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Rich Heritage of Architectural Monuments, Sacred Shrines and Uniqueness of Dogra Culture in Jammu

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Abstract: *Jammu which is identified as 'City of Temples' has rich heritage and blend culture. The native's belief that Jammu got its identity, after its founder Raja Jambulochan, who was considered to be ruled in the 14th century in the region. According to Tarikh-i-Azmi, Jammu came into existence over 900 century. The state of Durgara (modern name 'Duggar' or 'Dogra') is commonly found in the region. It is considered that Vallapura (modern name Billawar) was the capital of Durgara state, and the details of all the kings who were ruled over there were mentioned in Kalhana's Rajtarangini. Raja Bhim Dev is specially stated in the Delhi chronicles as he was a supporter of Mubarak Shah. Jammu is a land of diverse culture, traditions, different languages, norms, values and ethics. Every religion in Jammu has its great significance, people from different communities participated in each other festivals. Large number of architectural monuments, imperial houses, temples, art galleries, palaces, lakes etc. Basohli is famous for its paintings in the Jammu region. Numerous fairs and festivals were celebrated with great enthusiasm. Jammu is also famous for its cuisines like kachalu, gulgule, sund panjeeri, guchiyyan (dried black morel) patisa, kalari cheese, gheur etc. Specialty of Dogri food are rajma with rice, kulthein di dal, maa da madra, auriya and also various types of pickles are poured like kasrod, girgle, mango with saunf, jimikand, tyao seyoo etc. Dogra culture depicts their art of style in a magnificent way. This paper attempts to highlight the rich heritage of architectural monuments of temples and unique culture of the region because very few knows about the identity of Dogras and their Culture. The main objective of writing on this paper was that it attract the readers to visit in the region and learned about the historic culture of Dogra's.*

Keywords: *Jammu, Heritage, Uniqueness of Dogra Culture, Temples, Festivals, Cuisines, Art Galleries etc.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Raja Jambulochan founded the Jammu region in the 14th century. One day when Raja had gone out for hunting, he saw that a tiger and a goat drinking water from the Tawi river to satisfy their thirst, this scene forced the Raja to think over it and then he planned to established a city at this place and set up a huge example that both the strong and weak could survive together in any circumstances. He founded the city Jambu after his own name as 'Jambu' on that time but with the passage of time the name of city gets pronounced in different ways and now it was recognized as a 'Jammu'. Jambu Lochan was the brother of Bahu Lochan who also established a fort on the banks of river Tawi popularly known as 'BAHU FORT'.

Jammu is the largest city and the winter capital of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and also known as 'City of Temples' as it has numerous temples. The credit goes to Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Dogra Dynasty under the trust of Dharamarth. Actually he wanted to convert Jammu into Kashi that's the main aim of establishing a huge temples over there. Numerous shrines and Hindu Temples were founded in the region of like Bawe Wali Mata, Mata Vaishno Devi Katra, Mata Sukrala Devi Temple, Mata Machail Temple, Mata Sarthal Temple, Mahamaya Temple, Ranbeereshwar Temple, Raghunath Mandir, and Peer Kho Cave. Jammu is a land of Duggars or Dogras and popularly identified as Duggardesh.

The architectural monuments also have historic significance in Jammu and some of these are Amar Mahal Museum, Bahu Fort, Pandava Cave, Shahdara Sharief, Buddha Amarnath Temple, Kameshwar Temple, Akhnoor Fort and Mubarak Mandi Complex. Amar Mahal is open for all tourists while Bahu Fort is getting renovated under Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) with the temple Bawe Wali Mata inside the fort. Jammu is considered as it various pilgrimages as it have many temples, thousands of people not only from the state but from the various parts of India and abroad visit the shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi everyday to seek the blessings of Devi Durga. Another temple of Machail Mata being popularized day-by-day. Thousands of devotees not only from state but from all over nation visited to seek the blessings of Chandi Mata in the last week of July to first week of September. This pilgrimage occurred in Jammu for a period of 40-45 days in the month of Saavan. The sculpture and pindi of Devi Chandika is famous for shaking their jewellerys to shower and also flickering their closed eyes without any wind force.

