



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Saint Samandas Historical Personality

(Related to Meerut and Saharanpur Mandal .UP,India)

Neeraj Singh

Professor Aradhna (supervisor)

Chaudhari Charan Singh University, Meerut

Abstract:

Saint Samandas devoted his entire life to celibacy and played a significant role in removing orthodoxy and superstition from society. He emphasized primary education for the upliftment of the underprivileged sections and contributed to social and cultural transformation. A true devotee of Saint Ravidas, Saint Samandas adopted the teachings of Saint Ravidas and Saint Gyan Bhikshuk das in his life. He regarded Guru Ravidas as a great spiritual teacher for all humanity and a source of eternal knowledge. He considered Ravidas's pure and liberating philosophy as a guiding light for human development.

Saint Samandas extended the teachings and hymns of Ravidas, which were once limited to Punjab, across various regions such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Delhi. He also established Ravidas Ashrams and educational institutions to promote these values.

Saint Samandas was a saint of Nirguna devotion. His main area of work was Western Uttar Pradesh. His followers are spread across states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi. He worked tirelessly on primary education, health, and de-addiction throughout his life. He laid special emphasis on the role of women from the Dalit and Shudra communities in the economic, social, and mental development of society. Even after independence, practices like various rituals, hypocrisy, animal sacrifice, murder, and child marriage traditions were prevalent in the Shudra society, and people were still following them.¹

A consistent characteristic of Nirguna saints has always been their active role in society. Their main focus of worship is the attainment of knowledge, human welfare, and social reform. In the 1960s, Saint Ravidas was not seen with such devotion in the Shudra society of Western Uttar Pradesh, but in the last 50 years, Nirguna saints have taken a special interest in Saint Ravidas, and his values of unity, equality, diligence, compassion, and charity have been spread throughout society by these saints through various means. Today, in the Shudra community, you can find a Ravidas temple in every locality or village, but these temples are not more than 50 years old.

Saint Samandas was born on Poornima (full moonlight) of the Bhado month in 1922 in the village of Lakh, District Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh.² His father, Shri Phool Singh Kataria, and mother, Shrimati Lakshmi Santoshi, were devotees of Guru Ravidas. Their family had a special interest in serving saints and participating in satsangs. In his childhood, Swami Samandas renounced his family life and took initiation from Guru Gyan Bhikshuk Swami Ji. Guru Gyan Bhikshu Swami Ji was a member of the British army. Saint Samandas left his home at the age of twelve and became absorbed in penance. He performed penance in village after village to

¹ Late Alam Singh Kataria 'Satguru Ravidas Anubhav Prakash Adi Dharma Granth'

² Late Alam Singh Kataria 'Satguru Ravidas Anubhav Prakash Adi Dharma Granth'

attain knowledge. The villagers started to know him by his name. People began calling him Guru, Swami, Mahatma, etc. When he was unable to achieve his life's goal, he searched for a guru and reached Mahatma Haridas at Shukratal. Due to his poor health, Mahatma Haridas sent Saint Samandas to Guru Gyan Bhikshuk, and thus he came under the guidance of Guru Gyan Bhikshuk and took initiation from him.

Throughout his life, Saint Samandas propagated the Ravidas Mission, working to remove inequalities, social and religious evils, hypocrisy, superstition, meat-eating, alcohol consumption, and addiction from human society. He tried to dispel the illusions of deluded beings and show the public the path of truth. In 1960, after Guru Gyan Bhikshuk Das took samadhi and became Brahma-leena, Saint Samandas established the Guru Ravidas Gaddi (Unn) in the village of Unn, District Shamli. For almost 100 years, langar (community kitchen), satsang, and bhandara (feast) in the name of Guru Ravidas have been held here. This place is the workplace of Guru Gyan Bhikshuk, where he took samadhi and left his body. Every year, on the eve of Jyeshtha Poornima (June), Ravidas devotees, saints, and people from all communities decorate a palanquin of Saint Ravidas and take out a procession, followed by a grand satsang at night. After the satsang, they hold a bhandara on Jyeshtha Poornima (June, full moonlight). In the bhandara, all the Guru-devotees and followers offer their devotion at the feet of the Guru Gaddi.

