CHAPTER-II
AUTHORS AND THEIR TIMES

It is but natural for a common human being to adapt himself according to the social environment in which he lives. He cannot help adopting the influence of social conditions in which he is encircled. He follows the socio-religious and political phenomena. Only a reformer tends to reform the life values of society, while the scholars, the poets and the homosapiens try to point out their pros and cons. Thus, the human nature has deep relations with the society in which it is shaped. To undergo the reality of the verses of the Bards, Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal it is necessary to have a look into the social environment in which they accomplished their works. The study deals with the personalities who lived in 16th and 17th century A.D. Punjab. Though the referred poets had no direct concern with the socio-political infrastructures of their times but certainly they admitted the effects of the referred factors on their lives and works. Undoubtedly, socio-religious influences had been a major factor in the composition of their works.

A) SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The Bhatts, Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal were the outcome of 16th and 17th century AD. They were brought up in almost similar social, religious and political infrastructures. The contemporary social life factors effected their works naturally and the referred elements are found in their works fragrantly. The monarchical socio-political infrastructure and the contemporary prevalent religious values made them established poets of their times. To go through the significance and achieve a complete approach to their ideologies, it is necessary to go through the religious as well as the socio-political phenomena of their times.

Social Environment of Punjab:

The social environment of the Punjab in 16th and 17th century was pernicious. The Sikh religion was in its beginning stage. There were mainly two social orders based on two main religions. The society was divided into two major classes the Hindus and the Muslims. Being the ruling class the Muslims were the favorite subjects of the emperors. The Muslims basically hated Hindus severely. Undoubtedly, the Hindus were in majority in population still they were deprived of almost all privileges
and rights. Jaziya and pilgrimage taxas were forcibly charged from them. They were so bitterly treated that most of them were compelled to embrace Islam. The condition of the women in the society was worse than that of animals.

When Guru Nanak appeared on the horizon the Indian society had already become static and decadent.¹

**The Muslim Society:**

The Muslim society in the Punjab had been divided into three main groups.

a. **Upper Class**: All Amirs, Khans Maliks, Sheikhs, Iqtadars, Ulemas Qazis etc, were the higher stratum of Muslim society. Main political offices were headed by them. They lived in grand palaces and led a life of luxury and over indulgence. They had a large number of women in their 'Harms'. They kept women of exceptional beauty. These women entertained their masters, up to their maximum satisfaction. Women and wine had become indistinguishable part of their life.

Ulemas and qazis being the religious heads did unholy activities surreptiously. They took bribe for providing justice. They had gone astray from their real path.

Kazi hoe rishvati wadhi lai ke haq gavaee²

The qazis who were to dispense justice to the public had become corrupt and took bribe to give decisions in favour of the offenders.

b. **Middle Class**: The middle class consisted of the soldiers, traders, peasants and subordinate officials of the rulers. Their standard of living had a lot of difference than that of the upper class still they were far better than the status of Hindu society.

c. **Lower Class**: It consisted of servants, slaves and labour class. They were large in population. They had to earn their living by working hard in fields or by carrying building materials, making roads etc. The slaves working in the royal courts were better than those of working in houses. The house servants were oftenly treated badly. Obviously, their position in society was pitiable. Oftenly, the emperors and nobles fond of living in magnificent palaces used to employee Hindu servants to work for them.
Status of Women:

Women were considered an object of lust and merrymaking. Women of the upper class enjoyed some facilities. The women of middle class and lower class lived a life of misery and suffering. The purdah system was strongly in vogue. Although, the Hindu religion does not compel ladies to be strict in pardah but rulers had compelled them to live in veils. Institutions like polygamy and divorce had made their lives sympathetic and rather pitiable. They were mostly uneducated.

Dietary:

The upper class Muslims enjoyed palatable and delicious food. It consisted of meat, halva, puri, butter, fruits and vegetables. Drinking was common among the upper class and the middle class. Even the upper class women also taste wine. The lower classes used opium and hemp. The Muslims enjoyed chewing beetle and beetle nut. Numerous kinds of cold drinks or sharbats were drunk in summer season. The lower class ate simple food. Some of them even could not get food to their fill. The main ingredients they used were flour of oats and rice. Wheat was costly and was out of their reach.

Dress:

The men and women of upper class used to wear costly dress especially of silk and velvet, studded with precious stones and jewels. They also wear costly ornaments made of precious stones, jewels, gold and silver. The women of lower classes wore simple dress and cheaper ornaments. The upper class ladies used many kinds of cosmetics and perfumes. The 'Barbarvani' of Guru Nanak evinces that the middle class ladies had all sources to live a luxurious life.