There are also sacred lakes are found in the region and some of these are Mansar lake, Surinsar lake and Sanasar lake. Basohli is also famous for wall paintings. The history and culture of the region put a great impact on the evolution of temple architecture around the medieval period. Wooden Nag Devta temple was established near fresh water springs and among the important temple form dotting the Jammu Shivaliks, with the main examples being famous Karlah Nag Devta temple at Patnitop near Udhampur. Jammu has its unique blend of culture in various forms like folkdance, fairs and festivals, food habits, languages, style of dressing etc. The region has its rich cultural aesthetics and takes pride in different ethnicity and culture. The lifestyle of the people are very simple & heartwarming, and also popularly recognized as “KHAND MEETHE LOG DOGRE”. This is a place where both the Hindus and the Muslims existed peacefully and harmoniously. Different languages have been spoken like Dogri, Hindi, Poonchi, Mirpuri, Gojri, Urdu, Kotli, and Punjabi. Every Fairs and Festivals are celebrated with great pomp and shows like Bahu Mela, Purmandal Mela, and Jhiri Mela and also some folk songs are sung on special occasions like Karvachauth, marriage ceremonies, religious festivals and name of some of the folk songs are Karak, Gwatri, Bakh, Benthe as well as some folk dances are performed like Kud dance, Heren dance, fumanic and Jagarana, Surma, Keekli and Geetru.

II. RICH HERITAGE OF ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS

A. Mubarak Mandi Complex

Mubarak Mandi Complex is located on the banks of the river Tawi in Jammu city which is the winter capital of J&K. The ancient city is placed on the right bank and later expansion of the new Jammu have largely taken on the left side of the river Tawi. The site is situated in bazaars like Pucca Danga on the western part and Panjtirthi on the eastern part. It is a imperial palace of Dogra rulers from the time of Maharaja Gulab Singh, the only ruler of the princely state of Jammu. Dogra rulers constructed a imperial house in the 2nd quarter of the 19th CE. It was constructed as a group of buildings arranged over courtyards. It consists of decorative palaces of the King Family, large halls, galleries of art, palaces for official functions and public events, Secretariat or Army headquarters. The whole complex is connected with large and small courtyards & these were made under two noble gateways which are connected with outer main city and another one the small gateway is linked along the residence of the complex. A amalgamate of British Architecture with Rajasthanis & Mughal style makes it a place worth seen. Beautifully walls decorated with paintings. The palace shows the Dogra Heritage with typical Jharokhas and Arches. There is a blend of colonial impact with columns and pillars. But, after 1947, at the time of Independence, the elected govt. of J&K state started functioning on this complex. There were High Courts and District Courts. Since then it is known as Old Secretariat. With the passage of time, buildings have been worsened and are in very worst condition because no one take care of the Heritage Complex and slowly its glory has been lost. But after few decades, a society was founded to preserve the rich heritage of the Complex namely as Mubarak Mandi Heritage Society. Many Cultural festivals have been performed every year on the occasion of Baisakhi. It's very necessary to preserve the rich heritage of our society and it became prosperous only by renovating the structure of complex, various tourists attracts & visiting Jammu in the coming time which will be very beneficial for the state economy also. Otherwise, the Mubarak Mandi Complex will lost its magnificent beauty with the passage of time.

B. Amar Mahal Palace

Amar Mahal building was established in 1862 by a French architect, depends on the lines of a French Chateau burdensome by the Queen Anne Style. This palace was built for the Dogra Rajput rulers. It was the residence of king family, Maharani Tara Devi, wife of late Maharaja Hari Singh, but now it was converted into a museum. Red stone bricks were used to decorate the walls of palace. The top floor has a bay window whereas the first floor has French windows and a small balcony. Three sides of this palace have a long corridor covered by a sloping corrugating tin roof setting on a wooden framework. One can even find triangular projections typical of classical Greek architecture supported by ornate incorrect columns over some of the windows. It has art galleries which promote an Indian art and architecture. These galleries depicts a magnificent pictures of informal surroundings and has collection of paintings that range over different styles including Kangra art of miniature paintings. The collection of galleries includes some works of the artists like M.F. Hussain, J. Swaminathan, G.r. Santosh, Bikash Chatterjee, Ram Kumar, Laxman Pai etc. Nala Damayanti Gallery displays a set of 47 exquisite paintings made in the world famous style of Indian miniature paintings that came up in the late 18th century, known as Kangra ki Kalam visually narrates the love of Nala and Damayanti and ends at their Svayamvara (wedding ceremony). Dash-Avatar Gallery has oil paintings based on different theme and style of reincarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Hindu deity revered as the conservator of life. The paintings shows the incarnations of Vishnu chronologically as described in the Vishnu Purana (a Hindu religious text). Even the museum had Golden chair on which Maharaja sat & also there is a library in which 25,000 books were left out on various disciplines,

C. Bahu Fort

The ancient fort was established by Raja Bahu Lochan around 3,000 years ago. It was again renovated in the 19th century by the Rajput rulers of Dogra dynasty. Bahu fort has its own historical importance, inside the fort there is a temple of Goddess Kali, the presiding deity of Jammu. The natives believed that Raja Bahu Lochan takes away Mahakali from Kolkata to Jammu on that time & established the temple of Maa Kali. The temple is popularly known in Jammu as “Bawe Wali Mata”. Every Sunday and Tuesday, massive pilgrims visited in the temple and take parting ‘Tawi Flowing Worship’. Infact, this is one of the most esteemed temple of Goddess Mahakali all over the India. Bahu Fort is getting renovated under Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) with the temple Bawe Wali Mata inside the fort.