After a dispute over the Guru Gaddi in 2013, Guru Samandas moved the massive Jyeshtha Poornima bhandara to Shukratal from 2014 onwards. After 2014, the Jyeshtha Poornima bhandara has been held in the same manner at Guru Ravidas Ashram Shukratal. After Saint Samandas took samadhi, the Shukratal Ravidas Ashram established by him is considered the main ashram or temple by his devotees. In 2019, because Saint Samandas took samadhi on the land of Shukratal, the faith of the devotees in the temple has grown even stronger.

Saint Samandas gave special importance to the Guru. According to him, 'Without the knowledge of the Guru, true knowledge cannot be attained, and without knowledge, the Satguru cannot be found. Salvation is possible only under the guidance of a Satguru. Where iron turns into gold, it is the Guru who distinguishes between truth and untruth. The Guru is omniscient. The Guru knows the mystery of God or the Supreme Being. He is the one who gives intelligence, wisdom, and memory and removes sorrows.'³ Guru Samandas inspired people about the importance of the Guru and a simple life through satsangs in villages and cities. On October 1, 2003, a Dalit Mahasammelan was organized by the Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi at Talkatora Stadium, which was attended by famous saints, Mahatmas, and politicians. Saint Samandas was honored with the title of 'Sant Shiromani' by the then Cabinet Minister of the Government of India, Satyanarayan Jatiya, Minister of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Saint Samandas became known as a spiritual Guru to the masses and also as a social worker. Besides this, he was also a poet and composed many verses dedicated to Guru Ravidas. His verses are compiled in 'Anubhav Prakash' under the guidance of Saint Samandas by his devotees. Saint Samandas composed 'Ravidas Chalisa' in which he introduced the life of Saint Ravidas and sang songs related to the Guru, absorbed in the devotion of Ravidas with a sense of servitude. Some verses are as follows:

"Everyone has one nature, every sect and caste, the Satguru is unique.

Such a wondrous play of the Guru is unique, how can our intellect describe it.

Whoever sings this Chalisa of Guru Ravidas

Will enjoy all happiness and attain the highest position.

Samandas says this to explain, one will not return to the cycle of 84 births again."⁴

In these verses, we see that devotion is presented as the path to worldly happiness, and Saint Samandas' belief in rebirth is clearly visible. He had faith in the 84 cycles of life.

³ Late Alam Singh Kataria 'Satguru Ravidas Anubhav Prakash Adi Dharma Granth'

⁴ Late Alam Singh Kataria 'Satguru Ravidas Anubhav Prakash Adi Dharma Granth' pg. 12

He opposed social evils like dowry, pind-dan, child marriage, black magic, animal sacrifice at the doorstep, hypocrisy, and superstition. He spread the message of cleanliness and hygiene in every household and spoke against the consumption of meat and alcohol, especially of dead animals. Saint Samandas was born into the Chamar community or caste. He tried throughout his life to remove the feeling of inferiority towards this caste among people and the inertia within the people of the caste themselves. He linked the word 'Chamar' to 'chamra' (leather) and explained that a body cannot be formed without skin. The word Chamar has special significance, and being linked to leather should be a matter of pride for this community.

During his lifetime, Saint Samandas established hundreds of Ravidas temples and ashrams. He spread the stream of knowledge from Ravidas's sayings to the minds of the masses through satsangs. Being Nirguna and engaged in devotion with a sense of servitude, he made serving society his life's goal. He went from village to village, teaching people the right way to cook, clean, wear clothes, speak sweetly, and the true meaning of brotherhood. He would even set up a langar wherever he stayed and cook the food himself. He taught people to try to eliminate the differences of religion and caste. His many followers belong to Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu communities, and people from many different castes are his followers. People of various castes have donated land for his ashrams and schools. A sense of service is visible in every follower of Saint Samandas.

After Saint Samandas took samadhi in 2019, the care of his samadhi and the promotion of his teachings and messages are currently managed by Mahatma Gordhan, the chief manager of the Mahatma Gordhan Ashram at Shukratal.

Mahatma Gordhan Das, a disciple of Saint Samandas, described the scene of Saint Samandas taking samadhi and said that the messages and teachings of Satguru Samandas will always benefit life. He said that Satguru Samandas was an embodiment of simplicity and gentleness, and saints and public representatives called Guru Samandas a miraculous saint with a gentle and simple nature, stating that his life sets an example. The Brahma-leena Guru always solved the problems of the poor and distressed. On the news of Maharaj Samandas's passing, a crowd of millions of his followers from nearby districts and states like Haryana, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Punjab arrived at Shukratal from the evening of Saturday, August 11, 2019, until Sunday afternoon.

