

## BUDDHISM IN PUNJAB

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In the History of Indian religions, Buddhism occupies a unique place, firstly, for throwing its door open not only to the Indians of all strata of the society, but also the foreigners, who settled in India, and secondly for its spread in foreign countries. Along with the propagation of the religion all over the world, Buddhist art, architecture, language and literature also spread. During the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C Buddhism originated in northern India. The history of Buddhism in the state of Punjab dates back to 2000 years. The discovery of Buddhist site at Sanghol has created a unique curiosity of the existence of Buddhism in Punjab where majority of the population is Sikh. Has Buddhism still survived in Punjab? This is a very important question need to be answered. The paper addressed this issue by analysing various documents, books and published articles. This paper provides evidence of Buddhist presence in Punjab and also their current status.

### INTRODUCTION

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha known as Buddha and it is now an important religion of most of the countries of Asia. The most important doctrines he taught included the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path. Devotion is an important part of the practice of most Buddhists. Devotional practices include bowing, offerings, pilgrimage, and chanting. The religion of the Buddha started in one corner of India, but with the passage of time it made its way too many foreign countries. This extraordinary growth of Buddhism was due to many causes- The first significant cause was that it came into existence at a very proper time. The rise of Buddhism took place at a time when people were fed up with rituals which crept into Hinduism in course of time. Secondly, the simplicity of the teachings of Buddha, not only the philosophy of Buddha was simple the language used by him was also simple and familiar to the people. Thirdly, Buddhism did not believe in caste system and all were welcomed into its fold. The teaching of Buddha was emphasizing on equality and the religion of Buddhism opposed the inequalities created by the division of various castes (Gokhale, 2004). Thus spirit of equality also contributed to its rise.

During the time when the birth of Buddhism took place Hinduism has become complicated and more and more ritualistic day by day as a result the common people were tired. They needed a new religion which was simpler and Buddhism was the answer to their needs. Buddhism was open to all religion and also opens to all class of people in the society. The humanity side of Buddhism attracted more and more followers. He opened the salvation door to all groups of people without any distinction of caste and creed. He did not think about only his salvation but he

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thought about the salvation of all by teaching them the right path to salvation and helping others to attain salvation (Barthelemy, 1917). Thus the equal treatment and importance given to all class of people attracted more and more people to follow Buddhism.

### **SPREAD OF BUDDHISM IN PUNJAB**

The name Punjab is derived from the Persian words “punj and ab” which means five water (Sewa Singh, 2007). Thus the land of Punjab is called the land of five rivers. Punjab was the entry gate for most of the foreign invaders and in history it has been called as the gateway to the Indian Subcontinent. This state is situated in the north west of India forming the larger Punjab. After the partition of India in 1947, the region of Punjab was also divided into two, Eastern Punjab for India and Western Punjab for Pakistan. Punjab was further divided in 1966 with the formation of two new states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

In the ancient time Punjab was ruled by many dynasties like the Gandhara, Nandas, Gurjara-Pratiharas, Hindu Shahis, the Mauryans, Sungas, Kushans, Guptas and the Palas. Due to its geographical location Punjab was always attacked from the east and the west and it also came under the influence of these regions. The culture of Punjab is a combination of Hindu, Islamic, Afghans, British, Sikh and Buddhist influence.

Punjab was under the control of Muslim ruler before it became a Sikh state. However, it is said that over 2000 years ago, along with the countries such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kashmir, Punjab was also a Buddhist state. Buddhism came to Punjab through Buddha himself and gained a good hold in the Punjab-Gandhara region. Buddha also visited Punjab and gave his important speech the one known as Satipatthana Sutta or the discourse of mindfulness at Kuru village of Punjab.

In the ancient period Punjab was ruled by many Buddhist rulers and as a result many towns of Punjab became the centre of Buddhism. The Chinese pilgrim Hieun Tsang visited Jalandhar during his stay in India and he observed that Buddhism was flourishing in the Punjab city of Jalandhar. He witnessed that there were 50 Buddhist Viharas and 200 monks in the city of Jalandhar. The Buddhist ruler of Punjab, King Udit during his reign hosted the world famous educational centre, Takshila in Punjab.

During the reign of Ashoka he established many Buddhist viharas, stupas and other Buddhist monument which gave a great impetus to the spread of Buddhism in Punjab. Actually, the extraordinary activities done in the cause of Dhamma produced a blend in Punjab, which resulted in the advent of prominent Buddhist scholars and philosophers in Punjab during the ancient time.