D. Akhnoor Fort

Akhnoor Fort is situated on the right bank of the Chenab River (Ancient Name Asikni). The construction of this fort was started by Mian Tej Singh in 1762 A.D. and completed by his successor Raja Alum Singh in 1802 A.D. The Fort has high fortifications walls and two-storied watch-towers at the corners, which are crowned by battlements and merlons. Although, a huge part of this fort was ruined; but its conservation work is still under process. The Fort was perched upon an ancient site known as Manda, which has been subjected to limited excavation, which in turn has depicts a threefold sequence of culture.

- 1) *Period I* is characterized by red and grey pottery contain of jars during the period of Harappa, dish-on-stand beakers and goblets and various different objects, counting copper pins, bone arrowheads and sherds with Harappan graffiti.
- 2) *Period II* is considered by the existence of ancient historic pottery.
- 3) *Period III* is represented by Kushana objects and impressive walls of rubber diaper masonry flanked on both sides by a 3m wide street.

There were 19 states in Jammu Province in the 19th century and Akhnoor was the largest was stated by Alexander Cunningham. The fort is located near Jiapota (A tree after which the Jiapota Temple is named), where the Raj Tilak ceremony of Maharaja Gulab Singh was performed by the Lion of Punjab namely as Maharaja Ranjit Singh on 22nd June 1822. The fort is being conserved by the Government as a Dogra Heritage and its renovation is under processed by the Archaeological Survey of India.

E. Poonch Fort

It is a significant monument in the history of India. The Fort was constructed in 1179 A.D. and currently it was situated at Poonch. It covered an area of 7,500 sq.m. This admirable structure not only increases the beauty of the fort but also sets an example of a living time period of this reign. The Fort has endorsed partition and beholds necessary secretive tales of Muslim rulers, Dogras and the Sikh rulers. The Fort carry classic Mughal architecture impact. Though the Fort was established by Raja Abdul Razak Khan in 1713 A.D. but the construction of this fort was completed by his son Raja Rustam Khan, between 1760-1787 A.D. The Fort was under the emperorship of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on that time and also it was considered as a Golden Period by historians. In the reign of Raja Moti Singh (1850-1892 A.D.), the fort was renovated by his orders. He engaged a European architect for its renovation. The fort consists of 80 rooms that are beautifully designed in a structured way. Also, there is a small mosque, a temple and a gurudwara were founded in this Fort. Presently it attracts the tourist to visit as it is the pride of Poonch as well as Jammu.

III. SACRED SHRINES IN JAMMU

A. Raghunath Temple

Jammu is commonly known as ‘City of Temples’ as we know that numerous temples have been found in different parts of the city but what actually makes Raghunath Temple unique, as it occupy a special position in the heart of the city. The founder and the first ruler of Dogra dynasty namely as Maharaja Gulab Singh was credited with the arrival of construction works of this temple at 1835 A.D. After his death, his son Maharaja Ranbir Singh took all over the charge and completed the work of temple which was undertaken by his father. In 1860 A.D. Finally after a period of 25 years, the doorsteps of temples were opened for worship. The representation of seven shrine had adorably gold plated interiors, the Raghunath Temple is devoted to Lord Rama. There were several galleries with lakhs of Shaligrams, the main shrine of the Raghunath Temple in Jammu houses an image of Lord Rama. Three portion of the temples were engraved with golden sheets which gives a amalgamate look. Lord Rama, Vishnu’s eighth incarnation is the patron deity of the Dogras and hence huge pilgrims visited the temple on regular basis to offer their prayers to their God. It was allocated with many other temples and all of them were dedicated to other gods and goddesses who are connected with epic Ramayana. Any careful observer surely noted the style of Mughal architectural affected in the structure of temple. The magnificent designs put a great impression on every visitor. The statue of Maharaja Ranbir Singh and sculpture of Hanuman are sighted at the entrance of the temple. People not only from the region but from various parts of the nation visited in this temple.

The other shrines of Raghunath Temple consists of the images of Lord Shiva and many other incarnations of Lord Vishnu have been exist here. Specially mention worthy is the stone Lingam which is highly revered by the people of the region. Aarti, a significant Hindu ritual is performed here in early morning as well as in evening on regular basis and it was attended by many devotees.