The Influence of Guru Gyan Bhikshu Maharaj

According to Mahatma Gyandas, Samandas's Guru, Gyan Bhikshu Ji, was born in 1852 in Akhtiyarpur, District Meerut. His respected father was Shri Panch Das Ji and mother was Shrimati Sanvli Devi. He had a good command of both Hindi and English. The Guru of Guru Gyan Bhikshu Maharaj Ji was Guru Mamchand Ji. After becoming detached from worldly affairs, Gyan Bhikshu Maharaj left the British army and met Guru Shri Mamchand Ji in 1883. From 1883-1905, Gyan Bhikshu Das Ji attained knowledge under the guidance of Guru Mamchand Ji.⁵ According to the saints, Guru Mamchand Ji lived in Lahore and, influenced by the Punjabi religion, became a devotee of Guru Ravidas. Gyan Bhikshu Maharaj Ji wanted to spread the fundamental principles of Guru Ravidas - social reform, unity, equality, and brotherhood - across India to reduce the sorrows of the downtrodden. After leaving Lahore, Saint Gyan Bhikshu Maharaj returned to the village of Unn, Shamli, Uttar Pradesh, in 1905. Saint Saman Das Ji never went to school. His education was under the guidance of Saint Gyan Bhikshu. He also learned the alphabet from Saint Gyan Bhikshu. He spent his life trying to spread this literacy to the masses by establishing primary schools. Saint Gyan Bhikshu Maharaj wanted to make his community educated and strong, which is why he emphasized primary education. He spent all his property on opening and running schools. ⁶Hundreds of primary schools were closed due to a lack of funds. Primary education is still being provided in his ashrams today.

⁵ Late Alam Singh Kataria 'Satguru Ravidas Anubhav Prakash Adi Dharma Granth' pg. 12

⁶ All India Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas Organization Charitable Trust, Guru Ravidas Dharma Granth

Such a bond between a Guru and disciple seems surprising and miraculous in the 21st century. Millions of his devotees saw that when Saint Gyan Bhikshu Maharaj Ji left his body, Maharaj Samandas also went into a state of unconsciousness, and after a day, both of them re-entered their bodies and returned to a conscious state. Saint Samandas used to say, "My Guru cannot leave the world without giving the Guru Gaddi to someone. Wherever Samandas will be, his Guru will be with him."

Social and Cultural Impact of the Sant Ravidas Tradition

Leaders are invited to the stage in the ashrams established by Guru Saman Das Ji to explain their willpower and political role on the day of satsang. Shukratal is a spiritual city of Muzaffarnagar, where many saints perform penance to attain spiritual knowledge and spread it to the public. The people of this community have become aware due to the contribution of Guru Samandas Ji. People's contribution to education and science has grown. The saint culture is continuously working in the making of India, showing its historical importance by contributing to human welfare.

The saint tradition is not new in India. We can also see examples of saints and social reformers like Gautam Buddha and Mahavira in ancient Indian history. Many such saints who attained spiritual knowledge have shown an inclination towards bringing about social change. The saint tradition has always given priority to knowledge. The Indian constitution also mentions the discovery and research of new knowledge as a fundamental duty. In such a situation, the saint tradition seems to give more strength to Indian philosophy. From ancient times to the medieval period, saints like Ravidas, Kabir Das, Guru Nanak, and Pipa, and from the medieval to the modern era, the saint tradition has continuously influenced many parts of society and maintained its existence. Even today, many saints in India influence various customs, traditions, and cultures of society.

In the temples established by Saint Saman Das, satsangs are held every Saturday, and langars are held every Sunday. In every ashram, idols of Guru Ravidas and Gyan Bhikshu, and recently in some newly constructed temples, an idol of Guru Saman Das Ji has been established. An eternal flame is always lit in front of it. Devotees bow their heads, offer their salutations, and bring special gifts when their wishes asked of their Guru are fulfilled. The worship of devotees towards the Guru looks similar to that in Saguna temples. Devotees prostrate themselves or go to the temple by lying down or circling around when their wishes are fulfilled. In the Shukratal ashram, devotees are seen offering or donating essential clothes, shoes, oil, soap, and daily necessities in a basket at the feet of the Guru.

On the eve of Jyeshtha Poornima, a procession is taken out, which starts from the Haridas Ashram in Shukratal and goes to the Guru Ravidas Ashram. The managers of all the ashrams and temples on the way welcome the procession. Arrangements for water and food are made at various places. This procession lasts for about five hours. The procession reaches the Ravidas temple in Shukratal, and then the satsang begins at night.