Education:

The rulers were always busy in local wars and battles. Since the country was situated on the gateway to India. No proper arrangements were made to promote the field of education. The princes were provided education and training in all spheres of life. Special teachers were arranged for their education at the palaces Ulemas and Maulvis taught the children of general public in mosques, maktabs and madarasas. Primary education was rendered in mosques and maktabs whereas higher education was given in madarasas. A small amount of grant was allotted for education by the rulers. Lahore and Multan were the prominent centers of education in the Punjab. Other
important centres were at Jalandhar, Sultanpur, Samana, Bhatinda, Sirhind, Qasur, Sialkot and Kangra in the Punjab.

We find no evidence but the economic status of the menial caste evinces that there was no scope for them to acquire education. They were expected to serve the upper classes while the children of ruling families, religious heads and the state functionaries were allowed to acquire education in proportion to their economic and social status. The main social life of the public was based on the maxim. "Might is Right".

**Means of Entertainment:**

The Muslims were fond of hunting and polo horse-riding and animal fights were enjoyed. People took part in fairs and festivals enthusiastically. Musicians and dancers entertained the people in fairs. *Id-e- Nauroz* and *Shab-e-Barat* etc. were celebrated as the religious fairs. While there was also a tradition to arrange fairs on the sepulchers of the Muslim saints and faqirs establish in specific regions. Such occasions were allowed the terminology of *Urs*. Due to extensive influence of *Sakhi Sarvar* on the Panjab society the people used to burn oil lamps on the sepulchers on Thursday nights while the *Qadiri* sect of the Muslim *Sufis* engaged themselves in the art of music and poetry. Shah Hussain as well as Sheik Braham are the solid examples to evince the fact. The Qadiri school of Qasur, Shah Sharaf of Batala had been the established and popular places of learning and music.

**The Hindu Society:**

The social status of Hindus was different from that of the Muslims. They were under the rule of Muslim, who hate them considering infidels. The ruling class i.e. Muslim hegemonies cognized it their right to turn them towards Islam. By this way, they thought that they were serving for the welfare of Islam. There was no concept of untouchability in Islam, which was a curse for Hindu menial castes. Although the Islam could not provide the converted Hindus an equal status to Muslims and they were called *Kammis* (workers). They were deprived of numerous human rights. They were called *Kafirs*, the non believers in the Islamic terminology. Some Hindus were treated so badly that they embraced Islam under pressure. Besides, these problems, the Hindu society was itself filled with numerous vices especially the Brahmanic class.
Caste System - Varana Ashram Dharma:

The Hindu society was mainly divided into four castes and further sub-castes and clans-severe victim of higher and lower groupism. The Brahmans occupied the topmost position in the society. Their supremacy received a set back with establishment of Muslim rule in India. Some Khatris got good jobs as state functionaries like divan, munshi and kardars whether the lower caste Hindus were hated by the upper caste Hindus and Muslims. Moreover, the Sikh Guru’s also, criticized the Brahmans for their moral degeneration and degradation. With the passage of time they had become corrupt, avaricious and knavish. They always tried to fleece the common man:

On their forehead they had sacrificial mark and on their waist the ochre coloured loin cloth. In their hand they had knives, and enacted as butchers of the world.  

Kashatriays were the second among the upper castes. Their social duty was to fight for the nation. But under the changed circumstances they adopted new professions and occupations such as trade and agriculture. The vaishayas were at the third place in caste strata. They continued with their old occupations as trade, agriculture and animal husbandry. The shudras, the forth one in the caste-phenomena were treated badly by the upper classes. Untouchability, was really a blot on the face of Hindu society. Now the lower class people began to hate the higher classes for their disgrace in society.

If you claim the higher status of Brahmin by birth, why did not you take birth through some other passage? How are you Brahmin of high status and why am I from the lower caste? Does milk run in your veins different from that of blood running in my arteries?

Status of Woman:

The status of woman in the Hindu society was miserable. She was supposed to be a man's shoe. The birth of a girl-child was considered inauspicious Oftenly, the people used to kill the female child at the very time of her birth. If not killed no attention was paid to her education. The girls remained uneducated. Muslim rulers used to take away young Hindu girls forcibly, Therefore, they were married at an early age. The poor parents even married their young girls to the old men for want of money. They were compelled to live in the four walls of the house. The custom of Sati was in
vogue. It was the most cruel act to burn the living widow forcibly with the dead body of her husband in the same pyre. The re-marriage of the widow was not permitted. A widow was cursed with bitter words like 'husband-eater' or 'unchaste'. Her life became worse than that of hell. At several places, women were sold and purchased like animals.