B. Bawe Wali Mata

It is situated on the banks of river Tawi, the complex structure of fort depicts that it was the ancient construction in Jammu. The mesmerize view of waterfalls, green terraced gardens and blooming of flowers were commonly found inside the fort which makes it attractive. It was constructed by Raja Bahu Lochan approximately 3,000 years ago, but after sometimes it was renovated under the Rajput rulers of Dogra dynasty. It is renowned as 'Bawe Wali Mata'. Goddess Kali is the presiding deity of the residents of Jammu. The temple was reconstructed in 1822, just after the completion of the coronation ceremony of Maharaja Gulab Singh and it is also called as the temple of Mahakali and considered as a second only after Goddess Vaishno Devi. Every Sunday and Tuesday, massive pilgrims visited in the temple and take part in 'Tawi Flowing Worship'. Infact, this is one of the most esteemed temple of Goddess Mahakali all over the India. Bahu Fort is getting renovated under Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) with the temple Bawe Wali Mata inside the fort.

C. Mata Vaishno Devi

The one of the most sacred Hindu Shrines of India, Mata Vaishno Devi is located on the top of the Trikuta ranges of the Himalayas. The temple is devoted to Maa Vaishno Devi, it holds a great significance not only religiously but also historically, and that is why innumerable pilgrims visited every year to seek the blessings of Maa Vaishno Devi. It is considered that around 8million people visited in this sacred shrine every year. This makes it second religious temple in India after Tirumala Venkateshwara Temple. Mata Vaishno Devi sets an elevation of 5300feet above sea level and to reach this temple, pilgrims have to cover a distance of 12Km from the base camp Katra. While starting journey from base camp, there are main four points lying namely as Ban Ganga, Adhkuwari, Charan Paduka and Sanjichhat.

Palanquins and ponies are also available for those pilgrims who are not to reach by foot. Helicopter service and Electronic cars are also available to reach Bhawan of Maa Vaishno Devi. Under the cave temple, Mata Rani is present in the form of three pindis which depicted as three Goddess namely Maa Saraswati, Maa Lakshmi and Maa Kali. It is regarded that no prayers go ignored from the Bhawan of Mata Rani. Maa Vaishno Devi lived inside the cave for a couple days to hide from a demon namely as Bhairon whom after she killed. Maa Vaishno Devi pardoned him and also blessed him by giving a boon that no Darshan at her temple would be taken as complete, if the pilgrim failed to seek his blessings. That is the reason Bhairon Temple is situated next important step after seeking the blessings of Maa Bhawani.

D. Machail Mata

Machail Mata is also known as Goddess Durga which is situated at the village from where actually its name was identified. The Kishtwar district of Jammu region is the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. Goddess Durga is considered as Kali or Chandi. The place as the shrine is popularly known for its scenic view of mountains, mesmerizing view of sloppy hills, glaciers as well as small tributaries of Chenab River are flowing in the region. As we all are well aware that Padder Valley is famous for Sapphires mines around the world. The Buddhist and the Thakur community worshipping from the times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Devi occurred in a remote area in 'Swayambhu' form. After then, she first time rise in the form of fire flame in the village of Mindhal (Pangi Valley which is approximately 60Km far from Machail) and then in the form of Singhasan Mata (Saraswati) at village Chitto (which is nearly 15Km far from Gulabgarh). The fire later altered in the form of Pindi. The real shrine at Machail Village is Swayambhu which has on pindi and three idols of MahaKali (Mindal), MahaLakshmi (Machail) and Maha Saraswati (Chitto Mata), which are recognized to vibrate their jewellaries by itself without any blow of wind. The idol had closed eyes in Dhyana Mudra. The sculpture and pindi of Devi Chandika is famous for shaking their jewellaries to shower and also flickering their closed eyes without any wind force. The temples history is witnessed the Conquests of Zorawar Singh Kahluria, in the year 1834 he sought blessings of Machail Mata, before crossing the mountains and Indus River with 5,000 men for vanquishing with his army of native Botis of Ladakh. After succeeded in his mission, he became the faithful devotee. The shrine was visited by Thakur Kulveer Singh of Bhaderwah, Jammu region in the year 1981A.D. and from 1987, Thakur Kulveer Singh starts 'Chhadi Yatra' (sacred mace). Every year Thousands of devotees not only from state but from all over the nation visited the shrine which started from Chinote in Bhaderwah Machail and seek the blessings of Chandi Mata. This pilgrimage occurred in Jammu for a period of 40-45 days in the month of Saavan.

