in March 2008 issue of "**The Sikh Review**".

I have read this article. Does it not give wrong message to readers, that children can disown teaching and discipline laid down by ten Gurus?

Here I quote my own experience. My son has done MBA from Paris University in year 2000. When he was studying and staying in hostel in Paris, hardly any person was aware of Sikh religion in university campus. Members of faculty and friends used to ask him why he kept a beard and wore a turban. He made out a small pamphlet of what is

Sikh religion and how we do our prayer, and what we do at Gurdwara. Then he made arrangement with Gurdwara management for a visit of faculty and friends to Gurdwara. Faculty members and students were surprised to know that such a religion existed, as none of them was aware of the youngest faith. After kirtan, Ardas (prayer) was performed asking for welfare of every one in the world. After Ardas, langar was served all in pangat. Many faculty members and fellow students asked for more details of Sikh religion and appreciated the religion. One and all praised the basic of Sikh religion "*kirt karo*", "*vand choko*" and "*jap karo*" and protect the helpers. Also become "*saint sephi*" by taking Amrit.

More over everybody was surprised that so many sacrifices were made by Sikh Gurus and Gursikhs for freedom of religion, when they were told that 9th Guru Teg Bahadur Ji sacrificed himself for Hindus - victims of tyranny.

Our Gurus have clearly stated: "*Rehat Pyari Mujko Sikh pyara nahe*". "*Jab eh gahe Bipren ki reet, mai na karu inki parteet*"

Every religion has its own path to follow. In Sikh religion, discipline is the key. An article in a newspaper in USA, states: Sikhs prefer to wear turban (crown) earned after 200 years of sacrifices, than a cap.

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