The Hindu people, undoubtedly used to worship she-gods but insult their daughters by depriving them of the right to live like boys. Actually the Muslim rulers were habitually womanizers and used to abduct the Hindu girls forcibly. The Hindus who used to call Muslims malachh but bound to tolerate their oppression since the Muslim Pathans, Mughals and Afghans were the rulers of the day. Some of the Rajput Hindus also had married their daughters with Muslim nobles to acquire respectable status in administration but never liked to accept Muslim girls as their wives. Their religion did not permit them. The nobles used to consider their right to chaste Hindu girls since the latters were being subjected.

The Sikhs who were in a minor community were in efforts to reform the Hindu society and help them to get rid of the referred evils:

Man is begotten from woman, to woman he conceives and again receives a daughter, he again is betrothed a woman and marry her. He creates interrelation with woman and by her interrelation the system to retain the generation is survived. If one's wife dies he runs after another. Thus man has no value without woman. Why should woman be cursed who endows birth to kings?5

**Dress & Dietary:**

The Hindu ladies of upper classes put on beautiful and costly cloths and wore ornaments of silver, gold and diamond. The *shudras* and *vaishayyas* wore very simple clothes. The diet of the Hindus was very simple. Most of them were vegetarians. They ate wheat, rice, vegetables, ghee and milk. They avoided meat, garlic and onion, supposing that these things were not allowed in their religion.

**Education:**

The Hindus belonging to the rich class sent their children to the madarasas of the Muslim. Though hated by muslim students the Hindus were anxious to occupy state
jobs. So they sent their wards to muslim madarasas. Most of the Hindu children got education in pathshalas which were run by Hindu scholars.

From the above discussion it is crystal clear that the Hindu and the Muslim societies had drawbacks in the beginning of the sixteenth century. In both the societies, falsehood, deception, intrigues and hypocrisy were prevalent. Moral and ethical degradation had touched the highest peak. Humanism was found nowhere:

It was a long dark age of uncertainty and restlessness, leading its ugly scars on all aspects of people's life.\(^\text{6}\)

The religious deterioration and confusion is quite vivid from the following quotation:

The qazi misinterprets Shariate and eats filth. The Brahmin enacts like a butchers and takes holy ablution. Yogi does not cognize the values of renunciation due to ignorance. All the three kinds of people became the root cause of the destruction of the social life.\(^\text{7}\)

\section*{B) RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT}

Religious atmosphere during the 16\(^{th}\) and 17\(^{th}\) century Punjab was worst. The two main religions Hinduism and Islam were predominately prevailing, in Punjab. Guru Nanak's "Asa di var" throws lights on the religious phenomena of the day.

\subsection*{Hinduism:}

Hinduism was the religion of majority in the Punjab. The Hindus believed in Vedas, Puranas and Simaritis. They believed in the theory of transmigration of soul in the cycle of life and death. They believed in Karmic theory by which a living man receives woes and pleasures. They had four castes. The Brahman’s held the supreme position. All the rites from birth to death were considered incomplete without the cooperation of Brahman. Worthless traditions, incantations and beliefs were being preserved by Brahmans in the Hindu society. They were polytheistic in their religious ideologies. The false rites and rituals had got prevalence in Hindus due to their ignorance and nonscientific approach towards religion. Actually, they were being misguided by the Brahmans. The Brahmans, to loot and plunder the wealth of people were misinterpreting the holy scriptures. They were living a life of luxury by looting and duping the innocent people. Thus, the Brahman class, which was the learned and holding a high status had gone astray form the real path of religion.
Because of the Varna ashram dharma, the sudras and menial caste Hindus were suffering to the utmost. The Brahman class had not allowed them to worship or take part in the religious affairs. They were hoped only to serve the upper three castes—Brahmans, Vashyas and Khatris. Moreover, they were being compelled by Muslim refers to embrace Islam. Having them selves converted to Islam, there was more curse for them. Firstly, they were not considered equal to other original Muslims. Secondly, they were to face insult from the Hindu society. They were not allowed to enter schools, temples and other social institutions. Penalties were severe for them in case of breaching rites and traditions. During these times the religiously bigoted emperor's life became hell for them. It was a matter of grief that the referred caste system was based upon the birth measures and not upon the occupation or the activities of men.