During the reign of Ashoka and after his rule their flourished a local kingdom with Srughna also known as Sugh, as its capital which was situated near Jagdhari district of Ambala. This dynasty ruled Punjab around 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.

Raja Dhanabhuti was the follower of Buddhism and was one of the most prominent ruler of this dynasty ruling from 240 B.C. to 210 B.C. Raja Dhanabhuti not only built stupas in his capital cities but also contributed to building stupas in other region of India. He gave a huge donation during the building of world renowned stupa built in Bharhut in Central India during 250 B.C. to 200 B.C.

Raja Dhanabhuti was inspired by the work of Emperor Ashoka that he too built number of stupas in and around his capital city. In 635 A.D. Hiuen Tsang a Chinese pilgrim visited Sugh and witnessed that there were many stupas with the relic of Buddha built, Ashokan stupa and also there were some disciples of the King and some other Arhat or the person who has attained enlightenment.

Kuru was also one of an important Buddhist centre in Punjab now in Haryana. Lord Buddha visited Kuru and stayed in Kammasadhamma which is the market place of the people of Kuru. Lord Buddha delivered many religious sermons in Kuru along with Janapadas, Ratthapada, one of the nobles in Kuru converted to Buddhism and joined the Buddhist Sangha after hearing the sermons of Lord Buddha.

There is a possibility that Buddha visited some place in Punjab. In ancient period there was a commercial route which passes Sialkot, Agroha and Rohtak connecting Taxila with the Gangetic valley. It is said that Buddha visited Taxila and he may have used this route crossing Punjab to reach Taxila which is now in Pakistan.

Hiuen Tsang, a Chinese pilgrim during his stay in India from 634 A.D to 644 A.D. witnessed an Ashokan pillar in the five places of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Among the five places he mentioned Satadru which is now Sanghol in Punjab as the place where he witnessed the Ashokan pillar during his visit. Ashoka issued a number of pillar edicts and one important pillar edict of Ashoka was found in the plain of Punjab. This pillar was found at Topra, a village near Ambala and it was later removed and taken to Delhi in 1356 by Firoz Shah Tughlaq. It is now known as Delhi Topra pillar situated at Firoz Shah Kotla (Aruna Deshpande, 2013).

Hiuen Tsang visited three cities of Punjab during his stay in India. He visited Chinapatti, Jalandhar and Satadru which is now Sanghol. Chinapatti has been recognised as the modern city of Punjab and was a winter residence of Chinese hostage of King Kaniskha. Hiuen Tsang stayed in this place for 14 months studying the Abhidhamma sastra with Vinitaprabha a renowned scholar. He witnessed ten monasteries in Chunapatti with a large number of monks.

Hiuen Tsang also visited Jalandhar which was known as Trigarta at that time. According to Hiuen Tsang Jalandhar was a popular city and it was the capital city of the Jalandhar kingdom. The king of Jalandhar whose name was Wuddhi or Uditto was a follower of Buddhism and was an ally of Harsha who was the Buddhist ruler of the Vardhan dynasty. Hiuen Tsang also mentioned that King Uditto

welcomed him in his kingdom and treated him as a state guest during his visit in 635 A.D. In Jalandhar Hiuen Tsang witnessed that there were around 50 viharas and 200 monks residing in those viharas. He even mentioned that Chandravarma, who was the prominent scholar of that period, was residing in Nagardhana vihara in Jalandhar. Hiuen Tsang also stayed in this Vihara and studied Buddhist commentary of Prakarna-Pada-Vibasa-Sastra for four months. Hiuen Tsang visited Jalandhar for the second time in 643 A.D. when he was going back to China.

In Sanghol which was earlier known as Satadru, Hiuen Tsang witnessed around ten sangharamas but he mentioned that they were almost deserted. He also talked about a stupa which was built by Askoka in Sanghol (Ahir, 2003). Out of the three place mentioned by Hiuen Tsang, there was evidence found only in Sanghol. Sanghol has been discovered in modern Punjab and excavated by the archaeological survey of India. The discovery of Sanghol in Tehsil Samrala, district of Ludhiana has brought to light the presence of Buddhism in Punjab during the ancient period. The name Sanghol was also taken from Sanghpur which was a Buddhist monastic town. The most important artefacts that were excavated in this region were the Stupa. The stupa was excavated in 1985 by the department of archaeology. The stupa was built in the pattern of dharmacharka or the wheel of law by Ashoka during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. The base of stupa was in cylindrical shape with 16 metre diameter on a square platform of 17 metres height which is believed to be pradakshina or the circumambulation. Several votive stupas made of solid mud were raised by the followers on the covered pathway in the east.

