

Ravidassias of Punjab

Why in News

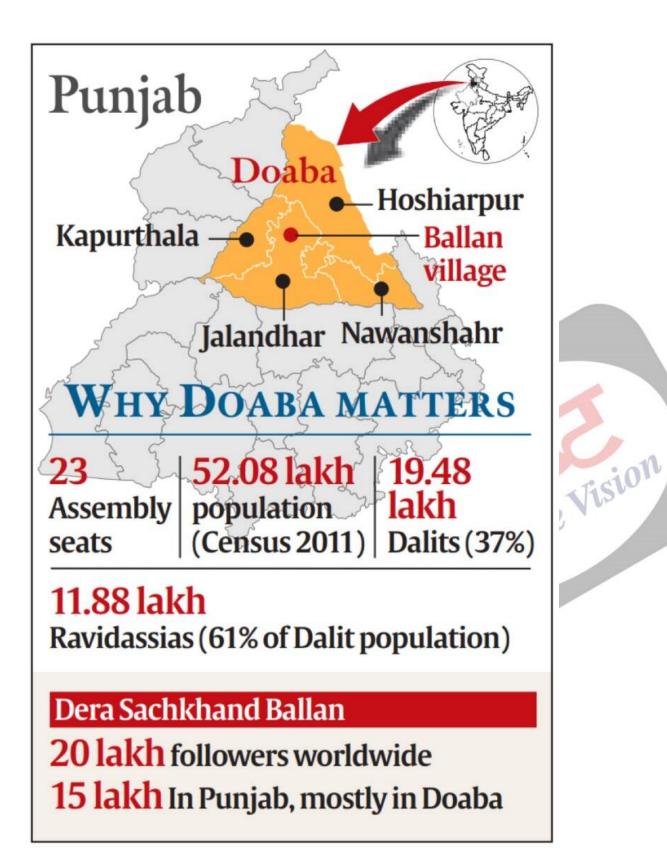
Recently, the <u>Election Commission of India (ECI)</u> has postponed polling for the Punjab Assembly election, which underlines the importance of the **Ravidassia community in the state.**

- The State government and political parties raised concern that many devotees would be in Varanasi (in a memorial temple) to celebrate **Guru Ravidas's birth anniversary** on 16th February and miss out on voting.
- Guru Ravidas's birth anniversary is celebrated on Magh Purnima, the full moon day in the month of Magh according to the Hindu lunar calendar.

Key Points

About:

- The Ravidassias are a Dalit community of whom the bulk nearly 12 lakh live in the Doaba region.
- The Dera Sachkhand Ballan, their largest dera with 20 lakh followers worldwide, was founded in the early 20th century by Baba Sant Pipal Das.
- Once closely connected with Sikhism, the dera severed these decades-old ties in 2010, and announced they would follow the Ravidassia religion.
 - The announcement was made on Guru Ravidas Jayanti in Varanasi.
- From 2010, the Dera Sachkhand Ballan started replacing the Guru Granth Sahib with its own Granth, Amritbani, carrying 200 hymns of Guru Ravidas, in Ravidassia temples and gurdwaras.



Guru Ravidas:

- Guru Ravidas was a mystic poet saint of the <u>Bhakti Movement</u> from the 15th and 16th centuries, and founded the **Ravidassia religion.**
- It is believed that he was born in Varanasi in a cobbler's family.
- He gained prominence due to his belief in one God and his unbiased religious poems.
- He dedicated his whole life to the abolition of the caste system and openly despised the notion of a Brahminical society.

• His devotional songs made an instant impact on the Bhakti Movement and around 41 of his poems were included in **'Guru Granth Sahib'**, the religious text of the Sikhs.

Source: IE

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