Due to wrong directions the Hindus had become superstitious and materialistic. The Hindus began to believe, that religion means only the cognition of the caste system, ways of eating, bathing in pious rivers, listening to the holy discourses (kathas) etc. Idolatry had been very common. People had forgotten the Almighty God. Numerous gods and goddesses were being worshipped. Trees, tombs and graves were made the images of adoration. The hypocrite Brahmans used to- read holy-books, recite evening prays, sit in meditation like cranes utter falsehood like false shining ornaments, recite gayatri mantra three times a day, wear rosary around their neck, put sacred mark on forehead, place a towel on the head have two lion-clothes (one for the daily routine and the other for prayer), know not the nature of the Lord. Guru Nanak advised them to meditate on the name of Lord. Without the true guru, man cannot find the right path.8

The Hindu Society had been divided in many sects like:

- Shaivism (those who are the devotees of god Shiva).
- Vaishnavism (those who are the devotees of god Vishnu).
- Saktism (those who worship the godless of Shakti Durga or Kali Devi).

**Sacred thread:**

According to the Varna Ashram Dharma the four castes of Hindu traditionally, used to wear sacred thread denoting their caste. Brahmin used to wear the sacred thread of wool, Khatries of cotton, Vashaya that of jute while the Sudra were bound to wear that of reed called (munj). Generally, the Brahmans and Khatries of the referred centuries used to wear the sacred thread but did not preserve the real life accordingly.
The tradition wearing such thread, really meant to provide a token of class and had no religious value. The Brahmins had made it a part of religious like as well as a system of identification. The Brahmins used to observe the religious rites hypocritically and their actions were quite against their religion and social duties. They used to call Muslims the impure (*Malechh*) but also derive good use of them.

**Buddhism:**

Buddhism was once the biggest religion in Asia especially during the time of Ashoka the great. It was spread in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Barma, Sri Lanka, China Malaya, Japan, Central Asia, Sayeberia etc. There were two main reasons which helped its extension. (i) the high moral and truthful character of its followers (ii) the political support of powerful kings of the time. The religion suffered a set back when the political patronage was withdrawn by the Brahim Hindu kings during the seventh century A.D.⁹

Buddhism was against Vedas. He did not believe in the worship of gods and goddesses. He was quite silent about God. According to Buddha, our desires are the causes of our woes. For fulfilling our desires we do actions, actions unchains the cycle of life and death. The aim of life is *Nirwana*. It is possible only when we follow the *Ashtang Marg* (Eight Points). In 16th Century Buddhism had little religious effect in society.¹⁰

**Jainism:**

There was a more sect Jainism, though in minority, living in Punjab. Brahmins as well as Jainis had cognized the concept of impurity and purity. They hated meat eating and preach nonviolence among the public. There preservations and precautions in practical life were much hard:

The Jainism has two sects *Shavetambar* and *Digambar*. They used to keep their mouth covered with clean cloth. They were vegetarians and did not believe in God.

**The Sikh Religion:**

During the period of religious confusion and deterioration, Bhai Gurdas describers that the position of Hindu-Muslim relationship was quite awkward:
Hindus and Muslims had gone astray from their primary aim. They were selfish jealous, proud, prejudiced and oppressors. For Hindus Haridwar and Kanshi were Holy places. Muslims revered Mecca and Kaba. God is One. For the Hindus, He was Ram. For the Muslims, He was Rahim. It was all misconception. The Hindus loved the Vedas; the Muslims respected the Quran. They had become avaricious and evil minded, quarrelling on the efficiency of their faiths. They could not realize the purpose of religion. The cycle of birth and death remained continued for them.¹¹

It was during this time that the Sikh religion came into existence the founder of which was Guru Nanak Dev. The ten spiritual teachers, the ten master of Sikhism were promoting there religious ideology which was quite different from that of Hinduism and Islam. The fifth Master had compiled the holy scripture, the Adi Granth which was being preached equally among Hindus and Muslims, Briefly, the referred religion was teaching the Hindus to be true Hindus and Muslims to become faithful to their religious guidelines:

Extorting the right of other is like eating swine for him (Musalman) and the cow for the other (Hindus). The guru or prophet shall stand surety only if a man does not eat carrion.¹²

The Sikh religion had propagated the under mentioned ideologies:

**Rejection of Varna Ashram Dharma:**

The Sikh Gurus promoted the ideology of Bhagat Kabir by which all men ought to be equal without the distinction of higher and lower castes, creation of a single creator called God. No one is untouchable since the blood with similar qualities runs through the veins of high and low. Man’s status should be calculated by the parameters of his actions and not by birth.