Many artefacts were excavated in the archaeological site of Sanghol. In the central part of the stupa were found a tooth, ashes and some bones which were believed to be the body relics of Lord Buddha. The railings of the stupa found have placed the excavated artifacts of Sanghol on the archaeological maps of Kushans highly. The railing pillars of the stupa were found in the pit between the monastery and the stupa. The important part of the excavated railings include 4 corner pillars, 58 standing pillars, 7 double sided pillars, 35 cross bars and 13 coping stones.

The stupa and the monastery is the most important monument excavated by the Department of archaeology at Sanghol. The stupa on the pattern of Dhamma Chakra was believed to have been first built during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C by Ashoka (Ahir, 2003). There is also a surkhi or murrum path around the stupa. In the east is a cemented pathway along which a number of offered stupas of solid mud were erected by the devotees. In the Archaeological site of Ropar some coin of the Kushan period were found and also evidence of some Buddhist artefacts were excavated. Some Buddhist remains were also found in Ludhiana district at Tihara, a place in the north-west corner of Jagraon Tehsil, which proved that Buddhism not only existed in one place but it was spread to other parts of Punjab too.

Tihara is a city mentioned in the Mahabharata which was earlier known as the city of Varat. In Tiharat a large number of copper coins in square shape were found. On one side of the coin is the Buddhist wheel and on the other side is mention the name of an old Raja inscribed in Sanskrit. There were also other archaeological findings like burn clay, large brick, dice glazed pottery including the impression of coins of the yaudheyas in clay have also been found.

The sacred tank in the Golden temple was commended as Amritsar which means the tank of nectar by the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das. It has been scientifically proved that it is the lake of Padmasambhava. St Padmasambhava was a prominent preacher of Tantrism Buddhism during the eighth century A.D. In 747 A.D. he went to Tibet and spread the message of Buddhism there. He considered as a Guru next to Lord Buddha by the Buddhist follower in Tibet.

According to the Tibetan folklore, the lake of Padmasambhava was brought into being on the petals of the lotus flower in this lake by king Indrodhi or Indrabhuti of Udyana or Urgayan. In the ancient day this lake was visited by the pilgrims from Tibet along with the pilgrimage of other holy place of Buddhist in Punjab. An Italian scholar G. Tucci said that, during the 13<sup>th</sup> century there was a regular relation between Jalandhar and Tibet. The Tibetan Pilgrims came here to visit the sacred place of the Buddhist tradition.

#### **Archaeological site of Sanghol**

The most prominent discoveries of Buddhism in Punjab were the excavation of the Buddhist site of Sanghol. Sanghol also known as Uchha Pind Sanghol is a village situated in the district of Fatehgarh of Punjab in India. In the ancient period Sanghol was a part of the Harappan civilization and it was also ruled by the Kushan's and the Gupta dynasty (Seema Chopra, A treasure of the Past, The Tribune). This site holds a very important place in the maps of archaeological discoveries in India. The rich and diverse cultural deposit, especially variety of coins, seals and sealing's grades Sanghol out from other existing settlements. The unearthing of refined pillars of stone railing which was found in the surrounding areas of a Buddhist stupa in Sanghol brought this site into spotlight in 1985 and thus large extent excavation was carried out (Himanshu, 2010).

The Punjab government gave permission to the Archaeological Survey of India under C. Margabandhu to carry out an excavation in Sanghol. Thus during the years 1969 to 1987, Sanghol was excavated by archaeological excavation team including S.S Talwas, K.K. Rishi, R.S. Bisht and Kuldeep Singh Siddhu. Many architectural artefacts belonging to the style of Mathura sandstone engraved with beautiful sculpture was excavated and along with that 117 architraves were also found in this site. The stupa and the monastic area with citadels along with moat, coins and seals of that period was also excavated which instantly attracted attention (B.M. Pande, Excavating Sanghol).