Satsang and Prasad in the Temple

The system of holding satsangs every Saturday and langars every Sunday in the ashrams and temples established by Saint Samandas has been running continuously. The ashrams were always open for every resident of the village, without any discrimination, to come in, present their views before the Guru, and talk to him. You can visit the ashrams established by Samandas Ji at any time. Morning and evening aarti are performed. This aarti seems very simple, in which a lamp is lit and the words of the Gurus are sung. Emphasis is placed on Nirguna worship. A continuous flame or diya is lit in front of the Guru, especially in the ashram established in Shukratal. Every devotee who comes to the temple first bows his head before the statue of Guru Ravidas and salutes him. The way of salutation looks similar to that of the Punjabis. After that, he salutes the Mahatma of the ashram. He has been seen donating a part of his income to Saint Samandan in the form of a bandagi and to the temple manager after taking samadhi. As prasad, the temple servants distribute puffed rice and batashas after darshan.

There is also a special atmosphere of satsang in the temples. These satsangs are mostly held on Saturday nights in these ashrams. The temple managers explained that the reason for doing this on Saturday night is that people work all day, and earning a living is essential. The right to earn is the first priority. At night, people from all the nearby villages gather, and since Sunday is a holiday, they can rest at the temple after the satsang. A grand feast is organized after the satsang, which the devotees along with the temple managers make successful.

Objective of Establishing the Ashram

Even after India's independence, untouchability was prevalent in many villages and cities. In such a situation, upper-caste people would neither allow lower-caste people to enter temples nor schools. Saint Samandas and Saint Gyan Bhikshuk Ji themselves had to suffer from the pain of untouchability many times. They understood the painful suffering of untouchability, which is why they put more emphasis on the Ravidas ashrams and primary education. These ashrams are open 24 hours a day for everyone. At the age of about twelve, Guru Samandas Ji moved towards spiritual knowledge and spent his entire life in the propagation of the Ravidas Mission and social service. Guru Gyan Bhikshuk Ji would open a primary education center wherever he stayed. He would arrange for water and two rooms. He would himself help in digging a well for water and in the construction work, and when the school was ready, he would leave the responsibility of the school to a follower and go to other areas for propagation.

The need for Saint Samandas Ji's ashram was so that the deprived sections of society, who were forbidden from going to temples, could come to the ashrams and attain spiritual knowledge. In these ashrams, they could give their services and acquire some skills, such as the skill of cooking, cleaning, writing, managing the temple, and by contributing to the construction of the temple, they could also acquire building construction skills.

Saint Samandas Ji established hundreds of ashrams during his lifetime.⁷ In Shamli district, there are two Guru Ravidas ashrams in the village of Unn, Guru Ravidas ashram in the village of Kheri Karmun, the village of Lakh (birthplace of Saint Samandas), and the village of Bhabhisa (established by Saint Gyan Bhikshuk Ji). In Muzaffarnagar district, the Ravidas ashrams established by Saint Samandas are: village Bhupkheri, village Samauli, village Shukratal (Samadhi of Saint Samandas). In Saharanpur district, the number of Guru Ravidas ashrams established is about thirteen, which are as follows: village Sarsawa, village Saharanpur Paper Mill, village Jambugarh, village Kajipura, village Shambhugarh, village Kurali, village Meharwani, village Kota, village Dumjhari, village Jandkhera, village Landora, village Lachhipur. In Meerut district, seven Guru Ravidas ashrams were established, including the village of Pawli Khas, village Hastinapur, and village Akhtiyarpur (birthplace of Saint Bhikshu Das Ji).

Besides these, three were established in Delhi, about 10 Guru Ravidas ashrams in Haryana, one in Hapur (Markpur), three in Bijnor (village Nagina, Vidurkuti, Chaugavan). Five Guru Ravidas ashrams were established in Haridwar.⁸ Saint Samandas Ji established about eighty temples and ten registered primary schools. The villagers who donated this land belonged to different castes. They donated the land under the influence of Samandas Ji.