**Rejection of Futie Brahamanical Rites:**

Since the age of Manu, the Brahmans had undertaken the religious duties in the Hindu society. They were called at the occasion of birth and death, marriage, *yagopavit* and *yajna* etc. Without his presence, all the occasions were considered incomplete. Therefore, they had also infrastructured their own code to earn bread. Moreover, most of the rites they pronounced had no scientific value. The Sikh religion rejected the yajna, sacred thread and false rites popularized by Brahmins. It was direct challenge to
the status of Brahmin in the Hindu society. The duties and obligations pronounced by Manu were not observed by Brahmins but they had considered their first right to guide the Hindu society.

It is due to the propagation of the Sikh theology that no one wears sacred thread in Punjab. Similarly, the Sikh rejected other ceremonies of idolatry, fasts and so called prayers.

**Rejection of Futie Muslim Rites:**

The Sikh religion not only rejected the superiority of Brahmans but also strike upon the Muslim rites which were based upon ill will of *maulavis* it conferred a new definition to *Namaz* (prayers) *zakaat* (tithe) as well as pilgrimage:

(i) The five Namasis have five names. The first is for truthfulness. The second is for honest earning. The third is for charity in God’s Name. The fourth is for purity of mind. Fifth is for Lord’s admiration and praise.¹³

(ii) Make mercy your mosque, Faith your prayer mat, Justice and lawfulness your Quran, Modesty your circumcision, Politeness and civility your fast, Right conduct your Mecca, Truth your spiritual guide, Pious deed your creed and prayer, Rosary is that pleases Him in this way, The Lord shall preserve your honour (says Nanak)¹⁴

(iii) A Muslim ought to be kind hearted, Free from sin, having no attachment towards Mundane pleasures, pure like flower, silk, deer skin¹⁵

**Rejection to the Political Infrastructure:**

Since the age of Guru Nanak the Sikh religion has paid no weightage to the monarchical infrastructure. It followed and propagated the theory of Sant Kabir:
There is no king equal to God (Being Eternal). All the worldly lords are mere temporary (for a number of days). They make false display of their pride.\textsuperscript{16}

It also undertook the concept of \textit{Beghampura} propounded by Saint Ravidas: \textit{Beghampura} is the name of the town (heavenly abode).

At that place, there is no pain or worry.
There is no fear of paying tax on goods.
There is neither, error nor dread, nor decline is possible there.
I have now found an excellent abode.
My brothers, everlasting life is found therein.\textsuperscript{17}

According to the Sikh theology the worldly kings and nobles are inferior to the reign of the Almighty which is Eternal. A man is born to serve the Almighty, but not to the false kings. It is the reason that the Sikh spiritual Gurus were conferred upon the title of ‘Sache Patshah’ by the congregation and the devotees. They were ever ready to sacrifice their lives obeying the orders of the ‘Sache Patshah’. It is the reason for which the Sikh community always pinched like a thorn to the monarchic nobles.

Guru Hargobind Sahib turned the life style of Sikhs and their distinction from Hindus and Muslims became clearer.

Guru Nanak and his successors had propagated the theology of a true man, a true theist in the religious environment of bigoted Muslim rulers. At the same time the Sufi school was prevailing in Punjab who had a theology of liberal man. Since it was not a school of atheist and due to political dominance remained attracted itself with Islam. The sufies knew that their theology cannot speak against the rulers. The Sikhs Gurus encouraged the people of liberal ideology to speak against religious bigotry as well as the oppression. Therefore, the way for liberal natured people was opened to join the Sikh religion and closed for sufies who could never dare to speak against Islamic values. It is notable that Sufism was not an \textit{Ijara} of Islam:

(a) The Sakhi Sarvar (12th-13th century) attracted Hindus and Muslims who had to live liberally with tolerable behaviour towards each other.

(b) Farid Shakar Ganj propagated the Islamic values with a cognition to Islamic law.
(c) Shah Hussain was quite liberal, ‘ghair sharai’ giving no weightage to rigidity and he was a contemporary of Guru Arjan. His ideology has similarities with the Sikh thought. Even his works have terminology of the Sikh scriptures.