In 1968, the base of the stupa was excavated in Sanghol, and in 1985 the Directorate of archaeology, Punjab, again discovered 117 engraved stone slabs which comprises 69 pillars, 35 crossbars, and also sculpted figures and figurines. A large number of Kushans sculpture made of red sand stone and which may be portraying the Jataka tales, were also excavated (R. Banerjee, *The Mahaummagga Jataka in Kushan Sculpture from Sanghol*). According to some scholars and historians, those artefacts belonged to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. Kushans sculptures. The kushan rulers built stupas for the monks who were residing in that region. Kanishka, who was the most important ruler of the Kushan dynasty and also the follower of Buddhism, encouraged the building of beautiful architectural stupas. During his period, the Gandhara and Mathura school of arts emerged which later developed into the famous Gandhara and Mathura school of arts. In some artefacts excavated in Sanghol, the influence of Gandhara and Mathura school of arts schools can be seen.

The base of the stupas which might have been a magnificent stupa long time ago is now protected and within a fence. The remains of the stupa and the discovery of other artefacts in these sites of Sanghol, show as that Sanghol was an important centre of Buddhism in India. In the centre of the stupa, there was a raised platform and stairways that led up to the platform. A casket containing ashes of the Buddhist scholar, Bhadras and inscribed in Kharoshthi script, was found in the centre of the platform<sup>2</sup>. The stupa had three side by side walls interconnecting with spoke walls which created a number of chambers. The architecture of the stupa is done by a proper mathematical calculation.

A further site enclosing the remnants of the three moats that were used for fortification has also been excavated. In the ancient time, the palace and the forts were surrounded by a dug moats for the protection against the enemies. A pit was also excavated near the main stupa and a number of important artefacts packed in that pit were also recovered. At the close area of the Stupa, ruins of a large palace of the Kushan era were excavated. There was a fire alter inside the enclose remains of the palace and a cistern of different size have also been excavated in that area<sup>3</sup>. The findings of the Sanghol sites are displayed in Sanghol museum which is located not far from the Sanghol archaeological sites.

### **CONTRIBUTION OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR IN THE REVIVAL OF BUDDHISM IN PUNJAB**

Dr. B. Ambedkar was born on 14<sup>th</sup> april 1891 in the town of Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. He got his law degree and various doctorates from the University of Colombia and the London school of economics. Dr. Ambedkar was an Indian Jurist, economist, politician, social revolutionist, a social reformer and a Buddhist (Keer, 1990). He was also the first law minister of independent India and was the architect of the Indian constitution. He motivated the Modern Buddhist movement

in India and fought for the political rights and social freedom of the depressed class of the society. Dr. Ambedkar was also conferred India's highest civilian awards the Bharat Ratna in 1990.

Dr. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism from Hinduism in 1956 which led to the mass conversion of the Dalits class of the society to Buddhism (Naik, 2010). He founded the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha or the Buddhist Society of India in 1955. He wrote many books about Buddhism and his final works was 'The Buddha and his Dhamma', which completed in 1956. He also wrote books titled, 'The Buddha or Karl Marx' and 'Revolution and counter-revolution in Ancient India' but it remained incomplete.

Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon at Isipatnam (Sarnath) and during his sermon he asked his disciple to go forth and spread the message of Buddhism to the world. Within a short period of time his message of equality, peace, kindness and compassion spread in different parts of the world. Among all the religion that came up during the sixth century B.C. the religion of Buddhism started by Lord Buddha became the most popular and prominent one. The Dharma given by Buddha stands on the doctrine which is reasonably possible for the wellbeing of all Human being (Ravi Shankar Singh, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's role in the revival of Buddhism and its impact on the social-economic development of ignored humanity in India).

After India got independence, during the 1950's the social doctrines of Buddhism was seen in a full function. The revivals of Buddhism enter a new phase when Buddhism was related with the nationalism and the operation of the government. The constituent Assembly turned in the direction of the rich cultural heritage of the Buddhist religion as India was in its glorious period under the rule of the Buddhist King. The Government of Independent India takes in the Buddhist wheel of dharma and the Lion from the capital of Ashoka as the National symbol of India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who was the chairman of the drafting committee was the man responsible for the use of these Buddhist symbol as Indian National symbol.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar studies the books of other religion and among them he was impressed and inspired when he studied Tipitaka, which is a collection of Buddha's teaching<sup>4</sup>. He believed that India would regain its ancient glory when the people turned to Buddhism and follow the high moral values taught by Lord Buddha. The teaching of Buddha was emphasising on equality and the religion of Buddhism opposed the inequalities created by the division of various castes<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the religion of Buddhism emerged as opposition against the caste system, during the period when the caste system was at its peak and Brahmins who were considered the superior class were ruling over the society. The teaching of Buddha gives equality to all class of people and also freedom to think and grow as a person.