IV. UNIQUE DOGRA CULTURE

A. Food Habits

The food is rich in Aroma and the flavor of the spices depicts in all categories of food either vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Rajma Chawal with Pure desi ghee and anardana chutney is very popular in the Union Territory of J&K. Paranthas of different stuffs are made like Mulli Paranthas, Methi Paranthas, & Aaloo Paranthas with mango pickle or curd. Chole Bathure is also very delicious and famous in the region. Kachalu chat is freshly prepared and considered it as light breakfast or in the form of evening snacks. Numerous cuisines like gulgule, sund panjeeri, guchiyyan (dried black morel) patisa, kalari cheese, gheur etc. Specialty of Dogri food are kulthein di dal, maa da madra, auriya and also various types of pickles are poured like kasrod, girgle, mango with saunf, jimikand, tyaooyoo etc. Dogra culture depicts their art of style in a magnificent way.

B. Folk Dances & Songs

The land of Dogra have beautiful folk music and dance as well. It was developed by the Duggar woman so that they could divert themselves from the longer duration as their husbands, brother serves for the motherland. Jagrana is also performed on the wedding occasion. Surma depicts the beauty of newly wedded girl whose husband is far away from her. Keekli is also a different Kind of dance in which holding each other's hand and balanced themselves and taking rounds simultaneously. Kud dance is identified as an honour to Lok Devtas in the region, basically it is a kind of dance which were mostly performed at night. Folk songs were sung on special occasion like birth of a child, marriage of a son and some other special occasion like Karvachauth, these songs were sung by ladies called as Suhag, Geetru, and Benthe etc.

C. Fairs & Festivals

Jammu is a place where rich fairs and festivals were commonly found. The Jhiri Mela is annually celebrated to commemorate the memory of a peasant, who committed a suicide, as a belief, to protest against the landlords. Jhiri Mela is occurred in the month of October- November. There is a great legend Mela in the whole Jammu. People from across the world visit in this Mela of Bawa Jito. Purmandal Mela is held at Purmandal which is situated at a distance of 39Km from Jammu. This fair has a great importance and is celebrated on the occasion of Maha Shivratri. The Mansar Food and Craft Mela is annually held on the occasion of Baisakhi. Bahu Mela is celebrated twice in a year on Navratras at Bawe Wali Mata Temple of Jammu. Chaitra Chaudhas is usually held in the March or April at Uttar Behni, which is approximately 25Km away from Jammu.

D. Dresses & Ornaments

Dogra wear dresses according to the weather condition prevailing in Jammu. The traditional dress for both men and woman are Churidar Kurta and Pyjama as in ancient times it was worn by Dogra rulers. The old-aged citizens of dogra community wore ghuttana and long Kurta tie a turban called Safa, which has socio- religious importance. Jewelleries are the integral part of human culture. Human beings used jewelleries to decorate their bodies and looks better. Dogra rulers were also fond of jewellery, Mangal Sutra kamarband and necklaces. Dogra ladies wore Nath or Baalu, Dogri jhumki, bangles, rings, bracelets, Mrijhiri etc. which put a great impact in the society. They used to worn Tikka, Shinghar Patti, suiyaan, gold clip, ardhchandrama etc. on their heads. So, we can say that jewellery always played an essential and important place in the life of Dogras. We should take some initiative steps to conserve the old items of jewellery and expose the young generation to these times.

V. CONCLUSION

By concluding it we can say that the place has very rich heritage of architectural monuments, sacred shrines and unique culture of Jammu which differentiate it from other states of the country. Jammu is considered as it various pilgrimages as it have many temples, mosques, churches, gurudwara etc. Thousands of devotees not only from the state but from the various parts of India visited in Jammu on regular basis. The contribution of Dogra rulers clearly depicts their developments in all the affairs like social, religious, political etc. Dogra culture played a significant role in attracted the tourists to visit again and again. This is a place where both the Hindus and the Muslims existed peacefully and harmoniously. Different languages have been spoken like Dogri, Hindi, Poonchi, Mirpuri, Gojri, Urdu, Kotli, and Punjabi. Every Fairs and Festivals are celebrated with great pomp and shows like Bahu Mela, Purmandal Mela, and Jhiri Mela and also some folk songs are sung on special occasions like Karvachauth, marriage ceremonies, religious festivals and name of some of the folk songs are Karak, Gwatri, Bakh, Benthe as well as some folk dances are performed like Kud dance, Heren dance, fumanic and Jagarana, Surma, Keekli and Geetru. Jammuities also known as "Khand Meethe Log Dogre" are known for their welcomed hearts, hospitality, unity and hardworking nature.

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