(d) Bulleh Shah Lahori was quite liberal and a propagator of liberal thought. We find in his work a good amalgamation of Islamic, Judaic and Hindu theology. He not only uses Islamic and Judaic stories in his narratives but also reveals the popular hearsays from Puranic and Vedantic literature with favourable as well as unfavorable comments.

Conclusively, it is opined that in Panjab the emergence of Sikhism closed the doors for entry in Sufism and called the people of the similar nature with new ideologies and the concept of Beghampura.

Islam:

Islam during the 16th and 17th century Punjab was prevailing under the monarchy of Mughals. After the demise of Akbar (1605) the liberal emperor, his successors proved religiously bigoted towards Hindus. They themselves along with their nobles had forgotten the true spirit of Islam and had become habitual of drinking and other anti Islamic affairs. According to the proverb (Yatha Raja Tatha Praja) The public follows the King. The nobles and functionaries engaged in Islamic law (shariat) and religious duties also had become corrupt. Undoubtedly, they perform Namaz (prayers), pay Zakat (tithe) and some of them visit Hajj but such affairs had become mere formalities. The bribery, women chastise and gambling had become their daily routine. They used to take the religious obligations lightly but pay more stress to convert Hindus to Islam even by force. Generally, the Muslims used to hate Hindus and people of other religions.

During the life time of Bhai Nand Lal, Aurangzeb was the emperor of the day. He demolished numerous temples including gurdawaras and got constructed mosques in place of them. Jazia and pilgrimage tax was imposed by the emperors upon Hindus.

Some of the upper caste Hindus also began to speak the language of Mughals the rulers of the day. The mullahs used to teach the lesson of Hame-ost and Hama-az-ost but used to abstain the non Muslims as well as the poor class Muslims.
Like the Hindus a feeling of upper and lower class took place among Muslims. Qazis used to sell justice by rate of bribery. They had proved butchers slaughtering the public.

The continuous process of conversion gave birth to a new class who were neither Muslims nor Hindus. Since Islam was a religion of alien so the local converts were quite unable to follow the spirit of Islam nor they could revert themselves since the Hindus had not allowed them to regain the Hindu religion. Thus they were in the state of confusion. They could neither perform *namaz* having no knowledge of *Kalma* is Arabic. So the muslims also hated them.

Generally, Hindu used to call muslims *malechh* (dirty) while the Muslims used for them the terminology *but prasat, kafir*. Even the eponym of Hindus which was rendered by Muslims meant for dacoits, thieves and uncultured people. Hindus used to hate Muslims due to the under mentioned causes:

a. People of uncultured nature.
b. Muslims were iconoclasts.
c. Their proximity with butchers, leather workers and untouchable Hindus.
d. Religious rivalry.
e. Freedom of lower castes.

The upper caste Hindus considered their right to avail the services of lower and menial caste Hindus. This right was endowed to them by their scriptures:

> Pashu dhor shudar aur nari.
> Yeh sab taran ke adhikari

Therefore, under the influence of Islam the downtrodden class of Hindus embraced Islam. By this way they got freedom from the yoke of Brahmans and Kshatries. Therefore, the fact became a cause of hate of Hindus for Muslims.

During the century understudy, the Brahmans got refuge under the Sikh Gurus. The sikh gurus were not in favour of their malafide practices but they accepted them in their fold. The Mughals had extorted the rule of India from Pathans who were less bigoted with Hindus. The khatri class of Hindus had made reconcile with the ruling class i.e., Muslims and most of them had accepted their services as functionaries.
Due to the influence of Buddhism and Jainism, the Hindus had become non-violent. They generally used to eat vegetarian food and hate killing of animals especially for food. The Punjab lands produced enough food for them. While Muslims considered religiously their right to eat meat. The Hindu religion does not allow such persons to deal with.

The gap between Brahmins and Muslims was hollow due to the referred facts. Conversions from the other Hindu castes were more but very few from the Brahmins. However, they found some way to live in the critical environment.

**Sufism:**

Sufism was also another sect associated with Islam. This sect was very popular in Punjab. This sect was divided in twelve schools (*silsilas*). The Chishti, Qadiri and Suhrawardhi schools were commonly found in the region. They believed only in one Allah. They paid respect to all religions. They considered the service of mankind as their first responsibility. They were fond of music and spiritual poetry. The Sufis inspired the Hindus and Muslims to maintain cordial relations. They always encouraged the emperors to give up orthodoxy and fanaticism. Their contribution in music and literature was appreciable. They did not speak much about social & political injustice. But Sikh Gurus fought bravely against social, political and religious injustice and sacrificed even their lives for the cause.