On October 14<sup>th</sup> 1956 at Nagpur on Vijaydarshami day, Dr. Ambedkar converted his religion from Hinduism to Buddhism and alongside five lakh of his followers too was converted to Buddhism. On this day the world was a spectator to

this extraordinary incident of mass conversion of religion. These great historical events brought revival to Buddhism. Thus the revival of Buddhism in modern period took place and Dr. Ambedkar was recognised as the person responsible for the revival of modern Buddhism in India. This transformation in Buddhism brought the Buddhist community of India closer to other Buddhist countries of the world. Dr. Ambedkar made stronger the cultural connection between India and the Buddhist countries of the world. After the conversion of Dr. Ambedkar many influential leaders of India too converted to Buddhism. On March 30<sup>th</sup> 2010, in the village of Aripur, district of Jahanabad in Bihar, the most recent conversion took place. More than thousands of people were converted to Buddhism and among them were mainly young educated people of India.

### **The Present Status of Buddhism in Punjab**

The Buddhist community of India, even after the death of Dr. Ambedkar devoted their life for the spread and progresses of the religion of Buddhism. Along with them were many Punjabis who were living in Punjab and also other countries like England, Canada, United State and some Europeans and Middle East countries. In the countries like U.S.A and Canada majority of the Indian converts belonged to the Punjabi community. Many of them were those who were converted to Buddhism along with Dr. Ambedkar and also some who converted in the later periods. According to the 1961 census, the Buddhist population in India were 14,957.

Ever since the mass conversion of 1956, Buddhism has been growing and developing in the state of Punjab. Many religious as well as non-religious movements like the Ambedkar and Dalit Panther movement was started in Punjab (Jones, 1996). The followers of Buddhism have done a lot in spreading the message of Buddhism and Buddhism has started to take a stronghold in some region of Punjab. Many Buddhist Viharas were also built in various towns of Punjab; one Vihara worth mentioning was the 'Takshila Buddha Maha Vihara' in the village of Kadian, on the way from Ludhiana to jalandhar G.T. Road. The International Buddhist Studies College provided financial help to the Punjab Buddhist Vihara society and as a result the Takshila Buddha Maha Vihara was opened in the district of Ludhiana. Many Buddhist societies were started by the Buddhist follower of Punjab in different countries like, The Punjab Buddhist Society of U.K and the Indian Buddhist Society Toronto (Devries, 2010).

The history of Buddhism in Punjab witnessed a landmark during the year 2003. The Punjabi devotees of Buddhism on April 2003 met the Buddhist monk Bhante Chander Bodhi and expressed their will to organized Diksha Divas during the month of October at Mohalla Ram Nagar in Jalandhar city. Many people from this region wished to convert their religion to Buddhism and due to it Bhante Chander Bodhi assured them to arranged Buddhist monks for the Diksha rituals. At this point of time, the followers of Buddhism from different villages of Punjab

also wished to arrange such religious function in their own village, as result many such function took place in different parts of Punjab. Thus as a consequences of the Diksha Divas functions many people from different region of Punjab embraced the religion of Buddhism.

The All India Bhikkhu Sangha, took the initiative in conducting the various function of Diksha Divas in Punjab. The Bhikkhu Sangha also felt the need to unite the all Buddhist follower of Punjab, those who stays in the country as well as the Diasporic communities of Punjab, under the banner of the All India Bhikkhu Sangha. Thus, on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2004, a meeting was held at Sanghamitra Buddha Vihara, in this meeting the new united body of the Buddhist followers of Punjab was formed, known as the 'Punjab Buddhist Society' which would function as a local body under the supervision of the All India Bhikkhu Sangha. Other Buddhist society like "the Punjab Bauddha Mahasabha, in Jullundur" and the "Buddhist society of India, Buddha Vihara, Siddharth Nagar also in Jalandhar" was started in Punjab.