Shukratal as the Main Ashram

After Saint Samandas Ji took samadhi in Shukratal in 1919, his followers considered Shukratal to be his main ashram. This temple has now become a symbol of faith. This temple, situated on the bank of the small Ganga river, is also very popular among devotees. Every devotee who comes to this ashram first shows his faith in the Ganga river by taking a dip, and then goes for darshan at the Ravidas temple ashram. Some devotees first have

⁷ All India Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas Organization Charitable Trust, *Guru Ravidas Dharma Granth* pg 60

⁸ All India Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas Organization Charitable Trust, *Guru Ravidas Dharma Granth* pg 61, 62

darshan at the Ravidas temple ashram and later bathe in the Ganga river. In both situations, the faith of the devotees remains constant between Saint Samandas and the Ganga river.

Shukratal is a spiritual center situated on the bank of the small Ganga river, which is also known as Guru Bhoomi. 5000 years ago, Shukdev Goswami narrated the story of the holy Srimad Bhagavatam (Bhagavata Purana) to Maharaj Parikshit, the son of Abhimanyu, here. It is a famous and sacred place in Uttar Pradesh, located about twenty-nine kilometers away from Muzaffarnagar on the banks of the Ganga. Every year, many pilgrims come to bathe in the holy river 'Ganga' on the day of Kartik Poornima.

Center for Yoga and Meditation

Special practice of yoga and meditation takes place in the ashram of Saint Samandas. The chief manager of the ashram compulsorily does yoga in the morning, followed by meditation. There is no specific time for meditation; saints can be seen meditating in the ashram at any time. Saint Samandas Ji puts more emphasis on yoga for a healthy body and meditation for a healthy mind for his followers. If someone's mind is very restless, he often tells them to remember the songs of Ravidas written by him with concentration.

Background of Guru Ravidas's Thoughts and Culture

According to Osho, "The sky of India is filled with the stars of saints. These stars are spread infinitely. Although the light is the same, Saint Ravidas is the North Star among all those stars."⁹ Every knowledgeable person has been influenced by the thoughts of Saint Ravidas. Guru Ravidas was born in the village of Mandur near Banaras. Today, this place is a small settlement called Seer Govardhanpur near Banaras University, where a huge temple of Guru Ravidas was built under the inspiration of Mahatma Shraavan Das of Dera Sachkhand Ballan Jalandhar. A huge fair is held here every year on the day of Magh Poornima, where millions of people from the country and abroad come for the darshan of Guru Ravidas. Guru Ravidas's father's name was Raghu, and his mother's name was Karma Devi. According to traditional folklore and Ravidas's saints, his birth is considered to be on Sunday, Magh Poornima, in the year 1433 Vikram Samvat. Ravidasiya people have been celebrating Ravidas Ji's death anniversary on this day every year. Guru Ravidas's wife's name was Lona or Lona. It is believed that during the medieval period, Lona Devi was an expert in the chanting of mantras in the processes of black magic. Ravidas Ji's wife supported him in his religious activities like serving saints, satsang, and the desire for knowledge. Ravidas Ji spent a large part of his income on serving saints. Dharmdas Ji, the author of 'Ravidas Ki Parchai', mentioned Ravidas Ji as one of the 'Panj Pyare' of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.¹⁰ Ravidas Ji's devotion, sattvic thoughts, liberal and calm nature, and content life were the reasons for his greater fame. Once, on the invitation of Rani Jhalai, Ravidas Ji went to Chittor. Besides this, the medieval poetess Meerabai also became a disciple of Saint Ravidas. Currently, 40 of his verses are collected in the holy book of the Sikhs, "Guru Granth Sahib." He left his body at the age of 151 in Vikram Samvat 1584.¹¹

Acharya Rajneesh called Ravidas the North Star in the sky full of Indian saints and inspired people to understand his words. Ravidas's culture is identified with leatherwork. Leatherwork means the upper surface of the skin. G.W. Briggs, the author of 'The Chamars', studied the method of making leather very carefully and wrote about it.¹² This writing method raises the question in mind that if the people of this caste or skill had benefited from industrialization, then perhaps their hereditary experience in surgery, veterinary medicine, and hand skills could have brought about some new discoveries. Currently, the price of shoes, slippers, handbags, belts, etc., made of

⁹ Osho 'Sat Bhashay Ravidas'

¹⁰ S.S. Gautam and Dr. R.M.S. Vijayi 'Chamar Caste History and Culture' pg 96

¹¹ S.S. Gautam and Dr. R.M.S. Vijayi 'Chamar Caste History and Culture' pg 96

¹² G.W. Briggs 'The Chamars' translation by Jaiprakash Kardam

leather is very high, which shows that if India had worked on it at a technical level, it could have become the biggest manufacturer. The Ravidasian culture now accepts this leatherwork with pride. This is their historical identity today.

