

UDHAMPUR....THE LAND OF NATURAL SPRINGS

Chander M. Bhat

Udhampur popularly known as 'the land of Druva' , 'the land of Bowli's' and land of Devika, Headquarter of District, is named after Raja Udham Singh, the eldest son of Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of Dogra rule in Jammu and Kashmir. The town is said to have been built in place of dense forest where Udham Singh occasionally went on hunting trips till he developed great love for the spot and choose it as site for township. District Udhampur lies between 32 degree 34 minutes to 39 degree 30 minutes North Latitude and 74 degree 16 minutes to 75 degree 38 minutes East Longitude. The altitude of District Udhampur varies from 600 meter to 3,000 meter above sea level. The District is situated in the South-Eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir State and is bounded in the West by Rajouri District, in North-East by Doda District, in the South-East by Kathua District and in the South-West by Jammu District. Udhampur is also known as Devika Nagari.

Total population of Udhampur town is 116727 souls as per census of India and the area of Udhampur city is about 6 square km. Udhampur city abounds with a number of natural springs locally known as Bowli. The water of these Bowli's is hot in winter and cold in summer. Maximum population of Udhampur in the wee hours goes to these Bowli's for having a refreshing bath and also takes water from these Bowli's for drinking purpose as it is said that the water of Bowli is good for digestion. Temples, shady trees, big rocks, peepal trees, etc are usual accomplices of these Bowli's, where Hindus pay their obeisance, kneel down in prostration and have ablutions.

There is a cluster of eight Bowli at Devika Temple. Each Bowli has its own significance. Three Bowli has been earmarked for bathing purposes and others are used for temple use. The water of these bowli is being offered to Lord Shiva by the people and one can see a huge rush of devotees in morning hours. A grand fair is being held at Devika on the eve of Baisaki which lasts for two and a half day. People from far off places from Jammu region participate in this fair. There is an ancient Shiva Temple on the bank of holy Devika. On the days of *Soma Amavasi* and Baisaki a large of number people from Udhampur and adjoining villages throng this shrine for having a dip in the Holy Devika.



Bowli at Devika Temple

Devika shrine has the unique distinction of enjoying the esteem of every community alike. Pilgrims make their way towards this shrine in good numbers belonging to different races and ethnic groups. They wish to pay obeisance and get their wishes fulfilled.

There is a natural spring at village Londana near Battal Ballian in Udhampur and people suffering from skin ailments are being cured after having a dip in the spring. It is believed that this is due to shrine Shakti of Baba Londana. But scientifically the water has been seen to have sulphur smell.



Billan Bowli

Billan Bowli. This bowli is situated behind Head Post Office Udhampur. There is a Shiva Temple in front of this bowli. The water of this bowli is crystal clear and is good for digestion. People residing near this bowli use the water of this spring for drinking purposes. The name of this locality is also known as Billan Bowli Mohalla.



Kallar Bowli

Kallar Bowli: This bowli is situated near Kallar on the western side of Udhampur on Dhar Road. There is a Shiva Temple adjacent to this bowli. Lust green water is oozing from the hill and the same is being stored in a pond build in the year 1953 by the residents of this locality.



Khartairi Bowli

Khartairi Bowli: This bowli is situated at Sangoor, Barrian. One can also reach this bowli via Udhampur by pass road. There are two Bowli's one is covered and other one is open. The open one gets the water from the hillside. There is a Chinar tree in the compound of this temple. There is a Shiva Temple in the area of this bowli and the area comprises of about three kannal of land.



Mian Bagh Bowli

Mian Bagh Bowli: This bowli is situated on the left side of Air Force road. An ancient Shiva temple is also situated the complex of this bowli.



Ratairi Bowli

Ratairi Bowli: This bowli is situated on railway road near pump station, Udhampur.



Saken Bowli

Saken Bowli: Sakan in Dogri means the relationship between two wives of a person. These bowlis are situated near Udhampur railway station. The origin of these bowlis is one outlet from the bottom of the hill and the water is being diverted into two ponds equally.



Sansu Bowli

Sansu Bowli: This bowli is situated near Supply Morh Udhampur enroute Pancharisome 4 km from Udhampur city. There is a shiva temple on the side of this spring.



Mangu Di Bowli

Mongu Di Bowli: Mongu Di Bowli is situated near Devika Ghat and the bowli has been constructed by a pious person named Mangu in the year 1941. The same person also constructed a big pond at village Panthal enroute Katra and the pond has been named after him as Mongu da Talab.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Born on 20th March, 1960 in Murran a village in North Kashmir, Chander M. Bhat is presently working as an Assistant Supdt. Posts, in Department of Posts, Govt. of India. His articles regarding Posts and of non-political nature stand widely published in various papers and magazines of the country. A booklet “How to Collect Stamps” published by the Department of Posts, has earned him genuine accolades. He worked on the project of tracing the roots of his co-villagers and of the village Murran, resulting into the culmination of a widely acclaimed book “Murran ...My Village”. Man with depth, Chander M. Bhat has also another book, “Ocean by Drops” (collection of poems) in his vase having colorful poems. His book “Ancient History of Jammu and Kashmir”, confirms his researching capability. Various research papers like “The Splendor that is Amarnath” and “Vitasta...The Sacred River of Kashmir” are valuable additions to his works that has proved very fruitful and guiding force in the exile period of Kashmiri Pandits community of which the author is also a member.

Presently the author is working on “*OOL...THE NEST*” a six volume project on all the 595 [each volume of about 2500 pages] Kashmiri Pandit villages of Kashmir.

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