The Punjab Buddhist Society U.K. for the non-resident India's was immediately established i.e. on March 28<sup>th</sup> 2004, after the Punjab Buddhist Society was established in Punjab. Five members were nominated to administer the function of this Society. In order to make possible for the Bhikkhu Sangha, to be autonomous and self-sufficient, in spreading the Buddhist religion, the Buddhist Society in U.K contributed a lot, financially and also by establishing Buddhist Vihara in Punjab.

The Punjab Buddhist Society U.K also attained a charitable position listed with the Charity Commission of England and Wales to work at all level from local to international level. Their objective was to establish and support the British Monasteries so that they could press forward the religion of Buddhism all over the world. At present, the main office of 'the Punjab Buddhist Society U.K' is located at 83 Lea Road, Pennfields in the south west of the city of Wolverhampton, England.

The Ambedkarite Buddha Vihara was founded by the Punjabi followers of Dr. Ambedkar in U.K and majority of its members belonged to the Indian state of Punjab. Every year the Punjabi Buddhist abandoned their conservative Hindu religion and caste identity and convert to Buddhism. The Ambedkarite Buddha Vihara has a number of books written by Dr. Ambedkar and also books on Buddhism in Hindi, English and Punjabi language.

## CONCLUSION

Buddhism was spread in different countries of India but in comparison with other Buddhist countries outside India it has less influence in its birth country. In India it is still popular and surviving in some of the Northern States of India. Buddhism has its root in some states of North India, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Buddhism laid its strong foundation

in the north India and then it spread to different parts of India and then in the world. The north Indian states were the important centre of Buddhism in the ancient India. Most of the important events of Buddhism during the lives of Buddha and after his death took place in the region of North India.

Punjab which is a state located in North India was also a Buddhist State ruled by a Buddhist ruler. The history of Buddhism in Punjab dated back to 2000 years when Buddha visited Punjab and delivered his sermon at Kuru which was a village in Punjab. Thus according to the historical records Buddhism was first spread in Punjab by Buddha himself. Punjab was also ruled by many Buddhist Kings and many towns and cities of Punjab became an important Buddhist centre.

The discovery of Sanghol in Tehsil Samrala, district of Ludhiana has brought to light the presence of Buddhism in Punjab during the ancient period. The most important artefacts that were excavated in this region were the Stupa. The stupa was excavated in 1985 by the department of archaeology. The stupa was built in the pattern of dharmachakra or the wheel of law by Ashoka during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. The base of stupa was in cylindrical shape with 16 metre diameter on a square platform of 17 metres height which is believed to be pradakshina or the circumambulation. Several votive stupas made of solid mud were raised by the followers on the covered pathway in the east.

This archaeological site of Sanghol gives us the proof of the existences of Buddhism in Punjab. The history of Buddhism in Punjab has always been told to us through books that have been written but not much focus on the past existence of Buddhism in this state has been given until the excavation of the Buddhist site of Sanghol. The discovery and excavation of this site has helped us in studying about the spread and survival of Buddhism in the state of Punjab. It has also broadened the scope of the study of the existence of Buddhism in Punjab.

Ever since the mass conversion of 1956 under Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Buddhism has been growing and developing in the state of Punjab. Many religious as well as non-religious movements like the Ambedkar and Dalit Panther movement was started in Punjab. The followers of Buddhism have done a lot in spreading the message of Buddhism and Buddhism has started to take a stronghold in some region of Punjab. Many Buddhist Viharas were also built in various towns of Punjab; one Vihara worth mentioning was the 'Takshila Buddha Maha Vihara' in the village of Kadian, on the way from Ludhiana to Jalandhar G.T. Road. The International Buddhist Studies College provided financial help to the Punjab Buddhist Vihara society and as a result the Takshila Buddha Maha Vihara was opened in the district of Ludhiana. Many Buddhist societies were started by the Buddhist follower of Punjab in different countries like, The Punjab Buddhist Society of U.K and the Indian Buddhist Society Toronto.

Through this research study i.e. the spread of Buddhism in Punjab it gives us the impression that Punjab is not only the birth place of Sikhism but other religion

like Buddhism also has its history in Punjab. Buddhism has existed in Punjab even before Sikhism and even at present it still exists along with other religions. The study of different books, journals, articles and reports has given us lots of information regarding Buddhism in Punjab and also the spread of Buddhism in different corners of the world. The finding at the Archaeological sites of Sanghol and Ropar proves the originality of the existence of Buddhist religion in Punjab.

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