As mentioned above both the Hindus and the Muslims had indulged in several false religious rituals such as ash bath on the body, preservation fasts, nudity, marking sign on the forehead, piercing ears and wearing *kundals*, holy baths, observation of *rozas* (fasts) dead worship and worship of gods and goddess and goddesses, and natural bodies like the *moon* and the *sun*. They had completely forgotten the true spirit of the religion.

Briefly speaking, the religious phenomenon of the 16th and 17th century comprising of Islam, Hinduism and other sects had merely reduced to minor groups. The religious priests did not validate the reality of religious duties and functions but performed the relevant activities formally.
C) POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Monarchical political infrastructure had been established throughout India and Panjab during the centuries under study, and it was directly under the control of Mughals emperors. The Mughal dynasty had divided the administrative jurisdiction in numerous states called Subas, chaklas and Tehsils. The Panjab was divided in three Subas-Lahore, Doaba and Sirhind. Each of the Suba was administered by a subedar who was deputed by the Delhi Sultanate. They were allowed by the emperor to have some troops as well as also authorised to maintain their own army according to their status conferred by the Emperor.

The Mughals had already established their dynasty on firm footing. Jahangir was the emperor during the life time the bards and Bhai Gurdas.

Jahangir was a staunch Muslim and envious towards the other religious communities of his times. He was religiously bigoted and had an mimical intentions towards the Sikhs. He has related about his polity about Hindus and Sikhs in his book- Tuzak-e-Jahangiri.

A Hindu named Arjan lived at Goindwal on the banks of river Beas in the garb of a pir and shaikh. As a result many of the simple minded Hindus as well as ignorant and foolish Muslims had been persuaded to adopt his ways and manners............... This business had been flourishing for three generations. For a long time it had been in my mind to put stop to this vain affair (dukan-e-batil) or to bring him into the jury of Islam. 18

And he further says:

I ordered that he should be summoned. His houses; camps and sons given over to Murtza Khan. His property and cash were confiscated. I issued instructions that he should be put to death by torture.19

The chronicles convey that before his martyrdom Guru Arjan sent a message to his son, Sri Hargobind Sahib to follow the life styles of a warrior and become martial. Guru Hargobind Sahib also felt that the Sikhs must learn the art of weapons for their survival. They must be ready to face bravely the tyrannical rulers and follow the life style of a soldier as well as a saint. He practically prepared the Sikhs and managed training for them to fight battles. Bhai Praga, Bhai Bidhi Chand and a few more Sikhs
proved brave soldiers and they accompanied the Guru in a few battles fought against the local functionaries deputed by the emperor. Therefore, the new ideology of the Guru became a turning point in the Sikh history.

Jahangir was not only against Sikhs but even had an irritative behavior towards Muslims of rival other sects. According to his version in Tuzak-e-Jahangiri he issued order to put Sheikh Ahmed Sarhandi behind bars:

.... I considered it better that the fellow should be put behind bars for a few days. So that the pround and ambitions of his propagaion may arrive to a cease. By this way the public following him also will learn a lesson. So I ordered Ani Rai to put him chained in the Gwalior fort.20

Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib (1595-1644 AD) who was called by the Sikhs a Sacha Patshah, adopted a royal umbrella, wore two swords-of Miri and Piri and a hawk. He also built a terrace called the Akal Takhat Sahib (the throne of the Almighty) in front of the Harimandir. He kept an army of trained troops and musketeers. He had created a state within a state. Jahangir did not tolerate the militant policy of the Guru. So, he was arrested and imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior. The Guru was released after 12 years with the intervention of Mian Mir and Vazir Khan, the governor of Gwalior. Afterwards, the Guru and the emperor remained friendly. A few local battles were fought with Mughal officials and the Guru moved towards the hills to live a peaceful life and propagate his religion.

Guru Hargobind Sahib was succeeded by his grandson, Har Rai. He followed a policy of peaceful living. When Prince Dara Shikoh asked for military aid and blessing of the Guru and the Guru obliged him, Aurangzeb became his bitter enemy. He called for the Guru who sent his son, Ram Rai into the royal court. Ram Rai was asked some questions about Sri Guru Granth Sahib to which he misinterpreted. Guru Har Rai became angry with his son, Ram Rae and he appointed his minor son, Har Krishan as his successor.