In modern times, Saint Shravan Das of Dera Sachkhand Ballan Jalandhar propagated the Ravidas Mission in India a lot. In parallel, Saint Sarvan Das Ji propagated the Ravidas Mission in Western Uttar Pradesh. Babu Jagjivan Ram, Shri B. Shankaranand, Shri P.V. Maurya, Manyavar Kanshiram, Kumari Mayawati, Swami Ramanand Shastri, Chaudhary Girdhari Lal, P.N. Raj Bhoj, Baba Gajjan Shah, Swami Achhutanand, Meera Kumar, S.A. Shivtarkar, Shri Mata Prasad, Pal Valankar, Dr. Surajbhan, Seth Kishan Das, Dr. Ramji Lal Sahayak, Mohanlal Kuril, and other great politicians, administrative officers, saints, and social reformers worked at the national and international level to spread the thoughts of Ravidas.

Guru Ravidas's name is not in need of an introduction today. His followers can be found in some city or the other abroad. In India, especially in Western Uttar Pradesh, the name of Samandas Ji will always be remembered for keeping the thoughts of Ravidas Ji alive. The ashrams established by him will remain a testament to education, the philosophy of life of Ravidas Ji, and the philosophy of life of Samandas Ji. Education and social service currently hold historical importance for the Ravidasi and other Shudra communities through Saint Samandas Ji. People gave information about Saint Samandas and Saint Gyan Bhikshu Das Ji, saying that they have been seeing the Shukratal temple for 50 years. In this temple, devotion is offered to the Nirguna, formless God. An eternal flame is lit in front of the Guru's gaddi, and salutations are offered in the morning and evening. Besides this, special attention is paid to yoga and meditation. Puffed rice, cardamom seeds, and batasha are distributed as prasad to the devotees visiting the Ravidas temple. And like a Sikh Gurdwara, langar of dal roti, rice, and any kind of vegetable is served at all times. People donate here according to their devotion. Besides money, people also donate food items, a part of their harvest, shoes, slippers, clothes for saints, oil, combs, etc., at the temple. Salutations are offered to the Guru by the devotees here. Besides this, the saints here said that they also perform yajnas from house to house. These yajnas are performed on occasions like entering a new house, buying a new car, getting a job, when a problem arises, the arrival of a new baby in the house, birthdays, etc.

Charitable works are also done in the temple. Children from poor families get a place to live in the ashram. Funds are also given for their education by the saints. People have been made aware of maintaining cleanliness by Saint Samandas. The saints themselves also start working for cleanliness in a village. In these temples, devotees also perform rituals like naming ceremonies for their children, mundan (first haircut), marriage, and Karna Bhedan (ear piercing). Before the satsang in the temple, publicity is done in villages, cities, and towns. Small and big service committees are formed, and work is distributed among these service committees. Their main objective is to tell as many people as possible about the importance of the Ravidas temple and satsang and to invite them to the ashram.

The saint community opened several free schools for both girls and boys in the ashram. The main objective was literacy. The devotees belong to Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, and other religions. Saint Samandas knew the thoughts of his followers without them saying anything, and they would get their answers even before they asked the questions. People believed that their economic prosperity had increased after coming under his guidance. Along with this, their social and mental development had taken place. People learned to save and adopted the Guru's mantra to overcome stress.

References:

- * Alam Singh Kataria (1993), *Anubhav Prakash, Gururavidas Ashram, Unn Muzaffarnagar*
- * All India Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas Organization Charitable Trust, 2016 *Guru Ravidas Dharma Granth*
- * Osho (2014) *Sat Bhashay Ravidas, Diamond Books*
- * G.W. Briggs, *The Chamars*, translation by Jaiprakash Kardam (1999) *Santa Prakashan*
- * S.S. Gautam and Dr. R.M.S. Vijayi (2011), *Chamar Caste History and Culture Gautam Book Center*
- * *Hindustan Newspaper* - 12 August 2019 1:04 PM e-newspaper
- * *Chamar Bulletin TV YouTube* https://youtu.be/xNgUQnDN90w?si=W0X1YJPs3jwEvp_y
- * <https://saharanpur.nic.in/about-district/>
- * <https://meerutdivision.nic.in>
- * <https://muzaffarnagar.nic.in/hi/tourist-place>