The development of Sikhism continued to gather momentum under the successors of Guru Nanak. The stern ethical tone distinguished Sikhism from other movements in India. The spirit of non-compromise with imperialism and religious values was responsible for the martyrdom of Guru Arjan.
The suba of Lahore was being administered by the governor Kalich Khan during the rule span of Jahangir while the Sirhind suba was under the administration of Wazir Khan II during the life time of Bhai Nand Lal. The referred subedar had also the status of a faujdar who had also accomplished the duties as a governor of Lahore in 1628 AD deputed by Jahangir and remained during the ruling span of Shah Jahan also.21

During the life time of Bhai Nand Lal at Anandpur the Sirhind suba was being administered by Wazir Khan-II of Kunjpura origin. He had envious relations with the Sikh Guru ie, Guru Gobind Singh and a few battles were fought between the two.

The latter had also killed the two sons and the mother of the said Guru. The suba had the status of faujdar during the time of Aurangzeb (1618-1707). The Delhi Sultanate was being administered by Aurangzeb the staunch Sunnite emperor of his times.22

The political environment of Panjáb as well as the Delhi Sultanate was not solid. The suba governors as well as the emperor had to fight against rebellions arising throughout the country. Due to the strict and religiously bigoted policies of Aurangzeb the whole country had reduced to terror. The Rajput chiefs had become against Mughals. Some of the Hindu nobles had left the support of the Delhi emperor. A letters of Jai Singh a noble evinces as under:

Your ancestors had tolerable relations with and Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Christians. They dealt them without distinction but during your reign all of them have been compelled to leave their homes. Some of them have left the country. An environment of hell is prevailing everywhere, the people are dying hunger stricken. Your subject is being crushed in poverty. The armies are distressed, businessmen are crying. If an emperor charges tax from such a poor subject, how his reign may prolong?23

If you have really faith in your scripture go through it again you will find that Khuda is equal to all and not of Muslims alone. The same is worshiped in mosque and temple. When we deface the production of an artist it means, we call for his curse. If you want more tax from poor Hindus the desire is unjustified. They have no money to pay it. You have no other way to charge from me and Maharaja Ram Singh. It is a matter of curse for you to kill the
minor people. I am confused due to the reason that why your functionaries do not inform you about the real facts.  

The state was not only against the Sikhs but also against Hindus, dancers, damsels, musicians and all other non-muslim sects. Even public was not in favour of the emperor who has put the Sarmad to death.

Aurangzeb the emperor enforced his orders strictly to collect tribute. He was a greedy and cruel towards his public. He had levied heavy taxes upon Hindus and also compelled them embrace to Islam. Under the similar circumstances the ninth Guru of Sikhs refused to embrace Islam. He was killed along with his followers with severe tortures. His son Gobind Rai was in his childhood.

The Hindu nobles of the Mughal darbar had good relations with Sikhs and their Gurus. Guru Tegh Bahadur passed days with Rajput nobles but the religiously bigoted Aurangzeb was absolutely blind to cognize friends and foes. He had already killed his real brothers and even his father. It is impossible to calculate what kind of services he rendered to Islam by his cruelty and treachery.

The tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh put to a cease the previous traditions of the Sikhs. He closed the masand system and directly took the Sikhs in his concerns. He united all castes of Hindus and Sikhs in an institution of Khalsa and trained them to crush the oppressors. He deputed a few scholars to translate the puranic literature subjected to martial affairs with a view to remind the Indians about their heroic culture. The Khalsa established by him in 1699 A.D was infused with a new spirit to live the life of a saint and soldier. He infused among them a spirit to fight for justice and lay their lives to abolish oppression.

Bhai Nand Lal stayed in Guru's court and compiled his works. Before the Guru initiated battle against the oppressors, Bhai Nand Lal was asked to return towards his native land.

Finally, it may be concluded that the Sikh community had a changed form, a class of saints to take part in politics and enact bravely to change the oppressive phenomenon of the Mughal politics.
References

4. Ibid, pp-324-25
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7. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p-662
8. Ibid, p- 470
12. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p-140
13. Ibid, p-141
14. Ibid, pp- 140-41
15. Ibid, p-1084
16. Ibid, p- 856
17. Ibid, p-345
19. Ibid, p- 35
20. Ibid, pp-274-75
22. Ibid, p- 164
23. Raja Jai Singh's, letter towards Aurangzeb, p-110
24. Ibid